



S^t Francis of Sales.

The Saints and Servants of God.

THE LIFE
OF
SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES,
BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF PETER HYACINTH GALLITIA.

"Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in
universo mundo."—*Antiph. Ecclesiæ.*

VOL. I.



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TRANSFERRED

TO
THE SECULAR CLERGY
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND,
THE SUCCESSORS AND SPIRITUAL CHILDREN
OF GENERATIONS OF MARTYRS,
WHO,
BY THEIR CHEERFULNESS IN HOLY POVERTY,
THEIR DILIGENCE
IN OBSCURITY AND UNDER OPPRESSION,
THEIR UNEXAMPLED CONFIDENCE
IN THE TRUTHS THEY TAUGHT,
THEIR FORGIVING CHARITY
TOWARDS UNGENEROUS OPPONENTS,
AND THEIR SELFDENYING KINDNESS TOWARDS THOSE
WHOM THEIR PRAYERS, THEIR SACRIFICES,
AND THEIR SUFFERINGS
RESCUED FROM THE DARKNESS OF ERROR,
HAVE PRESERVED TO THEIR COUNTRY,
TOGETHER WITH THE PRECIOUS EXAMPLE
OF THEIR OWN VIRTUES,
THE UNFAILING LIGHT
OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH,
AND THE HEREDITARY DEVOTION TO THE HOLY SEE
WHICH DISTINGUISHED
THE PILGRIMS AND SAINTS OF SAXON TIMES
AND THE PRINCELY BUILDERS
OF OUR NORMAN CHURCHES.

ST. WILFRID'S,
TRANSLATION OF ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY,
M.D.CCC.XLII.

PREFACE.

The following Life of St. Francis of Sales is translated from the Italian of Pier Giacinto Gallitia, Canon of the Church of San Lorenzo in Giaveno; and from the third edition revised and augmented by the author. It was published in Venice in 1729, and dedicated by the Visitation Nuns of Massa to Anna Luisa de Medici.

St. Mary's, Sydenham Hill,
August 30, 1854.

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THE LIFE
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BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE ANCESTORS, COUNTRY, PARENTS, BIRTH, AND
EARLY EDUCATION OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

AT the time when the Catholic Church was governed by St. Pius V., the Roman empire by Ferdinand I., the kingdom of France by Charles IX., and the duchy of Savoy by Emanuel Philibert, Francis was born in the castle of Sales, from whence the family derives its name: the castle is situated at about three leagues distance from Annecy, a principal town of the province of Geneva. His father was Francis, Lord of Sales, Boysi, Ballayeson, and Villaroget; his mother was Frances de Sionas, daughter of Melchior, Lord of Tuille and Vallières, both illustrious by birth, piety, and riches. The family of Sales is one of the most ancient of Savoy. The first of whom we find mention is Gerard, who,

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in the eleventh century, held rank as a nobleman in the army of Rodolph, king of Burgundy; at whose death he was deputed to convey the sceptre and crown of that kingdom to the Emperor Conrad. From thenceforward the descendants of that noble family have ever maintained the rank of nobility, have been honoured by the confidence of their sovereigns, in time both of peace and war, and were enriched by so many fiefs, that the father of our Saint reckoned eight. The arms consisted of an oval shield with a deep azure ground and two golden bands, to which a crescent and two stars were afterwards added, on the following occasion. Peter Lord of Sales accompanied Count Amadeus of Savoy when he went to the relief of Rhodes, besieged by the Turks; they were overtaken by a storm, but as the Lord of Sales was the first to catch sight of Castor and Pollux, (the indication of fair weather,) Count Amadeus desired him to add a crescent and two stars to his escutcheon; and thus do the armorial bearings stand to this day. In an old family picture this shield is held by a Hercules holding a club in his hand, and with two savages at his feet, their weapons cast down, their loins girded, and their heads encircled with poplar leaves.

The House of Sales has been ennobled at various epochs; in the year 1613 it was erected into a barony, an earldom in 1643, and finally a marquise in 1664. We must not silently pass over the excellent qualities of the parents of our saint, although the worth of the tree may be judged from the beauty of the fruit. His noble father was universally respected for his probity and honour; he was most

exact in the discharge of his duties as a Christian, of upright heart, and very zealous for the Catholic religion.

He bore arms during the Flemish wars, though without indulging in the vices of the camp; he served the princes of Luxemburg and Martigny on many important occasions. When Savoy was restored to Emanuel Philibert, he retired to his castle of Sales, and married Frances de Sionas in 1559. No marriage could have been happier, both being endowed with so much virtue that peace and concord ever reigned between them. Frances was graced with tender piety and modesty, which made her love retirement and shun the commerce of the world; but it was zeal for religion which specially distinguished this worthy couple, and at the period of which we treat, Calvinism had taken root in Geneva and the neighbouring territories; its doctrines were commodious, and it was considered the religion of the superior wits of the age.

Of the many virtues conspicuous in the Count and Countess of Sales alms-deeds deserve particular mention; these rendered them dear to God and men, and drew down innumerable blessings on their family. With holy eagerness and exactitude they practised the advice of Tobias, advice particularly necessary to persons engaged in the world: "Turn not thine eyes from the poor, that God may not look aside from thee; if thou hast much, give much, if thou hast little, of that little give willingly." Although their charity extended to every sort of poverty, they knew that the royal prophet calls them blessed who can distinguish between the *poor* and

the *poor*; hence they studied in the first place to relieve those poor Catholics whose property was seized upon by heretics. To such as these, who wisely preferred their faith to all earthly possessions, the parents of our Saint not only furnished the necessaries of life, but endeavoured to procure them those comforts which they had been accustomed to in their respective positions in the world. Their charity saved many families from the danger, or at least from the temptation of embracing heresy, and preserved them in their fidelity to God and His holy Church. Their proximity to Geneva and the Swiss, gave them frequent opportunities for practising this species of generosity, under circumstances where a less ardent charity would have cooled; that of the Count and Countess of Sales became on the contrary, more ardent, and God rewarded them for it by giving them a saint for their son, a son that may fairly be called the fruit of their good works.

Frances, who had long been married without having children, no sooner found herself likely to become a mother, than she dedicated her offspring to the Lord; and she fervently renewed her offering on the following interesting occasion. Anna D'Este, daughter of Hercules Duke of Ferrara, and widow of the Duke de Guise, so treacherously massacred near Orleans, formed a second marriage with James of Savoy, Duke of Nemours; and accompanied as she was by the two cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, together with a noble suite, she halted at Annecy. Every one was anxious to show due honour to the bride and her illustrious cavalcade; amongst others, the Countess of Sales repaired to the city to assist at

her court. At the request of the Duchess of Nemours, the Duke of Savoy consented to have the holy winding-sheet brought from Chamberry, where it was preserved, to Annecy. This precious relic is a large cloth or sheet, in which the sacred body of our Lord was wrapped after death, and which bears imprinted on its upper and under parts His own divine figure, stamped there by no other hand than that of His love, and coloured with no other ink than that of His blood, a treasure and relic of which the royal house of Savoy is the fortunate possessor, and rendered famous by the pilgrimages of Amadeus, the pious Duke of Savoy, of Francis, king of France, and of St. Charles Borromeo, as well as by the many miracles wrought in favour of those who have had recourse to it. It is only exposed to the faithful on special occasions, and when several bishops and prelates can assist at the ceremonial, and could indeed must be the heart that could view unmoved this blood-stained portrait of our Redeemer.

On the occasion in question, when it was displayed in the Church of our Lady at Annecy, the Countess of Sales was present, and felt her whole soul excited to fervour and devotion as she contemplated this unequivocal mark of God's love for man. She experienced such pious affections as she had never known before, and amidst tears and prayers, she, like the mother of Samuel, consecrated her yet unborn babe to Jesus, beseeching Him to be a father to it, to preserve it from the corruptions of the world, and to deprive her of the honour of being a mother, rather than allow her to give birth to a child that

should ever become His enemy by losing the grace of baptism.

It is currently believed that the first prayers before this sacred portrait never go unanswered, provided the petitions refer to the salvation of souls; at all events the prayer of the lady of Sales had its full effect. Our Lord heard the mother, and loaded the son with such an abundance of blessings, that not only did he preserve his baptismal robe unsullied till death, but even increased the grace of this first sacrament, so as to be raised to the eminent degree of sanctity which will be developed in the course of this history.

The Countess returned to the castle of Sales with a feeling of happy confidence that God had accepted the offering of her unborn babe; moreover, she prognosticated something of her child's future career, from certain mysterious dreams, which she related with great simplicity to her husband, and although he chided her for what he called the folly of noticing such trifles, and the superstition of relying on them, she nevertheless told him that she dreamt she had given birth, not to a noble infant, but to a little shepherd, who ran about in all directions to collect his scattered flock; another of these mysterious dreams will be related elsewhere. Any one who recollects the dreams recorded in Scripture, and those of the mothers of St. Dominic and St. Andrew Corsini, will readily believe that in the present instance, God intended to signify His designs upon the child. The pious mother communicated on the festival of the Assumption, and six days later, that is on Thursday, the 21st of August, 1567, she gave

birth to a son, in the seventh month of her pregnancy. Later in life, he used to express his delight at having been born within the octave of the principal festival of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom he was ever most affectionately devoted, and through whose patronage he received most signal favours.

On the 28th of August he was regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, in the parish church of Thorens, the family territory, when the nobility of the neighbourhood hastened to offer their congratulations to the Lord and Lady of Sales on the birth of their first child. He was named Francis Bonaventure, after his sponsors, Francis delle Flechere, prior of the Benedictin house at Challengy, and his grandmother Bonaventura de Chiuron, married to the Lord of Flechere; he was also named Francis in honour of St. Francis of Assisium, to whom the room in which the child was born was dedicated, and in which was a picture of the saint, representing him in the act of preaching to the birds and fishes. Moreover, he was so named in honour of St. Francis of Paula, to whom his mother vowed him before his birth. His baptism was celebrated with munificent hospitality, and with alms-giving which lasted from day-break until night, so great was the joy occasioned by the birth of a Saint, destined to be the ornament of his family name, the honour of Savoy, the admiration of the world, and one of the pillars of the Church.

We may here mention, that before the canonization of the Saint, his brother Lewis intended making over the castle of Sales to the Visitation order, that

so the house in which this great Saint was born might be ever consecrated to the service of God. For this purpose he put himself to great expense in repairing the castle of Thorens for his own family, but the poverty of the order, together with the wars, prevented the accomplishment of this pious project, a project which would have completed the glory of our Saint.

His premature birth was a cause of his being extremely small, weak, and delicate; for a time his nurses found it necessary to wrap him in cotton, and use the greatest care to rear him. His mother was unable to nurse him herself, and for one reason or other she was obliged frequently to change his nurses, who all attested that he gave them little or no trouble, and that in the cradle he looked like a little angel; they also declared that they often found him with his arms crossed upon his breast, and for this reason they did not swathe him in the usual manner. The doctors were of opinion that he would not live; but care, and still more Providence which destined him to great things, preserved him, contrary to all expectation; he grew up robust and of full size. In imitation of the mother of Samuel, the Countess of Sales gave a liberal distribution of alms at the period of his weaning, procured the celebration of many masses, had him blessed by a holy priest, and thus testified her anxiety for her first-born, as well as the piety of her own heart. As she trained his advancing steps she watched his budding beauty and the indications of future excellence, with delight; his little engaging manners won all hearts, his exterior corresponded with his virtu-

ous inclinations, and grace seemed to have formed him entirely for itself. He was docile and submissive to his superiors, and sweet and cordial towards every one; above all, he was noticed for his remarkable modesty, and this was his preservative against the first assaults of vice. The first words he uttered were, to the astonishment of those who heard him, the following: "God and my mother love me very much;" this was looked upon as a sure sign that he was prevented by grace; for, though it was natural enough for children to be sensible of the loving caresses of their mothers, it is unquestionably beyond their infantine powers to know and understand that God loves them. From thenceforward he accustomed himself to pronounce very devoutly the sacred names of Jesus and Mary, in whom later he was to find his greatest delight. The Countess of Sales, who considered her child as a precious deposit confided to her by God, and of which she was to give Him an account, laid aside most of her other occupations to devote herself unreservedly to the good education of a son who already disclosed such excellent inclinations, and Francis so far profited by her instructions as to excite her astonishment; she told Madame de Chantal that she might tell wonders of the infancy of the servant of God, having witnessed how extraordinarily he was prevented by heavenly blessings, and how he breathed out divine love from his earliest years. His father, on his part, neglected nothing towards training him up suitably to his rank, and inspiring him with truly Christian sentiments; in a word, both his parents endeavoured to make him a pious young nobleman; well knowing

that childhood, like soft wax, receives any impression either of vice or virtue, according to the example placed before it. They kept him at a distance from ill-behaved children, and from menial servants, who but too frequently prove the medium of corrupting noble youths, teaching them to do ill and to speak worse; as for games, they were only allowed in moderation, and such as depended more on skill than on chance. By degrees this assiduous culture converted natural propensities into virtues. Even in his childhood he seemed to possess the maturity of age, being remarkable for keenness of intellect, modesty of demeanour, and earnestness of energy. He was affable in manner, and extremely docile under instruction, all pretty sure indications that he would grow up an accomplished cavalier.

The Countess of Sales deserves the highest commendation for her assiduity in training his youthful mind to virtue; she took him with her to church, inspiring him with deep reverence for this holy place, for sermons, and for every other pious exercise. She read the saints' lives to him, a spiritual food well proportioned to his age, mingling with it devout reflections suited to a child's capacity; but above all, she was most careful to second her teaching by example. The holy child corresponded with, and even surpassed the hopes of the worthy mother. When at prayer, or assisting at holy mass, there shone forth in him a piety and recollection quite superior to his age. One of his principal recreations consisted in erecting little altars, and in imitating the ceremonies of the Church, the usual indication of a good disposition, and of vocation to the ecclesi-

astical state, as we read of St. Athanasius and St. Charles. Sincere in his words, he preferred punishment rather than excuse himself by the slightest deviation from truth. His parents had instilled in his mind the greatest horror of a lie, a vice as common to childhood as it is contrary to its simplicity. His charity towards the poor was extraordinary; not content with distributing all that he received from his mother for the purpose, (and she took great pleasure in constituting him her little almoner,) he also gave them what he received for his own pleasure, and often asked his parents for more when his own funds were exhausted, and very frequently he gave away part of his meals when he had nothing more left at his disposal.

We find noticed, in the processes of the Saint's canonization, three striking incidents connected with his love for the poor in his infancy. The first is, that on the day of his baptism, his nurse placed him on the table, at which were seated those to whom the Count of Sales distributed alms, as we have already related; the child remained there a long time looking intently on those poor people, as if it gave him pleasure to gaze upon such a multitude of friends and members of Jesus Christ. The second is, that when he was carried into the court-yard, if he saw a beggar there, he strove to go towards him, so that his nurses were obliged to cover his eyes, to prevent his agitation. Whenever he cried, the most effectual way to pacify him was to give him something to carry to his friends, as they styled the poor. The third is, that when he grew older, he used to slip away from his tutors, and go to the same court

to distribute whatever he had been able to save for the poor; and he did this so privately, and with such tender kindness as to excite admiration. But what is still more worthy of remark is, that he could distinguish poor Catholics from the heretics, and would separate them: he seemed to be endowed with a peculiar instinct in this respect; for he could tell the difference by merely looking at them, or by touching their garments. In distributing his alms, he always began with the former, saying, "You are my brethren and my friends: it is my duty in the first place to feed and clothe the household of the faith; whereas *you* who are not in communion with the body of Jesus Christ, must be content with the remnants; but if you return to the bosom of the church, you shall be treated as her true children, and shall be seated at table with the rest of our brethren."

In consequence of some misunderstanding with the Duke of Nemours, the Lord of Sales was obliged to withdraw to Chablais, a country already much infected with heresy. He established his family in the Castle of Brens, taking thither his wife and little Francis, who thus began his sanctification by imitating the flight into Egypt. It would almost seem as if Providence would even at this early age, make him acquainted with a place, where later he was to fight his chief battles; a place which was to furnish materials to his conquests, and to prove the most glorious object of his victories.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY STUDIES OF ST. FRANCIS.

WHEN Francis had reached his sixth year, his father, perceiving his aptitude for learning, sent him to college, much against the inclination of his mother, who was anxious to retain him under her own care, at least until the seeds of piety had taken deeper root in his heart: with well-grounded apprehension, she feared lest her son should imbibe vice with literature. The pious mother knew the dangers to which youth is exposed in colleges, where one diseased sheep is sufficient to infect the whole flock, in spite of the vigilance of the masters: on this account she wished to have her son educated under good masters at home. But the Count, though a man of great piety, had less elevated views than his lady; and considering the benefit of emulation amongst children, insisted on sending Francis to Rocca, where he advanced as rapidly in his studies, as he had advanced in piety at home under the tuition of his mother. In this college he acquired the first rudiments of grammar under Peter Battelier, whilst he lodged and boarded with a schoolmaster of the name of Dumax.

After a brief sojourn at Rocca, he and three of his cousins were sent to the college of Annecy. Annecy is an ancient city, which derives its name from Titus Anicius who governed the Allobroges for the Roman Empire. It is agreeably situated amidst fertile hills and fields, the air is salubrious; and, at the time of which we write, it was the resi-

dence of the bishop of Geneva, driven from his see by heretics: many events have rendered it remarkable; but none more so than the lengthened abode in it of our Saint, and its actual possession of his remains. The Dukes of Nemours generally resided there when they visited Savoy. Eustachius Capius, canon and official of the Church of Geneva, the Abbot of St. Angelo in Sicily, founded a college here for humanities, rhetoric, and philosophy; he placed it under the government of the doctors of Louvain, intending that his own country should not be left without the means of education. It was to this college then that our Francis was sent; where amongst his contemporaries he shone like a sun amidst stars. He seems to have felt an inward impulse to study; he buried himself in his books, clearly demonstrating his strong inclination to learning. He spared himself no trouble, and took notes of the more striking passages in his lectures, to have them ready for use in due time and place; and as his person was majestic, his voice sonorous, and his countenance beautiful, he was frequently chosen by his professor or master to give declamations. Possessing as he did a powerful mind, an excellent memory, a natural turn for eloquence, with a refined taste in the choice of his authors, it is not surprising that he should have been one of the most learned prelates of his age; as he unquestionably was one of the most holy. All the authors who have written his life were never satisfied with treating of the singular qualifications of this blessed child. Modest in his demeanour, composed in gesture, neat without affectation, he made himself respected by his com-

panions; and he, profiting by the authority which his birth and virtue gave him, admonished them so sweetly and unassumingly, that many of them declared that his very presence deterred them from evil—he thus renewing in Savoy what had been witnessed in Sienna in the days of St. Bernardin. He tolerated the failings of others with great discretion; and being most charitable in compassionating them, he offered to undergo the punishment awarded to his cousin Gaspar, who, with tears and screams, entreated to be let off: Francis having voluntarily consented to accept the chastisement, suffered it without the least display of regret. His sense of justice was equally remarkable: by orders of his father, one of his servants bought him a pair of gloves, and as the man refused to give the hosier the price he asked, the youth made up the sum out of his own pocket-money: he did much the same with regard to the toll over a bridge, which his servant refused to pay; Francis insisted on giving the money himself, saying it was only just to pay those poor people their demands, since they gave their sweat and toil for the convenience of the public. In truth these are but trivial traits of good-feeling; nevertheless they were indications of what the future man would be.

It must not be supposed that Francis devoted himself so exclusively to study, as to neglect that which was far more important, namely, progress in piety; to strengthen himself then in this, he asked to receive confirmation. How often we might weep to see the indifference with which this sacrament, (which imparts a plenitude of graces, and which

renders us perfect Christians,) is but too often received. Francis, however prepared himself for it with many prayers, and presented himself to it with such fervour and modesty, that the Bishop Justinian inquired who he was, admiring the fine disposition which he could read upon the youth's countenance; and publicly declaring that he would one day become a celebrated personage and the wonder of his age.

Unquestionably the grace of that sacrament was not received in vain, for, from thenceforward he advanced more rapidly than ever in the path of virtue. He prescribed for himself certain daily devotions, appointed a determinate time to be spent in pious reading, regulated his visits to the churches, and was most exact in observing these regulations, unless lawfully hindered, but never would he allow caprice to interfere with them.

In the summer season, when his companions spent their evenings in pleasant country rambles, he remained at home to read the saints' lives to his hostess who was an invalid. On recreation days, when he went to amuse himself with others, he generally invited some of them to go and pray with him, or he withdrew to some retired spot to pray alone. He had a particular partiality to the isles of Fier, whither he would engage his associates to accompany him, and there, kneeling down in the shade of the magnificent foliage, they would sing the Litanies of our Blessed Lady and other prayers; while he, with devout generosity reminded them that it was well to begin to serve God betimes, and that

they ought to pray then whilst they had time and opportunity for doing so.

In his recreations he was most modest, though cheerful, carefully shunning whatever was contrary to strict propriety and delicacy, insomuch, that in the height of summer none of his companions ever saw him bathe, or with his breast uncovered; he was as scrupulous in his dress as he was in his conduct.

Thus passed the first years of our Saint; and, as in his later life he became the model of priests and bishops, so, in his young days, he might be looked upon as the model of students and of youth.

CHAPTER III.

HE RECEIVES THE CLERICAL TONSURE AND IS SENT TO
PURSUE HIS STUDIES AT PARIS.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE, which so admirably disposes the lives of the saints, made use of human means to cause Francis of Sales to be a learned man. His father perceiving that it was useless to detain him any longer at Annecy, and judging from his progress that he was equal to the higher sciences, hoped that his talents would enhance the lustre of his family. He resolved, therefore, on sending him to Paris, that he might complete his course of studies at the college of Navarre. The name of Paris suffices to give one the idea of a city which is the Athens of France, whilst the multitude of its inhabitants constitutes it a miniature world. The Count of Sales

unfolded his projects to his lady, who, having so reluctantly consented to have her son sent to Annecy, was still more unwilling to see him depart for Paris, nor would she agree to it but on condition of his first spending some months with her at home. It was her object to arm him well, before exposing him to the trials of a vast city, generally speaking, the abode of great vices as well as of great virtues. She endeavoured, therefore, to instil into him the most Christian sentiments, and such maxims of piety as should be able to preserve him innocent even in the midst of the vicious, unscrupulous youths who usually abound in large colleges.

Francis, who wished to choose the Lord for his portion, hearing that the Bishop of Bagnarea was going to confer orders at Clermont in the Genevese territory, earnestly entreated his father to permit him to take the clerical tonsure. The Lord of Sales was much displeased at such a request, so completely at variance with his own designs. Perceiving his son's strong inclination to piety, he suspected that he would perhaps aim at the ecclesiastical or the religious state, whereas it was his own intention to establish him in the world in a manner suited to his birth and personal qualifications; however, following the dictates of prudence, he feared that a positive refusal would induce a step which he was most anxious to avoid; he knew that a naturally noble mind surmounts opposition, and being a pious man, he reflected that it would be useless to oppose the designs of Francis, if they were conformable to those of God; moreover, he thought there would be cruelty in saddening a son who was a source of so

much happiness to his parents; he gave him therefore the required consent, hoping that time would change his views, as might easily be the case, because the tonsure does not absolutely prevent its recipient from remaining in the world.

Having thus obtained his father's permission, he repaired to Clermont, carrying with him demissorial letters from the canon, John Tissot, vicar-general of the church of Geneva; and he received the tonsure in the ember-days of September, 1578, to his own indescribable delight. In those days the tonsure was given with great facility, in consequence of which many disgraced and abandoned the ecclesiastical state. But it was not so with our pious youth, who seems to have despoiled himself of every desire of earthly greatness when he assumed the surplice; and in putting it on he at the same time clothed himself with the new man of justice and of truth. From Clermont he returned to the castle of Sales, where he learnt from his mother that his father intended sending him to the college of Navarre, there to complete his course of studies. This arrangement was unsatisfactory on one account: he was most anxious to pursue his studies, it is true, but he wished to do so in the schools directed by the Society of Jesus; however, as it was his inviolable rule never to oppose the will of his beloved parents, he merely suggested to his mother the advantages which he might derive in the college lately founded for those fathers at Paris. He entreated her to reflect on the high fame of the Jesuit fathers, on the esteem and respect which they secure from their pupils, whom they nurture alike in piety and

learning: the same he knew might be the case in other colleges, yet as his inclination led him so decidedly to prefer one governed by the society, he thought this very inclination a sign that his studies would advance better there than elsewhere, and he presumed it would be a matter of indifference to his father in which college he pursued his education, provided he did but advance in learning. His mother acquiesced in these arguments, and like a pious lady as she was, cared much more for the preservation of her son's innocence, than to see him grow up an accomplished courtier, as his father wished. She used her influence so successfully, that the Count so far changed his plan as to permit his son to enter the college of Clermont instead of that of Navarre.

In the meantime preparations were made for his departure, his parents giving him excellent advice suited to his circumstances. In her maternal anxiety, the Countess frequently repeated to him the celebrated maxim of the holy mother of St. Lewis: "God only knows how dear you are to me; nevertheless, I had rather see you dead before my eyes than hear that you had committed one mortal sin." She inspired him with a tender love for God, and endeavoured to fill his heart with filial confidence in Him, saying to him, like the mother of the Maccabees, "whatever men may think, it is not I who have given you being and life. I am your mother only inasmuch as the Lord has been pleased to make use of me to bring you into the world. It is true you were formed in my body, but I neither gave you your limbs nor the blood which flows in your

veins, nor the power which gives you motion; still less did I impart to you that spiritual and immortal soul which renders you capable of eternal life; you have received your being from the Lord, and He it is who preserves it; from Him alone must you hope and expect every blessing."

She moreover availed herself of every opportunity to inculcate some new maxim of piety, teaching her son how to make use of creatures as a ladder whereby to ascend to the knowledge of the Creator, an exercise which afterwards became so familiar to the Saint, that he recommended it, in his "Introduction to a Devout Life," as a means highly useful in the path of spirituality. If they met with a poor man, she would remind him that though so dissimilar in outward appearance, this poor man was nevertheless his brother, having the same right as himself to call God his Father: circumstances had placed them in different ranks, though they were equal both in nature and grace; and that he ought to guard against ill-treating or contemning the poor either in word or deed, because, however miserable they might seem, they were in the main his equals, having a body and soul like himself. In their country rambles she would pause to look at the poor agriculturalists, remarking to him that it was a common error to suppose that the sustenance of mankind comes from them: they would labour in vain, since, "not he who sows, or he who waters," but God alone it is who has the power to give increase and to bring fruit and grain to maturity: a hail storm, a heavy rain, excessive draught, or a blight, being sufficient to ravage the fields, destroy the effects of

rural labour, produce scarcity in the land and famine amongst the people; whilst, on the other hand, rain, moderate heat, and seasonable weather, (on which a good harvest must depend,) rest entirely on the will of God, man having no power over such things.

These and similar thoughts, cast like the seed of life into the heart of the young saint, produced corresponding fruit, instilling into him a tender and fiducial love towards God, with great compassion and zeal for his neighbour. His father, too, did not fail to impress on his son's mind the importance of attending to the service of God in early life, of applying to study, and to the practice of virtue, since the whole course of a man's life generally depends on its beginnings. In glowing terms, he depicted the beauty of virtue, and the deformity of vice, of which he endeavoured to inspire the greatest horror, shewing how degrading it was in a noble cavalier to follow loathsome vices which vilify the body whilst they expose the soul to irretrievable perdition.

In fine, if his mother spared no pains to render him a good Christian, his father neglected no means of inspiring him with the elevated sentiments which ought to adorn a well-bred gentleman. Both of them succeeded, for they had the consolation of being convinced that his virtues made him dear to God, whilst men loved him for his amiability.

The day of departure at length arrived, and, having received his parents' blessing, he set out for Paris accompanied by a worthy secular priest named John Deage, acting in the capacity of tutor and

guardian. It was his pious mother's wish that he should have a clerical companion, whose character should oblige him to watch over her son's conduct as well as give him good example; acting in this respect very differently from those who entrust their children to any one they chance to meet with; an indiscretion to which we may ascribe the pernicious education of the greater part of our young nobility.

The tutor, though a man of great virtue and integrity, was easily carried away by anger; a defect which served to display the meekness of the holy youth, who, though often corrected and chastised without the slightest reason, never complained. One day the Countess of Sales unexpectedly made her appearance at the precise moment when he was punishing Francis, not only without cause, but even with great indiscretion: she at once decided on looking out for another, but her son would on no account consent to this; throwing himself at her feet, he entreated her not to think of such a change, for that he had no doubt he provoked his master, whose anger was the natural effect of his transgressions, adding that even a mild character would have lost patience probably in such a conjuncture; and that his haughty temper needed restraint and rigour:—a sentiment well worthy of a saint whose meekness could not be surpassed.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS ARRIVAL AND SOJOURN IN PARIS.—HIS RETURN.

THEY who travel in foreign lands, may find much instruction in the multiplicity of objects which meet their sight, though in truth all men are not capable of this reflection, which ought ever to accompany the traveller. But Francis, young as he was, found no difficulty in tracing effects to their causes, especially the desolation which he witnessed in so many places on his road. France was then in a deplorable state, the consequence of civil war, which under pretext of reforming and supporting religion, divided the kingdom into several factions, leading to such fearful results as may be better imagined than described. Savoy had suffered less in this respect, yet the disasters which heresy brings upon provinces, were not altogether new to Francis. His tutor, with much good sense, made him observe, that to be durable, civil society must be founded in God; and that uniformity of belief amongst the people was of the utmost importance;—that piety, justice, and religion contribute to the happiness of kingdoms,—and that, if the most flourishing kingdom of Christendom was reduced to such a state, and was destitute of these virtues, how reasonable was the inference that these very virtues are the most solid foundation of an empire. Relieving the tedium of the journey with these and other equally useful considerations they reached Paris, where, as is the case in most large cities, the young Baron (as he was now called) met with many per-

sons of eminent piety, and many more of depraved and vicious life. He made it his study to copy the example of the virtuous, and to shun the company of the immoral: scarcely had he reached the capital than he requested to be conveyed to the College of Clermont, to be introduced to the Fathers of the Society, who welcomed him with the demonstrations of esteem and affection elicited by the modesty, gravity, and amiability of his noble bearing. He explained his intentions to them, and as they judged him capable of rhetoric, he applied himself with such assiduity, that in two years' time he became one of the most eloquent speakers of the day. Every one admired his diligence, especially his teachers, who, seeing that he was not satisfied with his prescribed lessons (for he was indefatigable in reading) made choice of some of the best authors for him, from whom he selected the most elegant passages for future occasions. Father Nicodex used to say of him, "that the Baron of Sales was as hopeful and promising as he was beautiful."

Having completed his rhetoric, he applied with equal success to philosophy; his excellent capacity joined to his unflagging diligence enabled him to study scholastic theology at the same time; he had a good opportunity for this, because his guardian Deage was then writing it at the Sorbonne, and Francis could avail himself of his manuscripts, assist with him at the Theses, and argue with him as well as with the other students, so that in fact he became as well skilled in this science as if he were devoting himself exclusively to it; an unequivocal indication of his superior talents, for theology con-

tains difficulties enough within itself to occupy even a fine intellect. His father had given direction for him to learn the accomplishments belonging to an elegant education, such as riding, fencing, and dancing, and although Francis had in his own heart decided on embracing the ecclesiastical state, and felt a strong repugnance to these secular accomplishments which he foresaw would be useless to him, he acquiesced, nevertheless, in the wishes of his father, and thus acquired that noble deportment and those refined manners which won all hearts, and which he ever retained in spite of the modesty and simplicity which he professed. He only gave himself to these exercises by way of diversion and amusement; and considering his very earnest application to study, it was well that this sort of recreation should have been compulsory. In addition to the studies already noticed, he was learning Greek, and the positive theology of Genebrardus and Maldonat, who were then teaching with the highest applause.

These varied studies acquired for Francis such a fund of learning as can scarcely be over-rated, but as his humility was equal to his talent, he strove as far as possible to conceal his store of knowledge from the eyes of men, of which we shall be able to bring such proofs during the course of this work as will suffice to convince the reader that Francis was no less learned than he was holy. He spent six years in his studies at Paris, having Father Suarez and Dandino for his masters of philosophy. Anxious as his friends were to make him a great man according to the world, he was no less anxious to advance

in the science of the Saints: he did not think that his studies ought to be the only one, or even the chief of his occupations; he devoted a considerable part of his time to piety; convinced that true devotion, far from spoiling, serves to perfect other things, and that the time employed in the service of the Lord is afterwards repaid by Him, by the blessing which He imparts to other actions undertaken for His glory, the sole object of all His works. He joined the confraternity of our Blessed Lady, a seminary of piety as experience has shewn; his virtue was soon recognized, and he was elected assistant and prefect.

Well knowing the importance of good direction, he chose an excellent spiritual guide, to whom he candidly unfolded all the secrets of his soul; by his advice he had recourse to the sacraments of confession and communion every Sunday and festival, and he did his best to induce his companions to the same laudable custom. One evening he invited a compatriot to come and breakfast with him the next morning; they met accordingly, when Francis with holy ingenuity persuaded him first to accompany him to the Church for confession and communion, after which he said to him, "We will go home to breakfast whenever you like, but I was anxious to introduce you first to this, the best and grandest of all banquets." In all matters of importance, he regulated his conduct by the advice of his confessor, saying that if he who travels in an unknown country stands in need of a guide, still more necessary is a guide to those who pace the road to heaven, amidst

a thousand obstacles and dangers, and surrounded on all sides by enemies.

By the advice of his director he read the sacred Scriptures, making them his delight, and for the better understanding of them he began to study Hebrew, a language of little use excepting for such reading. He was assiduous in assisting at sermons and visiting Churches; faithful to prayer and to frequent elevations of the heart to God, thus practising the virtues of the cloister in the midst of the world.

In proportion as he shunned the society of the vicious, so did he seek that of persons consecrated to God. He particularly relished the company of Father Ange de Joyeuse, in whom he used to say that he beheld the world and all its pomps subjected to the humility of the cross. This worthy religious admiring the purity and innocence of the young lord, held frequent intercourse with him, inspiring him with contempt for worldly things, and this with all the more efficacy, as he himself having possessed all that is deemed precious on earth, was fully competent to assure his youthful friend that peace of heart will not be found in delights, or in the grandeurs which the world displays in order to seduce us; he often told him that an idle, easy life is utterly opposed to man's true condition, who, according to the oracle of the Holy Ghost, is born to labour; penance being not only necessary as a means of cancelling sins committed, but also as a preservative of innocence; and he gave as a reason, the well-known propensity natural to man to abuse his free will by sinning, "Therefore," said the Father, "we must use all our skill to correct this propensity by

means of penance and mortification, depriving ourselves even of that which is lawful, in order that nature may not urge us to that which is unlawful;" and he added that this reflection had worked so powerfully in him as to induce him to forsake the world with all that he had, or could have hoped for in it to become a Capuchin. Francis admired the really angelical piety of Father Ange, and he used to watch the hours of his serving at Mass, that he too might be present; and he used often to exclaim to a companion of his named John Paquelet; "O my God, what a beautiful example we have before our eyes in the person of this religious man, who born a prince, and brought up amongst princes,—the favourite of kings; after performing so many brilliant acts both in peace and war;—after having administered the first offices of a kingdom;—having possessed riches, titles, and honours, ends by turning his back upon the world, and clothing himself in sack-cloth, preferring to be an abject in the house of the Lord rather than dwell in the houses of the great; look at him attenuated by fasts, barefooted, dressed in a mean habit; assuredly God calls us to Himself by giving us such a model!"

Judging from these and similar expressions, Deage began to suspect that Francis was thinking of embracing the ecclesiastical state, or else of entering some religious order, a step which he knew would be unsatisfactory to the Count of Sales. He watched the austere mode of life pursued by the young lord, who studiously endeavoured to conceal his penances. He already wore a hair cloth three days in the week, frequently used the discipline, besides fasting rigor

ously. Although the Saint never believed true devotion to consist in corporal austerities, he well knew that mortifications of the body are a powerful stimulus to piety, and therefore never omitted them, using them as a means of bridling the senses, and of subjecting the members to reason; moreover he would thus imitate the sufferings of the Son of God, from which ours derive all their value and merit. About this time he conceived the idea of consecrating his virginity to God, which he had hitherto preserved unsullied. To render his purpose permanent, he bound himself to it by vow. To make this oblation with greater fervour and recollection, he retired to the church of St. Stephen, which being but little frequented, was better suited to his purpose; and here accordingly, he often withdrew to pray. Here, before a devout image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, after giving vent to the desires of his heart in long and fervent prayer, he besought our Lord to accept his perpetual renunciation of all sensual pleasures, and mercifully deign to receive the sacrifice of his body, as He had already favoured him by the acceptation of his heart, praying for the graces necessary to persevere in a resolution inspired by His Divine Majesty, acknowledging that without His special assistance he could not remain faithful to his promise, to which he now pledged himself by vow; he next placed himself under the protection of our Blessed Lady, begging her to be his advocate with God, and to obtain grace for him, without which, vain would be the attempt of man to preserve continency.

The Saint hoped that he had shielded himself

against temptations and the attacks of the devil, and that he might now live in peace and tranquillity; but Almighty God was pleased to put his virtue to the test, valuing those victories but little which are gained without combat. He therefore permitted the devil to assail him with one of the most distressing, most terrifying, and most violent of temptations; he clouded his mind, infused such horror into his thoughts, and filled his memory with such gloomy fancies, that his heart was completely upset; terrific perturbation succeeded the sweet peace to which he had been accustomed, so that he seemed to conceive an aversion for those very things which had hitherto been his delight; to all this was added spiritual aridity, which rendered him insensible to all that is most sweet in the service of the Lord. The devil, whom Scripture represents to us sometimes as a lion which openly attacks us, and sometimes as a serpent which strives to seduce by its cunning, perpetually tormented him with the idea that all he was doing for God would be useless, that his irreparable perdition was already fixed in the Divine decrees, and that he undoubtedly was of the number of the reprobate. This is a temptation often permitted by God to those whom He destines to the direction of souls, not only that they may know how to compassionate, but may also learn by experience how to guide those who are thus assailed, for, after all, "he who has not been tempted, what knoweth he?"

In Francis the struggle was so terrible as to affect his body; his soul had long been filled with the holy fear of God, whom he hoped to possess; his

heart was burning with tender love for Him; hence, to use his own expression, he felt as if he must die of very grief at the idea of being doomed to hate and blaspheme Him eternally; and this was his usual thought: such was the effect of his alarm and dread, that his body though naturally robust, became unequal to its proper functions; he lost both sleep and appetite; his complexion was jaundiced, and his eyes encircled with a dark halo; his countenance betrayed the desperation which was wrestling in his heart. The reader will perhaps suspect exaggeration in this recital, but whoever knows by experience or otherwise, the oppression which the thought of being eternally separated from God, must occasion in a soul that loves, will easily credit this account, for all the authors who have written the life of our Saint dwell on this conflict as one of the most fearful that our Lord could have permitted. Deage, who loved him as if he were his son, observed these serious effects, though without being aware of their cause; in vain did he question the pious youth who was unwilling to discover his grief, he felt too much shame to confess that his heart told him that he belonged to the reprobate, and this silence was a refined artifice of the devil's, who strives to strike dumb souls that are tempted, lest an humble and sincere exposure of their malady should effect its cure, well knowing that *this* is quite sufficient to dissipate it, whereas concealment increases and exasperates it. This temptation lasted for a whole month; but at last God was pleased to free him from it without the aid of man; hence we see that if our Lord left the devil the power to tempt

and try Francis in order to inspire him with diffidence of self, and to strengthen him in humility, a virtue so necessary to those who are to be raised to a high degree of sanctity, He at least suggested to him the means of relieving himself from the trial. One evening on his return home from college, he inspired him with the thought of visiting the Church of St. Stephen, where he had offered the fair lily of his virginity to God: on entering the Church, a tablet appended to the wall arrested his attention. Curiosity induced him to examine it, when he found it consisted of the prayer (ascribed by some to St. Austin, by others to St. Bernard, beginning '*Memorare Piissima,*' &c; and this prayer was destined to prove his remedy. Prostrate before the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he devoutly recited this little prayer, renewed the sacrifice of his virginity to her as his lady, promised to crown her daily his queen by the recitation of the rosary, and begged of her in exchange, that, if indeed he was not to love a God so worthy of all love in the next life, at least to obtain for him the grace to love Him as much as it was possible in this; he concluded his prayer by imploring her to become his advocate with our Lord, the God of all consolation, yet a God to whom he did not dare have recourse. A supplication thus fervent, and altogether so contrary to the sentiments of a reprobate was soon responded to. At first, he could only address himself to God in terms expressive of his diffidence; according to one author of his life, he gave vent to his sorrowing feelings as follows: "Shall I then be deprived of the favour of the Lord, who has so often allowed me

to relish the sweet flavour of His delights; and who has shewn Himself so amiable to me! O love! O charity! O beauty! to you have I consecrated all my affection. Shall I then no longer enjoy your delights? Shall I no more be inebriated from the abundance of your table? Shall I no longer drink of the torrent of your consolations? Oh! well-beloved tabernacles of the God of Jacob, shall I no more traverse you in my way to the house of God? O Virgin Mother of God, most beautiful of the daughters of Jerusalem! You, whose gifts might rejoice hell itself, shall I then never behold you in the kingdom of your Son? You, who are beautiful as the moon, elect and perfect as the sun! Am I not to participate in the immense benefit of redemption? Did not my sweet Jesus die for me? Ah dearest Lady, let what will become of me, at least allow me to love you in this life if I should be unable to love you in the next; if I am indeed to be of the number of those who shall never see your face, do not permit me ever to be of the number of those who will curse and blaspheme your holy name; in hell there are none who praise you." On this occasion he cast himself into the arms of God with such entire confidence and submission to His divine will, as to deserve to be completely delivered from the temptation. He himself acknowledges that at the very moment he finished his prayer it seemed to him as if a heavy weight was removed from his heart, and as if the scales of a leprosy fell from his body; so much so, that the violence of the devil being arrested, he felt as it were, the effects of that water which descending impetuously from Mount

Libanus, heretofore restored the leper's flesh to the pure freshness of infancy. Tranquillity of soul was restored to him in an instant, and, what was still more remarkable, his former health and vigour returned; his guardian and his friends noticed the change, when he related to the former the origin, the progress, and the cessation of his trial, which Deage ascribed to some strong passion which the poor youth deemed it impossible to master, for never would he have expected to find in a boy of sixteen so deep a sense of divine love, that the fear of not loving God hereafter, was capable of producing such strange symptoms, and such soul-felt grief; he blamed him for his indiscreet silence, and still more for the pernicious shame that had occasioned it; he made him promise thenceforth always to disclose his temptations and his whole interior to him. But Francis never after needed these confidential communications, because the peace which our Blessed Lady obtained for him was permanent; nor did the devil for a long time venture to assail a soul that had triumphed over him in the very bloom of youth. Full well might the fiend presage the defeats to which he would later be exposed at the hands of one in whom love was already so strong; whilst we may safely say that the love of our saintly youth was stronger than hell, since he would have wished to have loved his God *even in hell*.

CHAPTER V.

RETURNS TO SAVOY. IS SENT TO PADUA.

WHILST the Baron was pursuing his studies, he was also advancing with rapid strides in the path of Christian virtue. The recently-obtained grace stimulated him to a still more ardent love of God, and the love of God rendered sweet and pleasant to him his meditations on the Divine commands, in which, when he applied himself, his heart became immersed in heavenly sweetness. He was thus growing in grace, when he received orders from his father to visit the chief cities of France, and then return to Savoy. His departure was sincerely regretted by his Parisian acquaintance; this was particularly shown by four French gentlemen, who, in sheer courtesy, accompanied him as far as Lyons, nor did they separate from him without tears, so completely had he conciliated their esteem and respect. Father Stephen Binet, who was his companion in the schools, declared that to him Francis appeared as an angel in human form, and he noticed that the licentious shunned his presence, whereas the virtuous sought his company.

His journey was not long, for, as there were then four rival parties forming in France, the roads were not very secure for travellers; though, as war had not actually burst forth, he arrived at Sales without encountering any dangers, in the year 1584.

Francis was then in the eighteenth year of his age, was handsome in person, forward in learning, engag-

ing in conversation, and affable in his manner and deportment. His parents were highly gratified when they found that, loud as fame had been in his praise, fame in this instance had not exaggerated. Politeness required that he should pay visits to his friends and relatives, who all admired the sterling qualities of his mind, and his angelic soul formed to succeed in the most lofty of enterprizes. The Countess of Sales flattered herself that now nothing would again separate her from so dear a son, and that she would be left to enjoy the fruit of the excellent education bestowed upon him, but his father had decided on sending him to Padua, resolving to afford him, no matter at what expense, every advantage and means of sustaining the vast possessions and the high name which he was to inherit. He failed not to give him the best advice suited to his position, conversing freely and familiarly with him, but without lessening the authority which a father should ever maintain in his intercourse with his children; though this authority should not impose such a constraint as to induce children to yield rather from fear than love. Conceiving Francis to be destined to the world and the court, he taught him the maxims which would enable him to acquit himself of his duties with credit. He spoke to him of the flattery and deception which usually prevail in courtly circles; and warned him of the want of sincerity which he would meet with, and of the intrigues to which men will stoop, when self-interest or ambition are in question. In glowing terms he depicted the dangerous falls to which, as a young nobleman, he would be exposed, unless reason ruled his conduct,

and, that unless he stood upon his guard, some unexpected accident might cast him down; he reminded him, that though respect was certainly due to the great ones of the world, condescension becomes a vice, when anything contrary to virtue is required. But, above all, he strove to impress this maxim deeply in his mind, "that whoever attains to a high post by iniquitous means, besides having to bear the continual reproaches of his own heart, is in danger of losing himself with dishonour. A Christian ought to make it an *impossibility* to betray the interests of God for the sake of any created object." Having thus given him the best advice, and as much of it as time admitted, he sent him to Padua, that he might apply himself to the study of civil and canon law in that famous university, which then yielded to none in Italy.

It was not without extreme regret that the Countess, his mother, consented to this journey, but she considered it her inviolable law to obey her husband, who endeavoured to make her approve the reasons which induced him to deprive himself for a few years longer of the society of a son so precious to them both.

Francis set out with the same tutor and guardian who had accompanied him to Paris. The pious youth was aware of the high renown of the university of Padua, and therefore willingly quitted his own country to go and pursue his studies there. Jurisprudence was then taught by Guido Pancirolo, a man of consummate ability, whilst Father Anthony Possevin, of the Society of Jesus, one of the most experienced of spiritual masters, likewise resided there.

Francis chose the former for his teacher and the latter for his director; under the direction of these two, it is scarcely surprising that he should have become so great a man as he did in process of time. The Baron was delighted to have met with two such masters, nor can we describe his eagerness to profit by the teaching of men whose renown had even reached him in Paris. He animated himself to study and to piety by the well-known self-interrogatory of the great Arsenius, "For what didst thou come hither?" adding, that as the days of man's life are but short and flee away like a shadow, we are bound to employ them well, if at the moment of death we would avoid an accumulation of useless regret, sufficient to drive us to despair. Father Possevin seems to have known by supernatural instinct, the eminent sanctity to which our Lord called this young nobleman; moreover, we may piously conjecture that he foresaw that he was destined to be one of the most celebrated prelates of the Church; hence, learned as the father was, and illustrious as he was rendered by his treaties with the governments of Sweden, Poland, and Muscovy, (when he was employed as envoy by the Roman See,) he thought it no degradation to devote himself to the careful spiritual direction of Francis. He one day told the father, that although he relished the study of the laws, he felt a much stronger inclination to the study of theology, to which he daily devoted some hours, not only to scholastic, but even to mystical theology. Possevin highly commended this plan, and judging from the fine dispositions which he perceived in him,

concluded that he would in time become a great man.

Discoursing once on the state of life which he should enter upon when he had finished his studies, the father exhorted him to turn his mind to heavenly things, seeing that Divine Providence was reserving for him the charge of the bishopric of Geneva, and assuring him that his soul was not intended for the debates of parliaments and senates; that there was something far more glorious in announcing the word of God, than in composing the petitions for a senate. Believing him destined to carry the faith to rebellious subjects of the Church, to decide disputes between sectaries, and to be the prop of religion in his own country, he endeavoured to qualify him for so important a ministry, for which, learning without virtue, (as he reminded him,) or virtue without learning would not suffice. Where a person has only to attend to his own salvation, one may be satisfied with ordinary virtue; but God requires more in those who have to attend to the sanctification of others, for, according to the oracle of the Holy Ghost, since the lips of a priest are the guardians of learning, he ought to be well instructed, that he may be able to give an account of the faith which he professes. Possevin knew from experience that the ignorance of the clergy had contributed more towards the progress of heresy, than the inclination of the people for freedom of opinion; and he concluded that as heresy owed more to presumption than to learning, so it grew strong on the ignorance which then prevailed over the greater part of

Europe, and that it might be arrested by sound religious learning.

These discourses with his excellent director induced the holy young man to devote all his time to works of piety and to study. His studies were neither directed to interest, curiosity, or ambition, but to pure charity and the glory of God alone; and these motives rendered study so easy to him, that his masters were utterly astonished at the rapidity of his progress.

About this time he met with the little book called the "Spiritual Combat;" he read it as a letter sent to him by Almighty God, and for seventeen years always carried it about with him, praising it on all occasions. The Sum of St. Thomas was ever open in his closet, for he had no mind to be of the number of those theologians who know nothing of St. Thomas, unless when there is an opportunity of impugning his sentences; he simply admitted his truths, because ancient, though not as if they were eternal; and he used to say that one ought to have recourse to this book in order to be able to understand all others. He took great pleasure in studying the works of St. Bonaventure, from whom, I think, he must have copied that affective style which seems almost natural to him. He read Holy Scripture with great respect, and studied St. Austin, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Bernard, but above all, he admired the sweet style of St. Cyprian, whom he endeavoured to copy, composing little treatises similar to those written by that great saint. Unfortunately, the ravages of time, or his

own humility, has robbed us of these his early effusions.

It is astonishing how Father Possevin, notwithstanding his numerous and important occupations, contrived not only to give him the advice he did, but even to spend two hours with him daily, expounding St. Thomas and reading Bellarmine's Controversies, then recently printed. Thus did he form him to eloquence, of which he afterwards became so distinguished a master. Possevin's diligence was well seconded by the assiduous attention of Francis, who thus became the great man he did, for it is scarcely to be supposed that such great talent, joined to such indefatigable study, should not prove successful. It must not be believed that Francis converted heretics by the mere power of his gentleness; strong argument acquired by study, contributed much towards these conversions; for the heart is seldom gained till the mind is vanquished, and it is learning which must triumph over error.

But Possevin's object was not merely to make him a learned man. Perceiving in this young man a pure, humble, and docile heart, which allowed itself to be guided by grace, he spared no pains in its cultivation, that it might be capable of the most heroic and sublime virtues, and he gave him preservatives against all that might corrupt its purity. He taught him to behold God in every creature, to raise himself to God by means of those very things which seem likely to divert us from Him; and to acknowledge that in the various accidents of human life, nothing happens to us but by the orders of Providence. He next applied him to prayer, to

meditation and contemplation, instructing him in this art, so difficult yet so necessary for conducting souls to God; an art so neglected that we often see men assuming to be masters of it before they have even been scholars; who would teach before they have learned, and who, difficult as is the task of governing souls and regulating the passions of men, undertake it without being qualified for it, insomuch that St. Bernard might now with good reason deplore this disorder, as in his own day he wept over it in his eighteenth sermon on the Canticles.

Francis drew up the most exact rules for his own guidance; they deserve recording here, for they may be of great use to all young students who aim at high perfection. They disclose to us the signal virtue which he had even then acquired, though still in the bloom of life, living in the world at a distance from home, so that fear and respect for his parents had no share in them.

Amidst the unbridled license which but too often prevails in large universities, he so regulated his life that a novice-master would scarcely (even in an austere order) have exacted as much from his disciples.

Let it not be supposed that these rules are the composition of any of the Saint's partisans. Charles Augustus copied them from the original, written by Francis whilst he was at Padua, and we copy them faithfully translated therefrom.

THE RULE OF LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF SALES.

“I will always prefer the exercise of *preparation* to all other things, making it at least once a day, namely, in the morning. I will especially make use of it in all extraordinary occasions which may befall me, which I will take for the subject of my exercise. And as this preparation is, as it were, the forerunner which precedes all action, I will strive by means of it to dispose myself for the well-performance of each action.

“The first part of this exercise must be *invocation*; acknowledging myself exposed to an infinity of dangers, I will invoke the Divine assistance, saying, ‘O Lord, unless Thou guardest my heart, in vain do they watch who keep it;’ moreover, knowing that conversation has made me fail on former occasions, I will chide myself. ‘O, my soul,’ will I boldly say, ‘from early age I have suffered frequent persecutions. O God, be my protector, my place of refuge! save me from the snares of my enemies. Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst render me pure.’ In fine, I will beseech Him to make me worthy to spend this day without sin, to which, that which is written in the one hundred and forty-third psalm will much contribute: ‘Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies, because I have recourse to Thee; teach me to do Thy will, because Thou art my God. Thy good Spirit will conduct me in the right path; and for the glory of Thy holy name Thou wilt vivify me in Thy equity.’

“*Imagination* is the second part, and this is nothing else but a foresight of all that may happen during

the day. I will think seriously of all the events I may encounter, the companies I may be in, the places I may be invited to; and thus conjecturing the risks I may run, I will, by our Lord's grace, be cautious in all the dangerous occasions in which I may find myself.

“*Disposition* is the third part. After judiciously conjecturing the various labyrinths which may easily draw me aside from the right path, and expose me to the risk of losing myself, I will diligently consider and seek out the means of shunning false steps; I will arrange whatever I may have to do, the method and order to be pursued in matters of business, or in speaking to my companions, the decorum to be observed, and all that I have either to embrace or to avoid.

“*Resolution* is the fourth part. Consequent upon the preceding acts, shall follow a firm resolution of never more offending God, especially this day, animating myself by these words of the royal prophet: ‘Well, my soul, wilt thou not obey thy God and place Thy salvation in Him?’ Oh! how base it is to let oneself be drawn to evil, contrary to the love and wish of our Creator! and this for the fear, love, desire, or hatred of any creature, no matter of whatever rank or condition. Certainly this Lord of infinite majesty, worthy of infinite love, honour, and service, could not be so contemned excepting from our want of courage. Who could ever contravene His just laws to escape some misfortune to the body? some injury to property or honour? What can creatures do to us? Let us then console ourselves, and say with the Psalmist, ‘Let the impious do their

worst, God is powerful enough to subdue them; let the world despise me as it will, He who sitteth above the cherubim is my protector.

“The fifth part is *Recommendation*, whereby I shall remit myself entirely, and all that belongs to me, into the hands of Infinite Goodness, entreating Him ever to watch over me. I will unreservedly, and without exception, resign the entire care of myself to Him, saying to Him with my whole heart, ‘One favour have I asked of Thee, O my Lord and my Jesus! and again do I ask it of Thee, namely, that I may adhere to Thy will all the days of my life: to Thee do I recommend my soul, my mind, my heart, my memory, my will, my intellect; give me grace always to serve, love, please, and honour Thee.’”

SEVEN ARTICLES FOR THE WELL PERFORMANCE OF DAILY
ACTIONS, PRESCRIBED TO HIMSELF BY FRANCIS.

1. In the morning, as soon as I awake, I will return thanks to God in the words of the Psalmist: “I will think of Thee in the morning, for Thou art my helper.” Then I will reflect on some mystery, for instance, the devotion of the shepherds, who went to adore Him at His birth, or on His appearing to His blessed Mother at His Resurrection, or on the diligence of the Marys, whose piety led them to the sepulchre before the sun had risen. I will consider that Jesus is the true light of sinners, dissipating the darkness of infidelity and guilt. I will therefore say with holy David: “I will appear before Thee in the morning; Thou art a God that hateth iniquity;” therefore will I shun it with all my power.

2. I will never fail daily to hear mass; and that I may assist at this ineffable mystery as I ought, I will summon all the powers of my soul to do their duty, and to come and behold the prodigy which God has wrought on earth, saying to myself: "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and see the Word made Flesh, and which the Lord hath shown us, and which, for our consolation, is renewed in our churches, by the words which God puts in the mouth of the priests at the time of consecration."

3. As the body needs occasional repose, to recruit it when exhausted by labour, so, too, does the soul need rest from time to time, when it should sweetly slumber in the bosom of its divine Spouse. I will therefore choose certain determinate times for this sacred repose on the breast of my Saviour, in imitation of the beloved disciple; and as in natural sleep all the corporal powers are at rest, so in the *other* will I retire within myself, attending to no other concerns than those of the divine will and of obedience; repeating with the royal prophet, "Surgite, postquam sederitis, qui manducatis panem doloris: you who eat the bread of sorrow, by the consideration of your own and others' sins, do not arise or enter upon the toils and occupations of this world, until you have taken rest in the consideration of eternal truths."

4. If I should be unable to find any other time for this spiritual repose (as may often happen) I will steal a little from the hours usually appropriated to natural sleep, either by lying awake in my bed, if I cannot do otherwise, or by rising after my first sleep, or by rising earlier in the morning, bearing in

mind these words of our Saviour, "Watch and pray, that ye may not enter into temptation."

5. Should our Lord do me the favour of awakening me in the night, I will immediately rouse my heart with these words: "In the middle of the night a cry was raised, behold the bridegroom cometh;" and I will go forth to meet Him. Then, reflecting on the exterior darkness, I will consider that of my soul, and of the souls of sinners, forming the following prayer upon the Canticle of Zacharias: "Ah, Lord! since Thou deignest to visit us, by the bowels of Thy mercy enlighten those who walk in darkness, and who rest in the shadow of death; direct their steps in the way of peace;" or I will use the words of David: "In the night-time raise your hands to heaven and bless the Lord." I will say, "I remembered Thy name in the night, O Lord, and have kept Thy ways; I will water my couch with my tears, &c.: exercise contrition even in your beds."

6. Turning from time to time to my God and Saviour, I will say, "No, Thou dost not sleep, who keepeth Israel! The deepest darkness of night offers no obstacle to Thy divine rays: Thou, who in the middle of the night wast pleased to be born of Thy most pure Mother, canst likewise give birth to Thy favours in our souls. Ah, most merciful Redeemer! so enlighten my poor heart with the rays of Thy grace, that it may never more sleep in the night of sin; never permit my enemies to say, We have vanquished him." Finally, having considered the darkness of my soul, I will say, "O vigilant Guardian! must there be still more of the night of our imperfections!" and I will listen to the answer,

“The morn of good inspirations is come; why lovest thou darkness rather than light?” &c.

7. As nocturnal fears may sometimes interfere with my devotions, I will remember my good angel, who watches at my right hand, and will reflect on the verse of the psalm, “*Scuto circumdabit te veritas ejus, non timebis a timore nocturno*: The shield of confidence in God will protect me, therefore I have nothing to fear: the Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” which is as good as to say, neither the sun nor its rays are my chief light, nor can they give me safety; God alone can do this, and He is as propitious to me by night as by day.

We may remark here that the saint had a dread of ghosts, as he afterwards owns he had; to overcome this fear, he would not be accompanied by another person, for that would only have increased his timidity; but in solitary and obscure places he dwelt on the reflection of the Divine Presence, animating himself by such reasons as these: “What has he to fear who has God with him?” &c. By degrees he completely subdued this sense of fear, the excess of which sometimes makes men ridiculous.

OF SPIRITUAL REPOSE.

1. After having chosen a fitting season for this sacred repose, I will recall to mind all the good emotions, desires, inspirations, affections, and resolutions which God has given me at other times, and which He has allowed me to enjoy, in the consideration of His sacred mysteries, of the beauty of virtue, of the

nobility of Him whom I serve, and of His infinite benefits. I will not forget the favour He did me of weakening my senses and limbs by illness, for this was very useful to me; I will hence draw fresh motives for confirming myself in my resolution of not offending God.

2. I will fix my mind on the consideration of the vanity, of the grandeur, honours, and conveniences of the world; I will reflect on their transitory and uncertain nature, on their inability to satisfy and fill the heart, in consequence of which the heart will despise and abhor them, saying, "Accursed be such devilish instruments! common alike to the impious and the fool; far be ye from me; go elsewhere in search of those who desire you and will receive you!"

3. I will sweetly rest in the consideration of the deformity, abasement, and deplorable misery to be found in vice, and in souls addicted to it; then, without agitation and uneasiness, I will say to myself, "Sin is utterly unworthy of a right-minded person; it merely gratifies the imagination; it throws a thousand scruples, anxieties, uneasinesses, and bitternesses into the heart; but even if it did not do this, to know that it displeases God is quite enough to make us detest it."

4. I will dwell on the consideration of the excellence of virtue, which, beautiful, noble, generous, powerful, and attractive as it is, renders man exteriorly and interiorly beautiful and dear to God; it is peculiarly appropriate to man, to whom it ever brings consolation and delight; it sanctifies him and

transforms him into an angel, and gives him a paradise here on earth.

5. I will admire the beauty of mind or reason which God has given to man, to serve as a light whereby he may discern good from evil, loving and embracing the former and abominating the latter; and assuredly we should do this if we followed the light given us by God in order that we may see where we ought to place our feet. If we allowed ourselves to be guided by His maxims we should seldom stumble or fall into sin.

6. I will attentively ponder the rigours of the Divine justice, which undoubtedly will not spare those who abuse the gifts of nature and of grace; they ought greatly to fear the Divine judgments, death, purgatory, and hell, spurring up my sloth by such sentences as these: "Behold, I may die any day, what will it avail me then to have been an elder son! or to have enjoyed an abundance of worldly wealth and advantages! better is it that I should despise all things and live in filial fear under the observance of the Divine precepts, that I should study to advance in piety, and to secure for myself the blessings of the next life."

7. I will contemplate the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of my God, attributes which shine forth wonderfully in the life, passion, and death of our Saviour, and in the eminent sanctity of our Blessed Lady the Virgin Mary, and in the perfection of God's faithful servants whom we ought to imitate. Then, passing in mind to paradise, I will admire the glory and the perpetual felicity of the blessed spirits, and how the most Holy Trinity dis-

plays the grandeur of His attributes in the rewards which He bestows upon the happy inmates of the heavenly Jerusalem.

8. I will fall asleep in the love of the one only goodness of God; I will relish it if possible in itself, and not in its effects. I will drink of that living water, not out of the vases of creatures, but at the fount itself. I will taste how good this adorable Majesty is in itself, of itself, and for itself; being goodness itself; all goodness, eternal, indefectible and incomprehensible. 'O Lord,' I will say, 'Thou alone art good by nature and by essence, Thou alone art necessarily good; creatures are only good inasmuch as they participate of Thy goodness.'"

RULES FOR INTIMACY.

1. I must observe, in the first place, the difference between *intimacy* and *meeting*; the latter is casual and accidental, whereas the former is of choice and sought for. In meeting, the intercourse is, generally speaking, neither long nor familiar, therefore, no great friendship is produced; but *conversation* is the result of visits, leads to confidence, and mutual friendship springs therefrom.

2. In *casual meetings* I will not show aversion for any one, because that is a sign of a proud, arrogant, severe, satirical, or censorious man. I will guard against too great familiarity even with my most intimate acquaintance, because that might be attributed to levity. I will never allow myself the liberty of an ill-regulated word or action, that I may not appear insolent and extravagant. I will care-

fully shun offensive, caustic, and contemptuous expressions, it being most unreasonable that I should think of despising or deriding any one whomsoever, without incurring the hatred of those who would be unwilling to submit to insult. I will honour each one in particular; I will observe modesty; I will speak little and well, that so the company may be edified rather than annoyed by me. If the interview be but short, and that some one has begun to speak, it will be better that I should merely salute the company, and then assume a demeanour free alike from austerity and dejection, keeping myself reserved and moderately cheerful.

3. As for *intimacy*, it shall be with few, and with persons whom I respect, for it is difficult in large companies not to learn vice from the vicious, or not to be honoured by those who deserve no honour. I will particularly observe this precept, Be the friend of all, but familiar with few. But even here I must use judgment and discretion, because there is no general rule without its exceptions, save and except this one, 'Nothing against God.' In conversation, therefore, I will be easy without austerity, modest without insolence, gentle without affectation, docile without contradicting, unless reason requires it, cordial without dissimulation; and as men like to *know* those with whom they hold intercourse, we must be more or less reserved, according to circumstances.

4. As we are often obliged to converse with people of different character, I must remember never to speak but upon suitable topics, with some of good things, with others of such as are indifferent, but

with none of such as are bad. With superiors in age, profession, or authority, I will speak on what they may require; with my equals on good things, with my inferiors on such as are indifferent. As for improper subjects, they are always to be kept out of sight. Those of high rank admire nothing but what is exquisite and scarce, whereas, to our equals, this would seem affectation, and to our inferiors, too serious. Some gloomy minds rejoice in hearing of the vices of others, which ought to be carefully concealed from such as these; for they would philosophize for ten years upon the slightest imperfection. And after all, where is the use of publishing faults; they do but too easily betray themselves: it is well to confess them, but not to manifest them. However, discretion is necessary in all this; we must accommodate ourselves to our company, when it can be done without prejudice to virtue.

5. If I have to converse with libertine, insolent, or gloomy people, I will act thus; with the libertine, I will openly declare myself, provided that they fear God; with the insolent I will stand completely on the aloof; with the gloomy, I will stand, as it were, at the window, that is to say, I will but partially disclose myself; and as these are often curious to penetrate their neighbours' hearts, I will be on the reserve with them.

6. In conversing with grandees, I will act as I do with regard to the fire, that is, approach it sometimes, but not too closely, diffidently, yet easily. Grandees wish for love and esteem; modest diffidence creates respect, whilst ease creates love; respect,

however, must always be paramount. With my equals I will be alike free and respectful, with my inferiors more free than respectful; with superiors more respectful than free."

Regulating his life thus holily, the pious youth studied to please both God and man, and this at an age so liable to false steps. He showed these rules written in a little prayer-book which he always carried about with him, to Possevin and Deage, who both admired the exactitude with which he observed them, and the solidity of his judgment, which could prescribe such solid practices. Some of his companions having perused them, requested to have copies. To some readers they will perhaps appear more devout than complete; however, as they were the productions of his youth, composed, not for the public, but for his own private use, they contain, at all events, many useful practices, and foretell what would be the later works of a Saint, if such were the first sketches of his devotion.

CHAPTER VI.

ASSAULTS ON HIS INNOCENCE BY HIS FELLOW STUDENTS.

ALTHOUGH the Baron applied himself assiduously to theology, he did not neglect the chief object for which his father sent him to Padua, namely, the study of laws, to which he devoted four hours every day. As the light of this science merely disclosed to him the beauty of earthly things, of which grace

had already inspired him with disgust, he much preferred the study of theology, which raised him to the knowledge of the things of God, and to the love of Him. He became admirably well versed in law, for Pancirolo admiring his powerful intellect, his exemplary conduct, and his incessant application, gave him private lessons in addition to the public. The preference shown him by the master, though solely due to the virtue of the scholar, excited, as is too often the case, the jealous envy of others, who found in his good conduct the reproof of their own irregularities.

From his first arrival at Padua he perceived the risks to which he would be exposed, unless he shunned the society of the licentious youths studying there. Hence he decided on leading a more retired life than he had done at Paris, and distributed his time in such a manner that none was left for idleness, still less for vice.

Some of the students imagined the retiring habits of the Baron to proceed from another cause than the real one; they ascribed them to cowardice and lukewarmness, and resolving to prove this, they waylaid him one dark evening as he was returning from his solitary ramble, hoping to destroy his reputation by making him flee away; and considering the inequality of the combat, for he was alone, prudence would have suggested flight, but he was too well skilled in the art of fencing to feel dismayed; he promptly drew his sword, and handled it in a manner that his assailants had not calculated upon; they were seized with the very fear they expected to find in Francis; so alleging that they had been mistaken, and had

attacked him in place of another, whom they pretended to have been waiting for, they offered many apologies, and withdrew, admiring both his skill and valour.

Still more dangerous were the snares laid by these unprincipled young men to destroy his purity: they could not endure to believe that so handsome a youth, just in the fresh bloom of life, could be as chaste as he appeared; they, therefore, exposed his virtue to a fearful trial. The arrival of a notorious profligate female from Naples seconded their project. She was endowed with all those fascinations that are calculated to dazzle the eyes and hearts of men, and to wrest grace and innocence from the soul, even of the most pious and well disposed. At the instigation of the master of iniquity, the students applied to her, dilating on the beauty and admirable qualities of the young Baron of Sales, urging the wretched woman to vow his perdition; plans were laid, and they undertook to introduce him to her at the first opportunity. If Francis had had the slightest suspicion of the nefarious plot, nothing on earth would have induced him to enter her house; they told him that a famous jurisconsult, in comparison with whom Pancirolo was no better than a scholar, had lately arrived at Padua: nothing more was necessary to make the Baron anxious to become acquainted with him; whereupon, some of the students offering to conduct him to the learned Doctor's lodgings; Francis gladly acceded, and was thus unconsciously conducted to the wicked woman's house. She, feigning to be the lawyer's daughter, received him civilly, and

with so much modesty of demeanour, that he had not the least idea of deceit. On entering she told them that her father would be engaged for a short time on business of importance, and had commissioned her to entertain them until he should be at liberty. No sooner had they entered into conversation on indifferent topics, than one by one his companions framed some pretext for going away, till at last he found himself, like another Joseph, in the hands of a guilty woman, of whom hitherto Francis had not entertained a shadow of suspicion; her manner, her looks, and her words, now too truly betrayed her purpose; an ordeal few could have passed through unscathed, but he, to show his utter contempt of her and her proposals, spat in her face, thus sharing the glory of chastity with St. Thomas, in whose learning, too, he so largely participated.

No anger can equal that of an infuriated woman; and experience teaches that the most lascivious are the most furious. This woman, seeing herself thus despicably treated, not only loaded him with abuse, but actually raised a cry of *thieves!* The neighbours rushed in, and were preparing to convey the young Baron to prison, when the students, who had posted themselves where they might watch the issue, came forward and released him, affecting ignorance of what had occurred. Francis thanked them for this timely intervention, but, at the same time gave them to understand, that he saw through the unprincipled game they had been playing, though not, it is true, till late. He remonstrated with them, as he had already done with their female accomplice, on the

malice of their fault; and from thenceforward would hold no further communication with any of them.

The saintly young man attributed his victory to the patronage of our Blessed Lady: the circumstance became publicly known, and rendered him famous all over Padua; insomuch that he was called the perfect man.

He now resolved to be more than ever on his guard; but God, who sometimes tries the fidelity of His servants, to make it better known, permits occasions to present themselves to those who shun them, as was again the case with Francis. At the time of which we write, a certain Italian princess was residing at Padua. The writers of the Saint's life are silent with regard to her name, but all agree in saying she spared no expense for the attainment of her guilty object. She happened to see the Baron in some church, and was so struck with his beauty, as to permit illicit passion to enslave her heart. As he left the church, she commissioned one of her attendants to follow him, and ascertain who he was. She learned more than she wished, namely, that he was by far too virtuous a young nobleman ever to be won over to her purpose. But, as the difficulty of gratifying passions does not always appease them, on the contrary, it often inflames them; so in this instance, the Princess flattered herself that her wealth would prove the golden key which would effect an entrance into the young Baron's heart. He lived retired, it is true, yet held occasional intercourse with a few of the students, who seemed most inclined to piety and study. He walked out with them, and shared their innocent recreations;

which, without prejudicing virtue, relieve the mind, and give it fresh vigour, for there was nothing austere or contrary to social civility in the piety of our saint; he was affable and cheerful in conversation; his gentle amiability rendered him dear to his associates. Amongst his friends one was specially beloved by him; they seemed to be congenial minds; and Francis believed him to be solidly virtuous. It must be owned that virtue must be deeply rooted in a heart, to enable it to resist the machinations and artifices of a person who spares nothing that can tend to ensure the success of a project. This young man allowed himself to be gained by the Princess; her presents purchased, and her promises corrupted his heart; he conspired against the innocence of his friend, and undertook to use his best endeavours to render him favourable to her passion. He was much perplexed as to the mode of making his proposal to the Baron; however, judging his heart by his own, he fancied that he would be unable to resist the advantageous offers, which he was commissioned to make in the name of the Princess. Taking courage, he spoke of the affection which she bore him, and then made him the offer of her wealth and her person, assuring him that the intrigue should be carried on so secretly, that his reputation would be in no degree compromised; he concluded by remarking, that it would scarcely be safe to reject such a proposal, because, a powerful lady, whose love is slighted, is capable of undertaking anything against the subject of her disappointed passion, therefore, he had better accept a favour which many would gladly purchase at all costs.

The Baron was utterly astounded at this unexpected address, which, at first, he had not presence of mind enough to stop, till, reflecting that temptation enters by the ears as well as by the eyes, and that it is dangerous to listen to that which cannot be proposed without sin, he exclaimed: "Withdraw, you worker and minister of iniquity! what have I ever done to you—and what has God ever done to you, that you should thus league with His enemies, and contribute to the destruction of a soul which He has redeemed at the price of all His blood? He has done as much for you; and this it is which ought to have preserved your mind from the sentiments you would inspire into mine. You, who boast of being my friend, propose a thing for which you ought to correct me, if I were guilty of it! Let the lady keep her riches: even if I were to be reduced to the last degree of misery, never (with the help of God's grace) would I prefer earthly things to my everlasting salvation. Say what you please to the princess; but as for me, I declare I will have nothing to do with her friendship; as in like manner, from this moment, I hold no further intercourse with you: you shall have no opportunity of again making proposals, so prejudicial to your soul and mine: implore pardon of God for your sin: and now go, and sin no more!" These words were something more than mere sound; they so terrified his companion, that he dared not venture upon an answer: he withdrew in confusion, no less on the account of the reprehension, than for the failure of his plan: he afterwards owned, that if he could but have inveigled the young Baron into the apartments of the

princess, his fortune would have been made; such being the language of those, who, regardless of God, seek temporal advantages at the cost of their souls.

Francis returned a thousand thanks to God for assisting him on this dangerous occasion; reproaching himself for his ingratitude for past favours, as the probable cause of this assault. That he might be the better able to resist future temptations, he redoubled his prayers, fasts, vigils, and other austerities. Other falls, which were but too frequent, made him tremble for himself, considering the dangers which surrounded him; the enemies without, and still more, that which was within, filled him with holy fear and apprehension; concluding that God alone was his strength, he resolved to place all his confidence in Him, convinced at the same time, that it would be in vain to expect His aid, unless He corresponded with divine grace, and unless He preferred Him to all other things.

Truly do all things contribute to the advantage of those who seek God with sincerity of heart; temptations, which overthrow some, serve to confirm others in the love of God, nay, the very enemies who conspire to our destruction contribute to the salvation of those who love and serve the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS ILLNESS AND RECOVERY. PROMOTED TO THE
DOCTORATE. GOES TO ROME.

HOWEVER sedulously the youthful nobleman strove to conceal his penances from the eyes of man, in order that he might not lose the rewards promised by God, he was, nevertheless, detected by some wags, as he was stripped in an oratory for the purpose of taking a discipline. He and the Lord of Valence agreed to meet in the oratory belonging to the Minor Friars of the convent of St. Antony; having closed the doors and windows, and extinguished the lights, they had scarcely begun disciplining themselves, than four Venetian gentlemen, who had concealed themselves in corners, suddenly displayed lights, previously shaded in dark lanthorns, and came forward to see who were the penitents; and recognizing Francis, made him the subject of their derision; this, however, did not cool his fervour; he multiplied his austerities and penances; which, joined to his excessive application and other works of piety, inflamed his blood to such a degree, that he was first reduced to a skeleton, and then fell dangerously ill; a violent fever brought him to death's door, and, dysentery coming on, made his case quite desperate; remedies seemed powerless. Deage, terrified at the danger, spared no means of saving him; the loss of such a friend whose future patronage he could safely

depend upon, was severely trying; but still more deeply did he deplore the loss to the worthy house of Sales, to whom he was already much indebted: resigning himself, however, to the divine will, he found consolation in witnessing the heroic patience of the young Baron, and the spirit of penance which made him look on his sufferings as light, in comparison with what his sins deserved. When apprized of the hopelessness of the case, he said to the sick man: "Son, if Almighty God intends to call you to a better life, you are resigned to His will, are you not?" Grief here choked his utterance; but he had said enough, Francis understood his meaning, and replied, "I am prepared for whatever God may do with me, either to live or die: my sole happiness consists in living and dying with Him." He then recited various scriptural passages, expressive of conformity to the divine will, and of confidence in God: "The Lord is my light, whom shall I fear? If whole armies should stand against me, in Him will I place all my hope. How short are the days of men! how frail is life! but how beautiful are the tabernacles of the Lord of hosts! In the hope of beholding them, I await my hour. Blessed is the man who rests all his hopes in the Lord, and who hath no eyes to gaze upon, and no heart to love the vanities and fallacies of men." These and other similar expressions drew sighs and tears from his surrounding friends, he alone being calm. Anxious to fulfil his last wishes, Deage asked how his body should be disposed of in what church, and with what solemnities he would have his funeral obsequies celebrated? "My dear

master," replied Francis, "I leave all this to your charity, hoping that after death, you will continue that assistance necessary, which you have so long afforded me in life; there is one thing, however, which I much wish, and in which I beseech you to gratify me, namely, that you consign my body to the surgeons for anatomical purposes; for thus, I, who in my lifetime have been useless to the public, shall benefit it after death; or at least, it will prevent the strife which so often occurs between the relatives of the deceased, and the emissaries of the dissecting-room, quarrels of which I myself have but too often been an eye-witness." It may be questioned whether love for God and our neighbour could be carried farther. Deage and the others, who heard this last will and testament, were ravished with admiration. Having thus declared his charitable desire, the only one expressed by the young Baron, he humbly asked for the last sacraments of the Church, and received them with such transports of devotion, that it was astonishing that he did not expire in the very act. Father Possevin heard his confession, and assisted at the administration of the other rites, as did likewise his two medical attendants, one of whom was a Savoyard, and the other a Venetian. Francis was so universally esteemed, that the most distinguished personages of the city wished to visit him, each one deploring the death of so accomplished and virtuous a young nobleman, who was dying at a distance from his family, in a strange land, in the full bloom of youth, and at the very moment when he was about to reap the fruit of his application. He alone

seemed insensible to all this, attending solely to the grand affair of salvation; he was tranquilly fading away, confiding in the goodness of God, which he had already so often experienced, and endeavouring to profit by the salutary suggestions of Father Possevin, who watched by him indefatigably. He consoled his friends, and spoke of his death as a thing to be wished, rather than dreaded. He thought only of heaven, and his trustful hope of a blissful eternity made the moments seem long to him. He was already so exhausted as merely to be able to ejaculate, as he often did, the words, "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." When, all at once, whilst his attendants were making arrangements for his sepulture, he fell into a gentle slumber, during which his fever left him, and he awoke free from all dangerous symptoms, to the utter astonishment of every one. Not to lose an apostle, Providence so disposed that his illness should not be unto death, but to the glory of God, to whom he, from henceforth, resolved to consecrate his future life by receiving Holy Orders.

Judging that Almighty God had left him in the world only that he might forsake it, and had prolonged his life only that he might spend it in His service, he resolved to testify his gratitude to Him, by living for Him alone; nor was anything able to withdraw him from this purpose, as the sequel of our history will show.

His doctors looked upon his recovery as miraculous; and they were confirmed in this opinion by the rapidity with which his strength returned;

for, after a brief convalescence, he returned to his exercises of piety, and to his studies, with renewed fervour.

Soon after his recovery he received the degree of doctor; according to his father's orders he presented himself for examination, in the course of which he displayed such learning as to excite the admiration of the whole audience. Pancirolo, who had been his master, was his Promotor, and when delivering the usual oration, failed not to extol the fine example of virtue which he had shown to the university, proposing him as a model to all those who aspired to the same honours, and concluded by predicting that he would one day be the glory of his family, of his country, and of the Church. The whole University exulted in seeing the laurel thus bestowed, declaring that he received his degree less as a scholar than as a master. In testifying his gratitude he expressed himself in terms which equally honoured the excellence of his mind, and the goodness of his heart. His address drew forth a fresh burst of applause, and he was accompanied by the acclamations of the people from the hall to his lodging; he received his degree at the age of twenty-four, on the fifth of September, 1591. His recent illness had increased his personal beauty, and improved his constitution; therefore, to escape the dangers which beset him in a licentious city, he wished to return home. Precisely at this time, however, he received letters of recall from his father, but leaving him at liberty to visit some of the more celebrated cities of Italy, as he had expressed the

desire. Bidding his friends farewell, he quitted Padua on the second of October, to the universal regret of the people, who publicly declared, that in losing him, the city lost a beautiful example of sanctity, and the university its brightest gem. Father Possevin exhorted him to apply to theology, forewarning him that God destined him to the pastoral charge of the church of Geneva.

From Padua he repaired to Ferrara, and from thence to Rome, where he purposed remaining for some time, having letters of introduction to several of his father's friends there. He examined the wonders of that famous city, the monuments of Rome's ancient magnificence, the noble remnants of the times and fury of barbarism, monuments which were designed to immortalize the city. Francis gazed on all these with such reflections as piety would suggest; amidst those splendid ruins he pondered the ebb and flow of mundane affairs, the successes and reverses of men, the rise, progress, and fall of empires, the vicissitudes and revolutions of sublunary things; whereas, on the contrary, he saw God ever immoveable, always the same, always free and independent. He reflected how religion had established herself on the ruins of that very empire, which had devised all means to arrest her progress, and to expel her from the face of the earth. Rome, once the mistress of error, afterwards became the seat of truth. He gave less of his time to this curiosity, innocent in itself, than to piety, nor would he have cared to examine those objects which strangers so much admire, if his father had not desired him to give him minute details of all that was worthy of attention. He

spent most of his days in visiting holy places, the churches and the catacombs; the latter are cemeteries or subterranean places, where in times of persecution the early Christians were accustomed to celebrate the holy mysteries and to bury their martyrs. At the sight of these venerable places, consecrated by the piety of our forefathers, and watered with the blood of so many illustrious witnesses of the faith, which we happily can practise in peace, he would exclaim, "Oh! what a precious merchandise is martyrdom. Only Thy dearest ones can purchase it, my God. It is only Thy favourites who are permitted to die for Thy love! Enable me, O Lord, to be a martyr, at least in will, if I cannot be so in effect. The sword that makes martyrs may perhaps be wanting to me, but by Thy grace, I hope that I should never be wanting to the sword. Joyfully would I receive the stroke if occasion offered; but if I am not to be a martyr by suffering, let me be a martyr by compassion; yes, by meditating frequently on Thy sufferings, O King of martyrs, and on those of Thy elect! that so I may admire and imitate them. Those whom Thou hast pre-elected from eternity to die for Thee, to be crowned with this precious aureole; as for me, I am content to live in Thy love, of Thy love, and for Thy love."

In this manner did Francis encourage himself to defend the faith at all costs, and to labour in the conversion of heretics on his return to his own country; and as if he foresaw that he was to be the bishop of Geneva, then the centre of error, as Rome is the centre of truth, he made an offering to God of his property, his time, his studies, and even of his

life, if it were necessary to the re-establishment of the ancient religion, professed in that city for so many ages, but at length expelled by its impious inhabitants.

As it is occasion and will, and not suffering, which places the palm in the martyrs' hands, there can be no doubt but that the love which made the Baron sigh for their tortures, and which in due time rendered him a sharer in their sufferings, made him merit the crown and recompense of martyrdom.

He visited the persons most distinguished for piety and learning, and he is said to have been acquainted with St. Philip Neri, who then lived in Rome with the reputation of a saint; moreover, it is said that the holy old man kissed him on the forehead, foreseeing his sanctity, and predicting that he would be a great servant of God and most useful to the Church. There are old pictures extant, representing this incident, which is highly probable, considering that Francis would naturally seek acquaintance with one so conspicuous for sanctity, whilst St. Philip's spirit of prophecy and discernment are also well-known facts.

Although Rome is by no means free from immorality, the angel that guided the young Baron preserved him in the midst of this furnace, changing its scorching flames into an invigorating dew. He turned his eyes from all that could inspire vice and corrupt his heart. Our Lord was pleased to demonstrate the care He had of him, by permitting an accident which experimentally proves that the fate of the just is in His hands, and that He never forsakes them. One night on returning to his lodgings, on

the bank of the Tiber, he found his attendants quarrelling with the landlord, who was insisting on their seeking another lodging, because he expected higher pay from some newly-arrived strangers, whose equipages and luggage already occupied the space engaged by the Baron, with whom the man broke his compact, having more regard to profit than honesty; the affair would have ended seriously, had not Francis overheard the altercation, and with his usual mildness insisted on his servants yielding to the demands of the host; he withdrew to another lodging, this unjust treatment proving the occasion of his safety, for almost immediately a heavy rain set in, which, swelling the Tiber, overflowed its banks, carrying away in its impetuosity the house so lately vacated by the Saint; not a vestige of it remained, and all within it perished. This incident shows us how God watches over the safety of His elect, and what serious disasters would befall them, unless He preserved them by some extraordinary means. The Baron ascribed his deliverance from so manifest a danger, to God alone, rendering Him due thanks for it, and resolving to abandon himself more unreservedly than ever to Divine Providence, which, by hidden ways, yet ways directed to our advantage, rules our destiny according to His own high views.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISITS LORETO. RETURNS HOME.

EVERY Christian must surely wish to visit that house which was the dwelling of an Incarnate God, nor would any traveller possessing a grain of piety, travel through Italy without going to revere the walls of the house of Loreto, consecrated as they were by the presence of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Francis had bound himself to this by vow on some certain occasion, and on returning from Rome, carried his purpose into effect. Loreto is a small place, rendered famous since the year 1296, when the house inhabited by our Blessed Lady at Nazareth was established there. When Palestine fell under the dominion of the Turks, this house was conveyed by angels to Dalmatia, or Sclavonia, but three years later, it crossed the Adriatic, landing on a hill between Ancona and Recanati. Again did it change its site, and rested where it now stands, and where a city and magnificent church have since been erected.

It is impossible to enter within these sacred walls without experiencing a transport of devotion; it would be difficult to describe the sentiments of the pious young Baron on this occasion; he affectionately kissed the walls, he confessed and communicated, and gave free vent to the emotions of his loving heart. "These then are thy tabernacles, O beau-

teous Spouse of the Eternal King! Here, O divine Lover, didst Thou stand looking through the lattices! Here didst Thou feed among the lilies. Here didst Thou become my Brother! Oh! who will enable me to find Thee reposing on the bosom of my Mother, that I may kiss Thee devoutly? O God, the Master of truth, Thou hast been my teacher from my earliest age, and here in this place, I hope Thou wilt more fully instruct me, whilst I prepare for Thee a draught of the best wine from the juice of pomegranates!" After these and other similar sentiments of devotion towards the Mother of God and the Word Incarnate, he renewed his vow of virginity, resigning himself entirely into the hands of Divine Goodness, by whom he was then called to the ecclesiastical state, so powerfully, that he could no longer doubt his vocation. In this very spot he formed to himself the idea of the apostolic life which he was to lead when he should become a preacher of the gospel. He readily offered himself to all the toils, poverty, sufferings, and persecutions incident to such a life, and of which Jesus had traced the model within those very walls. It is here that the Blessed Virgin has erected the throne of mercy, and it is certain that Francis, who was so well disposed, here received particular graces. His mind acquired fresh light, and his heart was so completely filled with charity, that nothing seemed impossible to him when the glory of God and the salvation of souls were in question. Some of the favours bestowed on him by God became partially visible; Deage assuring us that there was something quite divine in the expression of his countenance,

his face beaming like that of a seraph, insomuch that he conceived so high an opinion of the young Baron's sanctity, that he accompanied and followed him with a feeling of reverence.

Having satisfied his devotion he proceeded to Ancona, to embark for Venice. He found a vessel on the point of starting, and at once paid the fare for his passage; a lady of rank, however, made her appearance; she had engaged the vessel exclusively for herself and retinue; when perceiving Francis, who had already taken his place, she desired the pilot to order him out. Fearing that he might not meet with another opportunity of crossing, at least for that day, the Baron respectfully stated his case to the lady, and entreated her to permit him to sail in her company, remarking, that he had but three attendants, and little luggage, and, therefore, could occasion little or no inconvenience; every one present joined in the request, but the lady was inexorable, insisted on his quitting the ship, and well nigh gave orders to have his effects thrown overboard. Francis submitted to this affront with his usual meekness, though the rest were not disposed to be so submissive; he remained some time on the beach, endeavouring to pacify his friends, and persuading them to submit to the Divine will; circumstances apparently fortuitous, he said, sometimes happening by special intervention of Providence, as they had recently witnessed at Rome, adding, moreover, that storms were frequent in those seas, and that travellers often left that port without ever arriving at the place they intended. This seeming conjecture of the Baron was literally

verified before their very eyes. There had been every appearance of a prosperous sail; the sky was serene, the wind favourable, and the sea calm; nevertheless, all this suddenly changed; a fearful storm arose, and though the pilot used his utmost skill to urge his vessel into port, she sunk with every soul on board, before Francis and his companions had left the beach.

This awful spectacle served as a new motive to the young man for putting all his trust in God, to abandon himself blindly to Providence, which guides events to its own purposes, by ways unknown to, and beyond the reach of human prudence. When the tempest was appeased, and the sea calm, he found another opportunity for sailing. The hope of a prosperous voyage inspirited the pilot and sailors, who thought of nothing but amusement; but Francis, who seemed to foresee coming accidents, instead of participating in the common joy, was extremely serious and recollected. Deage noticed this, and enquired the reason. "I am astonished," replied he, "to see that with only two planks between us and death, these people should be so daring as to give way to such unseemly mirth; but a short time ago we witnessed a shipwreck; nothing can be more inconstant than the sea; a storm has but just passed over; this gulf is famous for storms; who knows whether a misfortune similar to that of which we were so recently the spectators, does not await us? Let the rest do as they please, but for us, let us pray to that Lord whom the sea and the winds obey." Deage was a pious man, and having a particular regard for the Baron,

proposed reciting the divine office together. Scarcely had they begun, than the pilot, observing them, mocked and insulted them, saying, that priests and devotees always brought him bad luck. The wind soon changed; but he, heedless of the diversions of the other, called out, "Holla! what are you French gentlemen muttering there? as long as you hold your breviaries in your hands, the wind is sure to be against us; send them to the right-about, and do as others do." In the meantime the tempest became terrific, and the mirth of the passengers was changed into alarm; every one fell to prayer, with the exception of the pilot, who, with horrid oaths, declared that he foresaw these devotees would bring bad weather, and that they deserved to be thrown overboard. The Baron's guardian, naturally choleric, was going to answer the bravado, and check his ribaldry; but Francis prevented him, reminding him that this was not the moment for attempting a correction; a reproof would only infuriate the pilot, therefore, patience was their best resource; and they would go on with their prayers, regardless of the insult they thereby drew upon themselves. The storm did not last long, and as the vessel was well appointed, she reached Cattolica, a small port of the Adriatic, without damage, Providence not permitting that he should perish by water, whose heart already burnt with the flames which ultimately were to consume it. The pilot, who had been well aware of his danger, did not conceal his delight at having escaped it. Francis now believed it to be the right time to correct him, and accordingly said to him: "I cannot conceive what made you so

angry a short time ago,—the tempestuous sea, and the evident danger we were in, ought to have alarmed you, and yet you allowed yourself to be so far transported with passion, and to curse and swear, and forbid us to pray to God, from whom alone we can hope for any temporal or eternal blessing; do you not know that He holds supreme dominion over the sea and the wind, which obey and revere His voice, and which yield at His beck?"

His admonition was so kindly and gently given, that, harsh as the pilot naturally was, his mind was softened; nor did he fail to remark that the young nobleman, insensible to all save the offence against God, said not a word of the insults heaped upon himself; astonished at his moderation, the man threw himself at his feet, begged pardon, and promised amendment.

Experience teaches that they who reprove mildly, and with due regard to circumstances, generally succeed; whereas, contrary conduct becomes useless, correction often proving pernicious, unless it be discreetly administered. We gild the pills, and qualify the bitter potions which we offer to the sick. But it was not the pilot only who admired the virtue of the saintly youth—the sailors attributed their safety and the preservation of the ship to his prayers, publicly declaring that the elements respected his innocence and sanctity; moreover, they said that if this young gentleman had remained amongst them, he would have converted and turned them into saints.

In the course of this voyage he furnished a still more evident proof of his virtue, submitting to a

great humiliation with incomparable patience; his rank and age must have made him sensitive on such an occasion, but the love of his despised Redeemer enabled him to meet it with composure and peace of mind. The pilot was giving him an account of a little chapel of our Blessed Lady, which was seen at a distance, telling him that votive offerings were often carried there by those, who, thanks to her intercession, were saved from shipwreck: as Francis was listening attentively to the recital, the helmsman, by some sudden jerk of the cordage, inadvertently knocked the Baron's hat off into the sea.

There are certain moments, when, woe to him who errs! Virtuous as was Deage, after all he was but a man, and he gave a sound scolding to both one and the other. Francis took all the blame to himself, bearing the loss, as well as the reproof, very patiently; and by way of pacifying Deage, good humouredly remarked, that a crown-piece would repair all the mischief. But the tutor, who carried the purse, rejoined, "Very likely: but mind, your carelessness shall cost you dear: defend yourself as best you can from this north wind." Francis very composedly drew forth his night-cap, and put it on, supposing that as soon as they reached Chioggia, where they were to dine, a new hat would be provided for him, and, in the meantime, he smiled and joined in the jokes which were raised at his expense. On their arrival at Chioggia, however, Deage actually had the heart to leave him without a hat, and he was obliged to walk through the street (which happened to be thronged with people, watching the feats of a mountebank,) with nothing but

his night-cap on; and he submitted to this mortification without the least sign of resentment.

Indifferent as he was to personal insult, he keenly felt the offence committed against God by one of his acquaintance. On reaching Venice, he determined to stay there a few days to examine the marvels of a really marvellous city: there are few places which attract more strangers; its peculiar situation, its magnificence, and its political liberties contribute to this. The Baron met with several Piedmontese and Savoyards, with whom he formed an intimacy, either as being compatriots, or at least as being the subjects of the same prince; but discovering their profligate habits, he at once broke off an intercourse which accident, rather than choice, had given rise to; one only of the number attached himself to Francis, and this one, yielding to occasion and bad example, proved unworthy of his friendship. He was informed that, pressed by his companions, he had passed the night in some infamous place, and this was quite sufficient to induce Francis to break off all intimacy with him; nevertheless, reflecting on the loss of this young cavalier's soul, in whom he had discovered strong inclinations to virtue; he resolved to use his best endeavours to convince him of his dangerous state; he spoke to him most earnestly, depicting incontinency in its true colours, dwelling on its baneful consequences, and the final impenitence to which it usually drags its victims. He spoke to him of the mental blindness and the obduracy of heart, which are its most common effects; of the terrible judgments of God, and of the sufferings whereby He punishes it, in this life and

the next; till the young man, in whose heart the fear of God was not wholly extinct, saw his error, was induced by the Saint to make his confession, and did penance proportioned to the grievousness of his sin: to escape the danger of relapse, Francis persuaded him to leave Venice, as he himself did on his road homewards. He stopped at Padua to salute his old friends there; then passing through Verona, Mantua, Cremona, Pavia, and Vercelli, he reached Turin, and finally Savoy; when from this time until he was raised to the Priesthood, he was called the Baron of Villaroget, the name of one of his father's demesnes.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS ARRIVAL AT HOME. VISITS THE BISHOP OF GENEVA.
MATRIMONIAL PLANS. DECLARES HIS VOCATION TO
THE PRIESTHOOD.

It would be difficult to express the delight with which his parents welcomed him on his return to Tulle, whither the family repaired to meet him. Comparing the accounts which they had received of their son, with what they now saw, they acknowledged that report which usually exaggerates, had in this instance gone far below the mark; their satisfaction on his account, was in every respect perfect. He was then twenty-five years of age, and a more elegant and accomplished young nobleman could scarcely have been met with: he possessed every personal advantage, fine intellect, rare learning,

robust constitution; he was prompt in his replies, modest without affectation, affable without familiarity; in a word, he was the delight of his parents, who looked up to him as the prop of the family, whose friends warmly congratulated the Count and Countess of Sales on the admirable qualifications of their eldest son. His father sent him to Annecy on a visit to the Bishop of Geneva, the sincere friend of the family. He was a holy and erudite man, of mild disposition, and of apostolical simplicity, whose merits had raised him to the episcopal throne, from being a Benedictine Monk as he was. He was of noble birth, and devoted himself unreservedly to the duties of his ministry; prudent in enterprize; he had no valuable furniture, no retinue, nor any of the magnificence which in later ages crept into the Church, occasioning more damage than profit: his virtues gained him the respect both of clergy and laity, so that he ruled his diocese with an authority which no temporal grandeur would have conferred.

The bishop received the Baron with the sweet affability which characterized his whole conduct; he detained him with him for a long time, and conceived such an esteem of him, that he wished he could meet with a person like him to be his successor. He admired his noble mind and his heavenly disposition, which won all hearts; the interview would have been prolonged, if the bishop had not been informed that the theologians were waiting for him to examine the pretendant to a certain benefice. The worthy prelate made it his inviolable rule to confer benefices on the most deserving; learning and virtue were the only recommendations he would

attend to: he invited the Baron to assist at the examination, who excused himself on the plea that a layman with a sword at his side would be misplaced in such an assembly; but the bishop overruled the difficulty, telling him that he might be useful in the solution of certain questions; he conducted him therefore to the place of examination, made him take the seat next to his own, and then the disputation began. As is frequently the case on such occasions, the theologians differed in opinion; the Baron paid particular attention, but without attempting to offer an opinion; even when the prelate appealed to him, he modestly excused himself, remembering the admonition of Ecclesiasticus; "Be not forward in presence of your elders;" adding that it would ill become a scholar to speak before so many celebrated doctors, and before so great a prelate; more especially as theology was not a science on which he ought to hazard an opinion; but being most earnestly pressed, he solved the difficulty in few words, rendering the case so clear and distinct, that the whole meeting accepted his decision. Great was the astonishment of all present to hear this young nobleman, whom they had supposed to have been engaged in studies exclusively suited to his rank, so easily explain away difficulties which had puzzled the first theologians of the diocese. The bishop exultingly exclaimed, "How well I foresaw that your presence would be useful to us in this conference; your modesty convinced me of this." After courteously taking leave of him he returned to the hall of meeting, and remarked to the persons who were there, that this young nobleman had too

much virtue and learning to remain in the world;— that he had a sort of premonition that he would be his successor, and that he hoped Almighty God would confer this favour on the diocese. This impression rendered Francis extremely dear to him; he called him by no other name than that of son; and a warm friendship sprung up between them, which ended only with the death of the virtuous prelate; indeed, we may piously presume that it continues even in heaven, because, being founded in God, it must be eternal.

But the Count of Sales had very different views with regard to the establishment of his son: he was arranging a marriage for him, and hoped to procure him a charge in the senate of Chambery. He proposed sending him thither, to be admitted as advocate, and for this purpose he gave him letters of recommendation Senator to Anthony Faber, his intimate friend. This plan did not at all coincide with the secret intention of Francis, nor with the vow of virginity made at Paris and renewed at Loreto, nor with his resolution of embracing the ecclesiastical state, according to the instinct which God gave him. He hoped to be able to effect his purpose, especially as, by giving himself to the Church, he would benefit the younger members of his family; at all events he did not deem it prudent to oppose his father's views just then, because he might declare himself more openly after this journey; he decided, therefore, to await a more fitting opportunity; and, in company with Deage, set out for Chambery. Anthony Faber, the ornament of the Senate, and afterwards its first president, received him with all the courtesy

due to his high reputation; he lodged him in his own house as the son of one of his dearest friends, and spent several days instructing him as to what he would have to do on the occasion, in order that he might be admitted into the senate with applause; till perceiving that Francis was too well informed to need his instructions, he presented him without further loss of time to Podel the first president, and to the senate, who appointed one of the senators to examine him; he performed the task with the utmost rigour; but this only served to bring out the Baron's learning more markedly; and the examining senator declared in full senate, that, he had found a hidden treasure in the Baron of Villaroget, that is to say, talent and a fund of learning far beyond his age, adding many other things which induced the senate to receive him with applause. Francis replied to their acclamations with such eloquence, and thanked them so gracefully that they were in high admiration of him. In his address, he spoke of justice as the most excellent of moral virtues, as being unvarying, because it proceeds from heaven, and is the offspring of God himself; it maintains peace amongst the people, is the security of the country, and the inheritance of the children of heaven, and the hope of future beatitude. He next commended those who in their charges and offices, are faithful administrators of it; and so agreeably wound up his argument on the good purposes of justice, that his hearers believed they could not without injustice, withhold that meed of public applause which his virtue so evidently merited. Podel owned that he had never admitted

any member combining so much genius with so solid a judgment. All Chambery went to compliment him; every one feeling certain that he would soon be declared a senator. Faber above all conceived an esteem and affection for him, which lasted to the end of his life. This famous Jurisconsult was a native of Bourg en Bresse, and was so well trained by Anthony Manuce, that he became one of the most distinguished men of his day. His merit made him known to his sovereign, who conferred several important dignities upon him, which he so well administered, that he deserved to be raised to the highest of all, namely, that of president of the senate of Savoy. Some of his works were given to the press, and bear witness to the extent of his erudition; but his virtue was equal to his learning, and this it was that united him in such close friendship with the Baron: such was their mutual attachment, that they usually styled each other *brother*. When Faber went to Chambery in quality of president of the senate, he left his house at Annecy to Francis, who was then a bishop; moreover he dedicated one of his works to him. I have thought it right to dwell somewhat on the worth of this great man, to shew the sort of persons whom the Baron selected for his most intimate friends.

As he was returning from Chambery, a circumstance befell him on the road, which convinced him more than ever that it was the will of God he should embrace the ecclesiastical state. As he was conversing with Deage, his horse stumbled, and though he was an expert equestrian, he was thrown; the sudden shock detached his sword from his girdle

and also jerked the sword out of the scabbard; as the two fell to the ground they formed a perfect cross; the same thing happened thrice within a very short space of time and distance. The Baron was far from being adicted to anything like superstition, as the whole course of his life, and his works sufficiently prove; but he had too much piety not to be struck by the singular coincidence of the thrice-formed cross, which seemed to him indicative of the divine will. He believed moreover, that by this accident (which to say the least was certainly striking), God intended to make him understand that He did not approve of his engaging in secular affairs, He having destined him to the cross, of which this circumstance reminded him. He made Deage notice it also, declaring his intentions to him, entreating him to make them known to his father, and endeavour to obtain his consent to them.

The well-attested piety of Francis ought to have revealed his inclinations to his tutor, and have prevented surprise at this announcement; nevertheless, it seemed to astound him. Endowed as he was with virtue and wisdom, he dared not oppose the will of God by impugning the vocation of the young man, whilst on the other hand, his affection to the house of Sales made him unwilling to approve it; well knowing that the plans of the Count would be completely deranged by the designs of his son. He remained for some time thoughtful and silent; then, taking courage, he represented to his pupil the affliction which such a step would occasion to his parents and family, of which he ought to be the prop, reminding him that no expense had been

spared to qualify him for this duty; that they had with reason fixed their hopes in him, because in addition to being the eldest son, both nature and education had concurred in furnishing him with all that was necessary for corresponding to the designs of the family in his regard. He added, that he ought to consider *that* to be the vocation of God which parents selected for their children, provided their choice was not contrary to religion, or adverse to their salvation; he ought, therefore, very seriously to weigh these considerations, lest he might be deceived in the choice of such a state of life; it sometimes happening that we fancy we follow the voice of God, when, in reality, we are only following our own inclinations; it was his duty to warn him that self-love may have a part in such resolutions, and that when we most flatter ourselves we are renouncing self, we may in effect be the most wedded to self-love;—that he might securely work out his salvation in the world, and without devoting himself to a state so repugnant to the wishes of his pious parents, who so tenderly loved him: it would be quite sufficient for him to live as a secular, with the excellent dispositions which God had implanted in his heart: they would sanctify him and contribute to the sanctification of others. Let him remember Saints Lewis, Edward, Henry, Elzear, and the blessed Amadeus, who, living in the world, and exposed to far greater obstacles than any he would meet with, had nevertheless known how to render themselves worthy of the veneration of our altars. Surely then, he might safely walk in their footsteps; in conclusion, Deage exhorted him to

imitate them, and to spare his parents an affliction which would almost kill them.

The Baron had flattered himself that Deage, himself a priest, a doctor of theology, and a man of exemplary life would not have disapproved his resolution; he was therefore astonished to hear him oppose it so vigorously; he looked at him with one of those engaging smiles so difficult to resist, and well convinced that if he could but gain him over to his side, he would prove his best auxiliary with his father and mother, who esteemed him highly, he began one of those gentle reproofs which so forcibly convince the mind and touch the heart. "What!" said Francis, "do you blame a choice which you yourself have made? You who have renounced the world, would you bind me to it? You did not believe that you could work out your salvation in it, how then can you think that I, without half your virtue, can secure mine? Where is the tenderness of the father, and the sincerity of the friend, which I have hitherto found in you?" Deage, who really loved him tenderly, would have interrupted him, but the holy young man who had begun to speak with energy, gave him no opportunity; and following up the points of his opposition in due order, he thus continued; "Believe me, I know myself well, and young as I am, I can understand that these advantages of nature and rank, of which you speak, increase the danger to which we are all exposed with regard to the affair of salvation. The risks which besiege me are numerous, and although I discern many of them, there are others no doubt hidden from me; I know that as yet, I

merely possess the *desire* of virtue, whilst on the contrary, I carry within me the principles of seduction and disorder, which certainly will be my ruin if seconded by the dangers of the world, in which you would engage me: and, after all, what will it profit me to gain the whole world if I lose my own soul? God has long inspired me with an aversion for the world, so that by His grace, I prefer His holy fear and His chaste love to all other things. Do not then oppose a design which He Himself has inspired. I expect even more than this from your charity; I expect your aid towards carrying it into effect. I know that my greatest obstacles will come from those to whom I owe my life and my education, which has cost them so much; to them, whom next to God, I am bound to respect; I beseech you therefore to solicit their consent, and thus spare me the grief of occasioning them displeasure, by embracing the ecclesiastical state against their will." His arguments so completely moved Deage, that he gave up the point. He admired in one so young, this total contempt of the world, and of all that could captivate the heart; this fortitude which could withstand the tenderness of nature, and, convinced that the Baron was called to sublime sanctity, he told him that God was his witness how anxiously he desired his salvation, as much as he did his own; but that it was his duty to give different advice, according to the difference of virtue in the persons; that he himself had forsaken the world because he did not think he could have found salvation otherwise; not having sufficient strength and courage to withstand its seductions, whereas he (Francis) had

already given proofs of such solid virtue as to persuade him that he might not only live in the world without losing himself, but would even contribute to the salvation of many others by his example: he owned that condescension to his parents, whose plans he knew were diametrically opposite to the priesthood, had been the chief cause of his opposition; and certainly the honour they had done him in entrusting so beloved a child to his care, obliged him as far as possible to second their views. It was true, moreover, that many, especially in the ardour of youth, were apt to look upon as the real call of God, what in effect was but the sensibility of ill-regulated piety, and a certain flavour of spiritual things, having nothing of solidity about it, the consequence of which was after-regret and secret despair at having forsaken the world; he had formed a better opinion of his case, because he was well acquainted with the maturity of his judgment, the penetration of his mind, and the constancy of his heart; he had moreover observed the special graces bestowed on him by God, on various and dangerous occasions, from whence it might be inferred that he had preserved his baptismal innocence; considering all these reasons then, he would not oppose his wishes, but he entreated him not to require him to make the proposal to his parents; he had not courage enough for this; he could not be the first to impart intelligence which would be so painful to them. Francis made some other remarks in reply, and said that he would take such measures as he hoped would diminish their affliction; they concluded their discourse as they neared the castle of

Tulle, where the Baron found affairs in a state very different from what he could have wished.

CHAPTER X.

DECLARES HIS VOCATION. OPPOSITION TO IT. OBTAINS
CONSENT.

THE Count of Sales was highly gratified on being informed by the letters and accounts of Deage, that the senate of Savoy had recognized the learning and talents of his son, and thought of forming a matrimonial alliance between him and the young Lady de Vegi, the only daughter of the Baron of that name, councillor of state to the prince, and illustrious for several other distinguished offices, no less than for his wealth. He had already privately negotiated the affair with her parents and other friends, who highly approved the match; the young lady was in every respect so well endowed, that there was not a gentleman in Savoy who would not have wished for such a connexion. The Count pursued the affair with prudence and skill; convinced that the project would increase the honour, the credit, and the revenues of his house. As soon, therefore, as the young Baron arrived from Chambery, he mentioned the plan, and bade him hold himself in readiness to accompany him to Salanchez in Faucigny, to be introduced to the young lady. The proposition was like a thunderbolt to Francis, who was on the point of excusing himself from

undertaking such a journey by acknowledging his intention of embracing the ecclesiastical state, but his courage failed, respect for his father overawing him, and he trusted that delay would facilitate the accomplishment of his project. Conflicting ideas harassed him; on the one side, he deemed it improper to seek acquaintance with the lady when his mind was already decidedly fixed against matrimony, his keen sense of propriety suggesting all that was right on this score; but on the other side, the repugnance which he felt in opposing his father's will, prevented him from declaring himself. The Count noticed how coldly Francis received a proposition which would have filled any other young man with delight, but ascribing it to modesty, he imagined that the young lady's beauty would easily triumph over an indifference which he did not for a moment suppose to be rooted in the heart of his son.

Francis and his father soon afterwards travelled to Salanchez, where they were courteously received by the Lord de Vegi; the saintly young Baron soon winning the good graces both of the father and the daughter. No match could apparently have been better planned. The young people seemed made for each other, only that God had other views: Francis was unable to dissimulate; and so striking was his frigidity of manner, that his father reproached him for thwarting his plans, though these plans had no other aim than his own individual advantage. Francis met his reproofs with obstinate silence, and they quitted Salanchez without coming to any explanations. On their return to Tulle, the re-

proaches were renewed, to which Francis invariably replied that he deplored being the cause of displeasure to his father: the Countess too used all her influence, but in vain; nor were the friends and relatives more successful, though they all eagerly desired a match, on which the father had evidently set his heart. After making many attempts to renew the affair, which all proved ineffectual, the Count was perplexed to the last degree by the refusal of his son. Francis entrusted his secret to a clergyman of Tulle named Amadeo Bovard, with whom he had been acquainted at Paris. "I have seen the lady," said the Saint to him, "whom my father wishes me to marry; unquestionably she deserves an excellent match, considering her worth and fine endowments; I rejoice, nevertheless, within my heart, because God gives me an inward assurance that I shall enter into His house, and there make my abode, for I have chosen it. God is my everlasting portion; never have I wished to contract any other nuptials than with the Lamb without Spot, and I shall do this by embracing the clerical state." About this time the Baron of Hermance arrived from Turin, bringing with him the patent of Senator, which the Duke of Savoy, informed of Francis's deserts, had gratuitously conferred: whilst any one else would have deemed himself too much honoured in obtaining this dignity, the holy young man persisted in refusing to accept it; but perceiving how sensibly his father was afflicted on this account, he felt bound to explain his real wishes to him. For this purpose he consulted his cousin Lewis of Sales, Canon of the Cathedral of Geneva, who had great influence with

the Count: he stated his views to him, and succeeded in convincing him that it was the will of God that he should embrace the ecclesiastical state. Lewis listened to him with great delight, promised to use his best endeavours to obtain his father's consent, but requested to be allowed a little time, in order to recommend the affair to God, and to devise the best means of disclosing it to the Count in a manner the least distasteful to him. Lewis had a special object in requiring this delay: the Provostship of the Church of Geneva, the chief dignity of the Cathedral, was vacant; and being at the disposal of the Pope, he determined on soliciting it for Francis, which, if obtained, he hoped would tend much to lessen the objections of the Count: on the other hand, believing that the young baron would more readily accept the dignity if conferred without any effort being made on his part to obtain it, Lewis kept the secret from him, but managed so well that the Canon Francis de Roniis, who had much intercourse with Rome, wrote in his favour. Providence prospered the plan: the Bulls arrived, and Lewis and Roniis, going over to Tulle, took Francis aside, and showed them to him, telling him at the same time that *now* would be a good opportunity of explaining his intentions to his father, and of obtaining his consent. The Baron was astonished at finding himself thus favoured, frankly telling Lewis that though it was his wish to be a priest, he certainly had no intention of possessing benefices; it was his wish to depend for his maintenance on whatever share of the family property his father might choose to bestow upon him; adding that he deemed himself unworthy of the post; and

that there would be great impropriety in placing a young man like himself, devoid of virtue and experience, at the head of so distinguished a Chapter and Clergy as that of Geneva. He entreated him to allow him to resign the right in his own favour, Lewis being far better suited to the post than himself; for his sole wish was to remain the last in the house of the Lord.

Lewis had great ascendancy over the mind of his young cousin; and therefore told him in a decisive tone, that though he approved the humility which led him to shun the proffered dignity, and the holy policy of following the call of God without seeking after benefices, he likewise blamed that obstinacy which rejected them when they came unsought-for. They might reasonably believe that Almighty God had created these favourable conjuncture expressly to influence his parents, and induce them to accede to his wishes, with less regret to themselves. Lewis undertook to answer both to God and man for what might ensue, saying that Providence had its views in thus suddenly exalting him, without his own participation, cognition, or consent, to a dignity so nearly bordering on the episcopacy.

Francis was so docile, that not only did he yield to a known truth, but to authority likewise, whenever it was sufficiently weighty to sway his mind. Respect and esteem for Lewis, together with the certainty of having had no share himself in procuring this dignity, induced him at length to accept it. The three friends next presented themselves to the Count and Countess of Sales; where, after disposing of some indifferent topics, Francis asked his father

whether he might be permitted to request a favour, which, if granted, would prevent the necessity of ever asking another. The father, imagining that he wished for some prerogative (on the plea of his marriage) which would prejudice the junior members of the family, expressed this doubt, before undertaking to make any promise; but Francis assured him that the request he had to make would, on the contrary, be beneficial to them, since all he wished was the consent of his parents to embrace the ecclesiastical state, seeing that his cousin and the Canon Roniis had already obtained Bulls whereby the Sovereign Pontiff conferred the highest dignity of the Cathedral upon him, without his having had the slightest idea of anything of the sort. At this unexpected proposition the Count almost fainted: on recovering himself a little he said: "Who can have advised you thus, my dear son? I, who have looked up to you as the support of my old age, and of the family; and will you think of leaving me? Sooner or later I must die; you have brothers to whom you ought then to supply the place of father; will you abandon them and me too? Where is the use of having studied jurisprudence if you are to embrace the ecclesiastical state? Such a project assuredly requires much time and consideration." These remarks were interrupted by the sighs and tears of the worthy father; but Francis replied: "It would have been my wish and intention to have served you to my last breath, and to have assisted and protected my brothers, if God had not, from my earliest years, given me a vocation to the Priesthood. It was for this that I received the tonsure at

Clermont; I formed the resolution in Paris, and renewed it at Loreto. I now implore your consent to the accomplishment of this my desire." He mentioned the circumstance which befel him on the road from Chambery, when God seemed as it were to remind him that he was to forsake the sword and embrace the cross. Seeing him thus calm and resolute, the Count was convinced that it would be useless to oppose his son's project, and could scarcely speak for sobs and tears; whereupon Lewis interposed, and remarked that as children belong more to God than to their parents, he ought to surrender this one to the Lord, who plainly shewed that such was His divine will, and that it was for this purpose that the Baron had rejected both matrimony and secular honours,—that, if nature murmured, it must be silenced, and be reduced to the submission due to God, to faith, and to religion. Receiving no answer, for grief choked the father's utterance, he appealed to the well-known piety of the Count, saying to him, "What! would you dispute with God, and oppose His designs? Where is your faith? your religion? your submission to Providence? Would you expect to be the master? What would you do if God commanded you, as He did Abraham, to sacrifice this beloved son with your own hand? Or what would you do if He cut off all your children in one night, as He did to Job? Instead of depriving you of all your numerous family, God only asks you for this one, and will you have the heart to refuse Him? to refuse Him who gave His only Son for your salvation?" To this the Count humbly answered that he well knew whatever he possessed

belonged to God more than to himself, He being the absolute master, and that he no longer dared to contend with God; nevertheless he thought that if Francis would but acquiesce in his wishes, he might be equally pleasing to God, and might contribute to His glory by living in, and giving good example to the world. Painful was the interview; but seeing that Francis and Lewis still urged his consent, he concluded by saying that both himself and the Countess of Sales would require a few days for consideration, and he therefore begged Francis would not leave them until they had given him their answer.

If his father felt such a repugnance to consent, the feelings of the mother were equally acute; retiring to her cabinet, she wept incessantly for some days; the holy importunity of the son prevailed; piety at last triumphed over nature, and she resigned herself to the will of God; having gained her, she in turn gained her husband. When Francis and Lewis entered their room to receive a final answer, all their grief was renewed, insomuch that Lewis was deeply affected, and wept with them; scarcely had they power to raise Francis from the ground where he had thrown himself at their feet, declaring that he would not stir from thence, until they gave him their consent and blessing. At last the Count, who really possessed a noble soul, making an effort, again reminded Francis that when a priest undertook to follow the call of God, he ought not to apply himself to anything contrary to the divine will, and to the orders he had established in the world,—that elder sons were designed by nature to maintain and

perpetuate families; that on this account he had given him an education which would be useless to him as an ecclesiastic, that in this quality he would be unable to assist his brothers,—that he had looked up to him as to the staff of his old age; and that he could not without extreme grief relinquish all the hopes he had formed in his regard; he could not conceive what difficulty he would find in working out his salvation in the world, in a family so religious as theirs; a family that gloried in fearing and serving the Lord. It was not, however, their intention to oppose his vocation, if, after due examination it was judged that God required his services in a profession which seemed contrary to nature and humanity. Francis replied in terms of great respect, saying, that he did not think the ecclesiastical state would dispense him from discharging those duties which nature exacted, either towards his father or the rest of the family, that he would not find him less submissive to, and dependent upon him; that he would always find him prepared to advance the interests of the family; and he well understood that no profession ought to sever the ties which bind children to their parents. God was his witness that it would be impossible to feel greater affection and gratitude than he did towards those, to whom, under God he was indebted for life and education; the latter increasing his obligations; and he trusted that his education would not prove useless to him. This remark led his father to interrupt him, to request that he would accept the charge of senator, conferred on him by his prince; the request seemed reasonable, because the office was not incompatible

with the ecclesiastical state; his immediate predecessor in the provostship had actually been appointed to it; but the saintly young man again cast himself at his feet, beseeching him to grant the favour *in toto*; and to consent to his renunciation of any employment which might divert him from the functions of a ministry to which God called him. He again implored his unconditional blessing and that of his mother, being fully resolved not to arise till he had obtained it.

Although the Count was extremely dissatisfied that his son should so pertinaciously refuse an honour which was by no means inconsistent with his holy project, he was deeply affected; he and the Countess simultaneously assisted him to rise, when tenderly embracing him, he said: "Fulfil, my dear son, that which the Lord inspires; it is hard to kick against the goad. May the Lord, who as you say calls you to the priesthood, bless you a thousand times, as I on His part give you my blessing. May He be your recompense in heaven, as He Himself will be your portion and your inheritance on earth."

Francis received his mother's blessing at the same time, and he, taking advantage of his father's last words, expressed his wish to renounce his rights of primogeniture in favour of his brother Lewis, a youth of great virtue, and whom he tenderly loved; but his parents were inflexible on this point, and would on no account consent. They insisted on his retaining all his rights, which he did to the end of his life.

Amidst all the tears of his friends, it would be difficult to describe the delight of Francis. Turn-

ing to God, he repeatedly exclaimed: "Thou hast loosened my bands, O Lord; therefore will I offer Thee the sacrifice of praise. Blessed be God, for now do I possess what I have so long desired: nothing now will be able to withdraw me from Thy adorable hand."

I would here admonish those parents who oppose the vocation of their children to reflect on the virtue of the lord and lady of Sales; who, from the mere sense of religion, offered one of such high expectations, whose education had cost so much, and in whom they had centered their affections. In this, they most certainly sacrificed the interest of their own family to that of the Church, and deprived their own house of the column which they thus gave to the house of God. They owned that, upon political principles, children are born more for the state than for their parents; surely, then, according to the principles of religion, so much more noble than nationality, they are born more for the Church than for the state; consequently, nature ought to yield to grace. God well rewarded them for their sacrifice. Francis was the prop and glory of his family, and the consolation of his parents, and from being their son by nature, he became their spiritual father, ever promoting their greater sanctification. Thus were they amply remunerated by God, for what at first they considered a loss; and if they did not see him a rich man, at least they had the gratification of seeing him revered by princes, and applauded by the people as a Saint.

BOOK II.

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CHAPTER I.

HIS ORDINATION. HIS FIRST SERMONS, AND THEIR FRUIT.

BIRDS do not rejoice more when they escape from the net of the fowler, than did the young Baron, when, having obtained the desired consent of his parents, he saw himself disengaged from the world. We may say that now his wishes were fully accomplished, for, seeking nothing but God, he found all things in Him, and possessing Him, he cared for nothing else. On assuming the livery of a profession, of which he already possessed the virtues ornamenting his soul and the learning which enriched his mind, he likewise put on the new man, and received the spirit of his vocation. Would to God that the door of the sanctuary were never opened but to such as are similarly endowed. Although the number would be smaller, the profit would be greater to the Church, which is often injured by the abundance, as it is aided by the quality, of those who serve her, a few chosen subjects being most advantageous; whereas their multiplicity does not always increase either her glory or her joy.

The Countess having taken care to provide all that was necessary for Francis, he was able that very day to assume a dress different from that of worldlings, to his own extreme satisfaction; and being resolved thenceforward to attend to nothing but the service of God, and the extension of His kingdom, he set out the next day for Annecy, in company with Lewis of Sales, there to take possession of the provostship of Geneva. When travelling along, Lewis observed that Francis was weeping, and enquired whether his tears sprung from regret of the state he had embraced? Francis replied, "On the contrary, this choice fills my heart with joy; but I cannot reflect on the anguish I have occasioned my parents without feeling much affected." Let it not be supposed that his sacrifice was less acceptable to God, though watered with the tears of natural and lawful affection. Lewis did not reprove this sensibility, and owned that he had more than once been inclined to desist from seconding the views of Francis, in order to spare the grief of his worthy parents; and that he had only been deterred by the fortitude and constancy evinced by the young Baron.

On their arrival at Annecy, Lewis assembled the Chapter of the Cathedral, and presented the Bulls of the Sovereign Pontiff, bearing date 7th March, 1593. After giving proofs of nobility and learning, Francis was put in possession of the provostship on the twelfth of May, which that year fell on the vigil of the Ascension. Respect for his virtue and family procured him great honour. Music and a vast concourse of people rendered the ceremony

more striking than usual. He concluded it by delivering a discourse overflowing with humility, telling his audience that of the many things which rendered his voyage through the sea of this life dangerous, he believed one of the chief to be that of having been (through the benignity of the supreme pontiff) elected provost of the Cathedral of Geneva. It seemed dangerous to him that a man without experience, who as yet had not distinguished himself in the warfare of the Church, should possess a provostship at first starting; it was an irregularity that a man should be made the *first* before he had been the *last*, and that a great dignity should be awarded to great indignity; it was like a carbuncle in mud; well did he remember the expression of the abbot of Clairvaux, "Woe to him who is professed *before* he is yet a novice!" And the words of David, "In vain ye rise before the light; rise not till ye have rested, O ye that eat the bread of sorrow." According to the spirit which vivifies these words may be applied to those who would rise up to rule before they have sat down to learn, though according to the letter, they are differently interpreted; he then continued in these words: "Immature fruits are out of season, and spoil and perish; hence I have reproached myself, and in confusion have said to God, I have heard Thy hearing, O Lord, and I feared. But your presence here to-day, O my Fathers, dispels my fear, and greatly increases the confidence which I ought to have in the Lord. Yes, your presence so completely reassures me that I can scarcely say which is the greater, my present happiness, or my past fear, for I now

realize those words of the Psalmist, "Serve ye the Lord with fear, and exult in Him with trembling;" the *exultation* corresponding with my happiness, and the *trembling* with my anxiety. The thought of being your provost made me anxious, whereas I now see that I feared where there was no cause for fear. He would have reason to fear, who was placed over persons who would not be restrained by duty, whereas I am the provost of those who have all the virtues to be sought for in prelates. What then have I to fear? I need not distress myself on account of my youth, my ignorance, or my spiritual weakness, because I shall have no occasion to admonish, to instruct, or to correct, unless it were that I thought of teaching Minerva, preaching to Bernard, or as the proverb says, speaking Latin before the friars minor. They need no master, who have nothing more to learn; and any sailor may act as helmsman whilst the wind is fair. It is most true that hitherto your provosts have been distinguished for learning and authority; hence you might justly tell me with the poet that it is rash to enter here; you might indeed say this; nevertheless, for your consolation and mine, O my fathers, I beseech you to remember that God usually chooses the weak things of this world to confound the strong, and perfects His praises in the mouths of infants, in order that to Him alone may be given the glory of all good, which proceeds from Him, and which is due to Him alone."

This discourse was received with universal applause, every one predicting that he would become a first-rate preacher, would be the pearl of the

priesthood, and the honour of the Church of Geneva. But there was no one in the city (where the family of Sales was much respected) who more sincerely rejoiced on this occasion than the good bishop of Geneva. He at once looked upon him as his successor, considering him as best calculated by his sanctity to augment the lustre of the Church, as well as to render much advantage and honour to the diocese. He insisted on conferring on him the minor orders at once, and on the Saturday of the next Pentecost week, he made him sub-deacon. The humble and obedient provost would gladly have adhered to the regular intervals prescribed by the sacred canons; but the bishop would not agree to this : being well acquainted with the purity of his heart, and the extent of his learning, he judged that these, together with the diocesan need of zealous workmen, formed a just motive for a dispensation. After stating his own desires, Francis did not venture to oppose the will of a prelate whom he so highly respected. His lordship moreover desired him to prepare a sermon for the festival of Corpus Christi, as he wished to hear him preach. The holy provost endeavoured to excuse himself on the plea of incompetency, and concluded by saying that it belonged only to the diaconate to preach the Gospel in public; he therefore besought him not to impose on him a charge so far beyond his powers; but his objections were not admitted; the bishop telling him that he could grant a dispensation for this too; he was therefore obliged to submit. Francis bowing his head said, that obedience was better than sacrifice, and that at his bidding, he would cast forth his net; but that if

he did not succeed in his enterprize, his lordship's command would be the cause of it. How well he succeeded in the management of his net, in imitation of the apostle St. Peter; the sequel of our history will shew.

Whilst he was preparing his sermon, Father Fodéré, a famous Franciscan preacher, unexpectedly arrived at Annecy. The bishop was anxious to hear him, but as his sojourn at Annecy was to be but short, Corpus Christi was the only day when a sermon could well be given, and as he understood that it had already been appropriated to Francis, he felt some difficulty on the point. Francis not only yielded, but, perceiving the reluctance of the other, he entreated him most humbly and earnestly to consent; thus did humility, for that day, close his mouth, which nothing but obedience would have opened. His sermon was consequently deferred until the octave day, which that year fell on the festival of St. John Baptist. It was a stroke of Providence that our Saint should begin to preach on the day when the first preacher of the new law began to live. Whilst waiting for the hour of preaching, as the bell was ringing to give notice and collect the people, Francis was suddenly seized with a fever, which obliged him to throw himself upon his bed. It is doubtful whether this was the effect of natural timidity, usual to a first great trial, or a stratagem of the devil who foresaw how much he should lose through Francis. Raising his eyes to the holy mount, whence alone he looked for aid, he felt his heart replenished with a sweetness which completely invigorated him; rising, therefore,

he went and preached, arranging his discourse with equal eloquence and unction; he began it in such fine order, and finished it with so fervent a prayer as to draw tears from the whole audience. Having introduced a few sentences of controversy, he handled them so well, that three influential Calvinists who were present, were so far convinced, that they ceased thenceforth to deride our holy mysteries, and soon afterwards, being more fully instructed by our Saint, they were converted, although one of them was extremely obstinate in his errors, of which we shall have occasion to speak later. Such was the result of his first discourse, in which, if there was some mixture of human learning, it was qualified with the wisdom of the Gospel, insomuch that the power of the cross was not lessened. From this first sermon, we may guess the result of several others, which he made by order of the bishop. When the sermon was ended, the bishop (his eyes still moist with tears) turned to the canons and the principal citizens, and said: "Well, what do you say of my son? Has he not admirably spoken of admirable things? He is truly a new apostle, powerful in work and word; God gives him to us to teach the people the science of salvation, unto the remission of sins." Great was the applause and praise bestowed on him and his family. There were some ladies who applied to his mother there present, together with the Count of Sales, the eulogium heretofore conferred on our Blessed Lady, "Blessed is the womb that bare such a man, and the breasts which nourished him."

The bishop congratulated the Saint's father on the possession of a son so well endowed, adding that

he had all the qualifications requisite for success in this branch of the ministry; and in effect, his aspect was grave and modest, his voice pleasing and sonorous, his action lively and animated, yet free from stiffness and affectation. He paid attention to eloquence, especially at first, saying that as the heretics used it as one of their most powerful weapons, he too ought to make it available to the cause of truth. But the power of his sermons proceeded more from the inward unction of his own heart, penetrated as it was by a deep sense of the gospel truths. He gave of his own fulness, having made himself the disciple of Christ before he became a teacher of men. He prepared himself by meditation at the foot of the crucifix, more than by the study of books; convinced that if a preacher hoped to produce much fruit, he must be a man of prayer, and practise what he taught. He always bore in mind the commendation bestowed by Christ on his precursor; "he was a bright and shining light," inferring therefrom that if we would give light to others, we must first burn with the fire of charity ourselves.

He never wasted a moment of his time, well knowing that a Christian has nothing more precious, since it is given as the purchase of eternity. He was always either meditating, praying, studying, visiting the sick, reconciling enemies, or composing discords; for which his knowledge of law, as well as his invincible meekness so well qualified him. Wholly immersed in God, he chanted in the choir with the recollection of a seraph, and walked about the streets with the modesty of an angel, to the great edi-

fication of all who beheld him, nor did he neglect any exercise of Christian charity which fell in his way.

In September he was made deacon, having already founded the confraternity of the Holy Cross; and as December approached, when he was to receive the priesthood, he entirely interrupted his studies and all other application, how holy soever it might be, to prepare himself for this great event, when he hoped to receive the spirit, as well as the order of priesthood.

If the holy provost had listened to all that his humility suggested, never would he have presented himself before the Bishop to be ordained priest, though, indeed, we may say of him what St. Gregory Nazianzen writes of St. Basil, "that he was a priest before he received orders," of which he had formed a sublime idea drawn from the works of the fathers, who treat on the sacerdotal dignity. Moreover, God had given him such clear light upon its excellence, as to have inspired him with a holy awe of it; inso-much that he never would have dared to approach the altar if his prelate had not desired it; but this second Samuel obeyed the voice which called him, his humility yielding to obedience; he devoted himself exclusively to the spiritual exercises, by way of disposing himself to receive the grace of the Sacrament, and whereas he had hitherto spent some hours every day in the study of controversial theology, he now changed his plan, applying himself solely to that of theology which is acquired by prayer and meditation on Holy Scripture, of which the Holy Ghost is the master. He well knew that when the mind searches the grandeurs of God by means of scholastic subtle-

ties, it is apt to stray from His love, whilst, on the contrary, true wisdom and the holy fear of God are acquired by the practice of Christian virtue and perpetual meditation on His laws. He was far more anxious to be a holy than a learned man, for little will it profit us to have the mind enlightened by the truth, if the heart be not inflamed with divine love; hence he studied to advance in the knowledge of God as the saints did, namely, by prayer. Knowing too that God is purity itself, prayer taught him that only they desire to see Him who are pure of heart, he studied therefore to purify his by the practice of virtues, which disposed him to receive light from on high, and that interior unction which is the best of teachers.

By means of the spiritual exercises, the holy man brought such excellent dispositions, that, together with holy orders, he received the plenitude of that spirit peculiar to the priesthood, and which gives strength and vigour to pastors. He was ordained in the ember days of December by his bishop, whose tears testified the devotion and consolation with which he impressed his hands on the head of Francis; as for him, he seemed wholly absorbed in God, as may be inferred from his well known high idea of the priesthood. "To be a priest," said he, "is a great thing; it is a name signifying as much as *king*, and is a title equivalent in many respects to sovereignty; the quality of angel does not deserve so much respect; how necessary is it then for me to consider and prove myself attentively, having to consecrate the Body and Blood of the Son of God, in order that I may not read my condemnation at the

bottom of the chalice! I am astonished at the assurance with which I approach the holy altar, to which so many most holy men did not dare to approach. It is so sublime a dignity that the very angels do not contemplate it without admiring its value and excellence."

It was in these dispositions that he sang his first mass on the festival of St. Thomas the Apostle, his parents and a vast concourse of people being present. After vespers he delivered a fervent discourse on the subject of his sacrifice, when the Senator Faber, who was there, admired the erudition of the Saint more than ever.

Reflecting that he was now a priest, he said that God had elected and separated him from the world, in order that he might lead souls to virtue by his words and example; that a priest ought to be as invincible and indefatigable in his labours as he was irreprehensible in manners, and that his soul should be filled with sanctity, even to overflowing, that it might be outwardly seen; and as the common people are usually swayed by the conduct of the priest, his very aspect ought to inspire virtue and confound vice. In conformity with these sentiments, the Saint combined the lustre of action with the glory of dignity; hence he was as much respected by men for his sanctity, as he was pleasing to God for his merits. Approaching the mount of the Lord, the holy altar, with pure heart and innocent hands, he received the most copious blessings. As he celebrated mass, his beam- ing eyes and countenance indicated the flames which were kindled in his heart, and so perfectly purified it from the idea of created things, that he was able

confidentially to own to the Baroness de Chantal, that whenever he approached the holy altar, he felt himself, as it were, despoiled of all earthly objects.

CHAPTER II.

FOUNDs THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS.

REVIVING the errors of the iconoclasts, the impious Calvin condemned the veneration of the cross and of holy images; Francis resolved to institute a confraternity, whose chief object should be to honour them.

Whilst he was yet but a subdeacon, he took counsel of his canons, and gave a beginning to this confraternity of penitents, giving them a black habit and excellent rules, which were approved by the Bishop; the following are the chief:

1. They were to be called of the Confraternity of the Holy Cross, this being the standard under which Catholicity sustains itself, by which the devil is overcome, temptations are subdued, and infidels are defeated.

2. He would have it styled of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin; as it is Mary, conceived without sin, who affords succour to the miserable, gives courage to the pusillanimous, prays for the people and for the clergy, intercedes for the devout female sex, represses the audacity of heretics, and protects the good from all evils.

3. He would also have it bear the names of SS.

Peter and Paul, the glorious princes of the earth, one of whom was Christ's vicar, and the other, the doctor of the Gentiles: the *first* was the foundation-stone of the Church, whose faith shall never fail; the *other* was a vessel of election, destined to carry the name of Jesus before kings; whilst both, by their glorious martyrdom, have illustrated the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the mother and mistress of all other Churches; he had likewise another motive, namely, the fact of their being the titular patrons of the Church of Geneva, which they preserved from heresy up to the year 1553, when the license, insolence, and interest of the people drove away their prince-bishop, the clergy and religion, so that for many years this city had been the mistress of error, the sink of impiety, and the originator of the troubles, rebellions, war, and desolation which have inundated the neighbouring states. Now the Saint hoped, by invoking the saving sign of the cross, and the suffrages of the Immaculate Mary, and of the holy apostles, and by turning themselves to the Lord of mercy, practising good works, and the like, that God would yield to their prayers, (overcome by their holy importunity,) and would free them from the incursions of heretics and soldiers, that war, famine, sickness, and other dangers would cease, and that the enemies of God and man being confined within the precincts of Geneva, the holy Catholic religion would re flourish, and the Catholics be reinstated in the churches from which they had been driven, reduced as it were to the state of pilgrims and strangers in other cities, and using borrowed churches. The congregation was to observe four

chief festivals; the Invention and Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady, and of the holy apostles, June 29th. Moreover, on the second Sunday of each month, the Blessed Sacrament was to be exposed in their oratory, two of the brethren always remaining in adoration before It.

The members were obliged to confession and communion once a month, besides the four festivals above named: thrice a day they were to salute our Blessed Lady on their knees, with head uncovered. He exhorted them daily to recite five Paters and Aves, to accompany the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, to visit the sick, and the prisoners, to follow the dead to the grave, (in whose behalf certain suffrages were appointed,) and finally he prescribed rules with regard to the admission of members, and the election of officers, whose duties he specified, exhorting them to use their best endeavours to prevent litigation and discord, upon the same plan as the confraternity of the Crocifisso, established in the church of St. Marcellus at Rome. The members wore a black cloth dress, with the rosary appended to their girdle; to the sisterhood, he prescribed a white habit, plain and devoid of vanity. Above all things he recommended them to assist at the Church offices, and the instructions given at their parish churches; the Saint not approving that private devotions should withdraw the faithful from those churches, where by baptism they received new birth in Jesus Christ, nor would he on any account allow them to refrain from attending to the voice of their own pastors.

Amongst those who were enrolled in this Confraternity, we find the names of several canons of the cathedral, as well as of the most distinguished persons of the city. At the first election of the officers, Francis, who was the founder, was also unanimously nominated the first prior of the congregation.

On the following festival of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Confraternity began to officiate in the church of St. John, belonging to the Knights of Malta, the commander giving his consent at the Saint's request, who preferred it, because it was but little frequented, and because it was convenient to the inhabitants. The Bishop honoured the function with his presence; nothing was spared that could render the ceremony imposing and agreeable, which concluded in the evening with Benediction, given by the good prelate himself. One great advantage arising from this institution, was the check which it gave to dissensions and enmities, which for many years had reigned in Annecy, Francis applying himself to the reconciliation of enemies by means of that saving word which reconciles us all to God.

The high reputation of the Confraternity of the Holy Cross soon spread through the neighbouring country, and the city of Chambery entreated our Saint to go and introduce it there; he consented to this, and sent the constitutions to be considered and approved. For the closer union of the two congregations, he desired that both should meet him at Aix, a small town between Annecy and Chambery, on the Tuesday of the following Pentecost week, of the year 1594. It was not only his intention to confirm the union between these two members of

one and the same body, but likewise to render solemn adoration to a portion of the true cross, which is kept there with great veneration. The Senator Faber wrote from Chambery to the Saint, enquiring what the brethren were to do; he returned the following answer: "God be praised by you all, because the faith is now announced in every place. We will undertake the pilgrimage to Aix as you request, and as we have agreed, on the third day of Pentecost, in the same manner as you saw us here; we will sing the same litanies of the Holy Cross; we will go bare-footed, because we deem the halting-place to be holy, as being enriched with some of the precious wood on which our Lord was beheld by our forefathers, burning with still more ardent charity than in the bush which Moses saw. We will not, however, perform the whole journey thus, a few leagues will suffice, and this for divers good reasons. As it will be necessary to take some refection, we will all together repair to an inn, where we may partake of a modest frugal repast, taking care that the meal be seasoned with spiritual reading, which will prevent all profane discourse from mingling with our pious pilgrimage. I cannot precisely specify the hour of our arrival, because, as many intend to join us, even contrary to our wish, especially some ladies whom we have already admitted to communion, and other devotional exercises, we fear we may not arrive until late. We hope, however, to arrive at about ten or eleven o'clock, intending to hear mass at Aix before mid-day. It will be well that you should be ready there to meet us because you are fewer in number, and are at a less distance. Our

fraternization cannot be otherwise than sincere, as it will be cemented in presence of that wood which effected a reconciliation between the immortal inhabitants of heaven, and the mortal dwellers upon earth. Nor ought we to overlook the striking coincidence of your being made aware of our intended pilgrimage the very day that we had decided upon it; and hence, by Divine permission, whilst contemplating the same cross, let us have the same sentiments. May God be praised! I send you the rules and constitutions of our Confraternity, in which, if circumstances of place should require any alteration, you can make it; it is sufficient that we should all have one perpetual law, namely, that of ever being worthy of the glorious title of sons of God, and that we endeavour to be truly such. Conduct yourself always well, my dear and much-valued brother, and then the most Holy Crucified will be propitious to you. We salute you all, and with you, all the children of the Holy Cross, hoping to see and converse with you before long, that so our joy in the Lord may be full."

On the appointed morning Francis celebrated mass in the oratory at a very early hour, after which the procession was immediately formed; they lunched at Arbe, and then resuming their walk, reached Aix at ten o'clock. They were met outside the town by the confraternity of Chambéry, and after the usual interchange of courtesy, repaired all together to the church, where one of the Canons sang mass, and presented the relic of the holy cross to all the brotherhood to be kissed. After hearing a fine sermon, delivered by Father Cherubin, the Capuchin,

the two brotherhoods made their compact of perpetual confederation and union, electing for their common father, Francis the provost of Geneva. On the following morning they all confessed and communicated, after which they set out on their return; but Francis was obliged to condescend to the wishes of the Baron of Cusi, who entreated that the procession might halt at his castle, which lay in the road. On arriving there, whilst a repast was in preparation, they all descended the hill into a little shrubbery, where they engraved a cross and the name of their patron saint, on the bark of the trees. After spending some time in prayer here, Francis stood up, and, anxious to inspire the desire of bearing crosses calmly, he thus accosted the pious troop: "Behold, here we are in shady places and in the valley of death! let us forsake these caves and ascend to the mountain of the Lord: it was to the mountain that He carried His cross, to be ignominiously fastened on it for our redemption. It becomes us to follow His steps, since He has declared those to be unworthy of Him, who do not carry their cross and follow Him: let each one of us therefore take up our cross and follow Christ to Calvary, at least by contemplation." Whereupon he (and the rest in imitation of him), picking up the wood which lay scattered on the ground, made crosses of it, with which, loading their shoulders, they climbed the hill in silence, and returned to the castle. Here they found a magnificent supper prepared for them, and Francis told the Baron, that whereas they expected to reach Mount Calvary, they had, on the

contrary, found Mount Thabor. That it was precisely through many tribulations they must enter the kingdom of heaven, seeing that it behoved Christ Himself to suffer, before He entered into His glory. During supper, they discoursed of the banquet which awaited them in heaven. The Baron was highly gratified, and boasted that, like Abraham, he had on that day entertained angels. At the conclusion of the repast, they resumed their journey, and reached their oratory full of good purposes of living thenceforth more holily.

The reputation of the saintly Provost of Geneva daily increased, and at length reached the ears of his sovereign. Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, was most anxious to promote men of learning and virtue, and considering the advantage which would accrue to the public, if Francis would but apply himself to the administration of justice, he made another attempt to induce him to accept the senatorial dignity, which he had before offered; thus testifying the high esteem in which he held his worth. His relatives and friends earnestly pressed his acceptance of an honour, which most others would gladly purchase at a dear rate. Faber, more than all the rest, used all his influence; he wrote, he entreated, he remonstrated, but all in vain. He expatiated on his ardent wish of living with him; and as he could not possibly forsake his wife and station to make himself a canon at Annecy, he besought Francis to retain the provost-ship like his predecessor, and go and reside at Chambery; he explained how he would then be able to serve our Lord more effectively than in a private station, by his rectitude in

checking injustice, defending the interests of the poor, protecting widows and orphans, the precious objects of his solicitude; whilst these duties would in no degree interrupt his exercises of piety and religion; reminding him that his rank, learning, and virtue would ensure him such authority in the senate, that he would easily be able to protect the innocent and repress the vicious. The humble servant of God stood firm in his refusal; expressed himself in such terms of gratitude to his sovereign, as to increase the high esteem in which he was already held, and replied to those who were most urgent in their solicitations upon the subject, that since God had called him to serve His Church, he ought not to engage himself in aught that would divert him from this first obligation, and that whoever thought his state and ministry did not furnish him with full occupation, did but imperfectly comprehend how much charity might amplify it. Although he felt, as he said, that our Lord had given him sincerity and integrity enough to guard him against positive injustice; he by no means felt equally secure against the surprises of inadvertence, so inseparable from a post like the one now offered to him; that it was always dangerous to have to give judgment either with regard to the property or the honour of others; that our Saviour Himself refused a definitive sentence upon the differences between the two brothers, to serve as an example to those who profess the ecclesiastical state; that to keep himself at a distance from contests and litigation, would be safer and more in conformity with his state, in which he hoped to persevere until death; that he felt unwilling to

occupy a post which might be much better filled by another; that it was not well to mix up sacred with profane things; jurisprudence, though holy, would engage him too much in secular affairs; and it was an axiom of the apostle, that they who fight under the banner of the Lord, ought not to embroil themselves in worldly business. Feeling, as he did, quite averse to everything of the sort, he had made up his mind to announce the divine word to the people; and as he could not divide himself, his senatorial patent could be of no other use than to add to the papers of some archive.

His parents imagined that Francis would not persist in his refusal, and flattered themselves that he would yield as soon as his first ebullition of fervour had passed off, especially as the magistracy was not considered incompatible with the clerical profession; and numerous instances proved that the two could be combined without detriment to the soul. They, moreover, thought that deference to the opinions of so many great men would over-rule his own inclinations; but seeing him so resolute in his refusal, the Count of Sales declared that he knew not what his son could be thinking of, nor what to think of him.

But the ways of the Lord in the guidance of His elect, are not always the same, and though He may call some few to the discharge of such functions, He withdraws the greater number from them, inspiring them with a holy horror of such employments, as being opposed to peace of soul, and that solitude of heart so dear to the saints. God, moreover, had designs on Francis, wholly incompatible with such a post, intending that he should be a man altogether

addicted to His service, whose sole affair should be to labour for His glory and the salvation of souls.

In fact, scarcely was he admitted to holy Orders, before he began to cast the seed of the divine word through the adjacent villages so much in need of help and instruction, as they had been overlooked on account of their poverty and roughness. As soon as he was made priest, he applied himself to this with great fervour, shunning whatever could draw applause upon himself; he seldom preached in the city, giving the preference to country places, that he might instruct the rustics who adored God without knowing Him; conversing with the ignorant and simple, in imitation of Jesus Christ; and finding them better disposed to receive the light of the Gospel, as being, generally speaking, devoid of ambition, self-interest, and passion, which rule in concert with blindness of intellect, and hardness of heart.

He might have availed himself of the liberty allowed by St. Paul, of accepting necessary sustenance from those to whom he so abundantly imparted spiritual riches; but, preferring the example of the apostle to his permission, not only did he maintain himself, but also distributed his own property amongst the poor, and solicited still more from the charity of his friends. His disinterestedness gave credit to his ministry; for he well knew that avarice lowers the clergy in the opinion of the people, who, if subjected to harsh exactions or imperious domination by their priests, lose all esteem for, and confidence in them; two things absolutely necessary, if they would lead the people to the practice of Christian virtue, to which, unfortunately, they have a strong repugnance.

When esteem is lost, contempt and even odium often follow towards those whose duty it is to announce the word of God.

But it was not his disinterestedness alone which acquired and maintained the respect which the poor entertained for our Saint; his unalterable meekness contributed much towards this good effect. He looked upon them all with a father's eye, and lived amongst them as if they were his children, loving them all tenderly in Christ. He sympathised in their trials, compassionated their miseries, and with his usual tact, made himself all to all, that he might gain all to Christ. In a short time piety reflowered around Annecy, even in those places where intercourse with heresy had all but introduced atheism.

Whilst he was thus toiling in behalf of the villages, he did not however entirely forsake the city; he went there to visit the sick and the prisons, to put an end to law suits, to appease quarrels, and to extinguish hatred and animosity. Our Lord gave His blessing to the labours of the Saint. There was no heart so obdurate as to resist his winning gentleness and charitable persuasions, by means of which he gained universal good-will. Being appointed to hear confessions, he chose an inconvenient post close to the Church door, and here he took his seat at dawn of day, remaining until mid-day; as willingly receiving the poor, the ragged, and the rough, as if they were the highest personages of the land; and he used to say, that he gave them the preference, because they were often slighted by other confessors. It is said that he used to lend his

own handkerchief to his poor penitents when they had nothing wherewith to wipe away their tears. Amongst his penitents, was a blind old woman. As soon as he saw her enter the Church, he rose from his confessional to go and guide her to a seat; and not unfrequently did he lead her the whole distance from her house to the Church: he had a great affection for this old lady, and used often to say that he wished his conscience was as pure as hers, even at the price of his eye-sight. He had another poor paralysed cripple for his penitent, whom he used to take great pains with, in order to place him comfortably and suitably to the respect due to the sacred tribunal.

Whilst the Saint was thus attending to his penitents with his usual patience and admirable charity, the devil was laying a snare for him, even in the holy place. A very beautiful woman conceived a criminal passion for Francis, and as his reserve left her no other means of accosting him, she determined to assail him even in that tribunal where he held the place of Jesus Christ. After a rambling sort of preface, interspersed with sighs and groans, which puzzled the holy man as to what was still to come, she declared how violently she loved him, and desired to awaken a corresponding sentiment in him. She concluded by entreating him to have compassion on her. The holy man, whose purity had already so often been put to the trial, suspected that this woman was possessed; or at least that she was violently tempted by the devil; he therefore repeatedly made the sign of the cross on her head, exorcising her in a low tone, and trying to

bring her back to her senses, he represented the terror of the divine judgments, and the eternity of torment to which she would be condemned if she consented to such a temptation. But the impious woman, finding herself baffled, threw herself into a fury, as usually happens on such occasions, and began to cry out against him, calling him an insulting, filthy wretch. Francis wholly unmoved, told her with his accustomed meekness, that it was her soul which must be loathsome in the sight of God; that it indeed required compassion, and he therefore admonished her of her misery, advising her to repent and be converted to the Lord. She persisted, however, in her rage, to the great scandal of the by-standers, who at length drove her out of the church; and not daring to make her appearance again, she quitted the city, leaving another palm of victory in the hand of our Saint.

CHAPTER III.

CALUMNIES AGAINST THE SAINT.

HE had to undergo another assault about the same time; an assault which might have disturbed a heart less solidly grounded in Christian virtue. Almighty God frequently permits the just to be assailed by envy, to which calumny succeeds, and this, to exercise and prove their constancy in the good cause, as well as to teach them that they cannot be acceptable to Him, unless they add sufferings to their good works.

Some malevolent individuals, unable to endure the light of such a sun, instigated by private envy and jealousy, told the bishop that the provost was continually censuring his conduct, and severely criticising certain affairs dependant upon him. The good prelate allowed himself to be imposed on by these statements, so artfully concocted as to bear the impress of truth. He began to doubt, and even to regret having treated Francis as if he was his own son, and for having looked upon him as the first and best member of his clergy. It would be difficult to describe how keenly the heart of Francis felt this stroke; he had received many favours from, and held himself under many obligations to his bishop, whose virtues he respected and revered. He was therefore much afflicted at perceiving how completely changed in his regard was the manner of the prelate; the more so as he was quite unable to account for the change. On the one side, the good old man could not make known the impressions he had received without detriment to his reputation, whilst on the other side, the Saint was fully resolved to commit the affair, and the care of his own innocence to divine Providence, without interrupting any of the functions which he had undertaken for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Time at last undeceived the bishop; God so ordaining that the calumny should become evident; for unable to conceal his suspicions, he took Francis aside, and unburthened his heart to him. The sincerity of the servant of God soon cleared up the mistake, exposing the artifice and malice of the calumny. He found it more difficult to obtain pardon for the

calumniators, whom the bishop was determined to punish severely, if Francis had not prostrated at his feet, and excused his adversaries by saying that their reports proceeded from false zeal rather than from envy. From thenceforward the friendship of these two for each other became stronger than ever; our Lord availing Himself of the good understanding which existed between them, for the success of affairs referring to His glory; of affairs undertaken under the auspices of the bishop, and effected by the efforts of the Saint.

Two students of Annecy, lately returned from Louvain, were anxious to sustain theological theses, in order to shew their own people how much learning they had acquired in that famous university; and they requested the provost of Sales to act as president on the occasion; but the humble Francis excused himself, alleging that there would be an impropriety in him, who had not taken his degrees, if he were to assume such an office, whilst there were so many learned graduates in the city, well versed in theology. However, as they persisted in the request, he was compelled to acquiesce. He displayed such stores of erudition on the occasion, so clearly dissected the argument, and gave his replies in such subtle and appropriate terms, that he acquired the reputation of being one of the most learned, as he already was looked upon as one of the most virtuous men of his age; hence it was publicly said that there would be temerity in attempting to rival him in any species of learning.

In proof of this, some time later, his friends would have him offer himself as a competitor for the curacy

of Petit Bornand. When this became known, no one ventured to compete with him; all the other pretendants withdrew as soon as the secretary read out the name of the provost of Sales. The bishop, who had advised the step, seeing him left alone, instead of examining him, bade him deliver a discourse in Latin on the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist; which he did with incomparable talent and eloquence, to the admiration of the whole assembly. His ordinary conferred this benefice on him, with an apostolic dispensation for plurality of titles, which was easily obtained in consideration of the provostship possessing scarcely any revenues; the heretics having seized what had formerly belonged to it. He was unable to enter into possession without contesting the right with one who pretended to lay claim to it; not only was he forced to appeal to the bishop's tribunal, but he was even obliged to have recourse to Rome, and to the supreme senate of Savoy; gaining his suit in all the three courts; his cause being so just, and his reason so well founded. He assumed the administration of his cure, attending to it as much as possible himself, and providing it moreover with a vicar well adapted to the peculiar style of the people dwelling there among the mountains.

It will be well to give a sketch of his mode of life at this time; for it was a life of uniformity, simplicity, and regularity. He carefully shunned singularity, convinced that affectation could have no other aim than that of acquiring the esteem of men. He was clean and modest in his dress, furniture, and table; in conversation he was mild, affable,

courteous and civil. With his friends he was sincere and upright, but prudent and reserved; his eyes and aspect bore an air of paradise, ever serene and tranquil; the index of his pure and placid heart. Composed in his demeanour, he never swerved from the rules of politeness, without however any scrupulous adherence to them. He used to say that true piety is not opposed to the moral virtues, nor does it exclude anything that could render life social and happy: we may attend to devotion without being sordid, untidy, or austere; indeed, we ought to endeavour to win our fellow creatures by a behaviour which would inspire them with a love of virtue. A certain exterior austerity is by no means suitable to devotion; it renders the service of God tedious, whereas we ought to serve Him with joy and cheerfulness, and with a holy freedom. God commands us to call Him father, to shew that He would have us love Him tenderly, with child-like confidence; nor shall we go too far in trusting to His goodness; although our sins may compel Him to exercise His justice, He always punishes as it were against His will, never using severity until we force Him to it by our obstinacy in malice.

But this exterior of Francis, in which nothing appeared that was not well regulated, (professing as he did to lead a common life) was accompanied by an inward innocence which he never violated, and by a pure, disinterested heart, submissive in all things to the will of God. He was ever attentive to the divine presence, full of ardour and zeal for the divine glory, and wholly penetrated with the intention of extending it, and with the desire of possessing

Him. His whole life is one long proof of this, and it suffices to have known him, to believe even much more than we shall record of him.

This beginning, though illustrious, was as it were but a prelude to the greater enterprises to which God destined him. The mission of the Chablais furnished him with a more ample field, and in it he had to contend with more numerous and more formidable adversaries. How much he did and suffered during it will be shewn, at least partially, in the following chapters. I say partially, because with Francis, as with all great saints, it is but the smaller part which history transmits of their good deeds; the best and greater share is known to God alone. The formidable nature of the undertaking, which he so courageously entered upon, demonstrates that he was a worthy successor of the Apostles by his zeal in propagating the faith, and replanting religion in those provinces where heresy had uprooted it.

CHAPTER V.

ORIGIN OF THE MISSION OF THE CHABLAIS. FRANCIS
RESOLVES TO UNDERTAKE IT.

GENEVA, a happy city so long as she remained catholic, may boast of a thousand prerogatives, unnecessary to be detailed here; but as soon as she renounced catholicity, she rebelled against her bishop, and against the Duke of Savoy, both of whom laid claim to the sovereignty of Geneva. So

true it is, that they who are unfaithful to God, are seldom faithful to their prince. The Swiss, having under pretext of religion aided the city in its guilty designs, unmindful of the amicable relations existing between them and the house of Savoy, determined to despoil it of the Pays de Vaud, of the Duchy of the Chablais, and of the Bailiwicks of Gex, Ternier, and Gaillard, without which, it seemed that the Genevese would be unable to maintain their assumed independence. They intrigued with Francis I, king of France, then at war with Charles III, Duke of Savoy, and found no great difficulty in gaining possession of those territories, in banishing religion, and in committing all the excesses which usually accompany violent political changes. When peace was at length concluded between Henry II, son of Francis of France, and Emanuel Philibert, son of Charles III, after the famous victories of St. Quentins and Gravelines, France restored the states seized upon in the previous reign; and the Swiss were compelled to abandon the Chablais and the Bailiwicks, upon the stipulation, however, that catholicity should not be restored there. The Duke was obliged by the circumstances of the times to accede to this unjust compact; but he did so with the hope that some favourable conjunction would enable the people to return to their ancient faith; of which the Duke himself made loyal profession, and of which he was a most zealous protector. But Divine Providence reserved this glory to his son and successor Charles Emanuel; and the favourable opportunity occurred in the year 1589, when the Genevese, discontented at their proximity with a

powerful, warlike, and Catholic prince, induced the Swiss to break the peace concluded between them and Duke Emanuel Philibert. Under one pretext or other, they levied troops and again took possession of the territories, which were open, and were left unprotected. Their usurpation was but of short duration; the Duke no longer harassed by the powerful arms of France, advanced with his army, and soon compelled the Genevese and Swiss to withdraw from the conquered lands. For the future security of the country, the Duke established garrisons and built fortresses, fit to ward off rebellious attempts, and also to facilitate the re-establishment of the Catholic faith. The wise prince was well convinced that he could place small reliance on the loyalty of his subjects, so long as they professed a creed at variance with his own; and, as he no longer held himself bound to a compact which his enemies had broken by the very act of war, he began seriously to think of the means of restoring catholicity throughout his dominions. Recent success told him that in imitation of the Swiss, he might apply force; but, judging that it would be most prudent to begin with the good, he resolved to reserve coercion, until he found more lenient measures ineffectual. He wrote therefore to the bishop of Geneva, desiring him to select a few learned, pious, and prudent ecclesiastics, to go and preach the faith amongst those people. He promised to protect the missionaries, and to second their endeavours: he provided them with letters patent, to shew that they were employed by his orders; and he enjoined the governors of the different districts

to assist them if necessary with armed force; that so none should be audacious enough to disturb them in the functions of their ministry.

On receiving these orders, the good prelate rejoiced exceedingly, and blessed the Lord for opening in his day, the path for him to go in search of these stray sheep, which though wandering from his fold, belonged nevertheless to him. But on casting his eye over each corner of his diocese, he felt sadly perplexed in the conviction that he had scarcely any one competent to so difficult an undertaking; the dangers of which might well appal the stoutest courage. He well knew that his dear son, the provost of Sales, was the man most likely to succeed; but some feelings of human respect deterred him from making such a proposition, and he therefore looked round for other means. He assembled all the clergy of his vast diocese; when after reading the letters of his sovereign, he reminded them that the best part of the bishopric had for seventy years been plunged in the darkness of heresy; that God had at length looked with an eye of mercy on these abandoned people, whom heretofore His justice had given over to the spirit of error, and to the desires of their perverse hearts; that their prince was sending them to the spiritual conquest of this desolate country; and that if he did not second these just commands, he should himself become culpable of all future disorders, and be held accountable to God for all the souls which would be lost, for want of co-operation with the laudable intentions of the Duke. He needed workmen able to repair the ruins of the sanctuary; men who would be ready to go

in search of the stray sheep, for which his infirmities and old age disqualified him. He had therefore assembled them all to select some one to second him in the enterprise, from which no anticipated sufferings and difficulties would be able to deter him; he could truly say with the apostle that life was not more dear to him than his own soul, and that he was ready to sacrifice it if needful, in discharging the functions of his ministry. He trusted that they all had the same sentiments as himself; that they were not required to go into unknown countries, and preach to strangers whose customs and language they were unacquainted with: the sole question here, was to contribute to the conversion of their own countrymen, subjects of the same prince, governed by the same laws, reclaimed by baptism, (whose character they bore on their souls) to the bosom of the Church, from which, nevertheless, they were aliens. In conclusion, he reminded them that they ought less to dwell on the toils and dangers, than on the recompense which they would receive, and the unfailing succours of grace which would attend them; because, as the Lord called them forth to the assistance of their brethren, He undoubtedly would be their guide, their strength, their protector, and their crown.

The discourse of the good bishop, so far from inspiring his hearers with the same ardour that burned in his own breast, seemed rather to dispirit them, so great was their dread of the toils and dangers to which they foresaw the missionaries would be exposed. Not one of them had heart enough to second the zeal of the worthy prelate.

Francis alone was moved by the words he had just heard; instead of the fear which was depicted on their faces, his eyes beamed with eager desire of corresponding with the views of the prince and of the bishop. No sooner did the latter call for his opinion, than, with a magnanimity worthy of his noble heart, he rose from his seat, threw himself at the bishop's feet, and said, "My lord, I am ready to go, provided you deem me capable of the task." A murmur of applause ran through the whole assembly; all admired the generosity of the young provost; and the bishop, with tears in his eyes, and a heart full of joy, replied that not only did he deem him competent, but even necessary to such a mission, as being in every respect endowed with the desired qualifications. He declared himself infinitely obliged to him for his aid thus afforded to his old age; seeing that the burden belonged of right to his own shoulders, if he had had strength enough to bear it.

The provost added that he was not only willing to second him, but was even ready to take the whole charge of the mission upon himself. He entreated him to consider his age and his indispositions, which disqualified his lordship for such labours and sufferings; that though a bishop, he did not cease to be a man, and therefore should measure his designs according to his strength; and although God enjoined charity upon all men, and upon bishops more than all the rest, He likewise required discretion, because the sacrifices of charity must be seasoned with the salt of prudence; that if he believed himself obliged to give his life for his stray sheep, he

was likewise bound to preserve it for the welfare of the whole flock; would his lordship be satisfied to allow him (Francis) to preach by his order and under his auspices? if so, he would entreat him to act the part of Moses, and remain in prayer on the mount, whilst he, like another Joshua, went forth to combat on the plain.

He concluded by observing that in place of many workmen being requisite at first, it seemed to him better that there should be but few. The disposition of the people should be sounded; and then, according as the first succeeded, others might follow; that later, the bishop might go to complete the work, when it had sufficiently progressed, as they hoped it would. In the meantime, all that was needed, was a small band of select men with whom he would enter the heretical districts: but it was of importance that these few should be endowed with fortitude and patience enough not to be deterred by the first difficulties, which in all probability they would have to encounter, and should not timidly shrink from the task when once it was begun.

The opinion of the Saint was received by the whole assembly with the applause it deserved; the bishop yielded to the wishes of the clergy, relinquishing all personal share in the mission of the Chablais, and deputing the provost of Sales in his place; the next question was who would be his associates? Strange to say, Lewis of Sales was the only one to offer himself. Now, although he was a man of remarkable virtue, endowed with learning suited to the undertaking, the good prelate could not feel satisfied to see Francis set out with only one companion; but as

the holy man replied that numerical strength would not be necessary at the beginning, the bishop yielded to this opinion and dissolved the meeting, offering up fervent prayers to God for the success of the mission, enjoining all his clergy warmly to recommend it, that He might deign to bless it.

On this occasion something happened similar to what is recorded of St. Paul in Miletus; aware of the dangers to which the new apostles of the Chablais would be exposed, the clergy disapproved the journey, fearing that the Church would be deprived of them, but the two were inflexible in their purpose, zeal hindered them from seeing that which others dreaded for them, and submitting themselves to the orders of heaven, the party separated with tears in their eyes.

CHAPTER V.

FRANCIS SURMOUNTS ALL OBSTACLES, AND SETS OUT FOR THE CHABLAIS.

WHEN it became generally known that the provost of Sales was destined to the mission of the Chablais, his friends took alarm, and used all their endeavours to dissuade him from the project. They represented in vivid colours the toils and dangers to which he was exposing himself, and pronounced it madness in him thus to undertake alone, what the Duke of Savoy, with his whole army, had been unable to accomplish. On the contrary, he might persuade himself that the heretics would do as much to maintain their pre-

tended reformation as they had done to plant it; therefore nothing but misfortune could be expected. But finding the Saint resolute in purpose, they wrote to his parents, advising them to forbid his departure, now fixed for an early day. On receiving this information, the Count of Sales went over to Annecy, and taking his son with him, went to the bishop, and falling on his knees before him, entreated him with many tears not to impose such a mission upon Francis, telling him that though he had surrendered to the Church this his first-born and staff of his old age, he had sacrificed him to God to serve him as a confessor, but could not consent to have him a martyr; he could not agree to have him sent as a victim to be slaughtered, or as a lamb in the midst of wolves. The Saint answered in modest and humble terms, and finished by saying that it was his chief and sole affair to attend to the concerns and the glory of his Heavenly Father. Many remarks passed between the father and the son; the one resisting, the other persisting, till the Bishop would certainly have yielded if Francis had not encouraged him, entreating him not to make him unworthy of the kingdom of God; that having put his hand to the plough, he should lose the crown if he turned back. Upon this the good prelate admonished the Count of Sales against further resistance, unless he wished to see renewed the act recorded of the seraphical St. Francis, who surrendered his shirt into the hands of his own father, that he might be able to follow the standard of Jesus crucified. The Count replied that he certainly had no wish to resist God, nevertheless, he had not heart to become the

murderer of his son. "In truth," continued he, "I do not deserve that an angel should come and arrest the blow which is to sacrifice my Isaac; hence I cannot bring myself to consent to this sacrifice, which, as far as I am concerned, will be involuntary. May the holy will of God be accomplished!" Then, without anything further, he quitted the Bishop's apartment, his son following him, who, casting himself at his feet, entreated him not to hinder, but rather to animate him by giving him his blessing. "Son," rejoined the Count, "how often have I received your blessing, at sermons, in confession, and at mass; God forbid that I should ever think of cursing you; but do not imagine that I will ever give my consent to your undertaking, or give you my blessing on that score." Having said this, he left Francis and returned to Sales castle.

Having piously celebrated the festival of the nativity of our Blessed Lady, the provost received his prelate's benediction, and, accompanied by the good wishes of all the clergy and people, he started for Sales in company with his cousin Lewis. He took no other luggage with him but his breviary, Bible, and the works of Cardinal Bellarmine, then recently given to the press. Gladly would he have dispensed himself from visiting his family, but as the castle was exactly in his road, he could not do less, without showing positive disrespect to his parents. Here he again had to encounter their opposition, and all that the most tender affection could say and do to shake his purpose. The Count disapproved the mission of the Chablais altogether, and still more was he annoyed that his son and nephew should

have been selected for an enterprize which he was convinced would prove a failure. He spoke of it as an ill-concerted plan, the effect of indiscretion rather than of true zeal; no doubt, then, that the consequences would be more disastrous than profitable. He dwelt on all the obstacles to be encountered, the dangers to be apprehended, and the shame which would overwhelm them for having engaged in an affair so little likely to succeed. He told them that they might depend on his words, for he had had experience enough in the management of important affairs, adding, that he could not conceive how two such prudent persons as the Duke and the Bishop could not only have approved, but even have ordered such an undertaking at such a time. He resolved on writing to the former, to represent the inconveniences which might arise, as in all probability the mission would occasion war and desolation in Savoy, which had not yet recovered the effects of former disturbances, and then, using all the authority given him by God, over the one as father, and over the other as uncle, he positively forbade them to proceed any further, declaring that the task was far beyond their strength.

Whilst the father was thus haranguing, the mother was bathed in tears, so that a heart even less sensitive than our Saint's would have been moved, but faith (by which the just man lives) and confidence in God, which ruled his feelings and directed all his actions, were superior to all the risings of nature. Francis answered with his accustomed mildness, that no doubt the design of the apostles must have appeared very strange ; nevertheless, it prospered most

unexpectedly to those who only look at things in a worldly point of view; they preached the Gospel to all nations, and converted a whole world. Twelve poor fishermen, without learning, without eloquence, without support, opposed by all the powers of the universe, succeeded; with much greater reason then might they hope for success in the mission of the Chablais, so small in comparison with that of the apostles. Had the latter followed the dictates of human reason, the world would still be buried in the shades of paganism. It was true to say there was a wide difference between his cousin Lewis and himself, and those great men taught in the schools of our Saviour, replenished with the Holy Ghost, confirmed in grace, and endowed with miraculous powers; but, on the other hand, there was no comparison between the vast mission of the twelve, and the one intrusted to them. They would not have to preach in unknown idioms; on the contrary, they had merely to address their fellow-countrymen on the part of the same God whom they themselves worshipped, and on that of the same prince whose authority they all respected, and whose power they dreaded; to Christians, whom, though aliens to the Church, they were going to invite back again to her maternal bosom; to people who professed the same ancient symbols, believed the same Scriptures, and who held some doctrines in common with us; "Therefore," continued Francis, "we shall not be received as strangers come to proclaim unknown divinities, and wrest from them their most cherished hopes. God never fails to give special strength to those who preach His Gospel; and after all, we are not sent to the Indies

or to England, (missions not to be refused when offered,) and so far from worldly potentates opposing our design, they are resolved to favour us in every possible way. Our family, which had its origin in the Chablais, is respected there; we shall find friends and relatives who will not permit two unarmed men to be injured, men whose only aim is their salvation, and who are supported by the authority of their sovereign. I clearly foresee that we shall meet with difficulties, toils, and dangers, possibly death may even be the recompense of our labours, as it was that of the apostles, whose imitators we aspire to be; but will our dangers be greater than those of warriors, who for affairs of far less importance, and for an incomparably less reward than the acquisition of an immortal crown, expose their lives for the purchase of perishable glory? In a word, on occasions of this nature, death is preferable to a thousand triumphs; the enterprise may be laborious, but that is little when we consider the worth of that Lord who has mercifully called us to the ecclesiastical state." He next produced the authorizations of the Duke and the Bishop, saying that at the sight of these, nothing further could be said. The Most High watches over the ways of the just, and thanks to His aid, the ways of the impious perish. Although the Count of Sales was convinced by the reasoning of his son, it was not without great reluctance that he consented to his departure; he felt so confident that the scheme would prove a failure, and that his son and nephew would return to be the laughing-stock of the country. But God, whose judgments are inscrutable, and whose ways are dif-

ferent from the ways of men, strengthened the hearts of His servants in their good purpose; they refused all measures of precaution which the Lord of Sales wished to adopt for their safety, to guard them from the insults of the lower classes, so difficult to keep within due bounds when religion is in question. Francis replied, that having entered the sacred militia, spiritual arms were all they ought to wield against the enemies of God and of His Church, therefore he would agree to no measures of self-preservation,—the arm of God was not shortened, neither was His power diminished: therefore, the aid of man was not needed. The weakest instruments in His hands are equal to the greatest enterprises, and He would well know how to protect them in all emergencies, if He deemed it necessary to His glory. Having said this, he begged to decline further discussion with his father, and preparing to depart, he took his cousin Lewis by the hand, saying, "Let us go where God calls us, this is not a contest in which either fear or flight will enable us to conquer; a longer sojourn here will only tend to weaken us, and then others more generous than ourselves will bear away the crowns prepared for us."

His parents admired the immovable constancy of the holy man, and the Count seeing that nothing he alleged could daunt the two champions, gave them letters of introduction to his friends in the Chablais, and after accompanying them a short distance on the road, stood looking at them so long as they remained in sight. He then returned to the castle to console the countess, who was plunged in grief and apprehension for the safety of a son so precious to her.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS ARRIVAL AND FIRST EFFORTS IN THE CHABLAIS.

ALMIGHTY God who sometimes speaks to us by means of dreams, gave an indication, even during our Saint's youth, of the sort of employment to which He destined him. And, as in a dream, He gave St. Francis Xavier an idea of his after-labours in the East, so did He represent to St. Francis of Sales what he was destined to undertake in the West.

Whilst he was studying in Paris, John Boyard of Tulle, a man of mature age and judgment, likewise residing in the French capital, dreamt that he was crossing Mount Cenis, as if travelling from Italy to Savoy, and that he beheld a most formidable hydra rapidly advancing, endeavouring to ascend the mountain, when, suddenly, Francis, under the figure of Hercules, armed with a flaming two-edged sword, advanced, and prevented the monster's progress; after wounding it in several parts, he drove it back to Geneva, where its wounds were to be dressed. In the morning, Boyard related his dream to Dr. Deage and Francis, when the latter remarked with a smile, "Would to God that this figurative display may some day or other be verified!" The sequel of this history will prove how literally it was verified.

The two new apostles set out on the 14th Septem-

ber, 1594; on reaching the frontiers of the Chablais, they felt animated with fresh zeal, and prostrating on the ground, with tears in their eyes, they implored the blessing of God upon their entrance and sojourn in the province, and besought Him to be their guide and strength, to put words of life into their mouths, and such an ardent charity in their hearts as would stand proof against the contradictions of men, and against all the obstacles which the devils might raise to hinder the people from returning to the Catholic Church; they saluted the tutelar angel of the country, and fulminated a general exorcism against the malignant spirits which infested it, a plan which they resolved always to follow, (though in a low voice,) when about to dispute with the heretics. Francis was of opinion that the Calvinists, and more especially their preachers, were aided, or possessed by the devils, and therefore regularly exorcised those spirits, who either hardened their hearts or suggested the errors to be confuted; and he declared that the plan was most serviceable to him. After concluding their prayers and exorcism, Francis looked at Lewis, affectionately embraced him, and said that an idea had just occurred to him, to this effect, as they were entering the Chablais to exercise apostolic functions, they ought to imitate the apostles, and therefore they had better dismiss their horses and attendants and make their entry on foot, satisfying themselves, like the apostles, with that which was barely necessary. Lewis consented, and the two walked onwards to the fortress of Allinges, at that time entrusted to the care of the Baron of Hermance, who, under the title of governor,

commanded the province in the name of the Duke of Savoy; he had a strong garrison and watched over the peace of the surrounding districts. He was a brave and worthy man, a great friend to the house of Sales; he was surprised and delighted when he saw the two cousins approach the palisades of the castle. After the usual compliments, he took them into the fortress, when the Provost placed three letters in his hand. In the first, the Duke of Savoy gave him orders to receive and protect the missionaries whom the Bishop of Geneva would send to attempt the re-conversion of the Chablais; in the second, the Bishop warmly recommended to his care the missionaries he had sent him; in the third, the Count of Sales revealed his fears, and conjured the Baron, by their long-standing friendship, to protect and favour his son and nephew, and to assist them with his advice for the better success of the mission. As they were entering the castle, the governor pointed to the cannons on the walls, and said, "We shall not long stand in need of this defence if the Huguenots will hearken to you, for if you can but make them faithful to the laws of the Gospel, undoubtedly they will yield submission to the laws of their sovereign."

From the summit of the fortress our Saint beheld a scene which pierced his very heart; he could from that elevated spot nearly overlook the whole province, but yet he could not see so much as one symbol of Christianity; on the contrary, ruined monasteries, unroofed churches, overthrown steeples, crosses pulled down, villages and hamlets in ashes on all sides met his eyes, the sad effects of heresy

and rebellion. The sight drew tears from his eyes and sighs from his heart, as he exclaimed with the prophet, "How has the hedge been taken away from the vineyard, and its walls broken down! the ways of Sion weep, for there are none to come to the solemnity; the enemy has carried away all that was beautiful and good; no longer is there any law, no longer have the prophets visions of the Lord: everywhere are the stones of the sanctuary dispersed. Great is thy trouble as the sea: who shall remedy thy evil? O Chablais! O Geneva! be ye at least converted to the Lord thy God!" Then addressing himself to God, he said, "Ah, Lord! these people have rebelled against Thee, and against Thy Christ; the nations have seized Thine inheritance; they have profaned Thy temple, destroyed Thy worship, and ruined Thy sanctuary. Arise, O Lord, and judge Thine own cause, but judge it according to Thy mercy!" He remained silent a short time, shedding abundance of tears, but at last turning to the Baron of Hermance, he said, "The disease is grievous; a great physician is required to cure it."

They afterwards conferred together on the means most likely to succeed in the mission; the Baron qualifying his advice according to the time and the dispositions of the people to be dealt with. He was not only a valiant officer, whose military prowess and state services had obtained for him the esteem of his prince; he was, moreover, a man of consummate experience, who thoroughly understood the character of the people he governed, and was equally zealous for the Catholic religion, in consequence of which he had been promoted to the government of the

Chablais. He frankly represented to the two missionaries the difficulties of their undertaking. He told them they would have to do with a people, gross and simple, it was true, but most obstinate in their own opinions. Not the least pernicious of their errors was the persuasion, that the preservation of their privileges and liberty depended on the preservation of their so-called reformed religion, and this very error was quite strong enough to make them undertake any measures rather than surrender it. The proximity of the Swiss, and the Genevese emboldened them, as they were ever ready for rebellion. Intimacy with them, and the form of ecclesiastical government introduced by Calvin, made them look on monarchical government as a tyranny; hence they submitted with ill grace to a sovereign, whose yoke they had frequently attempted to throw off, and who would at that moment renew the attempt if they could do so with the slightest chance of success. The re-establishment of the faith, would, in time, dissipate the seeds of rebellion, and attach the people to their sovereign; but, in the meantime great caution would be necessary, because catholicity had been depicted to them in so black a shade, that they abominated it beyond all things. They looked upon the Pope as anti-christ; the bishops and priests as the emissaries of that monster; the Mass as a public profession of idolatry; the faithful as pagans; and the laws of the church as the offspring of the most intolerable tyranny. The preachers, as men, were the very quintessence of presumption, and looking on the people as their conquest, declared they would employ every means

to preserve it. Hence, having to deal with such materials, they treat the people with all possible mildness and condescension, save on questions of faith. The missionaries should confine themselves to essentials, avoiding singularity, and whatever might spring from a zeal to which prudence was wanting; the least precipitation might spoil all; whereas patience and longanimity, with the blessing of God, would bring success to their efforts. He added that it would be advisable to begin with Thonon, the capital of the province, because as it was near the fortress of Allinges, they could return there every night; and he was of opinion that it would not be safe for them to lodge elsewhere; in fact no one would venture to admit them, so general was the hatred against catholic priests; it would even be dangerous to attempt to say Mass at Thonon; therefore, for the present, they must use the chapel belonging to the fortress for this purpose.

The saint, who excelled in meekness and moderation, was quite satisfied with the remarks, the chief of which he committed to writing, conforming himself exactly to them. On the following morning he celebrated Mass in the chapel, after which, taking his Bible and breviary, he set out for Thonon, accompanied by Lewis and a man-servant.

It will not be amiss to narrate his line of conduct at this time. He always went on foot with a staff in his hand, although he had daily four miles of very rough ground to traverse. His dress was plain and without affectation; and as it was then customary to wear the beard thick, the hair short, and to encase the lower limbs in buskins, he

accommodated himself to all this, as being the mode of dress worn by respectable persons, so that his outward appearance was not very different from that of seculars; and this it was which procured his admission to the houses of several Calvinists, who by degrees, were by him converted to the faith. In a spirit of meekness, he made a resolution of never using any offensive expressions either to or of heretics, or of their creed. Imitating the angelical doctor, who, though he combated with all his power against error, always spared the erring: moreover he resolved to oppose the insults to which he foresaw he should be subjected, with no other weapon than that of invincible patience. The issue proved the wisdom of his rule. Some of the missionaries who were afterwards sent to his assistance, glorying in shewing no condescension to heretics, and refusing to act with his caution, encountered innumerable obstacles, and were looked upon by the Calvinists as superstitious dissemblers, and were hated accordingly. In the course of time, the saint was accused and blamed by those who were associated with him in the mission, on the plea that he was too condescending to the enemies of the faith, and that he did not make sufficient use of the authority imparted to him by his sovereign. He did not on this account change his plan; and experience demonstrated that his accusers were in fault; seeing that several times they were on the point of defeating every chance of reuniting those people to the church, a re-union which was ultimately effected by his prudent behaviour; hence to him is given, and ought to be given, all the glory of a mission which ended so successfully.

CHAPTER VII.

HIS FIRST ENTRANCE INTO THONON.

THE holy man did not deem it fitting to enter upon his mission without first informing the magistrates of the purport of his visit to the town of Thonon. Immediately on his arrival he went to pay them his respects, and to present the letters of introduction which he brought from the Baron of Hermance; they contained in compendium what the Duke of Savoy had written to himself with regard to the mission of the Chablais and the Bailiwicks, adding moreover that as Francis and Lewis were under his protection as well as their servants, and all those who in process of time should join them, he charged the magistrates to watch over their safety, as he would hold them accountable for any injury inflicted on the missionaries. The magistrates received these letters apparently with great respect, and promised obedience; but as soon as a report was spread through the town and the adjacent villages that two priests were come into the province to preach, the people were on the point of rising in revolt. They loudly declared that these envoys of the Pope ought to be driven out; that they were only coming to disturb the peaceable practice of their religion, if not to deprive them of it, that there was danger in moderation in matters whereon depended liberty of conscience, to acquire and preserve which had cost

them so much, both of wealth and blood. They added that the sovereign would be obliged to overlook their misdemeanour, because the number of the offenders would be too great to admit of their being apprehended, still less of their being punished.

Whilst people were discoursing in this style at Thonon, the most violent measures were concocting in Geneva, situated at no great distance, the inhabitants of which were extremely anxious that no change of religion should take place in the Chablais; they asserted that the Duke had violated the treaty of Noyon, therefore they were bound no longer to observe it, that it behoved them to call in the aid of the Swiss Confederacy, which had guaranteed the articles, and take up arms to drive away these priests; that it was lawful to kill them if they could be got rid of by no other means. When these opinions reached Thonon, the fury of the people was redoubled, and was carried to such length, that the fortitude of Lewis of Sales began to slacken, and he said to Francis, "What shall we be able to do in the midst of an infuriated mob? What chance have we of being listened to? It is dangerous even to be seen in public; what would it be if we were to attempt anything more?" He added, that he did not think the enterprise should be abandoned, but that he thought it ought to be deferred, and in the meantime devise measures for resuming it to greater advantage; if the people should, in their persons violate the majesty of their sovereign, or the rights of hospitality, they would be the individuals to be accused of indiscretion, and of occasioning the wars and desolation which might possibly ensue.

The intrepid Francis affectionately embraced him, and with a smile reminded him that hitherto nothing untoward had befallen them more than they had fully expected. He had never flattered himself with the idea that these people would come forth to welcome them, that they would renounce their prejudices all at once, or rush in crowds to hear them. Then taking him by the arm, he said, "See, we are as yet unhurt, we are as safe and sound as when we left our own homes. The heretics will think twice of it before they attempt anything against our persons, let their rage be what it may. A mob always makes a noise, but when they see that we are not afraid of them, they will reconcile themselves by degrees to what they now dislike. Almighty God has protected His servants, and delivered them from much greater dangers, therefore, thanks to His protection, we need not fear the rage of man, always impotent against those whom the Lord guards. We have perhaps done enough for this day, so let us return to Allinges and give the Baron an account of our adventures," adding, good-humouredly, "but leave this task to me, because fear usually magnifies objects; if you undertake to speak, the danger may seem much greater than it really is."

They returned to Allinges, when Francis reported what had occurred in Thonon; after due consideration, the Baron was of opinion that the mission should not be relinquished, in order not to prejudice the authority of the sovereign. He would provide for their security by giving them an escort, having no notion of leaving two such personages at the mercy of a blinded and obstinate populace, urged on,

moreover, by the Puritans of Geneva. The Saint absolutely refused this offer, declaring that he would rather abandon the mission than suffer the least violence to be offered to the people, whose conversion he would have to be free and sincere; he added, that since they had entered the Chablais without trusting to human aid, in imitation of the apostles, he would pursue the same course, using no other weapon than that of St. Paul—the word of God. Princes, of course, might employ the sword, when compelled to it by the contumacy of their subjects, but such a proceeding was at variance with the priestly character. A priest should imitate the example of Jesus and His apostles, since he is entrusted with their functions. The Baron replied that the escort was not intended to offer violence or compulsion to the people, but merely to keep them within due bounds, and teach them to respect those who were acting upon the orders of the prince; but the Saint was firm in his refusal, and would consent to nothing more than that the magistrates of Thonon should be written to again, and be reminded of their own interests and obligations. The Baron therefore wrote and signified to the magistrates, that the Duke had no intention of depriving them of liberty of conscience, still less, of any of their privileges, in proof of which he had sent them two priests, whose sole arms was the Word of God, but as there were several persons in the Chablais who wished to be instructed in the Catholic faith, lost amidst popular commotions, he had sent to the province men competent to give the required instruction. The Duke might have used force, (seeing that his enemies had been the first to

break the treaty of peace,) but he refrained from this in order to leave their liberty entire. The Baron reminded them that they talked of nothing but liberty of conscience, and how much their conduct was opposed to it, since they wanted to prevent the preaching of a religion which the sovereign professed, as well as to prevent those who wished it, from embracing it. He declared to them that it was the Duke's will to have the Catholic doctrine taught without impediment throughout the province; that Francis and his companions were under his protection, and that he would hold the council responsible for any injury inflicted on them; and, though no one should be compelled to go and hear them preach, so neither should any one be hindered from so doing, or from embracing the doctrines which they taught. He concluded by requiring their positive assurance in writing to this effect.

The council replied in most submissive terms, throwing the blame of what had happened on the populace, so difficult to rule in certain unlooked-for circumstances, pledging themselves to carry into effect the intentions of the prince, with all due respect.

The next day when Francis reached Thonon, he was received with much more consideration; nevertheless, he could soon perceive that there were secret and strict prohibitions against any one going to hear him, or having any intercourse with him, so that he stood as completely isolated in the middle of Thonon as if he were in a desert; he continued, notwithstanding, to go thither every day, as if he had the most important affairs to transact; rain, wind, or

snow, nothing deterred him, and often when the stoutest rustics would not face the road, he was to be seen regularly plodding backwards and forwards, to the astonishment of every one, and well was it for him that he had inured himself to hardy habits, and was able to endure hunger, thirst, cold, and other privations incident to the ministry which he had assumed; though, robust as he was, his sufferings frequently well nigh put an end to him. His friends represented to him the uselessness of exposing himself to all these inconveniences, to whom he replied in the words of our Saviour: "Know ye not that I must be about my Heavenly Father's work?" adding, that as God alone knew the moment prefixed for the conversion of these people, and as it might come sooner than was expected, it behoved him to be ever in readiness for it.

The first winter which he spent in the Chablais was so severe, the snow so abundant, and the frost and cold so intense, that his hands, feet, and legs festered and broke, so that the path was often stained with his blood; his torn shoes and buskins being insufficient to protect his wounds; but he would not on this account omit his daily journeys; in effect, not satisfied with walking all the way to Thonon, he would visit the neighbouring villages, where he often met with adventures that would have cooled a less ardent charity than his own. We may with truth affirm that the parable of the good shepherd, seeking his stray sheep amidst rocks and precipices, was but a faithful picture of what Francis did for the conversion of the Chablais; and that Jacob, so wearily

tending the flocks of Laban, in heat and cold, was but a figure of him.

His sufferings in summer were not much less; the intense heat of the sun's rays on the plains, reflected by the surrounding heights, all but overpowered him. It will not be amiss to detail some circumstances referring to this epoch of the Saint's life, well calculated to encourage those who labour in the conversion of souls, as well as to confound the courage of the most magnanimous. Like the great apostle, he might say that the signs of his apostolate were toils, vigils, fasting, calumnies, insults, persecutions, and every sort of suffering endured with incomparable patience. Although his whole life at this time was one continued suffering, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, we will mention some of those which have reached our knowledge, though it is quite certain that only the least part of them has been recorded. It must have been no slight trial to him to have to cross the Durance, a rapid river, on no better bridge than a cross-beam. In the two first winters this beam was like a sheet of ice, but his zeal found out a way of crossing; he crawled over it on his hands and knees at no small risk and toil. He might sometimes have spared himself this task, but zeal for souls, and devotion to the holy sacrifice of the mass, made him regularly encounter it. So many and great were his sufferings at this time, that some historians of his life pass this one over as unimportant, although it occurs in the bull of his canonization.

One evening he set out later than usual on his return from Thonon to Allinges, having been detained

on business connected with the mission. Night overtook him, and he missed his path. After rambling about to no purpose for a long time, they reached a village at a late hour when all the people were in bed. The ground was covered with snow, so that the herdsmen did not venture to take their flocks out even in the day-time. They knocked at every door, entreating shelter, lest they should perish of cold, but all in vain; it was a Calvinist hamlet, and not one of the inhabitants could be moved to compassion. Roland, the man-servant, thought the name of such a man would soften them, so he incautiously said who he was, but this only made them more obstinate, and drew forth a volley of abuse: God, however, who never forsakes His servants, enabled them to discover the village oven which was still warm. Francis, Lewis, and the servant entered the bakehouse, and thus preserved their lives; but for this they must inevitably have been frozen to death.

Another evening they arrived at a village, thoroughly drenched with rain, yet on no plea could they obtain so much as shelter, so strict were the prohibitions of the ministers against one whom they looked upon as their greatest enemy; they were therefore compelled to pass the night in the open air, exposed to all the inclemency of the weather. Like the apostles, Francis blessed the Lord for being found worthy to suffer something for the glory of His name.

Such accidents would have induced any one, less submissive to the will of God and less zealous for His glory, to take precautions against their recur-

rence, but our Saint never thought of sparing himself when the salvation of his neighbour was in question; toil, suffering, and danger seemed but to increase his courage. On one occasion he was met by a heretic, who, dreading the invectives of his clergy and his acquaintance, did not like to accost Francis in the town, but waylaid him on his return to the fortress, wishing to have a private conference with him. He told him at once that his meekness and patience, and the sufferings to which he daily exposed himself for the salvation of people who received him so ill, had made an impression on his mind, that he had contrasted his manner of life with that of their own preachers, and had come to the conclusion that purity of doctrine must be there where there was purity of life; he entreated him therefore to become his instructor, conjuring him by the Blood which Jesus had shed for the salvation of souls, not to delay the instruction he so much needed, and which he expected from his charity. It was then almost night, and having to pass through a wood, this delay seemed dangerous. Lewis, and the servant who had shared his sufferings on previous occasions, strongly urged him to defer the instruction till the next day, but Francis replied that none of them were sure of a next day, and that it would be to him a source of self-reproach to the last day of his life, if, from fear of suffering and danger, (from which God could easily preserve him if He pleased,) he deferred even for a brief space, advice which could contribute to the salvation of a soul. He spent so much time in catechising the Calvinist, that night overtook them precisely as they were entering the

wood; it was impossible for them, dark as it was, to distinguish the right path, whilst the bears and wolves were howling around on all sides. Rowland was half terrified to death, and Lewis was not much better. Francis alone remained full of holy confidence; he consoled them, and assured them that our Lord, who had preserved Daniel in the lions' den, would watch over them, seeing that they incurred their present risk, only because they gave succour to a soul that asked it in His name; they rambled on without knowing whither, and at last reached an old ruinous building where, under a portion of remaining roof, they found some sort of shelter. Whilst they were resting there, the moon shone forth in full splendour, and revealed to Francis that the edifice had once been a church, and like many others, had been destroyed by the Calvinists; the sight reminded him forcibly of the deplorable state of the Chablais; the churches in ruins, the priests expelled, truth trampled upon, and heresy triumphant; add to these the blindness and obduracy of the people all but invincible, insomuch that they closed their ears against the voice of those by whose means our Lord recalled them to His bosom. Amidst these ruins our Saint renewed the lamentation of Jeremias; seated upon a stone, his eyes streaming with tears, he exclaimed from the inmost depths of his heart, "O temple, to whatever saint thou mayst have been dedicated, in thy ruins do I adore that God who lives through endless ages of ages, and His only Son, who, suffering such torments for me, animates me to suffer for Him. Drive hence the north winds, and let the soft southern breeze

blow through these gardens the sweet scent of aromatic spices! Bless our purposes, O Lord! send Thy divine Spirit upon the heart of this nation, and enkindle in it the fire of Thy holy love. With Thy usual benignity enable us, O Lord, to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, according to Thy good pleasure: then shalt Thou receive sacrifices of justice, oblations, and holocausts. O great God! the people came to Thy inheritance and profaned Thy temple; at least, O Lord, dispose our hearts that they be a suitable lodging-place for Thee." Sleep overpowered him whilst he was thus praying: he slept, like another Jacob, on the stones until break of day, when awakened by his servant, he made an act of adoration to God, and pursued his homeward journey. Those who abound in the spirit of this world, being incapable of feelings like these, and being ruled by their passions, cannot conceive how the saints are so sensitive to the interests of God's glory; but they who know how good is the God of Israel to those of upright heart, will find nothing in our details but what they themselves have experienced on similar occasions.

Owing to the rigorous prohibitions against any one going to hearken to him, the Saint's first labours in Thonon seemed useless; sometimes he would cry out in the middle of the town, "How long, O ye children of men, will ye be hard of heart? how long will ye love vanity and seek after lies!" His labours, however, proved most profitable amongst the soldiers garrisoned at Allinges. As the Centurion was one of the first to believe in Christ, and as Cornelius, a military man, was the first Gentile con-

verted by St. Paul, so too did Francis gather the first fruits of his mission by reforming the manners of the soldiers belonging to the fortress. Our Lord thus demonstrating that there is no state of life in which man may not work out his salvation, and seeming as if He would authorise the mission of the Saint, by rendering it similar to that of His only Son, and those of His apostles. His piety and zeal gained him the confidence of all, especially of the officers, of which he availed himself to win them over to God, and to make His holy love reign in them. He began by converting some Calvinists attached to the garrison, and their conversion was so complete, that they concurred with him in improving the morals of their Catholic comrades.

Three vices then predominated in the army, swearing, drunkenness and duelling. To remedy these, Francis had recourse to the governor, explaining to him that he was rendering himself accessory to the guilt of his dependants, by not opposing it, and as swearing is held to be a grievous sin amongst Catholics, he prevailed on him to issue a proclamation, imposing heavy penalties on any one who should blaspheme the holy name of God, the Blessed Virgin, or the saints, either at play, in conversation, or in anger. Thus, swearing was soon put an end to, though until now there was scarcely an individual in the fortress who was not addicted to it. His next attack was upon duels. It was the impious custom of those days to settle all disputes by single combat in some preconcerted place, but with a view to personal security, the captain's leave was first obtained. For some imaginary point of honour, for a slighting

word, in fact, for a mere trifle, were men continually risking their lives, and often losing them, as if by this they acquired as much glory as when they exposed themselves for their prince and country on the battle-field. The Saint spoke so energetically against this practice in his public discourses and in private conversation with the Baron, that this brutal folly, hitherto of almost daily occurrence, was quite abolished. He clearly proved to the Baron that duelling was forbidden by all laws, and conjured him not to render himself guilty of sin, by leaving the soldiers at liberty to have recourse to it, for that it was injurious to the country, to the sovereign, and to his own conscience. His advice was implicitly attended to, the officers were forbidden to allow their men to fight a duel. The same zeal and the same success attended his efforts to establish habits of temperance amongst them.

The early historians of his life tell us that God gave such a blessing to the apostolic labours of the Saint at Allinges, that the garrison was more like a well-regulated monastery than the abode of a troop of soldiers; yet, he exacted from them no practice of piety, but such as were conformable to their state; never was there a spiritual guide who better understood how to regulate each one according to his condition; his "Introduction to a Devout Life," is a good proof of this. He endeavoured to inspire the troops with a holy fear of the divine judgments, telling them that as their profession frequently obliged them to expose their lives to danger, it was of the highest importance that they should keep themselves in such a state as would save them from

dreading the consequences of a sudden death. These, and similar maxims, seconded by his example, and above all by his prayers, changed the soldiers into new men. He filled their hearts with a sincere piety, which so far from being incompatible with valour, contributes to it, and gives it its brightest lustre.

Thus, combining sweetness with rigour, the simplicity of the dove with the prudence of the serpent, a condescending charity with a most ardent zeal, he succeeded in an incredibly short space of time in eradicating abuses and evil habits as deeply rooted as they were prejudicial; and this to the great admiration of the inhabitants of Thonon, who, from neighbourhood, had much intercourse with the fortress of Allinges.

One only task would not satisfy the magnanimous zeal of our apostle; therefore, whilst he was thus labouring amongst his soldiers, he did not desist from his daily journey to preach the faith at Thonon. From the first, some of the most bigoted were for taking away the life of the new preacher, whilst the more moderate satisfied themselves with despising his undertaking. They looked upon his sermons as the effect of over zeal on the part of a young missionary, who wished to give his partizans a good opinion of his virtue; adding that the flame of his ardour would soon be extinguished by the slight appearance of success, seeing that scarcely any one deigned to go and hear him; besides, it was hardly to be expected that his preaching would be long tolerated in a town so totally opposed to his religion; but the hour destined by God for the

conversion of the Chablais came at last; and in vain did Geneva and its emissaries strive to check it with their cabals and their calumnies. No force, no counsels can hinder the execution of that which the Lord has decreed. An omnipotent cause always produces its effects; and this all the more infallibly, the more its power and force accommodate themselves to the freedom of the human heart.

The inhabitants of Thonon, were, indeed, deeply prejudiced against the Saint; they had often heard him described as a magician, a seducer, a deceiver, and a hypocrite; nevertheless they could not ignore his piety, gentleness, invincible patience, and indefatigable zeal. The Calvinist ministers attributed his every action to a secret ambition which sought its own ends, by ways most difficult it was true, but not less secure; but he despised their calumnies, as much as if they in no way concerned him. The prince's authority, of which he so little availed himself, the innocence and simplicity of his conduct, so completely opposed to anything like human pretension, spoke highly in his favour, inso-much that the most obstinate looked upon him as a saint. Moreover, the officers and soldiers of Allinges, in their frequent intercourse with Thonon, spoke loudly of his virtues and noble qualities; whilst the evident change in their manners was his best eulogium, and went far towards removing the prejudices of his enemies. The garrison of Allinges no longer displayed that unbridled licence, in which hitherto it had gloried; no more horrid oaths and blasphemies; no more duels to wrest souls from God, and valiant subjects from the prince. On the contrary,

the men were submissive to the laws, decorous in speech, modest in behaviour, more exact in the discharge of their various duties, because performed from the purest and sublimest of motives. Now they followed the dictates of conscience, where formerly they had been guided by human respect. This unexpected change was a just subject of admiration; the hand of the Most High visibly appeared in it, whilst it created an esteem for the instrument of which our Lord had made use to effect it. In this manner did God dispose men's hearts in favour of His servant, and open the path to the vast works which he afterwards accomplished.

He himself perceived that the aversion of the people was daily diminishing; they no longer strove to shun his approach; therefore he thought he might now venture to call at the houses of those with whom he had occasionally exchanged a word; that he might be able to come out his own way, he was content to go in theirs. At first, his visits were merely of civility and courtesy; he spoke upon indifferent topics, anxious to habituate the people to receive him. It must be owned there was something enchanting in his manner, every one was fascinated by his engaging sweetness; he had only to speak, to win all hearts; whilst, on the contrary, the imperious, harsh, and exacting manners of the ministers, contrasted most vividly with, and tended materially to exalt, his affability and meekness. They never passed him without insulting and loading him with abuse, too offensive to be repeated here; and this served equally to illustrate his moderation (for he never betrayed the least emotion)

and to acquire him the esteem of those who witnessed his patience, and the overweening pride of his opponents.

It was impossible for these visits to continue long without referring to the cause which had brought him to the Chablais, well knowing that he was not come to the town merely to waste his time. He availed himself of every opportunity to introduce the subject of religion. The sublime manner in which he treated matters of controversy, gained for him the reputation of being learned; then, by degrees, his hearers became curious and dubious, and, lastly, anxious to be informed. This was precisely what the Saint wanted. He then explained the mysteries of the catholic faith to them, in terms so clear and convincing, that many of them began to listen to him with delight, and even with profit. By degrees, he drew over friends to himself, and subjects to the church, till at length the whole of the Chablais and the three Bailiwicks were converted; so that when he returned to Annecy from this mission, he was able to say with truth, that he left fewer heretics there, than he had found Catholics; and it is well known that on his arrival, he found no more than seven or eight Catholics.

No eloquence could do justice to his humble patience and his apostolic toil. As soon as his mission began to fructify, he often delivered three and four sermons in a day, first at Allinges, then at Thonon, and then in the neighbouring villages; submitting to all the inconveniences of these journeys on foot, in a mountainous district, with almost impassable roads; and he did all this at a

time when he often had not more than eight or nine persons in the congregation; this was particularly the case in the parish church of Allinges, situated at some distance from the fortress, and whither he used to go and preach every day on his way to Thonon. He did this for three years; and when we consider the circumstances of time and place, such perseverance may well excite admiration. Sometimes he only found two or three, and even only one old woman in the church; nevertheless, he regularly went there through the frost and snow of winter, and the scorching heat of summer; finding as much satisfaction, and preaching with as much zeal, as if he had a numerous and very respectable audience.

As nature is apt to flag, when the number of his hearers does not stimulate the energy of the preacher, God was pleased to make known by the following incident how useful his sermons were; and that he ought not to spare himself even if but few persons were present to hear him. On the festival of St. Stephen, kept with solemnity at Allinges, when the bell rang for the sermon, seven individuals only made their appearance. The smallness of the number, so contrary to what he had expected, surprised him, and he hesitated as to whether it would be worth while to preach; but reflecting that charity looks not to whether there be few or many, and that Jesus had not disdained to speak to a single Samaritan woman, he entered the pulpit, and from the history of St. Stephen, took occasion to treat of the invocation of saints, and to show that reverence is due to them, as being the friends of God. He next confuted the errors of the

Calvinists on these points, and completely shivered the calumnies with which they assailed the Church. Amongst his seven hearers, one of them was a procurator of Thonon, recently converted by our Saint. Being but a neophyte in the faith, the devil strove to excite strange doubts in his mind with regard to this very subject. When the sermon was over, this man solemnly declared that he had almost made up his mind to renounce Catholicity the next day, and return to the errors of Calvin in consequence of these temptations; but that the provost, in his sermon, had completely dispelled all his doubts, and satisfied his mind as to the real truth. When this circumstance came to the knowledge of our Saint, he returned thanks to God for having inspired him to touch on that subject; and, taught by the incident, he made a firm resolution never to desist from preaching, no matter how insignificant the number of his hearers.

His congregation at Thonon was not more numerous; for a long time he was unable to speak at all, and when he did begin, he could only make the attempt in the public streets, for no one ventured to go purposely to hear him, on account of the secret prohibition already named. A regular plot was formed among the townspeople; first in the consistory and then in the house of deputies, to prevent any one from having intercourse with him, as we learn from one of his own letters written to Faber, in the course of the second year of his mission. For a long time scarcely any came near him, but the Saint, who knew that Jesus had shed His blood for every single soul, never disdained to preach to whoever would.

come to hear him; later in life, this was a source of great consolation to him, and proved most advantageous to his cause, as the conversion of the whole country clearly shows.

We may judge from one of his letters to a religious man written about this time, what were his feelings at thus finding his sermons so poorly attended: "It would be sheer loss," he writes, "for any one else who could produce more fruit elsewhere, to waste his labour for nothing, as I do, who am only fit to preach to the bare walls; for this is what often happens to me in this town. This is the seventh month since I began preaching here, and yet very often I have not more than four or five Hugonots for my audience."

CHAPTER VIII.

PREVENTS A DUEL. A CONFERENCE—ITS RESULTS.

AFFAIRS were in this state when Almighty God was pleased to facilitate to the Saint the means of catechising those who from human respect did not dare apply to him at Thonon. Zeal would not allow him to spare himself in any way, even though it might endanger his life; he learned by some means or other that two gentlemen of his acquaintance were gone into the country to fight a duel; he immediately followed them, borne on the wings of charity, hoping to hinder the sin against God, and the loss perhaps of one or two souls; he reached them at the moment when their fury was at its height, and when

deadly blows were being desperately given on both sides. Interference seemed little less than madness, nor was there any prospect of the struggle ceasing, until one, if not both the combatants, lay stretched dead upon the plain. Francis was robust and agile, he contrived to separate the two without being wounded by either, though at the risk of his life; having succeeded so far, he represented to them in vivid terms the enormity of a crime condemned by all laws, human and divine, as well as the evident danger of everlasting perdition to which they exposed themselves for a mistaken point of honour; he engaged them to grant mutual forgiveness, reconciled them on the spot, and had the satisfaction of seeing them embrace one another. But the grace which accompanied the ministry of the Saint, operated still more powerfully in those two hearts, it completely changed them into new men, and both of them made a general confession to him. One, who was particularly moved, forsook the world, and retired to a country house which he possessed in the neighbourhood of Thonon, the sole remnant of a very large inheritance which he had dissipated. Here, at a distance from those objects which had well nigh caused the loss of his immortal soul, and for the sake of which he had sacrificed his property, he reflected on the days he had misspent, shedding floods of bitter tears over the miserable time when he lived as if he had no soul. Francis, who had won him to God and had recommended this retirement, visited him every day; convinced that as fresh plants need more careful culture, so newly-converted souls require more assiduous direction, and that it is always dangerous

to leave them to themselves. He instilled into his heart the virtues of which he made profession, those precisely which were most contrary to his predominant passions, insomuch that he who was hitherto vindictive, haughty, and choleric, became meek, humble, and modest; it must be owned, however, that he had to wage many a battle against himself and his vices, which we may say were inveterate; for the gentleman was already advanced in years; but attention to the practice of the prescribed virtues, together with the help of grace, and the direction of the Saint, secured for him the virtues most opposite to his natural propensities, so completely as to seem inherent in him; and few indeed could have suspected the violence to which he momentarily subjected himself. He had long borne arms, and his courage had gained him a very high reputation as a man of honour; as such he was visited by all the neighbouring nobility. On these occasions he spoke in grateful terms of the grace whereby God had brought him to a better mode of life, and of his esteem for Francis, of whom God had made use to withdraw him from his disorders. This excited a desire in many of his friends to become acquainted with the holy man, who gladly acceded to the proposal, and God Himself vouchsafed to bless it. From thenceforward this house became the rendezvous of those whose hearts were touched by divine grace. Regular conferences were held, heretics assisting at them. To proceed in due order, he began by showing that schism was one of the greatest evils; that there never could be an indispensable reason for separating ourselves from the Church; that this of

itself was sufficient to condemn the author of it, those who were deceived by it, and those who obstinately adhered to it; that if the former had improperly and unreasonably separated themselves from her communion, all those who had hitherto followed them, were now bound to return to her; that neither the interests of friendship, threats, hopes, or affection for those whom they looked upon as brethren, or respect for those who bore the name of pastors, could be sufficient to dispense them from their present obligation of returning to the Catholic Church. She was their mother, their ancestors had lived and died in her communion, from her they had received the sacred writings, baptism, and education; in fact, many of them had been born, nursed, and brought up in her bosom. He added, that without speaking of her extent, her antiquity, and her succession, (all essential notes of the true Church,) he would not conceal from them that it was as impious to condemn to eternal pains without cognizance of cause, those from whom they had received life, as it was unjust to pronounce sentence against a Church to which they were so much indebted, without hearing her in her own defence. The Catholic Church might well complain of being so unfairly accused of having deteriorated the precious deposit of the faith, and of having forsaken the religion of her fathers, depicting her, as her enemies did, with such distorted features as to render her hideous, insomuch that her own children could scarcely recognise her for their mother. He also told them that he was prepared to justify her in terms so clear, that the least intelligent of his hearers should understand and be able to

decide on the merits of the case, that for this he had only to explain the real doctrines which she teaches, not those which her enemies impute to her.

This opening discourse, in itself so reasonable, was listened to with deep attention, exciting in the hearers a curiosity to know what the Church teaches. The Saint taking advantage of this, went on to say that the Church was accused of having fallen into idolatry, and of giving to saints and images that worship which is due to God alone; his hearers must admit that these were the chief points on which schism and heresy strove to justify their position. "Well, then," resumed the Saint, "she requires no less to justify the origin of the rebellions which have cost so much blood, and have led to such fearful consequences; nevertheless, it is most certain that the Church is not guilty on these heads; to be convinced of this, you have only to hear her real principles, as defined by herself, and not by her enemies." And he added, that as for himself, he was ready to sign these truths with his own blood.

He declared these truths as follows. The Church adores one only God, the Creator and Lord of all creatures. According to her, this adoration consists chiefly in believing with a constant, humble, and submissive faith whatever He has been pleased to reveal, in hoping for all blessings from Him, and in loving Him above all things, as the sovereign, true, and only good, the possession of whom suffices to make us happy, and in looking on all created things, as finite and dependant upon Him, and as owing their existence to Him, and in condemning that abominable impiety which would apply to any creature, no mat-

ter how excellent, the worship and adoration which are due to God alone.

With regard to the mediation of Jesus Christ; the Church so far from destroying it, publicly professes to owe all to it. According to her, there is no life, no hope out of Jesus. Him does she ask, and from Him does she look for every help; to Him does she direct all her thanksgiving, centering in this Mediator between God and man, all her hopes of salvation. Moreover, she teaches us that all sin is forgiven entirely through the pure mercy and merits of Jesus, from whom proceeds the justice of the just man by the Holy Ghost, professing it to be due to a liberality wholly gratuitous; the good works which we do are His gifts, because they proceed from His grace. The life eternal is proposed to the faithful, as a boon mercifully promised to the merits of the Redeemer of mankind, and as a reward to be assuredly given to whoever does well in virtue of this promise. Upon the whole then, the Church teaches that our good works are God's gifts, depending on grace, having no other value than that which is imparted to them by the merits of our Saviour and Redeemer. Though we can do nothing of ourselves, we can do all things in Him who strengthens us; hence all our confidence must be in Jesus.

The Calvinists were astonished at this explanation given by the Saint, so different from the language which their ministers ascribed to the Catholic Church, which they incessantly accuse of giving to creatures a worship which is only due to God; of adding coadjutors to Jesus Christ, and thus dimin-

ishing His sole mediation; of exalting free-will to the prejudice of grace, and of weakening the satisfaction made by Christ, by teaching that good works are necessary to salvation. But their astonishment was materially increased when Francis added that it was also the doctrine of the Catholic Church, that Jesus Christ, God and man, was alone capable of offering to God condign and sufficient satisfaction for our sins, and that, in consequence of His infinite dignity, the satisfaction was likewise infinite; that when she ordains penance and satisfaction, it is not with a view of supplying to the satisfaction already offered by Christ, but rather to restrain men within due bounds by just and reasonable penalties, to repair in some degree the scandals given, to serve as a salutary sort of discipline, and the like.

As they listened to these statements, his hearers began to suspect that probably the Calvinists did ascribe to the Catholic Church, dogmas which did not belong to her, either because their ministers did not exactly know their tenets, or, if known, that they might have some private motives for adulterating them. They concluded moreover that he would, with equal facility, justify his Church on other points of controversy, and annihilate the calumnies raised against her. But Francis, unwilling to overcharge their memory at first, deferred the rest to another conference. Thus ended the first, which was followed by several others, which all turned to the honour of the Saint, and to the advantage of his cause.

Such was the method of the Saint, and such it ought to have been, according to the teaching of the

divine Areopagite; viz., not to stop confuting and arguing upon errors and false opinions, which would be an endless task, because such disputes only lead to confusion, at least, generally speaking; but, to begin at once to state the simple, naked truth; studying to render it as clear as possible. Truth, considered with relation to the intellect, possesses quite power enough within itself to captivate, and to force an entrance into the mind, when proposed in its native simplicity. In this art, our Saint was peculiarly gifted; and as he used the talent entrusted to him to such good purpose, he impressed the articles of faith so thoroughly on the soul, that greater clearness could not possibly be desired.

CHAPTER IX.

CONVERSION OF A GENTLEMAN. FRANCIS WRITES ON
THE MYSTERIES OF RELIGION.

A GREAT diversity of opinion arose amongst the preachers, as soon as it became known in Geneva, Thonon, and through the Chablais, that these conferences were held at the house of the gentleman before alluded to; especially when they heard the manner in which the Saint explained the chief points of controversy. Some said that this intercourse with the Calvinists had taught him better principles; and that probably in time, he would himself embrace the religion which he was come to exterminate. Others pretended that he had not faithfully interpreted the doctrines of catholicity,

and that his teaching would be censured by his own body as soon as it came to light; whilst others, and the greater number too, were of opinion that his eagerness to make proselytes, and gain credit with his party, had induced him to falsify his doctrines, and assimilate them as much as possible with those of the reformed; declaring that he would not dare to maintain in public, what he had advanced in private in presence of witnesses already partially gained, or at least favourable to his cause.

It would seem strange (though really true) that none of their most learned ministers were acquainted with the real doctrine of the Church, and that they should have refused to accept as Catholic doctrine that which was taught by the Saint; unless, indeed, they dissimulated in pure malice. Certain it is that their ignorance and spite was the chief hindrance to the people's return to the bosom of the Church; for had they sincerely wished for peace, the mere study of our principles would have led them to agree with us; and in coming over themselves, they would have brought their straying flocks with them.

Francis being informed of what was said of him, thought that silence on his part might be misinterpreted to the prejudice of his cause, and therefore he determined to reply. He published a work, in which with his usual mildness, he stated that he could not alter the doctrines of the Church, or falsify his own sentiments without failing in fidelity to his ministry and to his own private character. That the manner in which he had lived amongst them, ought to give a better idea of him, and of his good faith; that in truth he most ardently desired

their return to the Catholic Church; but this desire would never be able to make a liar of him, or induce him to use unlawful means for the attainment of his object; that he had expounded Catholic doctrine, not according to his own opinion, or the opinions of any particular doctor; but according to the rules laid down by the holy council of Trent, which surely could not be accused of ignorance, in not knowing the real doctrines of the Church, there represented; or of malice in falsifying them. Still less could the Church be reproached with not following her own dogmas, since it was precisely for so doing that she incurred the aversion of the Protestants. Neither could it be asserted that he had not explained the articles of the Catholic Faith with all possible fidelity and exactitude. On the contrary, it was for them to own that they did not know those doctrines as they really are, or else they had represented them so unfaithfully, because it suited their interests to conceal the true features of the Church. In a word, they were so anxious to believe her the horrible figure which they represented her to be, that they were unwilling to acknowledge her identity when placed before them in all her own fair beauty and proportions. How was it, that the more he strove to display her in her native purity, the more pertinaciously did they declare that he was changing her doctrines; even going so far as to imagine that he was leaning towards their party, when he was only endeavouring to undeceive them, and remove their erroneous opinions?

This discourse served as a preface, and was to be followed up by the true doctrines of the Church,

upon those articles chiefly contested by heretics, when he quoted the passages in council of Trent, to leave them no chance of accusing him of adulterating its expressions, and of thus exciting the disapprobation of his own party. For the sake of brevity, we omit here all that he wrote on the invocation of saints, and of the veneration due to images and relics, merely remarking that none of his opponents ventured to contradict him, for he had expressed himself equally ready to justify the Church with the same sure evidence on all other controverted points, and that he was ready to do so either by conferences or in writing, whichever the Calvinist ministers preferred. He concluded by requesting that they all would read his work with the same spirit of charity in which he presented it to them. But the preachers had no such kindly intentions. Confounded at finding him publish doctrines which they declared he could never teach but in private; they nevertheless shunned meeting him in disputation. Convinced that their cause would be essentially weakened if the meetings at the gentleman's house continued, for they were daily attended by increasing numbers, the heretics revived their former calumnies, accusing him of magic, of being a deceiver, and a hypocrite, who disturbed the public peace by disseminating false doctrine. They moreover contrived a plan for the assassination of the gentleman at whose house the conferences were held, fancying that so terrible an example would deter others from contracting intimacy with Francis. They had some difficulty in finding a proper person to play the part of the assassin, till at length one of his own relatives, a

Calvinist, blinded by false zeal, undertook the task. The scheme was not so secretly concocted, but that the gentleman gained information of it. He was warned to stand on his guard, and to have assistance at hand in case of assault; and that as he had friends enough to come forward in his defence, he had better avail himself of their good offices. But the gentleman replied that if the Calvinist came unattended, extra succour would be unnecessary, as he was still able to defend himself; and that if he brought followers with him, there would then be time enough to take other measures of defence. On the following day, the relative in question made his appearance in the most friendly manner, as if for a day's amusement; he was alone, and armed with his sword only. The Catholic received him with his usual courtesy, and they spent the day together; the Calvinist making no evil attempt whatever, either because he saw no favourable opportunity, or that remorse checked him in the commission of a crime so unworthy of a man of his rank. The next morning, the Catholic wishing to deal fairly with him, invited him to take a long walk. The two went out unaccompanied, and when they reached the open country where there was no danger of interruption, the Catholic let him know how well he was informed of his intentions. In great confusion, the heretic changed colour, and became almost petrified; but the other re-assured him, telling him that if the so-called reformed religion taught the assassination of relatives and friends, the Catholic faith obliged its votaries to love their mortal foes, according to the teaching and example of Jesus Christ.

Having said this, he cordially embraced him, and thus completely confounded him. He acknowledged his diabolical purpose, implored pardon, and protested that from thenceforward he would find no friend more faithful, no relative more affectionate than himself; nor was this all; the time of mercy was come for this gentleman; grace began to work in his heart, and he who had been more zealous than Saul, and a more fierce persecutor of the Church, requested to be introduced to Francis, whose conversation completed what the good example of the Catholic gentleman had begun. The Calvinist abjured his errors, and became more ardent in defence of the faith, than he had formerly been in defence of Calvinism. This conversion alarmed the whole country. He was known to be so furious a partizan of the sect, that he would have gone through anything to maintain it; and they could not conceive how he had thus suddenly passed from one extreme to the other. Many persons, ignorant of the grace with which God encouraged the labours of the Saint, publicly affirmed that he had been gained over by promises, whilst others asserted that he had been bribed with a good round sum of money. But sensible men looked on these reports as mere inventions of the ministers to discredit the holy man; for how was it to be supposed that he had considerable sums to throw away or to promise, since it was notorious that the mission was carried on at his own expense; and that the alms which he distributed amongst the poor, often left him without the bare necessities of life for himself.

Great as was the commotion which such a conver-

sion occasioned in Geneva and the neighbourhood, it was equalled by that which followed the publication of his work, where he justified the manner in which the Church proclaimed her own doctrines; nor was it an easy task to contradict him, for, to do it successfully, his adversary must have shown either that the Council of Trent knew not the doctrines of the Church, or that Francis had changed them, or that he had misquoted the decrees of the Council, or that the Church did not adhere to them; assertions which it was so impossible to substantiate, that the Calvinists did not even attempt to adduce them, though their silence was lowering them essentially in the opinion of their people. Silence seemed to betray the weakness of their arguments; consequently greater numbers began to attend the sermons of our Saint, conversions became more numerous, and these no longer in private as before, but openly, the Saint meeting with ready listeners in the streets and public places. Friends brought their friends to him, parents their children, masters their servants; even the country people came to Thonon expressly to assist at his sermons, to the inexpressible rage of the ministers. Fearing that in progress of time all the people would be for following Francis, they often consulted together, like the Scribes and Pharisees, saying, "What shall we do? This man worketh many signs." As yet, they did not think that they could safely make any attempt upon his life, because the new Catholics, looking upon him as their father who had regenerated them by the word of God, were most zealous in watching for his preservation. But at length, passion so completely

blinded them, that they resolved to try and assassinate him, although they well knew the risks to which they would be exposing themselves. Thanks to the protection which Almighty God held over the Saint, who sought nothing but the divine glory, all their nefarious schemes proved abortive, as will be seen in the following chapter. God would not permit the heretics to make a martyr of him, whom He had destined for an apostle.

CHAPTER X.

DANGERS TO WHICH THE SAINT WAS EXPOSED.

ALTHOUGH the labours of the apostolate cost Francis so much, they seemed as mere trifles to him in comparison with the consolation he received from the frequent conversions of Calvinists. But in the meantime hell slumbered not; on the contrary, it made vast efforts to hinder the progress of the faith. If the ministers ventured not to reply to his writings, at least they endeavoured to vilify him, proclaiming him a seducer, an enchanter, a magician; affirming that he received nightly instructions as to what he was to attempt in the day. One Calvinist more daring than the rest swore that he had seen him distinctly in the nightly assemblies of the magicians; and that he would consent to be hung and quartered, if some of their countersigns or marks were not discovered on the body of Francis. On the popular mind, which is like a beast with many heads, these calumnies produced various effects; generally speaking, to the

disadvantage of the Saint; many concluding that if such really was the case, they ought, at all costs, to put an end to the life of this disturber of the public peace; and that he who would inflict the blow ought to be richly rewarded, as doing an act pleasing to God, and serviceable to his country. The holy man was informed of all these rumours by his friends. He listened to them with a smile, and making the sign of the cross, said, "Behold all my incantation! With this sign I hope to conquer hell, not to form a compact with it. With this sign I humble the devils, expel storms from the atmosphere; and with *it* do I preserve myself from all nocturnal fears. Armed with this sign I fear nothing that men can attempt against me; even though I saw an army drawn up in array against me; in this sign would I hope. If the ministers wish to work the same wonders that I do, let them come to me, and I will teach them how to do so by the power of the holy cross."

To effect their purpose, diabolical as it was, the ministers bribed two unprincipled men with the promise of a large sum of money, paying down part of it at once, and pledging themselves to give the rest as soon as the homicide should be effected. One evening, then, when Francis had been detained at Thonon by business which prevented his return to Allinges, he retired as usual to his room, and had spent the greater part of the night in prayer and study, when all at once he heard a noise as of arms, followed by the sound of subdued voices. He at once guessed the real state of the case, and after taking counsel with God, he concluded that he ought

to imitate the conduct of our Lord, who went forth to meet His enemies at a time when His Father had decreed His death, but who hid Himself from the Jews till that hour had come. Francis therefore slipped aside, and no sooner had he done so than his chamber door was forced open. When his enemies found him absent, they imagined him to be at the house of some Catholic giving instructions, or else that he was in attendance on the sick. Annoyed at the failure of their scheme, they retired, not thinking it safe to remain long in the house, because the magistrates were obliged openly to afford protection to the Saint if requested, though in secret they did their utmost to thwart his designs.

His deliverance from this danger revived and augmented his confidence in God, though at the same time it strengthened the idea of his being a magician, for when it became known that he actually was in the house at the very moment his life was sought, it was said that he must have rendered himself invisible. Such may have been the case, as some historians of his life remark, but if so, it can only have happened by divine power, certainly not by demoniacal agency.

The Baron of Hermance was informed of the plot, and used every means to discover the offenders, but all the witnesses were accomplices, and therefore it was impossible to ascertain the truth. The Saint was the only person who could have given the information, (for he had recognised some of the intruders,) but so far from it, he even tried to persuade the governor against endeavouring to discover them.

The assassins, however, deemed it as dangerous as it was ignominious to suffer him to live after the failure of such an attempt, they therefore secreted themselves in the forest through which he would pass on his return to Allinges, to surprise him there; the Catholics, suspicious of foul play, insisted on accompanying him, at least for that evening, although the Saint protested that he needed no other protection than that of heaven. Night came on before he quitted Thonon, and scarcely had he entered the wood than he was assailed by two armed men, who fell upon him with a volley of abuse. The Saint lost neither his courage nor his self-possession; he strictly forbade those who accompanied him to use their weapons; and then, with the sweetness and dignity which graced his every action, he thus accosted the miscreants: "You are mistaken, I should imagine, since you are attacking a person who not only never injured you, but who would even readily give his life for you." These words acted as a talisman, wresting the arms out of their hands, and the malice out of their hearts; they cast themselves at his feet, implored pardon, and declared that from thenceforward they would on all occasions prove themselves his faithful servants. Francis raised them from the ground, tenderly embraced them, and advised them to quit the place, in order to escape the researches of the governor, who would be less favourable to them if they fell into his hands. They who had followed the Saint, attributed the sorrow of the others to the annoyance they felt at having been defeated in their purpose by the intervention of his friends; so far from consenting to their flight, they insisted on

conveying them to Allinges, and surrendering them to the discretion of the Baron. Roland, the Saint's servant, urged this most warmly, saying that unless something was done on the present occasion, they would be daily exposed to such assaults; but the holy man, in a tone of authority, insisted on their being set at liberty, and forbade his followers to speak of the affair. Roland, however, could not possibly obey; he immediately informed the governor, who, convinced that it would not be proper to leave such a flagrant delinquency unpunished, committed within sight of the fortress and in contempt of his authority, sent a detachment in pursuit of the wretched men. Francis exerted his influence so effectually, for the Baron could deny him nothing, that ultimately the affair was allowed to drop, and the assailants were left unharmed.

The Saint had hitherto refused an escort, saying that he desired no other termination to his life, than that which God had appointed—that he was in His hands, and that nothing could be more glorious to him than to receive death in defence of the Catholic cause; that it was for heresy to plant its errors with weapon in hand, but that Catholics, on the contrary, ought to use no other arms than those prescribed by the apostle, namely, the inspired writings. Our forefathers had no escort, no guards, when they went about preaching, quite satisfied to have God on their side; such, too, was his own wish, but from this time the governor would absolutely insist on a few soldiers following him at a distance, though Francis tried every means to avoid it.

But if the holy man was thus intrepid in the

midst of enemies, his parents and friends were much alarmed on his account. The Count of Sales above all feared for the safety of his son, and wrote to entreat him to abandon an enterprise which it was quite evident to him, would only be carried into effect by the roar of artillery; he insisted that further perseverance would be sheer obstinacy, that his zeal might find full occupation in catholic countries, without toiling to no purpose, and with great risk, in heretical provinces; that he need not expect to convert the Chablais, and that even if he did convert it, the expense of maintaining it catholic was out of the question in the then state of the royal exchequer, exhausted as it was by war. From these and other similar reasons he concluded that it was his duty to return to Savoy, and he ordered him to do so. Francis answered this letter by telling him that the crown was only promised to perseverance, and that he was determined to pursue the undertaking, hoping that this light tribulation would lead to an immense weight of glory, and thus his labours would by no means prove so useless.

Finding that his letters could not restore his son to him, he repaired to the Bishop, and in a state of great excitement complained to him that he had sent his eldest son like a lamb in the midst of wolves, and that though he should deem himself happy to have saints in his family, he preferred their being confessors to martyrs; he urged that enough had now been done, and, in fine, said all that could be dictated by a love which feared, and by a fear that loved. The worthy old prelate strove to convince him that the honour of his son would be compro-

mised if the undertaking were now abandoned, especially as there was every prospect of reaping the fruit of his past labours. But as nothing could pacify the Count, he promised to satisfy his wishes in every way short of issuing a positive command. He determined, therefore, on giving Francis a successor in the mission, and wrote to inform him of his motives for so doing, asking his advice as to the person to be selected; yet feeling quite convinced that scarcely any one else would be able to extirpate heresy from the Chablais, since there were but few men who could be compared with our Saint.

The Count of Sales moreover engaged the President Faber, the great friend of Francis, to write to him, and endeavour to persuade him to return to Savoy, seeing that the mission did not advance as might have been expected.

This series of importunities compelled the Saint to answer, that report, which usually betrays the truth, had magnified the dangers to which they imagined him to be exposed, and lessened the success which God had accorded to his toils; the former were by no means as great as they were represented, nor was the number of heretics already converted, and on the point of conversion, so small as was supposed; but even supposing the former to be greater, and the latter less, he should deem all his time and labour well bestowed, had he only converted one single soul. Christ Himself, with His miraculous powers, did not convert more than five hundred persons during the three years of His preaching, and the Church, which afterwards became so extensive, spreading all over the world—people flocking to her

in crowds—was at first composed only of these; so true it is, that our judgment of a work must not depend on the mere promptitude of its success. Almighty God demands labour from His ministers, reserving the glory of success to Himself; neither did He say to His apostles, “Go and convert,” but, “Go and teach;” consequently, nothing should induce him to forsake his mission, unless the authority of his prelate should decide that it was beyond his strength; and that as for giving him the support of other workmen, and the preparing things necessary to this purpose, it seemed to him something like a task which has neither beginning nor end. He exhorted the Bishop on no account to lose courage, considering the promises which our Lord has made to those who trust in Him. Although nothing but unpleasant and alarming objects as yet appeared, this very circumstance obliged them all the more to raise their eyes frequently to their heavenly country, to which Elias was not conveyed otherwise than in a whirlwind. He was well aware that many things would be needed for the maintenance of the faith in the Chablais, when restored, but that they were not so numerous nor so arduous as to be insurmountable, that he had already formed his own projects, which he trusted would be approved of by the prince and by the bishop, because they were of such a nature as not to be burthensome either to the people or the duke; that being on the spot, he was able to see things as they were; and certainly there was every reason to hope that in a short time Almighty God would afford an ample blessing on the seed already sown. By the private persuasions of the governor

and the Catholics, many Calvinists attended his sermons; and that he should continue to preach, exhort, and unfold catholic doctrine with all patience, in spite of all the prohibitions of the consistory and council of Thonon. It was true to say, much prudence was necessary; they intended, however, to introduce the service of the mass without delay, "in order to prove to our enemies that we find courage in those very things which they might suppose would deprive us of it."

It was in these terms that the holy man replied to his Bishop, to his father, and to Faber; to the latter especially, he confidentially opened his heart, and gained him over to his side; hence, so far from dissuading him from his purpose, he encouraged him to pursue it, and endeavoured to console the good Count of Sales; writing to him, and telling him that present success was an augury of future victory, but that even if the undertaking failed, the recompense would not on that account be diminished, since it is the characteristic of God to remunerate, not the fruit derived from the labours of His servants, but the labours themselves. The Count of Sales was very much consoled by all these suggestions, though not altogether reassured with regard to the safety of his son, and, to compel his return home, he issued a positive prohibition against any one sending him succour, either of money or of other necessities; in consequence of which Francis would often have been reduced to great straits if his pious mother had not secretly furnished him with money, clothes, clean linen, &c., contriving to send

his brother Lewis with these things, though under the pretext of different little excursions.

In the meantime, a report of the intended assassination of Francis spread far and wide, and produced just the effect which might have been expected in minds not entirely blinded by prejudice; people began to say to each other, "If the ministers are able to answer him, why have recourse to such violent measures? The use of such means is a convincing proof of the weakness of their cause; it seems strange that, close to the gates of Geneva, the very centre of Calvinism, one man should dare attack all the ministers, and that none of them should venture to defend the common cause; it will be impossible to believe the ministers, even on their word, if they thus give us occasion to distrust them. If Francis is teaching error, why are they silent? Why not come and convict him?" These reflections proved most serviceable to Catholicity, and induced many to address themselves to the Provost of Geneva, and ultimately led them to the Church.

We will conclude this chapter by relating an incident which plainly shows how visibly God protected the holy man. It is related in the Jubilee year of the Visitation Order, by a converted heretic, who declared on oath, that he had pledged his word to carry the head of Francis either to Berne or to Geneva, that three different times he had placed himself in his path for the express purpose of killing him, but that on every occasion his gun had missed fire, though one of the best in the canton, and though he had loaded it with every possible precaution. He likewise declared that he and others had often

attempted to waylay him, but invariably missed sight of him, although it was known that he had traversed the very path where they were on the watch for him. So true it is that the hand of sinners is powerless against the just, when, confiding in the Lord, they are protected by Him.

CHAPTER XI.

FRANCIS ESTABLISHES HIMSELF AT THONON.

THE number of converts at Thonon increasing sufficiently to form a moderate parish, the holy man thought it was now time to go and reside there, and accordingly made the proposal to the Baron of Hermance. He said that this was the only way of sparing himself the daily journey of two full French leagues, over a very rough road and through all sorts of weather. The hours thus spent in walking to and fro, would then be more profitably spent for the benefit of the Catholics, that, when living in the town, a thousand favourable opportunities might offer which were lost by his residence at a distance; that, if any of his Catholics died in the night, it would be a source of bitter regret to him not to have been able to assist them at the moment of, perhaps, their greatest danger; that the day was too short to give instructions to all who applied for them; besides, there were some who, like Nicodemus, could not persuade themselves to visit him by day, but who would have no difficulty of doing so by night. The Baron, extremely unwilling to be separated

from him in this manner, replied, that by settling in Thonon, he would be exposing himself to too great a risk, and trusting too much to the Calvinists, his inveterate foes; having already attempted his assassination by day, they would be still bolder by night; that the parties were as yet too unequal; consequently, the Catholics would be unable to protect him; that, as the Duke of Savoy had taken him under his protection, any assault upon him would be an attack on the royal authority, would necessitate reprisals, and perhaps lead to the destruction of Thonon, whereas, by temporizing a little, matters would mend. The Baron also adduced various motives of policy, such as the vicinity of Geneva and of the Swiss, with whom a rupture would just then be inconvenient, the affair of the Marquisate of Saluzzo being still pending. But Francis, who had abandoned his life in the hands of Providence when he took up the mission of the Chablais, promised to act so circumspectly as to occasion no disaster. The Baron, therefore, to spare the holy man his daily laborious journey, and being well assured of his meekness, prudence, and discretion, gave his consent to his establishing himself in Thonon, though to his own very great regret, well knowing how much the garrison of Allinges would suffer by his absence.

The governor wrote again to the magistrates, recommending the person of the Provost to their especial care, declaring that they themselves should be answerable for any insult offered to him, seeing that their office obliged them to prevent disorder.

The Saint took up his quarters in the town, lodging at the house of a pious widow, named Jane

du Foug; she was warmly attached to the whole family of Sales, particularly Francis, who had already been in the habit of repairing to her house to take his meals, or when he wished to study. In gratitude for her favours, as well as from a feeling of respect, our Saint used familiarly to call her mother, whilst she on her part treated him as a son. It would be impossible to describe the delight of the Catholics, whose affection and esteem he had won; they looked upon him as an apostolic man, replenished with grace and power, wholly divested of self-interest, with no other care but the glory of God and their salvation. Francis was deficient in none of those duties which charity or his own peculiar ministry could require. Assiduous in cultivating this new vineyard of the Lord, he devoted his whole day to labour; visiting the sick, instructing neophytes, and holding conferences, whilst his nights were spent in prayer, study, hearing confessions, and the like, allowing but a very small part of the night to sleep. His manners and his words were so well regulated as to sustain his teaching, and his doctrine perfected what his example began.

As his mode of life was truly apostolic, so did God bless it with the same favours as He bestowed on the mission of the apostles; in effect, the little church of Thonon bore a close resemblance with nascent Christianity. The same charity reigned amongst the faithful, the same zeal, and the same purity of manners. The pastoral solicitude of the Saint was not satisfied with the mere abjuration of error; he required a corresponding change of manners, that, where sin had once abounded, grace

might still more abound; and God so far favoured him, as to correct their hearts at the same time that He enlightened their minds.

Nothing seemed to open the eyes of the heretics so much as the succour and assistance afforded to the poor and to the sick; Francis spent almost all that he had for his own subsistence upon them, even depriving himself of bare necessities: often and often did he endure hunger that he might nourish others; and despoiled himself to clothe the naked, gladly suffering the privations of poverty to relieve the poor; he was perpetually appealing to the charity of his parents and friends, for means wherewith to relieve the needy, and in effect he frequently received considerable subsidies, though to his charity they seemed but scanty. The Catholics in the country so well seconded his zeal, that many of them materially reduced their own expenditure, to bestow their savings on the poor. The Countess of Sales also sent him considerable sums, like a generous mother and nurse as she was to the poor.

The heretics were confounded, whilst the Catholics were strengthened by the many proofs he gave of his zeal for divine worship and the salvation of souls. The mission had now reached its second year, and the winter was intensely severe; yet the saint went regularly every morning to say Mass in the church of St. Stephen, belonging to the neighbouring village of St. Marin, not yet venturing to celebrate in Thonon. He had to pass the river Durance, over which was an old stone bridge, in so ruinous a condition as to be impracticable. For the convenience of foot-passengers a plank had been thrown

across the stream; and this, as we have related on another occasion, he was obliged to pass on his hands and knees, as the only chance of crossing the slippery board in safety. On reaching the river's edge, he would make the sign of the cross, and then calmly venture upon a risk involving nothing less than his life. Those who witnessed it were utterly astonished; and it was spoken of through the country, and materially raised him in the estimation of the people, who well knew that their own ministers were incapable of such an act; for they always had an eye to their own interests, and dearly loved the comforts of this world. Restrained as he was in the discharge of his ministerial functions, so great was his moderation, that he preferred exposing his life to danger, rather than endanger the mission by precipitation in introducing religious solemnities before his party was sufficiently numerous.

When he had to impart the last rites of the Church to the sick and the dying, being unable to carry the Blessed Sacrament publicly, he carried it in a little silver box suspended round his neck. He gave notice by pre-determined signs to the faithful; walked along with a more serious and recollected air, wrapped up in his cloak, and saluting no one as he passed. All this was sufficiently intelligible to the Catholics, who followed him on these occasions to the houses of the sick, where they could with full liberty adore their Lord. One day he met Claude Marin, the Duke's Fiscal Advocate, who noticed the unusual gravity of the Saint, but Francis whispered in his ear, "Do not be surprised at what you see; I have with me the King of kings and Lord of lords;

some other time we will talk of business; at present be content to withdraw, and do not accompany me." It would be more easy to conceive than to describe his sentiments on these occasions; the tears which rolled from his eyes betrayed the burning affection of his heart, in the secrecy of which he exclaimed: "Now rule, O Lord, and reign in the midst of Thine enemies;" then entering still more deeply into himself, he said with the prophet, "The sparrow has her home, and the turtle-dove a nest wherein to nurse her young. O Queen of heaven, chaste Dove, how is it possible that your only Son has chosen my bosom for His nest? With truth may I now say, 'My beloved to me, and I to Him;' since He is now pleased to dwell on my breast." In a word, a man who could find devotion in everything must surely overflow with tenderness of heart, and have his mind illuminated when bearing in his arms, as we may say, the King of glory.

Spring again came round, when the Saint preached his second Lent at Thonon; but this was not sufficient for his zeal; he used to go forth and sow the seed of the divine word in the neighbouring villages. The eloquence, learning, and piety with which he preached raised the curiosity of the most obstinate, as the following extract from one of his letters to his friend Faber will show. "I am beginning to have an ample and delightful prospect of the coming harvest. The Lord of Avulle and the Comptrollers of Thonon came almost publicly to hear me yesterday. As I intended preaching on the subject of the Holy Eucharist, they were curious to hear the Catholic doctrine on this point. Those who dared not openly

be seen (having taken an oath to the contrary), listened to me from a private spot, if at least my voice was able to penetrate so far. I have gone still further; having promised in my next sermon to prove our doctrine by Scripture, and to justify it by such convincing arguments that none of our adversaries shall be able to deny it, or to deny that they themselves have been blinded by the darkness of error. They well know that this bold proposition is a challenge to disputation, which they cannot decline without damaging their reputation. It would indeed betray the weakness of their cause, should they shrink from encountering the least one amongst the Catholics. The affair is safe; if they venture upon a discussion, it is possible that they may yield. I am told by the Advocate Ducrest that the magistrates of Thonon, in full council assembled, have come to the resolution of presenting their confession of faith in writing; that we may familiarly discuss amongst ourselves the differences existing between the two creeds; and that when some of them wanted the minister to accept this embassy and bring us the manuscript, the others would not consent, pleading their ignorance of philosophy, and saying that they should be unable to combat scholastic subtleties. Thus the matter rests; they dare not combat, excepting through the Vicar, whilst our little troop is a sad annoyance to them. With cheerfulness and hope I wait to see whether they will meet me, feeling (thanks to our good Lord) full of courage."

Faber answered this letter, encouraging him to persevere, antecedent advantages giving so much room to hope. In the meantime the best informed

persons expected that the ministers of the Chablais would agree to hold a disputation, and would call in the aid of their neighbours, rather than hazard their reputation by a silence discreditable to their sect. But they no longer found it so easy to accuse the Church of teaching falsehood and error, still less to convict her, as formerly, when her pastors, for the most part ignorant and negligent, had neither talent nor spirit to defend her. The Calvinists felt now how dangerous it was to dispute with such a man as Francis, so learned and so exemplary; whereas heretofore they could easily seduce a people whose clergy were frail in morals, timid, and self-interested, and who, scarcely knowing the principles of the faith, were incompetent to resist the calumnies with which the heresiarchs sought to blacken her. It was this which so materially favoured the progress of Calvinism, which began to decline as soon as there was some one to assail it, as well as to defend the Truth.

CHAPTER XII.

FRANCIS PROPOSES A CONFERENCE. THE MINISTERS AGREE, AND THEN EVADE IT. CONVERSION AND DEATH OF ONE OF THEM.

THE ministers were confounded when they saw that in spite of their prohibitions against the people having any intercourse with the Saint, not only did they go to hear him, but that numerous conversions were the consequence. They feared that these would multiply unless some opposition were

made. They began to consider the best means of preventing it, and various were the expedients proposed. Some were for forwarding their confession of faith to the provost, and then to hold an amicable conference with him upon it; others suggested that Viret, the Minister of Thonon, a man much respected by his party, should discuss the controverted points with Francis; others approved of the discussion, but said that Viret should be seconded by other ministers, because the provost (as Viret himself admitted) was an excellent rhetorician, and possessed the art of puzzling any one who was not well versed in logic. To these varied opinions were added other difficulties in execution—for instance, How to draw up the confession of faith, as the Calvinists had never been able to arrange a formula which had satisfied all? nor did they agree about it themselves. To trust the dispute to Viret alone would be risking too much, considering the ability of the Saint, his skill in controversy, and his wonderful self-command; hence, however much he might be insulted in dispute, his passions were so completely subdued, that he never lost sight of his subject, and in this respect alone, possessed an immense advantage over his opponents; finally, if Viret was to have associates, what an honour this would be to Francis, since it was a tacit avowal of his superiority. It was said, that his reputation was too high already, and ought not to be increased by a public disputation, when the spectators would be numerous, and when a report of the proceedings would be circulated through the country. As each expedient was proposed, difficulties presented themselves, and the

congress broke up without coming to any decision, as it is generally the case in meetings where most of the people are of equal authority; and where each one would have his individual opinion to prevail, where none are willing to yield, and where no one is competent to grapple with obstacles as they arise.

Francis was informed of all these proceedings, and resolved to profit by the occasion. He himself challenged them to a conference, which he declared to be necessary, in order to terminate differences, and remove the scandal occasioned by their silence. It would have been indecorous to refuse this public defiance, which they could neither conceal nor ignore: it was therefore accepted, and the time, place, and subject of discussion were arranged. The ministers of the Province were for leaving the chief charge to Viret, because, being on the spot, he could, if needful, resume and reply to the arguments. The news of the intended meeting and the day soon became known; and at the appointed time, no fewer than ten thousand persons must have flocked to Thonon, from Geneva, Chablais, and the surrounding districts. The ministers hoped that their numbers would terrify Francis, and that distrusting his own strength, he would not venture to appear: but they were mistaken, he was the first to take his place, to their astonishment and terror; and as shame had compelled them to accept the challenge, so now did fear suggest various pretexts for deferring the discussion, palliating their baseness under the specious plea of not having obtained the permission of His Highness. This excuse was far from satisfying either

of the parties, for it was well known that on other and more delicate occasions, they had not been so respectful to the authority of the sovereign. It was answered that as Francis was in the country by order of the prince, they might reasonably suppose that his measures would be approved of at court, and that of course the Provost would not have undertaken the dispute unless he felt quite sure of the Duke's approbation. Viret, who was commissioned by the rest to convey these excuses to the Saint, was received by him with his accustomed courtesy, and though the pretext seemed plausible, Francis knowing that it was groundless, agreed to be responsible for the consequences, pledging himself to secure due approval for what was to be done that day, appealing to all those present to be the witnesses of his promise. But the ministers insisted that in so delicate an affair, no caution could be too great, and, therefore, they would not enter upon the discussion without the express permission of the sovereign.

But the holy man, more anxious than ever to enter the lists, sent to request the permission from the Baron of Hermance, governor of the province, and invested with full powers by the Duke. The Baron at once conceded the amplest faculties for the disputation, sealed and expedited with all due formality. It was now thought that retreat was impossible, and that the ministers must necessarily come forth; but they were resolved not to expose themselves to so fearful a risk, though they might well foresee that their withdrawal would materially damage their cause, and turn the balance of opinion

in favour of the Catholics. They replied, then, that the baron's authority was limited to civil matters only; and that for a conference on religious topics, the consent of the sovereign was necessary; and that if he disapproved the issue of the dispute, he would look upon it as an attempt against his sovereignty.

This proceeding showed how little the ministers trusted to their own cause; whilst it equally tended to confirm the new converts in the faith, and to confound the Calvinists. The Saint availed himself of the opportunity, and addressed the vast assembly on one of the most pernicious errors of Calvin, who says that Scripture alone is a sufficient rule of faith; rejecting tradition altogether. He treated the subject so ably, that many Huguenots were convinced. When the people had dispersed, he went in search of the ministers, and told them that their flight was a clear indication of the fallacy of their belief; that their reputation and their interest would be prejudiced unless they held the discussion: and he offered to leave the choice of the subject-matter to them; but all in vain. The ministers replied that they had not shrunk from the dispute from want of confidence in their arguments, but solely on account of the respect due to his highness; and they persisted in boasting to the people that they could easily have defeated Francis, if motives of policy had not silenced them; as if mere words would undeceive a people scandalized by facts.

The insincerity of the preachers aroused the shame of one of them, who, either acting in good faith, or confident in his own learning, hoping to convert the Saint, went privately to him, and told him that he

paid this visit in order to redeem the given promise; and that though the rest evaded it, he thought it right to confer with him. Francis received him not only with civility, but even with joy; and it must be owned that this conference, though less important than the public one, led to better results, both parties acting with sincerity.

Having agreed that the discussion should be confined to essential points, leaving those which the Calvinists themselves called secondary and unimportant, the preacher advanced all that he could in defence of the pretended reform: the saint listened to him with composure, and then by degrees unravelled all his arguments: his replies were so convincing, that the minister could not gainsay them. Francis then went on to prove catholic truths on such solid grounds, unveiled the fallacy of his antagonist's sophisms, demonstrated the real sense of the Scriptures, and the truths of faith so clearly by tradition, that the other owned himself convinced. He required time, however, to decide: grace worked in his heart, and after mature deliberation he was converted. Sufficient and prudential motives justified secrecy on the occasion; but the opposite party soon began to suspect his conversion: it was ascertained that he had private communications with the holy man; and finally, that he had actually joined the Church. His former associates foresaw that the conversion of one of their own body would prejudice their cause, unless they could devise some effective remedy; and they urged his family and friends to win him back to heresy. Entreaties and threats proved equally unavailing; and at last, under one pretext or another,

they got him hurried off to prison, hoping to terrify him in this manner, but to no purpose: they procured false witnesses, and so made him appear guilty. The convert was well known as an upright, conscientious man; and people were astonished at finding matters pushed so far: but this was only another instance, showing the power of false zeal on the one side, and of divine grace on the other. Injustice was carried to such a pitch that the minister was condemned to death, and the sentence was carried into effect with such precipitation, that Francis had not time to appeal to the prince, as he intended. Thus, the first preacher converted by our saint, became, through the malice of the Huguenots, a victim of the true faith, and of divine love, most happy, indeed, therein, inasmuch as he became at once a Catholic and a martyr.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONVERSION OF PONCET, AND OF THE BARON D'AVULLE.

—CALUMNIES OF THE HERETICS CONFUTED BY THE SAINT.

THE injustice with which the Huguenots had oppressed the innocence of the minister converted by Francis, horrified both Catholics and Calvinists, and led to effects precisely opposite to that which was intended; namely, that of hindering conversions, which thenceforward became more frequent. Amongst the

converts of this time which deserve special mention, were Peter Poncet, advocate of the territory of Gex; and Anthony di San Michele, Lord of Avulle, whose renunciation of the errors of Calvin was a last blow to heresy in the Chablais.

Poncet had heard several of the Saint's sermons, and was much scandalized by the evasion of the ministers with regard to the public conference; and still more so by the violence shown to the converted preacher. Anxious for a more ample explanation of the points of controversy, he paid several visits to Francis, proposed his doubts, and accepted his solution of them. The conversion of this man cost the Saint a great deal; for he would not yield until he had not an atom left whereon to cling; and was several times convinced before he would promise his conversion. The holy man forebore for a long time, but seeing the advantage which would accrue to the Church by the adhesion of such a man, he pressingly warned him that in an affair of this nature, he ought not to be guided by motives of false policy, nor be swayed by human considerations, either of friendship or interest; that it was surely reprehensible to be ashamed of appearing a Catholic, when, by divine grace, he really was such; that Jesus could not recognise as His disciple one who did not publicly acknowledge Him for master; in fine, he adduced the example of the philosopher Victorinus, converted by St. Simplician, as related by St. Austin, and reasoned so effectively, that Poncet made a public profession of the Catholic faith, in the hands of our Saint, on the 20th of August. His example was followed by many others, although the infuriated heretics

published a report, that in punishment for his change of religion, Poncet was possessed by the devil; adding that he was so fearfully tormented, that the provost was obliged to spend several hours of the night with him, for the purpose of exorcising him, pretending that the time was given to this purpose, whereas it was employed in completing the instructions, which other business prevented from being given in the day.

In proportion as the Calvinists defamed the man of God, so did the Baron of Hermance extol his conduct. Having occasion about this time to repair to Chambery, he there expressed his belief, arguing from the conversion of Poncet, and other important circumstances, that the intrusive ministers would before long be driven from the Chablais. He was never weary of speaking of the apostolic labours, and the superhuman learning of the Provost of Sales, by whose means God wrought such great things to the advantage of religion.

In the meantime Francis was wholly intent on promoting the interests of the faith, and in rejecting the calumnies of the heretics, who affirmed that Spondè, who just then had renounced the errors of Calvin, had been visibly punished by God for the crime; the penalty being nothing less than insanity. They made this boast, and based it on the assertion of a man whom they prevailed on to renounce the Catholic Faith, and who declared that Spondè was mad, and was confined somewhere in France. But God enabled the Saint to disprove the calumny, for he received a work composed by that writer, which had just been reprinted, with

an entirely new preface by the author, a work sufficiently convincing that Spondè was not only *not insane*, but was moreover a true Catholic. This circumstance gave Francis an opportunity of exposing the duplicity of the Huguenots, who lie so boldly even of their neighbours, and at the hazard of detection. How much less then could they be trusted when speaking of persons at a distance?

Day by day did Calvinism become suspicious even to its own votaries, who could not but perceive that, if falsehood and human means were necessary to its support, the same arts must have been employed in planting it; whilst, on the contrary, the conduct of the saintly provost corresponded with that of the apostles, being quite exempt from deceit and self-interest. His charity, gentleness, patience, and indefatigable zeal, were so many strong and efficacious calls with which God invited them to return to the Church.

All these reports reached the ears of the Baron d'Avulle, one of the most distinguished gentlemen of the country, and consistorial judge, looked upon in Thonon as the head of the Calvinist party. His noble qualifications had gained for him an extraordinary reputation in Geneva, and the neighbouring districts. The conversion of this man, and the origin of it, deserved to be fully detailed. He was called Anthony di San Michele, Baron of Avulle; and he was one of those Calvinists, who, as we have before stated, was present at the first sermon preached by Francis, whilst he was as yet but a sub-deacon. He was married to a Catholic lady, his equal in rank, but his superior in virtue, for which she was

distinguished even more than by birth. The piety and devotion of this lady were the first means employed by our Lord to withdraw the husband from the errors in which he lived, less by choice, than in consequence of being a native of an heretical country. He could not bring himself to believe that God, so merciful even to obstinate sinners, would abandon a lady adorned with so many virtues as his wife; he therefore used his best endeavours to win her over to his own Creed; using all the artifices of gentle and affectionate persuasion; but the lady, well instructed by our Saint, shewed such firmness to her religion, that he was obliged to desist from his attempt, and promise not to annoy her any more on the subject. Having gained this point, she easily gained another, namely, that he would be present at the Saint's sermons in Thonon. D'Avulle already knew that Francis must be a powerful preacher, having heard his first sermon at Annecy, and accordingly accompanied his wife. The first time he did so, the Saint had been duly forewarned, and preached with much energy on the characteristic signs of the true Church. The sermon made d'Avulle waver; just about the same time, the minister (of whom we so lately spoke) was put to death; a man of integrity like d'Avulle, disapproved such violence; but the preachers strove to pacify him by various arguments, which seemed to him so frivolous, that his long-standing esteem for them began to decline. He was well versed in controversy, and certainly a staunch Calvinist. The judicial murder of the converted minister increased his distrust, and though the pertinacious refusal of the ministers to

meet the Saint in discussion, disgusted him, he did not think that the malice of those who professed or taught a religion, ought to be held as an infallible rule for testing the merits and truth of it. The arguments of the provost were powerful, he admitted, yet he remained balancing between the two, unwilling to decide in favour of either, until his conferences with the Saint inclined him to the side of catholicity. No doubt his wife had a large share in this desirable issue, seconding the efforts of Francis by appealing to the mercy of God, whom she strove to propitiate by alms, prayers, and tears. The Father of mercies at length heard the prayers of the virtuous lady, and granted what her faith solicited. By degrees, d'Avulle perceived that the errors were in his own intellect, not in that of his wife, and he accordingly rejected them; the unbelieving husband was thus sanctified by the believing wife.

This conversion cost Francis more than all the rest put together, and was the noblest of his victories; however as d'Avulle was the mainstay of Calvinism he deemed all his labours well bestowed. Believing a change of religion to be an affair of the highest importance, the Baron would use every precaution, in order to save himself from after-reproaches. Not content with verbal communications with the Saint, he committed his doubts to writing, and received their answers in the same form. These were attentively examined, and the distinctions weighed. The man of God thought that he must be differently dealt with from the generality of others; hence he made it less his aim

to confute the errors of Calvin, than to prove the antiquity, truth, majesty, and sincerity of Catholicity. He exposed the falsehoods with which the heretics have corrupted holy scripture; and d'Avulle, who, the more he learned, became all the more curious to hear, was never weary of conversing with the Saint. To do this more conveniently and secretly, after despatching his occupations in the city, he used to withdraw to a wood about a league distant from Thonon, where the two together would argue for two or three hours at a time. When he was on the point of yielding, another precautionary measure occurred to his mind, which would free him from any thing like reproach of leaving Calvinism without sufficient deliberation, and without good grounds for embracing Catholicity. He requested the Saint to set down in writing the various points they had discussed, that they might be sent to Geneva and Berne, to see what answers the most celebrated ministers of those places could give them. The Saint well knew that his arguments could not be defeated, and accordingly consented, saying, that it had never been his object to mislead any one; but he requested that this might be the last plea for refusing to forsake his erroneous creed. D'Avulle gave the promise; the conferences were written and sent to the ministers of Berne and Geneva; he declaring that he would renounce the reformed religion, unless they could solidly confute the arguments of the provost of Sales.

The issue was just as Francis had predicted; the reply was waited for in vain; hence d'Avulle presumed by their silence that they had nothing to

advance. Pitying the blindness and obstinacy in which they lived, and in which he himself had hitherto lived with them; he renounced their errors, and was received into the Church, and this in a manner which fully repaid Francis for all his previous toil in instructing him. He would have his abjuration to be made in public, and for this purpose invited many personages belonging to the province, and even to Geneva, specifying the day when the ceremony was to take place. He made a general confession of his whole life to the Saint, who had gained him to God and to the Church, publicly declared the motives of his conversion, exhorted every one to follow his example, and, to render himself worthy of this and other graces, he abjured and detested the errors of Calvin. He was then admitted by Francis into the bosom of the Church, in presence of all the people of Thonon, and of a great number of Huguenots from the neighbouring provinces, who went expressly to be eye-witnesses of a fact, which nothing would induce them to believe unless they saw it themselves.

This unexpected and important conversion, occasioned as much joy to the Catholics as confusion to the heretics; more especially as it was soon followed by many others, insomuch that the Saint was unable to instruct the numbers who were eager to be converted. He was obliged to ask for further aid, and it was evident that this last blow gave the mortal wound to heresy in the Chablais; the neophyte cavalier sedulously exerting himself in defence of the faith he had embraced, and in combating the one he had renounced; everywhere extolling the

holy man through whose means God had enlightened him.

Another circumstance occurred about the same time, and contributed to destroy the little remaining credit of the ministers. D'Avulle frequently visited Geneva on business of his own; now glorying in his conversion, being too powerful to fear an insult, he went there publicly as usual; and although when he was absent they said that Francis had perverted him by enchantment, no one ventured to say a word upon the subject when he was present. Antony de la Fay, one of the most influential of the ministers, relying on the authority and influence which he had formerly held over him, took courage at last to reprove him for his change of religion: the Baron answered that he spoke too late; that he ought to have replied at the proper time to the writing which he sent to Berne and Geneva; that indeed his conversion was fully justified, seeing that neither he nor his *confrères* had a word to oppose to Francis, whose very presence seemed almost as redoubtable as his disputations. The minister felt himself cut to the quick, and replied that he was willing to go over to Thonon, and before D'Avulle convict the magician who had deluded him with a false exposition of Catholic doctrines. The Baron took him at his word, and fixed a day. On his return home, he told the provost of Sales that in a short time he would be confronted with an adversary worthy of himself. Francis expressed his delight at this intelligence, declared the stranger would be welcome; but feared that, like the ministers of Thonon, who had refused a public conference, those of Geneva would also

refuse a private one. In fact, La Fay did fail in his promise; and though pressed four or five times by D'Avulle, he always found some new pretext to excuse himself. The Baron then proposed to Francis to go over to Geneva, there to confer with the minister, observing, that his presence and authority were sufficient guarantee against mischief; and, under pretext of a visit of civility, a discussion might be introduced. Although the Saint felt some reluctance in entrusting himself to Geneva, a city rebellious to the Duke, the people of which were naturally seditious and inimical to Catholicity, and to which, moreover, his mission did not extend, he promised to accompany his friend, lest a refusal might be interpreted to the disadvantage of his cause. Accordingly, the Baron D'Avulle, our Saint, Lewis of Sales, the Advocate Ducrest, and a few others from Thonon to serve as witnesses to the disputation, set out on the prescribed day. The minister was astounded at finding himself thus besieged in his own house by the magnanimous provost of Sales, the sight of whom alarmed him, though he did his best to conceal it.

On his introduction, Francis accosted him very graciously: "You see, Sir," said he, "I bring the Lord of Avulle to you, since you have not made your appearance in Thonon, according to promise, when you were to convict me of teaching false doctrines: I thought it better to bring him here myself, to justify the doctrines which I have taught him; choose what subjects you please, for I believe I shall be able to prove that they must err who do not agree with the Catholic Church in matters of faith." The points of dispute were arranged; and in the "Life of Sister

Costa, first Tourière of the Order of the Visitation," who was present, we read that the conference was publicly held in the square called *del Moulard* (unless some other conference is here alluded to) in presence of a vast multitude, and lasted more than three hours. Our Saint endeavoured to oblige the minister to finish one topic before proceeding to another; but it suited his purpose better to multiply questions, and thus leave them all undecided,—a common subterfuge with heretics. They treated on the unity, perpetuity, and visibility of the Church, on the Sacrament of the Eucharist, on good works, and their necessity to salvation, Purgatory, the intercession and invocation of Saints, &c. Amongst the variety of subjects, any one of which would furnish material for three days, the provost so manifestly held the advantage, that the minister, seeing how dissatisfied the assembly was with his replies, interrupted the conference by throwing out a volley of abuse against the Saint, occasioning scandal to the whole audience, many of whom wished Francis to retaliate, as he so easily might have done; but he, with his usual gentleness, replied, that if the minister could have defended his cause by argument and reason, there would be no occasion for all that fury; but like a drowning man, he was glad to catch at a straw. The conference ended in a most disgraceful manner, the preacher proclaiming the holy man to be a sophist, an enchanter, and a false prophet, whose eloquence seduced the people. This conduct served only to confirm D'Avulle in the Catholic faith: he deemed himself obliged to compose and publish a work, declaratory of the motives of his conversion:

this little tract was printed at Lyons. In it he highly eulogises the provost of Sales; and clearly shows that he had neither convinced him by sophistry, nor converted him by magic. Numbers followed him to the bosom of the holy Church, and amongst the rest, ten of the highest nobles of the country.

The author, or rather the authoress, who relates these circumstances in detail, tells us that after the rebellion of Geneva, no one had ever ventured to discuss religious topics in that city; and it must be owned that as God tied the minister's tongue and prevented him from speaking to the advantage of his party, so must He likewise have tied the hands of the people, to prevent them from ill-treating the holy man, whose courage in daring to shew himself at Geneva in defence of the good cause, induced our Lord to protect him whilst there. Many admired his learning, and many more admired his meek forbearance. To some, who advised him to repay the minister in his own coin, he replied: "I have never spoken severely to my neighbour without regretting it; it behoves us to follow our Saviour's rule in this respect, not that of the world; mildness is more likely effectually to touch a heart, than bitterness and severity."

As the conversion of such a man would contribute materially to the restoration of religion in those districts, Francis sent an account of it to the Bishop of Geneva, to his Highness the Duke, and to the Supreme Pontiff himself, and received letters of congratulation, as will be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

SENTIMENTS OF FRANCIS UNDER CALUMNY. RECEIVES
CONSOLATION FROM GOD, AND CONGRATULATIONS
FROM MEN.

IN proportion as the Saint's labours succeeded, so did the calumnies of the ministers increase. They became so notorious, that he was informed of them, and was admonished that if not for his own honour, at least for the honour of his ministry, it was desirable to see the temerity and audacity of his adversaries repressed; but Francis, trained in the school of the Redeemer, replied: "Put yourself in their place, and see whether you would not cry out against him who took the bread out of your mouth. Why then should we be surprised at the preachers striving to discredit me, who am thus reducing their profits? Let us pray to God for them, and strive to give them reason to speak still worse of me. Even at court, the most prosperous are generally the best abused. Let us say with Tiberius, Be quiet, let them talk. With a little more courage and we shall do enough, God will help us." It was in this manner that the Saint digested calumny. One of his cousins wished to take up his defence, unwilling that such a man should be so vilely treated. Nobility, when irritated, is but too apt to have recourse to violent measures on these occasions, unless its hands are restrained by the nails which transfixed

our Lord's. "Gently," said our Saint; "Saint Paul, though represented near St. Peter, holding a sword, does not convey to us the idea that he raised it in defence of his colleague. We are not here just to be punctilious as to the words of our enemies, which at most, can only prick a little. If we can keep our head above the wind, a breeze under foot is of small consequence. The waves dash against, and wash rocks and shoals, but carry off with them straws and light materials. It is then our glory to be pursued by the enemies of the Church; nor can there be a greater proof of innocence, than to be defamed by the guilty. If the Calvinists accuse me, the Catholics know me. The greatest offence to a man of honour, would be to have him eulogized by the mouth of a heretic. It is an infamy to be praised by the infamous. Even a Roman, who was the subject of a pasquinade, said he should feel annoyed if it had been written by Cato or Scipio; but as it was the production of a nobody, he cared nothing about it. Now if a pagan, who had as we may say, a mere glimmering of light, could reason thus, what would he not have said had he been blessed with the full light of faith?" Such was the style in which Francis replied to those who informed him of the injurious manner in which he was spoken of by heretics; never would he on this account desist from his endeavours to win souls to the Church; heedless of the reports circulated by the sons of darkness, who usually speak worst of those who do the best, as was the case with our Divine Lord himself.

Nevertheless, if the Saint would not allow men to

defend his cause, God, not content with protecting him, would likewise console him by filling his heart with heavenly delight. On the night preceding the festival of the Blessed Sacrament, (May 26th,) this favour was conferred so abundantly, that he was compelled to cry out—and this was heard by persons in the house—"Restrain, O Lord, the torrent of Thy graces!" entreating our Lord to moderate His favours, to measure His graces, and to retire from him, seeing that he was unable to contain such a store of riches.

In this manner did God remunerate the fidelity with which he resumed, in the silence of the night, a prayer which had been interrupted by the occupations of the day. It was in these communications that he received the lights which enabled him so successfully to dissipate the dark shades of error; here, in the transports of his fervour did he renew his resolution of dying in defence of the great mystery of religion, the Blessed Eucharist; after which, towards morning, inebriated with this torrent of sweetness, he celebrated holy mass, and then preached with an ardour that gave him the appearance of a seraph. Eye-witnesses affirm that resplendent rays issued from his face, his heart being so thoroughly inflamed as to betray itself on his countenance; his words, too, were like so many rays of light dispelling all doubt from the minds of the greater part of his audience, amongst whom a confused murmur arose, as if the force of truth was offering violence to those who listened to it, as we may judge from the effects, for in a few days, six hundred persons embraced the Catholic religion. This favour was found in the

Saint's own hand-writing, among some papers which he inadvertently gave to his brother, the Baron de Tulle. Francis was exact in noting down the special graces bestowed on him by our Lord, to preserve the grateful memory of them, and also to excite himself to fresh fervour.

In the meantime, fame began to report the successes of the mission of the Chablais, and the advantages gained by Francis over the heretics, which rendered his name so glorious, that it resounded through Savoy and the neighbouring provinces; passed the mountains, reached the ducal court, and even Rome itself, where Clement VIII. was informed of what had taken place in the Chablais.

The more Francis strove to conceal himself, the more was Almighty God pleased to manifest the value of His faithful servant; and as Francis attributed the whole glory to the Author of all good, from whom he derived the wonderful gifts which men so much admired, yet cared not to ascertain the origin thereof: so did the Lord, whose interests he had so much at heart, inspire people to talk of his zeal, mildness, learning, and especially of the charm with which he insinuated himself and gained possession of the heart, and of his unwearied perseverance in the duties of his apostolate. He received many letters of congratulation; one of the first to be mentioned was from the Bishop of Geneva. Our Saint made it his inviolable rule never to undertake anything of importance without his approbation; he gave him an account of all his proceedings; hence the prelate was fully informed of all that happened in the Chablais. He sent one of his attendants expressly

to convey his congratulations, together with letters (in which he calls Francis his son—the staff and support of his old age—and even his pastoral rod,) several little presents and objects of devotion, exhorting him to persevere in the way so well begun, and assured him that God would assist him through all his tribulations, to his own great advantage. In his answer, the Saint told him that if he wished to know what he had done, and what he was then doing, he had only to read the Epistles of St. Paul, for though he was indeed unworthy of the comparison, His Divine Majesty did not disdain to use his weakness to promote His own glory. He then compared the province to a paralytic, and said that possibly it might reach its true country, even before he was able to stand; that he trusted the piety of the Bishop would obtain for him what he himself could never merit; that he was a sinner and nothing more, and therefore, unworthy of the favours God was pleased to lavish on him. “But,” concluded he, “you well know this, my lord, and I trust you are persuaded that all serves to render me still more and more your most humble and obedient son and servant.”

Next to the Bishop, come the congratulations of Father Possevin, his former master at Padua, who, seeing part of his prediction verified, looked forward to the accomplishment of the rest. In his letter he expressed the delight it would give him to see and converse with him, and still more to employ himself and whatever talent or authority he possessed, in the same cause; he also sent him his book on painting and poetry. Father Cherubim of Maurienne, the

famous Capuchin preacher, sent him a picture of our Blessed Lady, in the act of adoring her sleeping Infant. These little presents were so dear to him, that he told his brother in one of his letters, that he frequently had both the book and picture in his hands. The book contained a beautiful canticle in praise of our Blessed Lady, by Father Tursellino, which recreated his ears after the horrid blasphemies which he was compelled to hear; whilst the picture recreated his eyes, pained by the sight of so many ruined sanctuaries and desolate churches, adding, "No doubt these illustrious personages, by sending me such presents, hoped to impress Jesus and Mary still more deeply in my heart."

Faber likewise sent him a work on penance and divine love, in verse, a composition of his own, worthy of so great a man, who could combine the solidities of jurisprudence with the beauties of poetry; the work was exceedingly admired in Thonon, as it well deserved to be.

One of the ministers finding in it the words of St. Gregory and of Holy Church, when, alluding to the fall of Adam, it is styled a "happy fault," inasmuch as it called for "such a Redeemer," declared the expression to be blasphemous, atheistical, and papistical. As the unfortunate man could not be induced to speak to Francis, he sent one of his friends, who well chastised his rashness, clearly demonstrating how glorious to Christ was the death He underwent for sin, and hence the fault of our first parent may justly be called happy, since He was pleased to die in order to destroy it, and thus obtained a name which is above all names.

About this time, too, Faber dedicated to him his twelfth book "of Conjectures on Civil Law," and in the dedication passed encomiums on him, to which nothing further could be added, for they display Francis in his true colours, and are the more trustworthy as emanating from a man very sparing of his praises.

To these marks of respect, innumerable others might be added, but let it suffice to name those from the apostolic Nuncio, resident in Turin, the Duke of Savoy, and the Pope himself, who sent him a brief, to be spoken of hereafter.

There is certainly something in praise well calculated to seduce a heart that is not thoroughly grounded in humility; although modesty may exteriorly dissimulate, it seldom happens that we do not yield, at least in some degree, to the temptation, attributing to self, what entirely belongs to God. There was no such defect as this in Francis; his answers to these congratulations are a proof of it; he uniformly protests that we have nothing but what proceeds from God, who giveth the increase; not he who plants, or he who waters; that in vain does man appeal to the ear, unless God touches the heart; that He, who made all things out of nothing, can easily use a weak and vile instrument for the accomplishment of a great work; but then the instrument still remains nothing more than an instrument, nor can it claim the merit of the work. His conduct corresponded with his sentiments; he could not bear that any one should show him more respect than formerly. He was just as ready to give audience, and was just as familiar with the poorest of the

poor, as ever he was. When missionaries were sent to help him in his labours, he always left the higher functions for them, reserving the lowliest and most laborious for himself, although the Bishop had constituted him the superior, and the first in dignity in the diocese. His meekness and patience daily increased, nor would he ever avail himself of the privileges of his rank, or the esteem of his sovereign. Whoever insulted him, was sure to go unpunished, for he seemed insensible to everything, when the interests of God and of the Church were not in question.

But nothing gratified Francis so much as an apostolic brief which the Sovereign Pontiff sent, through him, to the Lord of Avulle. We insert it here, as a graceful addition to our history.

“TO OUR BELOVED SON ANTHONY DI SAN MICHELE,
LORD OF AVULLE, CLEMENT VIII., POPE.

“Beloved son, health and apostolic benediction!

“To our great spiritual consolation, we have been informed by letters from our Venerable Brother the Archbishop of Bari, Apostolic Nuncio at the court of our singularly beloved son the Duke of Savoy, that He who is powerful and rich in mercy, hath wrought great things in you; withdrawing you by the power of His right-hand, from the deepest shades and from the profound abyss of error and heresy, in which you had been trained from your earliest years, and has transplanted you into His admirable light, that you might discern and receive the Catholic truth, and unite yourself to that one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Roman Church, out of

which there is no salvation, and which has lovingly admitted you to her maternal bosom. We find from these same letters that you detest ancient and modern heresies, and that you display a truly contrite and penitent heart. We bless the God of heaven, who has dealt with you according to His great mercy, and who has not allowed you to remain longer in the darkness and the shadow of death; you, being as you are, a noble gentleman, well versed in affairs both of peace and war, and endowed with all those qualifications known to us. Herein do we rejoice with the Catholic Church, with the Duke your Prince, who so justly loves you, and who so highly esteems your person; and with your consort, whose tears and prayers have reached the throne of God, and have gained you to Jesus Christ. Continue, Beloved Son, and recount the wonders that God has shown in you; and if, heretofore you persecuted the Church of God, like Saul, now endeavour to edify and defend it, like Paul.

“In the meantime we would expedite these letters, to show our affection and benevolence in your regard; and we grant you our paternal and apostolic benediction.

“Given at Rome, near St. Mark’s, under the seal of the Fisherman, this twenty fifth day of September, 1596, in the fifth year of our Pontificate.

“SILVIO ANTONIANO.”

D’Avulle corresponded with the pious wishes of the Pontiff, and did great things for the service of the Church, and of Francis, who had generated him to Jesus Christ. To this purpose he devoted not only

his learning, which was of no ordinary stamp, but likewise his authority as consistorial judge in Thonon. The heretics did their best to deprive him of this post, to which they themselves had elected him, for they looked upon him with an evil eye, as soon as he separated himself from their pretended reform. Francis, however, anxious to protect so useful a son, wrote to the Duke, and obtained letters-patent from him, declaring it to be his intention that d'Avulle should continue in the office of consistorial judge, with the right of vote. Although this occurred some months later, we notice it here, in order not to have occasion to interrupt our narrative.

CHAPTER XV.

DEATH OF THE BARON OF HERMANCE. HIS SUCCESSOR.
THE DUKE OF SAVOY CALLS FRANCIS TO TURIN.

THE affairs of the Saint in the Chablais were progressing thus satisfactorily, when a misfortune occurred which would have disturbed their course, if the mildness of Francis had not interposed a remedy. The Baron of Hermance, that wise and prudent man, fell dangerously ill and died in a few days, precisely at the time when his judgment and authority seemed most necessary. He loved the provost of Sales as a friend, and respected him as a father; and being most zealous for the Catholic religion, he seconded all his designs. Moreover, he had such credit in the province, that he succeeded

in many very difficult as well as good enterprizes, so that his death was a sad drawback to the conversion of the Chablais. He was assisted by the holy man in his last illness, and it would seem as the anticipated reward of his virtue, that he should have lived so long in intimacy with him, and have expired in his arms. Francis deplored his loss with bitter tears; and his regret was aggravated by the character of Jerome Lambert, who succeeded him in the government of the Chablais. He was a cavalier of great merit, no doubt, but did not possess the affection of the people, like Hermance, nor was there any chance of his winning it, considering his austere and haughty manner. He was incapable of condescension, or of acting with moderation. Under pretext of upholding the authority of his sovereign, he created disgust in all who had to deal with him, so that it was feared he would be as much detested as his predecessor had been loved. Such a disposition would be anything but congenial to the extreme gentleness of Francis, who had much to suffer from him, but who never complained, and who preferred relinquishing his plans, rather than succeed in them, at the expense of peace and good will. On this account he forebore attempting to celebrate Mass in Thonon, and was compelled daily to walk a good mile to the chapel already spoken of; passing and repassing the frail bridge which in previous winters had exposed him to so much danger and suffering. The Baron of Hermance, sincerely regretting the inconvenience to which the holy man was thus daily subjected, was planning measures for the restoration of the Mass at Thonon, but with great prudence;

and there was every appearance of his succeeding, without any breach of the public peace, having nearly obtained the consent of those who were the most opposed to it. He was the more anxious on the subject, as he knew the danger there was of Francis falling into a rapid torrent, in which case there could not be the slightest chance of saving him. Lambert had neither the credit nor the discretion of the deceased. Francis, therefore, would risk nothing, though he well knew how much he would be the sufferer, as winter was now approaching. God, however, provided in another way, as we shall show in due time. But it is certain that he would never have sought accommodation by the use of any arbitrary measure; and would have rather gone on to the end repairing to Marin for the daily celebration of Holy Mass. So great were the consolations and support which he derived from this bread of the strong. He frequently owned that his sacrifices and prayers did more towards the conversion of the Chablais, than all the other talents which Almighty God has bestowed upon him. He said, "The Apostles always joined prayer to preaching; the men who fought under the command of Josua would not have conquered, had not their leader Moses raised his arms aloft in prayer. They deceive themselves, who expect to convert either infidels or sinners by any other means than those employed by Jesus and His disciples, since God has reserved to Himself alone, the power of changing hearts; *this* can never be asked too much."

The Duke of Savoy being informed of the toils and trials of the holy man, as well as of their advantageous

results, not only wrote to testify his satisfaction, but likewise desired him to let him know what measures he deemed best calculated to ensure the total re-establishment of Catholicity in those districts. Francis had thought that the Duke had hitherto not sufficiently cared about this mission, for beyond ordering him to undertake it, he had done little or nothing to forward it; he was, nevertheless, convinced that if his authority were exerted with kindness and discretion, the conversion of the whole province would soon be the consequence. Francis then blessed the Lord for affording him the means of conveying his opinion to His Highness, which he did in the following terms: "Since your Highness commands me to propose the means which I deem most likely to carry into effect your desire of seeing these people reunited to the Catholic Church, I will state my opinions faithfully to your highness.

"A secure and permanent revenue for a good number of priests, is absolutely necessary; priests who should be solely occupied in imparting the word of God to the Calvinists; from the want of this, we have been now continually preaching in Thonon for part of two years, with little profit, because the inhabitants will not believe that we are here by order of your Highness, seeing that we are merely provided for day by day, and likewise because we have not a competent number of workmen, having no place to lodge them, no bread to give them, nor have the expenses hitherto incurred been paid. The pensions paid to twenty of the Huguenot ministers, employed in the province previous to the

late war, would be more than sufficient to our purpose, if your Highness would but at once have them thus applied. It would likewise be desirable that the churches should be repaired, and competent revenues be assigned the curates appointed to the charge of them, leaving the best preachers at liberty that they might go wherever necessity called them, instead of fixing them in any determinate place; but, above all, the churches of Thonon and Allinges ought to be restored, and parish priests be appointed to administer the sacraments, as is required by the great number of Catholics already there; as well as for the sake of many others who are well disposed, but who are lost for want of cultivation; besides, this would accustom the people to the exercises of the Catholic religion, especially if the solemn offices with organ and singing were introduced, at least in Thonon, the centre of the duchy. Preaching is useless if the people shun the sight of the preacher, and will not hear his voice, which has hitherto been the case. It would be well if your Highness would write to the Syndic, and commission one of the senators of Savoy to come hither, and convoke a general meeting of the inhabitants, where, in full assembly, and invested with the insignia sent him by your Highness, he might hear and consider the reasons proposed to induce their return to the Catholic faith, which they quitted chiefly through the violence of the Bernese. This should be done in terms demonstrative of the authority and charity of a mighty prince like your Highness, towards his misled subjects; this would be a gentle violence, which would compel them to submit to the yoke of your holy

zeal, and, as I believe, would work marvellously on their obstinacy. Should your Highness judge proper to employ the Senator Faber in this undertaking, it seems to me that he would succeed admirably.

“The Baron d’Avulle, by his example and his familiar intimacy with individuals, will likewise contribute much to the good work, according to his actual good will and inclinations. It would also be expedient to raise a company of soldiers or cavalry, to give occupation to the young men, which, if religiously governed and assisted with due instruction, would be useful, and draw over the most valiant to religion. Those who adhere obstinately to their errors, ought by public edict to be deprived of military and civil charges. Finally, a college for the Fathers of the Society of Jesus should be established in Thonon; the consequence of which would be, that the whole neighbourhood would enjoy the great advantages of religion, which is all but extinct in these parts, both in belief and practice. For the rest, I bless the Lord for presenting this favourable opportunity to your Highness, and for awakening in your soul the desire of serving Him effectually; for which He created you a prince and a ruler over people. If this enterprise requires continual expenditure, you must remember that the salvation of souls is the highest degree of Christian charity. The glorious St. Maurice, whom your Highness so much honours, will be your advocate with God, and will procure you every blessing, of which the first and chief is that of being the main instrument in re-establishing the faith in those countries which the

Saint watered with his blood and sweat. I incessantly send forth supplications to the Divine Majesty, as I ought to do, for the prosperity of your Highness; and as I was born and bred, so I hope to live and die, of your Highness, the most humble and most obedient servant and subject,

“FRANCIS, &c.”

The Duke showed this letter to the Apostolic Nuncio, and decided on calling Francis to Turin, to consult with him, and to obtain a more correct view of the state of the Chablais. His Highness expressed himself in terms of esteem and of gratitude for his important labours, assured him that he was anxious to second his designs, and therefore requested his presence at court, for the more easy arrangement of plans necessary to the completion of a work already so well begun. No intelligence could be more gratifying to our apostle, who hoped that an energetic appeal to his Highness would obtain the succours needed for bringing back to the fold of Christ the stray sheep of the Chablais. A thousand times did he thank the Divine Goodness for inspiring the prince with an idea so advantageous to religion, and that he might start without delay, he immediately made such arrangements as he deemed advisable to the welfare of the mission during his absence.

CHAPTER XVI.

PAPAL BRIEF, ORDERING FRANCIS TO CONFER WITH BEZA,
HIS JOURNEY TO ROME.

TOGETHER with the brief sent by the Sovereign Pontiff to the Baron d' Avulle, was another entrusted to the care of Father St. Esprit de Beaune, a Capuchin, who was leaving Rome for Savoy, and was commissioned to deliver it to Francis. It was dated the first of October, 1596, and was a mere letter of credence, in which the Pope, after assuring him of the esteem which he had of his prudence, and of the reliance which he placed on his zeal for the faith, tells him that Father St. Esprit had orders from him to propose a delicate negociation, which His Holiness decided on placing in his hands, as being the most likely person to ensure its success, that it was an affair of high importance, and which His Holiness had much at heart, as tending to the glory of God. Francis applied to Father St. Esprit, from whom he ascertained that the Pope wished him to repair to Geneva and confer with Theodore Beza, the head of the Calvinist party, and to spare no means of winning him back to the Catholic Church, authorizing him to offer, in the name of His Holiness, every advantage, (save and except ecclesiastical dignities,) and every security that Beza could desire.

Every body knows who Beza was. Born of Catholic parents, he professed the faith for many

years, till weary of living in the ecclesiastical state, or flattered with the prospects of the grandeurs and pleasures authorized by the new sect, or naturally inclined to novelty, he sold his priory, went to Geneva, and proclaimed himself the disciple of Calvin. It was he who headed the ministers at the famous colloquy of Poissy, where he spoke so impiously of the Blessed Eucharist, that the audience obliged him to retract his words. During the lifetime of Calvin he shared his authority; his talents and the amenity of his character so endeared him to the Genevese, that they used to say they had rather go to hell with Beza, than to paradise with Calvin; at the death of the latter, he was looked upon as the leader of the sect, amongst the members of which he enjoyed unrivalled credit. Unquestionably he was one of the first intellects of his age; he wrote elegantly both in prose and verse, and was of a cheerful agreeable temper. If Calvin was his superior in learning, he so far surpassed Calvin in other respects, as to excite his jealousy on several occasions. At the time our Saint had orders to visit him, he had lost none of his cheerfulness and gallantry, though a Septuagenarian. It is not positively known what was the Pope's motive for then attempting to bring him back to the bosom of the Church, or whether the renegade himself had given occasion to such an expectation; it is not likely that so prudent a Pontiff as Clement VIII., would, on any weak conjecture, have given Francis so express an order to go and attempt his conversion. However this may be, the commission could not be otherwise than honourable to Francis, since

the court of Rome, so judicious in discriminating merit, and so wise in its judgment of men, proved its appreciation of the holy man, by selecting him to so delicate an undertaking.

The Provost was perplexed by the two contradictory orders—the one from his sovereign summoning him to Turin, the other from the Pope, ordering him to repair to Geneva. Father St. Esprit was of opinion that he ought, in the first place, to obey the Sovereign Pontiff; and to induce him to do so, he urged that it was not the proper season for crossing the mountains, that he himself had been in danger of perishing with cold; that the roads were now become still more impracticable in consequence of the snow which had fallen since his arrival in Savoy. So well informed as the Pope was, he undoubtedly had his reasons for giving such precise orders for attempting this conversion; that delay might defeat the measure, and if this conjuncture were missed, perhaps another favourable one might not occur—that it was advisable to set about it at once, considering Beza's advanced age, who might die before Francis returned from Savoy, in the event of which, a notable example would be lost, an example which would contribute to an infinity of others; that, supposing his life to be spared, man's will is unstable, that his present good dispositions might change in the interval of delay.

Francis, who, like other apostolic men, always preferred the greater glory of God and the advantage of souls, did not yield to these arguments of Father St. Esprit, though apparently so weighty; his zeal rather prompted him to set out for Savoy,

although at the risk of his life; he therefore replied to Father St. Esprit, that though Beza's conversion would be glorious to himself and most useful to the Church, it was at best but uncertain; whereas, on the other hand, the Chablais and the three Bailiwicks were evidently quite ready to be converted, if the prince would only second him with his authority; that the conversion of Beza affected one soul only, his example being doubtful upon others, considering his advanced age, which might lead people to say his intellect was weakened, and that he was no longer able to judge in matters of religion; but that in the conversion of the Chablais, was involved the salvation of innumerable souls, each one of which cost our divine Saviour as much as that of Beza, high as he stood in the opinion of men; nor could he believe that His Holiness would have entered upon a measure which could be injured by delay, without informing him of such a circumstance, and therefore there would be still time after his journey to Piedmont; that most certainly man's will is mutable, but the will of princes is still more so, being obliged to accommodate them to the interests of their states, and therefore must often change, even in spite of themselves; it was therefore of the utmost importance to take advantage of the Duke's actual readiness to further the conversion of the Chablais, as, having taken the first step, retreat would be derogatory to his sovereign authority, a point on which princes are peculiarly sensitive. In fine, that it was easy to see from the present state of affairs, how necessary it was that the sovereign should interfere. The converts were so numerous,

and of such a class that churches, pastors to instruct, colleges for the education of youth, and many other things, depending upon the will of the sovereign, were imperatively required. "It is true," continued he, "that the season is unfavourable to such a journey, but how many soldiers and merchants cross the mountains every day on business of much less importance."

Convincing as were the arguments of the holy man, Father St. Esprit was not yet satisfied; he looked on the conversion of Beza as an affair of interest to himself, whereas that of the Chablais was not. How seldom it is that man's intention is so pure as to exclude every particle of self-interest! He insisted strongly on the authority of the Pope, and of the obligation of ecclesiastics to obey it in things connected with the advantage of the Church. But the Saint answered that he was sure His Holiness would look to the greater good, and that if he were on the spot, he would order him to carry out his present plans; that he was ready to give him an account of his conduct, promising himself, moreover, that even Father St. Esprit would plead in his justification. The argument was cut short by the arrival of another letter from the Duke, enjoining the provost to undertake the journey without delay, that his Highness and the papal nuncio might at once confer with him on the affairs of the Chablais. Father St. Esprit, who was a man of upright intention, convinced that the conversion of Beza would not be achieved in one single visit, saw it must now be deferred, and that Francis ought certainly to set out to Turin.

They were then at the end of November; snow

had fallen in abundance, a furious north wind had set in, which rendered the cold more intense; the roads choked up with snow, concealed the precipices which bordered them, and every day brought sad accounts of the misfortunes which beset poor travellers.

Francis was resolved to set out in spite of the remonstrances of his friends, as he did, with only Roland to accompany him, of whom he had much more compassion than of himself. We may guess what he must have undergone, when it is stated that he travelled for the most part without a guide, for no remuneration he could offer would induce the peasantry to expose themselves to the horrors of such an excursion; he was thus compelled to depend on his own conjectures and slight knowledge of the country. He crossed the mountains called of St. Bernard, (not through Morin, as some writers have mistaken,) in a furious storm, the snow drifted about in all directions, and almost freezing him to death. They reached the monastery half dead, nor were their horses in much better condition.

This monastery was founded by St. Bernard de Menthon, archdeacon of Aosta, in thanksgiving for his safe passage across the mountains. Hospitality is exercised here in a truly Christian style; travellers are even gone in search of by the religious, who daily sally forth, laden with the requisite restoratives, in case any poor wayfarer should have sunk or missed his road. His arrival surprised the monks, who well understood the dangers he had been exposed to, and accordingly they did their best to relieve him. He gave orders to his servant to con-

ceal his name, fearing that if he were known, he would be treated with distinction; but Roland had no notion of being ruled in this instance by the humility of his master, and therefore did not think fit to obey him. Having disclosed the name of the guest, and the object of his journey, the religious treated him with every possible demonstration of respect and affection. They had already heard of what he had been doing in the Chablais, and looking upon him as a Saint, similar to those of the first ages of the Church, they deemed themselves happy in being able to lodge such a man. Francis accepted their hospitality and courtesy with his usual sweetness, and gratified them by informing them of the state of religion in the Chablais, according to their request, expressing himself with all due modesty.

They were unable to retain him amongst them as long as they could have wished. As soon as the storm subsided, he resumed his journey, passing through Aosta, and arrived at Turin after encountering all the rigours of the very worst season. He was admitted to an audience with the prince, who welcomed him most cordially, and showed him all the esteem and affection that a sovereign can show towards a subject. He highly commended him in presence of his whole court, and apologized for obliging him to travel in so unpropitious a season, and then whispering in his ear, he told him, that contemplating an early visit to the Chablais in person, he wished beforehand to take all necessary measures for the conversion of the whole country, and to consult him on the subject, resolving to press it with the whole weight of his authority.

CHAPTER XVII.

FRANCIS IN COMMUNICATION WITH THE DUKE AND
HIS COUNCIL.

THE arrival of the Provost of Sales occupied the attention of the court for several days. The prince, who like a wise man as he was, knew how to appreciate the worth of his subjects, spoke repeatedly of the immense good he had effected in the Chablais, praising his moderation and patience, and requiring minute details from himself, of various circumstances of which he had only heard through vague report. The whole court looked upon him as an extraordinary man, admiring his virtue and learning, especially his prudence, by means of which he had achieved so much, as to leave little doubt but that the whole district would soon be converted.

Besides public audiences, the Duke had several private conferences with him, taking information from him with regard to the state of his dominions beyond the mountains. Francis spoke so judiciously, that the Duke soon saw he was as well versed in politics as he was experienced in the science of the saints and the subtleties of controversy.

Descending to particulars of the mission, he told him that the lower classes were all Calvinists, because they knew nothing else; that the middle ranks, although sincerely addicted to Calvinism, were in reality less attached to it, than averse

to Catholicism, that this aversion sprang from the miserable misrepresentations of Catholic doctrines, so perpetually attributed to him; but that the chiefs and ministers of the Huguenot party adhered to their pretended reform from mere human motives, such as liberty, independence, and self-interest, and that it was on this account that they so pertinaciously shrunk from an amicable discussion with him on religious topics, and so maliciously maintained that he did not teach true Catholic doctrines; which, notwithstanding, he had invariably expounded according to the terms of the Council of Trent—the secure rule of faith. That this opinion of his was fully borne out by the perpetual discord which reigned amongst them, and which had prevented them from ever drawing up a formula containing the articles of their belief, according to the principles of Calvin; to this might be added the violent measures employed to keep the people true to the pretended reform, for instance, the false accusations by which they procured the death of the minister who had returned to the bosom of the Church, the spirit of calumny so prevalent amongst them; their league with the enemies of the state; his own assassination planned in Geneva, and attempted several times, adding, that he mentioned this, not to solicit punishment, because having pardoned it from his heart, it ought to be overlooked, but only to show that they who could have recourse to such means, so far from being converted with kindness, might fairly be distrusted on the essential points of religion, which exacts so much sincerity. He added, that as they hated Catholicity, so too did they abhor the

principles of their political government, Calvinism being the natural enemy of monarchical institutes, and as warmly attached to democracy. The proximity of the Genevese and Swiss, the continual intercourse they had with them, and conformity of religion, strengthened this aversion, which, moreover, they looked upon as a link that secured for them the protection of their neighbours. There was no motive more likely to attach the people to Calvinism, than the persuasion that the maintenance of their privileges depended on the preservation of their religion. Their ministers declared to them that the wish to restore Catholicity was only to enable the government to deprive them of their political rights. He concluded by saying that if the heretics depended on their sermons only, nothing more than preachers would be necessary to answer them, but, since they availed themselves of human means for the dissemination of error, it was only reasonable to use the same means for the re-establishment of the truth.

The Duke, supposing that the Saint wished him to apply coercion to oblige the Calvinists to return to the Church, here interrupted Francis, and said that this was too hazardous a point to venture upon, nor was it suited to the present posture of his affairs; that measures of severity would infallibly rouse the Swiss to arms;—that at the present moment he expected to be attacked by France—the affair of the Marquisate of Saluzzo not yet being concluded. It was therefore important that he should give the Swiss no just pretext for joining the French against him. But the Saint replied that he

never had the slightest idea of such a proposition; and although the Swiss had employed force to expel the Faith from those countries, he would never recommend the same measures for the extirpation of Calvinism. By human means, he meant offices, honours, protection, rewards, which were certainly more due to the Catholics, as being the most faithful and obedient of his subjects. Now, it could not be expected that *this* would lead the Swiss to rise against a prince so powerful as his Highness, the effects of whose prowess they had so recently felt. The best of their troops were already in the pay of France and Spain, and on such advantageous terms too, that it was not likely they would be recalled unless for the purpose of self-defence; all they now sighed for was peace, as they were still suffering from the effects of civil war. Geneva though insolent under the protection of France, was wholly devoted to traffic, and this would be sorely prejudiced by war; and the king of France having but just been received into the Church, would lay himself open to suspicion, if he favoured Calvinism, therefore there was little chance of his encouraging the Genevese in their opposition to what a prince might choose to do in his own states. Potentates might take advantage of every thing in time of war, but peace inspired different maxims; nor was it according to sound policy to protect subjects who take up arms against their lawful sovereign.

The Duke admired his correct judgment even in political affairs, of which he could have had no experience, being still under thirty years of age. Nevertheless these lights were necessary to him,

for without them he would have been less qualified for the functions to which he was destined by our Lord. Religion and the civil state are so closely connected, that the one is seldom touched without affecting the other; hence it is always hazardous to trust the affairs of religion to those who will not observe the interests of the state.

The pious prince now conceived redoubled confidence in the Saint; besides general information he enquired of him in particular, all that could contribute to perfect the good work. He desired him to commit his opinions to writing, and to call on him the next day, in order that they might be examined in presence of the Pope's nuncio, the grand chancellor, and the state council.

On the following day, Francis made his appearance in the audience chamber, and was presented by his Highness to the nuncio, as an apostolic man, who had rendered great service to the Church. The nuncio being well informed of all that he had accomplished, listened to him with great condescension, and warmly commended him. Then being introduced to the council of state, he repeated what he had written to the Duke, or had represented to him in private interviews. He presented the memorial which he had drawn up; which in substance contained the following articles :

“Immediately required eight preachers, with a revenue of a hundred golden scudi per annum, which might be taken from the stipend allotted to the ministers:

“It would be well to unite several parishes into one to save the expense of supporting all. The revenue

of the parish priests to be fixed at a hundred and seventy golden scudi, which would enable them to maintain a vicar; fifteen or sixteen of these would be sufficient, but not more than are necessary.

“It is expedient that the Church offices should be complete at Thonon; therefore besides the rector, there ought to be at least six priests, with a revenue of four hundred golden scudi. The expenses hitherto incurred, amounting to two hundred scudi, ought to be refunded.

“A catholic schoolmaster ought to be established in Thonon, till such time as a college of the society of Jesus can be introduced there.

“It is of the utmost importance that all the ministers should be driven out of the country, especially those of Thonon, who are bolder and more extravagant than the rest.

“Also to deprive by public edict, the heretics of all charges and dignities whether civil or military.

“It is expedient that the governor of the province should impose heavy penalties in punishment of those delinquencies which heresy has established into custom.

“And also to ascertain minutely what property belonging to benefices and religious houses, have been usurped by the heretics and are unjustly held by them. This property would raise a sufficient fund for repairing the churches, and for the maintenance of the priests. But nothing requires more prompt consideration than the restoration of the Church of Allinges, and appointing one for the converts of Thonon, together with priests to ad-

minister the sacraments and preach the word of God."

The zeal of the Saint did not stop here. He represented that there was a consistory in Thonon, composed chiefly of laics, at which an official of his Highness assisted, though without having a decisive vote. This tribunal, which was the only good thing introduced by the heretics, had power to punish, by correction and light penalties such vices as the magistrates usually overlook; for instance, intoxication, excesses committed at balls, banquets, games, and dress, immodesties, oaths, blasphemies, disobedience in children, disputes between married people, and the like. He requested his Highness to leave this tribunal standing, as being very useful in correcting abuses; but to give an order that the president of this consistory should be one of the preachers deputed by the Bishop, in order that the corrections should be made according to the spirit of the Gospel; and that one half of it should be composed of ecclesiastics, leaving the decisive vote to the official appointed by the sovereign. The pecuniary penalties to be applied to the repair of the churches, and the relief of the poor.

He moreover suggested the prohibition of heretical publications, as tending to nourish the people in error and insubordination. They abounded in consequence of the close vicinity of Geneva. In proportion as these were suppressed, Catholic works should be substituted, such as would improve the people, and counteract the pernicious effects of the others. It was of importance to the benefit of the state, that a love of virtue should be instilled in the

minds of the people, who are never more submissive to their rulers than when they are faithful to God; the most virtuous citizens always being the most loyal. That Catholic books might be sold at a cheaper rate, he requested the Duke to establish a Catholic printing press at Annecy, granting it such privileges and prerogatives as should enable it to cover its expenses: it might even be helped with a pension taken from the revenues of some abbey, with the Pope's consent. In fact, a hundred scudi which the monks of Talloira pay annually to a layman for the alleged privilege of cutting wood, might be applied to this purpose.

Lastly, he added, that he knew there were many who were deterred from being converted, (though they wished it) by the dread of poverty; therefore conversion would be greatly promoted by opening a house of mercy at Thonon, for those, who having a trade, were unable to procure work, or to provide for their subsistence in any other way. There were rich abbeys enough in Savoy, serving no other purpose than that of discrediting religion, because of the disorderly lives of the inmates. Some of their revenues might be applied to this good work. A seminary was likewise necessary. Geneva was famous for its schools, which attracted gentlemen from all quarters, to the great benefit of the sect as well as of trade. To give a better idea of the spiritual destitution of the country, he need only state that previous to the rebellion, there were between the river Durance and Geneva, fifty-two parish Churches, and nineteen in the Bailiwick of Ternier, without reckoning abbeys, priories, and

chapels. The whole of the property belonging to these Churches had been seized by the Bernese. A few ecclesiastics still retained a small share, whilst others, by order of the Pope, had joined the ranks of SS. Maurice and Lazarus, erected for this purpose in commendam. If there were no other means of restoring and maintaining the Churches and parochial clergy, the revenues of the former should be taken for the purpose. The principals of the institute were therefore summoned, Thomas Bergara and Joseph di Ruffia, cavaliers of great experience, who promised provisionally to maintain six curates, authorizing the provost to choose them. The holy man foresaw that some of the councillors would oppose his propositions, and had therefore prepared himself to defend them, which he did so effectually, that the Duke granted all he required, with the exception of two articles, viz., the expulsion of the ministers, and depriving the heretics of charges and dignities, promising, nevertheless, that in a short time, even these should be carried into effect. Thus ended the conference, much to the honour of Francis; every one admiring his modesty, prudence, and wisdom.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FRANCIS TAKES LEAVE OF HIS HIGHNESS, AND RETURNS
TO THE CHABLAIS. REGAINS POSSESSION OF THE
CHURCH OF SAINT HYPPOLITUS.

FRANCIS felt a holy impatience to return to the Chablais, not only to resume his task with fresh ardour, but likewise to obviate the inconveniences which he feared his absence might occasion; and therefore he endeavoured to hasten the expediting the patents promised by his Highness. He had several other interviews with the Pope's nuncio, to whom he particularly mentioned the order he had received from his Holiness to seek out Beza, together with the motives which had induced him to defer complying with the order till after his return. The nuncio not only approved of his decision in this particular, but promised to justify him to the Pope, and to become his advocate at the courts of Rome and Savoy, that he might the sooner obtain what he required for the success of his mission. He encouraged him to go on with the same assiduity and zeal as he began, assuring him that his labours were known to his Holiness, and were most gratifying to him. All things being arranged for his departure, he had a last audience with the Duke, who remitted to him the patents he required. They consisted of a letter to the magistrates of Thonon, and another to the governor of the

province, wherein he signified it to be his will that the mission should be supported to the utmost of their power; and in another letter he gave orders to his officials, to pay the expenses already incurred, and those to be hereafter incurred, in support of the same.

He made further enquiries as to the state of the city of Geneva, and received from the holy man, all the information he desired. The Duke expected that Francis would take advantage of his friendly dispositions in his regard, to ask something for himself, or at least to have his expenses re-imbursed; but finding that he made no allusion to anything of the sort, he himself made the proposal. Francis then took occasion, *not* to represent any personal interests, but those of the chapter of the Cathedral of Geneva; stating the needy conditions of the canons, who, since the alienation of their revenues by the heretics, were reduced to such straits as not to have wherewith to support themselves in frugal respectability. They were compelled to officiate in a borrowed church; though thanks to Divine Goodness, there was not a cathedral in Europe where the Church Office was more solemnly performed, considering their poverty, which was very great. The first year they were helped by Paul III., who granted them half the fruits of the vacant benefices; it being only reasonable that the other churches should contribute towards the maintenance of the mother Church. Pius IV. and Gregory XIII. had exempted them from the payment of all tithes; nevertheless, in the course of three years, they were most rigorously exacted by

the officials, to the great inconvenience of the canons. He therefore entreated his Highness to permit them to enjoy this immunity, as well as some other privileges which he specified. The duke acceded to all these just demands, giving orders that the necessary patents should be expedited. He moreover assured the holy man that he would soon send one of the senators to signify his will to the people of Thonon; one who should in person second all his good designs, deferring until then the confirmation of the two articles referring to the ministers and offices. He then took leave of him with a thousand marks of esteem and affection.

The winter was becoming more and more severe, therefore all his friends at court were most anxious to detain him at Turin till the spring. Even the Duke and the nuncio recommended him to defer his return; but Francis was not one to consider himself when the interests of God were in question. The only precaution that he took, was to cross the mountains called little St. Bernard, which were not quite so rocky as the Alps of the great St. Bernard. He reached Thonon in safety, though not without having much to suffer; and lost no time in visiting all his Catholics, giving them an account of all he had done in their behalf. Mutually gratified, he rejoiced to find that *they* had lost none of their zeal and constancy; whilst they were equally delighted that *he* had been received in court with such distinction, and had obtained so much to the benefit of religion in Thonon and the province. He spent several days in fasting and prayer, to obtain from God constancy for himself under the opposition to

which he foresaw he would be exposed, and due submission for the people, in order that *he* might not relent in his zeal, nor *they* compel the sovereign to have recourse to rigour, to enforce the execution of his orders.

Francis and the Catholics were most anxious that the church of St. Hyppolitus, surrendered to them by the Duke, should be promptly restored, that he might officiate therein at the approaching Christmas festivals. He therefore hastened to deliver the Duke's letters to the governor of the province, and to the syndics of Thonon. A report had already been circulated that the Mass was to be restored, and the heretics, in their fury, declared they would do their best to prevent it. The governor promised his assistance, according to the orders of his Highness, and desired Francis to let him know promptly and minutely, if he met with any opposition on the occasion; but the syndics no sooner read the Duke's letter than they themselves excited a sedition. The Calvinists ran to arms, and immediately closed the gates of the town, to prevent the governor and the country people from coming to the assistance of Francis and his friends. One party invested the Church, to hinder him from taking possession of it, whilst the others marched round the town, threatening to massacre all the Catholics, and to burn Francis in the market-place. The Catholics seeing the danger to which their pastor was exposed, likewise took up arms, and acknowledging no other ruler than the Saint (viewing in him the sovereign, whose orders he was obeying) were determined to sell their lives at a dear

rate. The authority of the prince gave them courage; and though far inferior to the Calvinists in number, were evidently not to be despised. It seemed as if some man of authority directed them (but in an under-hand way), for they took up their post most advantageously, and in regular order, so that even a smaller number would have been able to stand their ground. The safety of Francis was their first concern; they surrounded his lodging, and though he told them that he would on no account oppose force to force, and that he should deem himself most fortunate to die in so just a cause, nothing would induce them to withdraw. "You are too susceptible under insult," said he to them; "it is very clear that you are as yet mere novices in your religion, which orders us to die for our neighbour, whereas you would kill him. Are these the miracles of the Church you have forsaken? The Apostles raised the dead; but you would slay the living. They cured the cripple, but you would cripple the healthy. Oh, no! shew yourselves to be the worthy children of Christ, by suffering injuries and blows; for it is far more glorious to suffer for His love, than to avenge oneself for the glory of the world." Thus fortified by the grace of the Lord, he went forth at the head of his little troop, to meet the enemy; who though vomiting a thousand imprecations upon him, did not dare to touch him; restrained either by the majesty and sweetness of his aspect, or by the fear of those who accompanied him, or by some superior power. Towards evening he was able to enter the church, and having workmen ready at hand, they began operations at once.

No sooner were the heretics aware of this than they resumed their arms and surrounded the church; when there was every appearance that the two parties would proceed to blows. Francis placed himself immediately between them, at the risk of his life. His presence restrained the Catholics, and checked the fury of the Calvinists. The syndics insulted him, calling him a disturber of the public peace; and telling him that it was not lawful for him to say Mass in their city against their consent; as it was settled at the treaty of Noyon, that they should enjoy liberty of conscience. The Saint replied: "It does not belong to you to pass judgment on my actions. I have full power from his Highness," (here he produced his authorization), "as you well know; and it behoves me to inform you, that come what will, your heads will pay the penalty of any injury inflicted on me and mine;" then, raising his voice so as to be heard by those at a distance, he told them that if he had taken the church on his own authority, they would have some right to oppose him, yet even then, it ought to be done according to the ordinary forms of justice, and not with weapons in their hands, as they were not allowed to use them, unless by permission of the prince, in his service, certainly *not* in opposition to his intentions. They might judge from the letters they had received, whether he was acting by orders of his sovereign; and if so, they were bound by their office to second him, and not oppose him. It was with their consent that the citizens had taken up arms, perhaps even by their command. Let them beware lest their disobedience drew upon them

the destruction of the town. It was not his intention to become their accuser in this case, nevertheless, he had orders from the Duke to inform him of the manner in which they received these his formal decisions. His Highness had no idea of depriving them of liberty of conscience; but reason suggested, that having so many other places of public worship, it was but just that they who professed the religion of the sovereign should at least have one church wherein to assemble. He was depriving them of nothing of their own, since it was well known that the church of St. Hyppolitus had for centuries been dedicated to Catholic rites, and that they were merely requiring possession of what had been wrested from them by violence, so that if the Catholics now made use of the same means (which they did not), the Calvinists would have no right to complain of them; he concluded by conjuring his hearers, for the love which they owed their common country—by the solicitude with which they ought to guard it, to open their eyes to the miseries which they would entail on themselves by persevering in contumacy, and opposing themselves to the express orders of their sovereign.

His own followers loudly applauded this speech, to which the heretics responded by calling him a magician, an idolater, a papist, the enemy of his country, and there was every appearance that the infuriated mob would bring matters to a crisis, when some of the more moderate proposed an accommodation; whereupon the rest laid down their arms. The leaders repaired to the house where Francis lodged, at no great distance, when several arrangements were

suggested, but as they all implied a suspension of the prince's designs, at least till they could apply to him, Francis rejected them all with a courage that astonished them. He insisted on the provisional execution of the Duke's express command, saying, "Even if he should be inclined to favour you, and should deem your pretensions lawful, it shall be no benefit to you to have taken up arms to compel me and mine to obey you." In despair of bringing him to their terms, the councillors threatened to have him assassinated by some one who should send for him under the pretext of a desire to be converted to his faith; to this the Saint replied, with an energy that completely confounded them, "You ought to be well aware that there is nothing I should like better than to give my life in so just a cause; my only regret would be the certainty of the terrible vengeance that would follow. Be wise then in time, and endeavour to bring your people to obedience and submission, lest you provoke the just indignation of your prince." The councillors declared they would not answer for what might ensue, and demanded a public acknowledgment of their opposition, whilst he, on the contrary, protested against them, as guilty of rebellion and high treason: and thus finished the contest.

However, when the principal inhabitants began to reflect on the probable consequences of the affair, they tried to appease the people by telling them that they were resolved to write to the prince, hoping that when better informed, he would do them justice, and in the meantime to show their respect for his commands, it was judged advisable to leave

them to be carried into effect without further opposition.

Letters were accordingly written by both parties, the tumult ceased, and the Saint remained in peaceable possession of the church; immediate repairs were begun, in order that it might be ready for the new born Saviour, and that the Catholics might assist at the holy offices within its walls at the following Christmas festivals.

The night preceding the solemnity, the Catholics assembled in great numbers, even from the neighbouring villages. The Church was prepared with more neatness than ornament, and the Saint celebrated holy mass, which had not been done since 1535. The concourse was so numerous, that communion was administered to at least eight hundred persons. At the conclusion of the mass, he preached with such a deep feeling of devotion, that all hearts were influenced with love for the precious Babe of Bethlehem, born for the redemption of mankind. At daybreak he said his second mass, and the third about nine o'clock, an equally large assembly assisting at it. To him, these indeed proved festivals of multiplied consolation, for the inhabitants of three villages came in a body to abjure heresy at his hands, namely, those of Allinges, Messing, and Breno. Acting on the faculties given him by the Bishop, he appointed curates to these villagers, and obtained several immunities for them by applying to the Duke.

He sent his cousin and coadjutor of the mission, Lewis of Sales, to Breno, of which he happened to be the temporal lord.

So immense were his labours at this time, that it is difficult to believe how one man can have accomplished so much. In proportion as the number of Catholics increased, so did the conferences and instructions increase, and it was he who had to give them; it is, however, a characteristic of charity to do that which seems impossible. The heretics themselves were astonished how one man could undertake and accomplish so many things. Preaching, hearing confessions, holding conferences, visiting the sick, writing, assisting at funerals, going in quest of the poor in the vilest of huts, measuring his labours, not by his own strength, but by the necessities of his neighbour and the immense charity of his heart.

Although his days were spent in these laborious functions, his nights were not devoted to repose; he had taken upon himself the care of the church of Thonon, until he received further information from the bishop; now, he not only spent a great part of the night in writing, studying, praying, and instructing, but very often without so much as taking off his clothes to lie down; he even availed himself of this time to carry the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, in order that it might not be exposed to the insults of the heretics by day.

He could have obtained precise injunctions and prohibitions from the prince against whoever should dare to disturb the exercises of religion; but he judged it better to forbear for a time, in order not to exasperate the Calvinists against himself, which would only have hindered the progress of the faith. Indeed, it is surprising how considerate he was in

their regard, especially when we know that his consideration cost him so much. He does not seem to have felt the effects of his labours at the time, but they most undoubtedly shortened his life; old age, to which he did not attain, would probably have betrayed the toils of his youth. His friends frequently warned him to take a little care of himself, to which he invariably answered, that it was not necessary that he should live, whereas it was necessary that the Church should be saved; that, supposing he were carried off by an attack of pleurisy, he should get to heaven all the sooner, but that if he lived, he should at least have the consolation of not having looked to the pain for the sake of the consolation which accompanied it; that the example of Jacob confounded him, and that the God of Jacob well deserves all our love. "In a word," he says, "love renders labour sweet, and those things easy which appear impossible; those who love, can well understand that where there is true love no toil can weary us."

God blessed his zeal, for the number of Catholics daily increased. It is affirmed that, through his sermons, as many as eight thousand persons were converted in one day, and this it was that rendered his labours so sweet. As the agriculturalist rejoices under the fatigues of a plentiful harvest, so did he exult in his heart, as he saw the wheat of the elect increase, the wheat which was to fill the granaries of the heavenly Jerusalem.

But it was not his labours alone that sanctified him; love, and the interior spirit with which he laboured, contributed yet more to his sanctification.

He partially describes the variety of his labours in one of his letters, and then adds, "In reality these functions are various, but the intention with which they are done is but one; it is love alone which stamps the difference on the price of our actions and exercises. Our Divine Saviour was equally the beloved of His Father in the garden where He humbled Himself, at the marriage of Cana where He was exalted, on Thabor where He was transfigured, and on Calvary where He was crucified, because in all these circumstances He honoured His Father with the same heart, the same submission, and the same love; let us then endeavour to have a true love, which may make us seek nothing but the good pleasure of our Lord; this will render our actions beautiful and perfect, however common and insignificant they may seem;" a practical instruction to be despised by no one who is engaged in multiplicity of occupations.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SAINT RECEIVES AN ANSWER FROM THE DUKE.
WRITES SEVERAL TRACTS. CONVERSION OF THE FIRST
SYNDIC, &C.

FRANCIS wrote both to the Duke and to the apostolic nuncio, informing them of the difficulties raised by the people of Thonon, soliciting a prompt and favourable answer, fearing lest the intrigues of some of the courtiers might be directed against the good cause. But there was no need of pressing the

Duke on a point where his authority had so manifestly been despised by the Thononese. He testified his displeasure by not answering their letter, whilst, on the contrary, nothing could have been more favourable than his answer to the Saint, whose zeal and prudence he commended. He approved all that he had done, or purposed to do, for the re-establishment of the Catholic religion, adding, that he had given orders to Lambert the governor, to assist him, declaring, moreover, that he was willing to succour any minister who wished to become a Catholic, as requested; finally, he ordered him to show this letter, which was dated 7th January, to the syndics and to the council. This mortified the people of Thonon to the last degree; as if they had expected no reproof, and as if the sovereign, whose authority they had contemned, was to show no resentment on the occasion.

Their mortification was increased, when, a little later, the regiment of Count Martinengo, lieutenant-general of the Duke's forces, came and took up its quarters at Thonon without giving any previous notice, remaining there till further orders were forwarded from court; this was done by His Highness, expressly to keep the people in check, and to testify his indignation. The soldiers arrived during Lent—with what spiritual profit to themselves, will be shown later.

In the meantime, the restoration of the public exercises of religion brought new conversions every day, yet they were not so numerous as the insatiable zeal of the holy man could have desired, who, perceiving that the inhabitants did not attend his ser-

mons, or at least but very seldom, he resolved to address them through books. "Thus," said he, "1st, If you will not come to me, these books shall go to you, and shall convey to your hearts what you will not come here to fetch. 2nd, They will satisfy those who, not knowing how to answer my arguments, say they should like to introduce them to the ministers, to see whether they would not then appear in a different light, or whether they would not be completely refuted; every one will be at liberty to present them to whom he pleases. 3rd, As the eye is a better judge than the ear, they will be able to consider them attentively, as they hold them in their hands. 4th, That they may see that I am ready to say at Annecy or at Rome the same things that I say at Thonon." This last remark was intended to remove the erroneous opinion of some who did not believe him to be a staunch Catholic, merely because he did not teach those doctrines which the Calvinists falsely ascribed to Catholics; meaning, for instance, that he said our works are of no value, unless they are coloured with the blood of Jesus Christ, which gives them all their worth; that in the adorable Sacrament of the altar, under the species of bread and wine, there are substantially, really, and truly, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, but not carnally;—that the saints have no further power than that of mediators, and that there is the same difference between them and God, as there can be between the creature and the Creator; between that which is finite, and that which is infinite, and other such truths applied to the faithful in so very different a sense by the ministers. He wrote successively various tracts on the

chief points of controversy, briefly and in his usual style, as easy to be understood, as they were sublime in their teaching, obtaining all the success he had expected. He dedicated them to gentlemen of the city of Thonon, in a letter which served as preface, worthy of his excellent heart, because filled with sentiments of humility and of charity for the people. His incessant occupations and his infirmities did not allow him to complete the work in the manner he could have wished, so that several of the pieces are mere fragments, which were never filled up, unless, indeed, some of the papers were mislaid. There is a small volume of these controversial tracts, collected by Father de Caugi, a minim. One of the first treats of "true and false missions," where he proves that Luther, Calvin, and other ministers of the so-called reformed Church, had no true mission, refutes their absurd notion of a Church with an invisible mission, demonstrates the error of those who affirm that the Church contains none but the predestinate, and that it can and does suffer an interruption. A second treats of the "rules of faith," in which, after demonstrating that holy scripture forms the real rule of our belief, he proves that the heretics have corrupted it by discarding some of its books to suit themselves, and that they have profaned it by translating it into the vulgar tongue, essentially deteriorating the majesty of the divine word, and gives examples from the translations of Clement Maroth and Theodore Beza, in the psalms of David. He next reproves the grounds on which the ministers strive to justify the translation, and the use of it in the vulgar tongue. He then treats of tradi-

tion, which forms the second rule of faith, showing that in all ages it has been received by the Church, and that the heretics are guilty of great rashness in rejecting it. In a third, he treats of the rule of faith of "explanation and application." He establishes the primacy of St. Peter and his successors, on the authority of scripture, the fathers and councils; he shows in what sense Catholics teach that St. Peter was the foundation-stone of the Church, namely, secondarily and subordinately to Christ; for, if St. Paul says there can be no other foundation than Christ, he likewise says that the faithful rest on the foundation of the apostles; he next adduces fifty prerogatives, attributed by the holy fathers and councils to the Bishop of Rome. This tract discloses the profound respect which he bore to the Holy See. In the second part, after deploring the injurious attacks of heretics upon the Church, by refusing to recognise her as the rule of faith; upon the general councils by despising their authority; and upon the holy fathers by trampling on their credit; he proves that the Church must be, and ought to be visible, and have a visible head competent to decide controversies; likewise, that she should be "one in her doctrine, holy and spotless, endowed with the gift of miracles and prophecy, universal, ancient, perpetual, fruitful and apostolical." And as all these qualities are wanting to the misnamed reformation, he concludes that it cannot be the true Church, nor does it teach the rules of Christian perfection. In the fourth place he speaks of the sacraments, their nature and form, and of the intention necessary in those who administer them, (we have to regret the irrepa-

rable loss of the remainder of the tract,) and then he authoritatively and argumentatively proves the existence of purgatory.

Although these treatises were never completed and touched up by the master-hand of the holy man, they are full, nevertheless, of excellent instruction; and whoever compares them with his other works, will readily admit that they are worthy of the admirable pen of St. Francis, and are most useful to those who are engaged in the conversion of heretics. His style is sweet, Christian, and full of tender compassion for erring souls; treating, them with charity, and, according to the example of the angelical doctor, without asperity of expression, and without indiscreet zeal, which, generally speaking, only confirm the erring in their obstinacy, instead of inducing them to seek and love truth. When the people of Thonon read these tracts, they not only conceived a high opinion of the learning of the author, but also quite changed their idea of the Catholic Church, to which, in progress of time, they united themselves.

There were in the Chablais a great number of persons possessed by the devil, experience showing that they always abound in heretical countries. This proves the justness of a remark made by Martin Rio, to the effect, that heretics are much given to magic; they who rebel against God easily league themselves with the devil. Francis relieved many of these by exorcism, having a special grace in this respect, to the no small annoyance of the ministers, who could never expel the devil from human bodies. To discredit him, they renewed their former calumnies,

proclaiming him a magician, though their assertions did not meet with general belief, his most exemplary life being the most convincing proof of the contrary. Their next assertion was, that the people he delivered were not really possessed, that their contortions, &c., were merely the effect of imagination; whilst others, in fine, denied the existence of the devil altogether, or if there was such a being, at least he had no power over the human body. This opinion was supported by a certain doctor of Paris, who had the audacity to dedicate a work to the king of France, in which the impiety, if not the atheism of the author was avowed, for he directly impugns the use of exorcism, against the very ancient and uniform teaching of the Church.

Seeing that no one else took up the cause, the Saint composed a work, which, if it was not printed, is only owing to his humility; in nine short chapters, not the less clear in consequence of their brevity, he says all that could be desired on such a subject. He first demonstrates the relation there is between the human and the angelic nature; how Satan holds communication with man since the fall of Adam, and how far his communication extends; he then tells us that the communication, by means of which Satan allies himself to man, is more frequent since the incarnation; that though it produces warfare in the soul, and torture to the body, God has provided a remedy to this serious and frequent evil. He next discusses the precise qualities of the vexation occasioned by the devil in those of whom he has possession; of the dispositive and immediate causes subservient to the malignant fiend, in his attacks upon

the human body; of the designs of Satan both against the individual possessed, and against the Church, which undertakes to expel him from the possessed, and he concludes by saying that as God sets bounds to the fury of the devil, when tormenting the indemoniated, so does He likewise limit his malice, when he tries to deceive the Church by his artifices; and as the patience of the one surpasses his power, so does the prudence of the other triumph over his deceit; that if the devil, the prince of darkness, sees his deception unveiled, his followers who are in and of the world, take up two weapons at his instigation, viz., force and calumny in order to fight against the church, and although she may not have arms to contend against force, at least she has that which can repel calumny—innocence in action, sincerity in speech, and authority in her judgments.

About this time, Viret, the minister at Thonon, enraged at seeing the Mass revived in the city, was incessantly preaching and declaring that the papist's Mass was downright idolatry, and the abomination of desolation foretold by Daniel; he asserted that the real presence of the body of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, destroyed the symbol and analogy of faith. But in speaking of these things, he affectedly used terms of logic, of which he evidently did not understand the meaning, and applied them so inopportunely as to excite the laughter of those who were pretty well informed; whilst the vulgar and ignorant, admiring what they did not comprehend, imagined their minister to be a very learned man. "There was danger," says Charles Augustus, "that Viret, inflated by so much praise, might burst;

but Francis soon averted the danger, by publishing a short and devout meditation on the Apostles' Creed, where, in as many paragraphs as there are articles, he clearly proved the mystery of the Eucharist to be in conformity with all that the apostles propose to our belief in the Creed." This meditation soon circulated so widely as to be printed in Paris and in other places; it is worth remarking, that towards the end, he added an anagram of his own name in French, signifying that the strength of faith was incapable of diminution, 'Francoy de Sales. Foy sans decaler.'

A little later, still worse befel Viret, than the notion of having discovered that the mass and the Eucharist destroy the analogy of faith, and the mortification of seeing it so clearly proved, that so far from destroying them, they are in accordance with every article of the Apostolic Creed; whereupon he rashly accused of blasphemy, a proposition of faith, used by the Saint in one of his sermons. Several letters were written on both sides, (for the minister had not courage to venture on a personal encounter,) but he wrote so much, and perhaps so hastily, as to fall into one of the heretical propositions of Jovinian, with regard to the virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in consequence of which he was obliged publicly to retract his words.

All these writings, seconded by the incredible labours of Francis, so far excited the people of Thonon, that several embraced the Catholic faith; amongst others, the first syndic, named Peter Fournier. This conquest was highly gratifying to the holy man, who was well aware that men of authority are usually

imitated by many others; he resolved, therefore, to conduct this neophyte with public solemnity to the church. Assembling all the Catholics, they formed into a procession and walked along to the church, Fournier being at the right hand of Francis; on reaching the square, the heretics who were lying there in wait, discharged a shower of stones, some of which even struck the Saint. Notwithstanding this, the Catholics advanced steadily, and on arriving at the church porch, Francis turned round and accosted the mob; the sweet, persuasive power of his words, and the dazzling brilliancy of his eyes, so completely subdued the outburst of popular fury, that those who were accustomed to witness such scenes, ascribed it to nothing less than a miracle. Fournier made his abjuration, his confession, and received communion, and, animated by the zeal which the holy man usually infused into his neophytes, he protested that he would not suffer the city to be any longer styled an heretical city, seeing that it might justly be called Catholic, now that the majority and the most respectable of the inhabitants belonged to the Church. He deemed it expedient to write to the Pope, who took so lively an interest in the affairs of the Chablais, as was testified by his letters to the sovereign and the bishop; the council was assembled, when the holy man, with his usual tact, overcame all opposition, and was commissioned to write to His Holiness, which he did, to the great satisfaction of the pontiff, who was so exceedingly zealous for the progress of religion.

The letter was as follows :

“Most Blessed Father!

“Loving us as your Holiness does, with so much solicitude and charity, although we were but stray sheep, and are but lately returned to the fold, as we are assured by letters from our friends at Rome, and by the arrival of the archbishop of Vienna, this does but demonstrate the truth of what we have all along heard from him, who, by the gospel, has regenerated us to Jesus Christ, namely, that there is here on earth a sovereign pastor, to whom our Saviour committed His flock, in such distinct terms as evidently to show that He entrusted them all to him, to him consequently does it appertain (in addition to daily supplications) to take charge of all the churches; most sincerely then do we recognise in your Holiness, the pre-eminence of the apostolic priesthood, together with the zeal proportioned to so high a dignity. Greatly do we rejoice to see your Holiness so well imitate the glorious St. Peter, at the same time that you occupy his chair; especially inasmuch as you would not only govern the sheep, but would wish to succour all, and particularly us. Prostrate, therefore, at the feet of your Holiness, we return you infinite thanks for this favour, beseeching you to continue those benefits which spring from your truly apostolic spirit in our regard, and never to allow your paternal clemency to be wanting to us. Thus will your Holiness truly be most blessed in your immortal reward, as you already are exalted by the dignity which you possess. May God long preserve you, according to our prayers, for the advantage of His Church.

“From Thonon,” &c.

CHAPTER XX.

ARRIVAL OF TROOPS. FRANCIS GOES TO CHAMBERY.

WHILST Francis was wholly intent on defeating the schemes of the Calvinists, some of whom daily embraced the faith, and in strengthening the new converts, exposed to great persecutions by the domineering spirit and deceit of the heretics, the holy season of Lent came on, a season not even known by name to the inhabitants of the Chablais. The holy man began it by the distribution of ashes and preaching. Not satisfied with preaching in his own church, he carried the word of God through the neighbouring hamlets. Every Sunday he assembled the children and adults of both sexes in the afternoon, instructing them in the rudiments of religion, in an easy and familiar manner. Twice a week he gave lessons on cases to the clergy and others who wished to be instructed.

The faith seemed to rise in common opinion, as people saw the provost redouble his exertions and bear up so nobly under them; they felt convinced that Almighty God gave him strength, which he so entirely employed in His service, whereas Viret was quite overtaken by his one weekly sermon on Sunday.

Lent was half over when the Count of Martenengo's regiment arrived at Thonon, at a moment when Francis was in the country; the heretics were

astounded, imagining the soldiers were come to pay them off. Well was it for the former that it was a saint whom they had injured, one whom they well knew they could insult with impunity, for never would he avenge himself. As soon as he returned, the officers went in a body to visit him, informing him that they had orders from His Highness to undertake nothing without his concurrence; to regulate themselves according to his desire, and to act as he believed circumstances to require. Francis, who never had recourse to human measures for what concerned his ministry, excepting in extreme cases, availed himself of this civility, to beg they would enforce strict discipline amongst the troops, and would let them be as little burdensome as possible on the inhabitants. Perceiving that they came in crowds to his sermons, attracted by esteem of his person, as well as by the power of his arguments and the eloquence of his discourse, he changed his method, and instead of confining himself to points of controversy, of which his sermons had hitherto chiefly been composed, he began to preach on moral doctrines, such as might benefit both the converts and the old Catholics, as well as the soldiers. He dwelt now on the fundamental truths of religion and the maxims of eternity, which are applicable to all states; he did it so successfully that every one ran to hear him, his style being adapted to every capacity. Our Lord blessed his pious designs. In a short time as great a change was wrought both in officers and men, as had been before observed in the garrison of Allinges. There were few who did not make general confessions of their whole lives to him,

and he distributed the paschal communion to all on Holy Thursday, Saturday, and Easter-day. It not unfrequently happens that these changes are of no long duration; old habits insensibly resume their sway, either from negligence in combating them, or because occasions and bad example are so common in the army. Francis, foreseeing these inconveniences, prescribed preventive remedies, gave salutary counsels proportioned to each one's strength, and that they might have no excuse for neglecting them, they requested him to commit them to writing, which he did. Once he met with a soldier who was on the brink of despair, in consequence of having communicated, after inadvertently breaking his fast, which he was assured by some of his companions was a mortal sin; we could hardly describe the compassion of the holy man, on witnessing the desponding condition of the other, or the gentle tenderness with which he strove to assuage his grief and remove his scruples; from that time the soldier could never say enough in praise of the Saint, whom he called the refuge of sinners and the consoler of the afflicted; he became more than ever anxious to assist at his sermons whenever his military duties permitted.

News reached the Saint that the Count of Martingo intended visiting Thonon, to confer with him on matters pertaining to the total conversion of the Chablais. He took all necessary measures with his neophytes, and when he heard that the count had arrived at the fort of St. Catherine, he mounted his horse, and rode at full speed all night, in order to meet him there; but on reaching Viri, he was

informed that he had started for Chambéry. Being in the neighbourhood of Annecy, the Saint went to see the good bishop, and gave him an account of all his proceedings. From thence he repaired to Sales Castle, to gratify the wishes of his parents, who had long been most anxious to see him. His stay was but short; no longer than was necessary to satisfy the claims of duty and respect, and to write a few memoranda which would be useful to him in Chambéry, whither he repaired to meet the count, and his old friend Faber, from whom he received certain patents, whereby the prince authorised the bishop of Geneva to avail himself of the beneficiary fruits of the Chablais, Ternier, and Gaillard, for the maintenance of the curates deputed, or to be deputed to the various parishes. An arrangement which was only to be considered as provisional, until such time as the Pope's consent could be obtained.

He was received at Annecy, Sales, and Chambéry, in a manner suited to the reputation which his missionary success deserved. Whilst he was hastening the execution of the Duke's orders, some deputies from the heretics arrived, to remonstrate against the concession demanded by Francis, complaining of having to surrender a small part of that which they so unjustly possessed; and by way of gaining time, they tried to bring on a law-suit. But the provost, firm to his purpose, overruled all their opposition; and moreover obtained a suspension of the payment of the ministers, from the funds belonging to ecclesiastical benefices. Having received various sums of money, he appointed some parish priests in different parts of the Chablais; all men of

sense and judgment. This affair occasioned him no small trouble, whilst at the same time it afforded him a corresponding amount of consolation; looking forward to the abundant harvest, which in effect was duly gathered. Thus by degrees was the fair face of the Chablais renovated. He went to Bellevay, in company with Chevalier (one of the two at whose theses he had assisted in Annecy) intending to establish him there as curate; but they were so ill received by the inhabitants, who were still most obstinate in Calvinism, that they could procure no lodging, no food, nor even so much as a seat on which to rest themselves. They were obliged to content themselves with a bit of dog's bread, made of bran, and a little new-made cheese. This, with some plain water, was all they could procure; and this not without great difficulty. With no other table than the ground, and no other table-cloth than his cloak, the Saint had the consolation of imitating the poverty of Christ and His Apostles, as well as their toils; nor was this the only time he met with inhumanity at the hands of the Calvinists, in the course of his mission.

On returning to Thonon, he was wholly intent on providing for the sustenance of the curates, and removing intervening obstacles. He wrote to the Duke, to the nuncio, and to the supreme senate of Savoy, concerning the conduct of the monks of Aux, and Abbundanza, who filled the whole country with their scandals, giving the heretics good cause to complain and reprove; and destroying more in one day, than others could build up in a year. Hoping to escape the consequences, these monks endeavoured

to defame him, by informing the Duke and the nuncio that his charges against them were the effect of mere envy; but, certain of the pure intentions, the discretion and zeal of Francis, (being then unable to attend to the reformation of the religious,) the sovereign compelled them to maintain a good number of preachers in the Chablais; and to afford an abundant annual alms to the nuns of St. Clare, driven by the heretics from Geneva, and then established at Evian.

Of his after labours in reducing the monks to a life of regularity, and of his success, though not without much toil and suffering, we shall treat elsewhere.

CHAPTER XXI.

FRANCIS VISITS BEZA IN GENEVA.

WE have already said that the negociation alluded to in cypher, in the brief sent by the Sovereign Pontiff to the provost of Sales, referred to an attempt at the conversion of Beza. It was so explained by Father St. Esprit, who warmly urged Francis to enter into the measure, to repair to Geneva, and to use his best endeavours to win the arch-minister back to God and to the Church. He was then the head of the Calvinist faction, and the oracle of the Genevese. The Saint was most eager to comply with the order, and accordingly on his return to Thonon, went to visit Beza at Geneva. He went several

times; but I think it better to relate all the particulars at once, in order not to interrupt the course of our history; although some of the details now given, occurred prior to his journey to Chambéry.

In truth it was no easy matter for Francis to obtain an interview with Beza. He was then seventy years of age, and was always surrounded by so many persons, that it seemed impossible to see him in private. His house was the perpetual resort of numbers, either because the Genevese distrusted him, or because they delighted in his agreeable conversation. Moreover, Francis was known to, and was most cordially hated by the Genevese; so that it was dangerous for him to trust himself amongst them. The object for which he went, added to the danger, because so delicate a business could not possibly be concluded in one visit; repeated visits might excite suspicion; and if the design became known, the life of the Saint would in all probability have paid the forfeit. Nor was it impossible in a populous state, to effect the murder so secretly as to pass it over unnoticed, especially as subordination was not so well maintained at Geneva as in a monarchical state. There were plenty of persons in that city quite capable of such an act, for it is but too well known what blind zeal can do, when animated by so powerful a motive as that of religion. Francis foresaw the risk, and explained it to such of his friends as he entrusted with the secret, all of whom had the same apprehension, and therefore they all endeavoured to persuade him not to venture amongst such a perverse set of people. They reminded him, that, having assassinated the Gospel, the heretics

would glory in assassinating the preachers of it; and that, after casting the relics of deceased apostles into the lake, (during the rebellion they threw the skull of St. Peter which was enshrined in the cathedral, into the lake,) they would treat living apostles still worse. But as this was an affair in which the glory of God was concerned, and as it had been imposed on him by the vicar of Jesus Christ, Francis made slight account of all these dangers. He disclosed his plan to the bishop, the chapter, and a few virtuous discreet persons, recommending himself to their prayers, redoubling his own fasts and prayers, persuaded that the conversion of an obstinate sinner can only come from the Father of lights, who from stones can raise up children to Abraham.

Having earnestly recommended the success of his enterprize to God during several days, remitting to Him the care of a life which he was risking in His service, he started for Geneva, full of zeal and confidence. God was satisfied with the sacrifice of his heart, but seems to have been unwilling to purchase a martyr at the expense of an apostle, who was destined to do still greater things for the glory of His name. Francis went, saw Beza, spoke to him, and *convinced*, if he did not *convert* him; and he did all this with so much circumspection, as to cheat the vigilance of the Genevese, although a hundred eyes were always open upon Beza, who was an object of general esteem.

Francis was fortunate enough to find Beza alone when he entered his house; prudence then required that he should avail himself of the opportunity. After the first compliments of civility, which the

aged man accepted with due courtesy, he conversed on various different topics, until, charmed by the engaging sweetness of the Saint's manner, Beza invited him into his private closet, which Francis appeared to look upon as a great honour. Thinking that he had now no time to lose, he said to Beza, "As I have the misfortune of only being known to you upon the representation of my enemies, I trust you will not form your opinion of me upon the mere report of those whose interest it is to discredit me; no one can love sincerity better than I do; believe me, then, I am not come here with the intention of surprising or deceiving you; still less should I think of betraying what may pass between us." He then added, that a little attention to his countenance and manner, would satisfy him of his candour and honesty of purpose; for that his countenance was but the reflex of his heart and mind; "besides," said he, "if I wished to deceive some one, I should not be so unadvised as to attempt it, upon a person so learned, so clever, and so highly spoken of as yourself."

And in fact, the Saint's physiognomy and whole bearing were so noble, that no one with the slightest pretension to discrimination, could suspect him of any malicious purpose. It was necessary to the success of his undertaking, that he should win Beza's confidence, which could not be done unless he dissipated the bad impressions made on his mind, by the sinister reports circulated to his prejudice in Geneva. Beza likewise professed frankness and sincerity. Now as we naturally love others whose character corresponds with our own; and as a similarity of

disposition is the best key for unlocking hearts, the heresiarch was pleased with the Saint's introduction of himself, and answered that he had always considered him to be a man of great merit and of noble mind; that his very enemies admitted his vast amount of learning, which he himself also greatly admired, though he deeply regretted that it should be employed in so poor a cause as catholicity.

This remark just enabled Francis to open the controversy, which he did by conjuring the other to tell him sincerely whether he thought a man could be saved in the Catholic Church? This question, though the natural consequence of Beza's own words, disconcerted him a good deal. After a brief silence, he asked for time to consider; and passing into an adjoining cabinet, he walked backwards and forwards for a quarter of an hour, but so interruptedly, that the Saint conjectured his conscience was pricking him; his very countenance betraying the agitation of his heart. In the meantime Francis took up an old book, appearing to read, but in reality he was secretly praying that God would show mercy to a man who had already received innumerable graces, and whose age seemed to tell that he must soon be summoned to the bar of Divine justice. At the same time, he rendered thanks for being himself a member of the true Church, in which he hoped to live and die. At length the aged man came forth, and after apologising for the delay, he said that he would confidentially open his heart to him, since they were alone, and since he knew that he might trust him with his real sentiments: "I do believe," said he, "that a man may be secure of salvation in

the Church of Rome." To which Francis replied, "then why establish your pretended reform with so much war, incendiarism, and desolation? Nothing but the impossibility of being saved in the Church, could authorize separation from it, and all those baneful consequences which follow the introduction of Calvinism in every state." He added that since a man might be saved in the Catholic Church, it might lawfully be inferred that it was the true Church, because, as at the time of the deluge, none were saved who were out of the ark of Noah, so now was salvation impossible out of the Roman Catholic Church, of which the ark was a figure. Beza rejoined that the Roman Church perplexed souls with her numberless ceremonies, which occasioned difficulties; for example, teaching that good works are necessary to salvation, hence confusions ensue, and the former are shunned by saying they are only a matter of decorum. When the people are taught by faith that good works are necessary to salvation, yet omit them through cowardice or any other motive, they miserably damn themselves, because they violate the dictates of their own conscience; "therefore," he said, "we have smoothed the path to heaven, and have made it pleasant by establishing as a fundamental truth, that faith (without works) is requisite to salvation; and for this, we have fought even unto blood, for the propagation of our reform, that we might rescue the people from the tyrannical necessity of good works; besides, the *separation* is attributable to the Catholics, who excommunicated, rejected, and expelled us from the bosom of the Church, and con-

demned us as heretics with whom they would hold no commerce."

The Saint answered that by denying good works as necessary to salvation, we were plunged into a labyrinth from whence it was not easy to escape. This doctrine overthrows all laws, natural, human, and divine, which threaten transgressors with punishment, and promise rewards to the good. Christ in His gospel, when stating the sentence which is to decide the fate of every one, speaks not so much of sins committed as of good works omitted; the same is to be observed in the case of the withered fig-tree, in the parable of ten virgins, and in that of the buried talent. And as for the separation of the Calvinists from the Church, by their expulsion, the Church did not have recourse to this measure till obliged by the obstinacy of those who would promulgate doctrines at variance with those handed down to her by antiquity. Every well regulated society has its judge, which, without appeal, undertakes to decide controversies;—that the Calvinists themselves recognise this authority in their national synod, in the same manner as the Catholics recognise it in a general council;—that all private individuals, of which society is composed, are bound to submit to this supreme authority, however constituted; unless indeed, we are to live amidst perpetual strife and contrariety of opinion. Now, if some few persons refuse to submit to the decision of this authority, and separate themselves from the rest of society, to establish another amongst themselves, society is not to be accused of causing the separation, since it does but avail itself of its own right to interpret the law,

and declare those to be schismatics and heretics, who segregate themselves from the body of the Faithful. Now if these general maxims apply to the case in question, it is evident that the Church did not cause the schism, although by her excommunications she expelled the Calvinists from her bosom. Instead of recognising in her the power of judging and deciding which Christ had conferred upon her, (for did they still recognise this, they would belong to her communion,) they set themselves up as judges in their own cause; accused her of fundamental errors, and of having corrupted the word of God: they had even done worse, destroying churches, uprooting the ancient venerable faith, laying violent hands on the clerical functions, depriving the lawful pastors of a good part of Europe, establishing others in their stead, notwithstanding all the opposition of the Church, which even Beza admitted to be the true Church, inasmuch as he did not dare to deny the possibility of salvation in it. Finally, he added, "it would be worth something to see how the Calvinists would treat any one who ventured to do half as much against their creed as they have done against the Catholic Church."

Beza replied, that they would not condemn the Catholics without hearing them, as the Catholics had done towards them, and that if they had to condemn, they would at least follow the true rule of faith, which the Council of Trent had not done. To this Francis observed, that when the condemnation of dogma and doctrine was in question, there was no need of hearing the authors, otherwise no book, no matter how impious, could be condemned unless the

author's name were stamped upon the title-page. It was easy to see, from the work itself, whether it was conformable to faith or not. The Council, however, had repeatedly invited the Protestants, and promised them safe-conducts, and had waited for them so long, that the fault was evidently all on their side; but as none of them appeared in person, their own publications were examined instead; that if these were not understood according to the real meaning of their authors, the condemnation of them was not to be omitted merely because they obstinately chose to keep away from the Council; all well-regulated tribunals act upon this principle, even the Huguenots themselves would do so in similar circumstances. Beza said that the Protestants had good reason for staying away from the Council, although they were offered passports, because it was notorious that the Catholics hold it as a maxim that they need not keep faith with heretics; they had a proof of this when the Hussites were burnt at the Council of Constance, although they had been provided with safe-conducts; after such an instance, they whom Catholics look upon as heretics could never rely on any proffered pledges, since those given by the Emperor Sigismund had been violated.

The Saint replied, that it was an old calumny to attribute to Catholics the impression that they could with safe conscience break faith with heretics; but as the accusation had so often been refuted, he was astonished to hear it brought forward again; that, quite the contrary, Catholics teach that faith is to be kept with whomsoever it has been pledged. The instance of the Council of Constance was no disproof

of this: the enemies of the Church had so distorted this fact, that few persons properly examined it. He admitted that the safe passport of the emperor had not been observed; but this had happened because Constance was a free city, of which its own magistrate was sovereign, and it belonged to the magistrate to give a valid note of safety; but independently of this reason, the safe-conduct actually given was only conditional, as may be seen by reference to the Acts of the said Council. Now the Hussites expressly violated these conditions; and after recognizing the Council as judge of controversy, they opposed it as soon as it condemned them. That many other proofs might be adduced to show that Catholics have never taught this doctrine, so recklessly attributed to them;—that, supposing the case in question to be as Beza asserted, that single instance was not to be taken as the general rule of the Church, since she constantly affirmed the contrary, and maintained it in practice. Beza made no reply to these arguments, of which he must have felt the force; and the Saint asked him which rule of faith it was that the Council of Trent had not followed? The heresiarch answered: “That of Holy Scripture only.” Francis saw it was useless to enter upon this discussion, and therefore remarked, that Scripture admits of many interpretations; how, then, are we to know the right one? It is necessary that there should be in the Church an authority having the right to explain it, and to determine the meaning of it: this is surely conformable to faith. Hereupon Beza, in few words, broached many errors; saying that Scripture is not

obscure, that all the faithful have sufficient light to understand it, and that the Holy Ghost renders it intelligible by interior inspirations. Francis had just expected this answer; and as it touches upon the *rule of faith*, the foundation of all disputes, which if not well established, all that rests upon it falls to pieces, he enquired of Beza,—“How comes it, then, that, if Scripture is so clear, and so easy to be understood, the eunuch of Queen Candace appealed to Philip the deacon for its meaning? How is it that Daniel and St. John the Evangelist demanded an interpretation of the angel of what they saw? The Protestants themselves are daily publishing books and commentaries, contradictory one to the other. Luther, whom his followers look up to as one inspired by God, understood the words referring to the Blessed Eucharist in one sense, and Calvin in another; the former admitted the *reality*, at least in the act of reception, whilst the latter only accepts the words in a figurative sense. How do you prove that Calvin was inspired, and that the Church is not—the Church which Scripture calls the *pillar and ground of truth*? Name the counter-signs which lead you to infer that these inspirations proceed from the Holy Ghost rather than from the spirit of darkness, who often transforms himself into an angel of light, to seduce the faithful. Moreover, what assurance have you, for instance, that *you* are not mistaken when you tell me that you have these inspirations? How do you know that they really are inspirations?” Embarrassed by these questions, which so well demonstrated the falsity of his propositions, Beza replied, that since the understanding of

Scripture was necessary to the Church, the Holy Ghost, who invisibly governs her, renders it intelligible, by inspiration, to the faithful who compose the Church; this being the way in which God enlightens the mind and touches the heart. This was but the same answer, therefore the Saint persisted in his questions: "Does the Holy Ghost give inspirations to *all* who read the Scripture with a sincere desire of understanding it, *or* only to a few? If to *all*, how happens it that the Catholics have none, and that they are obliged to apply to the Church for a correct interpretation of it? On what grounds can you affirm that each separate individual understands the truth, and yet, when taken collectively, have no such certainty? If, on the other hand, *all* have not these inspirations, but only a *few*, there must necessarily be some certain signs whereby they may be known; for no sensible man would believe on the bare word of another in a matter of such deep importance." The Saint proceeded to say, that it followed, as a natural consequence of his arguments, that the Calvinists, so far from being the reformers of the faith, did not even know the true rule of faith. He proved, that if these inspirations are to be taken as the rule, the Holy Ghost must inspire contradictory doctrines and so would no longer be the God of peace (*Deus pacis*), as St. Paul calls him, but of dissension (*sed dissentionis*). This contrariety was evident enough, Luther denying the Epistle of St. James to be canonical, whilst Calvin admitted that it was so; the same might be said with regard to other books and points of doctrine. "Now if the Calvinists say he is in error,

why may not Luther say the same of them? Which of the two are we to believe? How can any one suppose, after the formal promises made by God to the Church never to abandon her, that He should have allowed her to remain for such a length of time without the light necessary to believe and to teach that which is right? If He gives light, He certainly gives it to the Church; hence St. Austin protests that he would not believe the Gospel, unless the Church proposed it to be believed. Now, he lived in an age when, according to your own admission, the faith was still pure; and is it likely that the Holy Ghost would have hid Himself from the faithful for many centuries, to reserve His inspirations for a few private individuals in these latter years,—leaving in error so many saintly men who were solely occupied in seeking after truth,—and this, that He might afterwards reveal it to Calvin, for him to teach it to others?” Francis concluded that the Calvinists had no reason to accuse the Catholic Church of teaching false doctrine, nor the Council of Trent of not having followed the true rule of faith in deciding controversies, seeing that they themselves do not so much as know what is the true rule of faith. The supposition that Holy Scripture is so clear as to be easily intelligible to every one without extraordinary succour, and granting each individual the liberty of interpreting it at pleasure, is the sure means of never agreeing on any single point, and to admit private inspiration (besides the inconveniences already adduced) is to open a direct road to fanaticism, tempting men to become visionary. In proof of this, he selected an

instance from amongst many, which he had frequently heard related by Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. When he assisted at the Colloquy of Cormasse, the most celebrated ministers (and there were great numbers collected from the various provinces) could not agree in producing their confession of faith; consequently, one rejecting what the other proposed, none being willing to yield, yet each one having a different opinion on this most important point, they quitted the assembly one after another, to the scandal of their own followers, and the ridicule of the Catholics. The Duke therefore inferred from this, that the Calvinists not only do not understand the whole of Scripture, but that not even the Principals of the sect can agree amongst themselves with regard to what is the true and legitimate meaning of it; and that their inspiration, of which they boast, must be of a very contradictory tendency, since it will not enable them to establish anything like uniformity of belief; that the Protestants, in fact, only consent to agree on one single point, namely, hatred of Catholicity, leaving in peace all other sects, though they condemn them as false, impious, and heretical.

These historical facts touched Beza to the quick, who, though he piqued himself on his moderation and self-possession, could hardly restrain his impatience. He could not contradict the statement made by the Duke, because it was too notorious to be denied; therefore all his resentment fell on Francis, and his abuse showed how much he was irritated. But the holy man, always equal to himself, meekly and humbly told him that he was not come to his

house to disturb and annoy him, and that for the future he would not introduce controversy. The apology of Francis was a subject of confusion to the heresiarch, who, perceiving his own failing, entreated him to excuse him, and to attribute his warmth to zeal for his own religion, saying, that a man was not master of the first emotions of his heart. He conjured him to continue to honour him with his visits, which would always be most gratifying to him.

Thus ended the first conference of our Saint with Theodore Beza, which took place on Easter Tuesday, 1597, and lasted three full hours. In passing through the ante-chamber, Francis met some of Beza's servants and acquaintances, to whom he was known, who not only looked at him very spitefully, but even said, loud enough for him to hear them, that he was a man quite capable of raising a sedition; but the Saint passed on as if their words did not concern him, and retiring first to the hotel, he then returned to Thonon.

CHAPTER XXII.

FRANCIS CONSULTS THE POPE WITH REGARD TO BEZA.

THE advantage which Francis had gained over the head of the Calvinist party gave rise to no vain-glory in Francis, who was wholly intent on the means of gaining him to Christ. In the meantime, in informing the Sovereign Pontiff of the state of religion in the Chablais, he told him that he found Beza in sentiments not wholly averse to Catholicity, since he

owned that salvation might be found in the Roman Church, and that he thought the credit in which he was held, together with wealth, contributed much in binding him to heresy. He besought His Holiness to inform him of his intentions, as the conversion of Beza was a work worthy of his Pontificate, and to be procured at any cost. He owned that he discovered in him a heart of stone, grown old in obduracy; therefore his conversion would be difficult. He did not, however, despair of it, if he could only see him frequently, conveniently, and with safety; for this purpose he thought it would be advisable to hold a disputation with the ministers in Geneva itself, in case His Holiness approved of it: in difficult and important matters it is necessary to incur some risk. The Pope answered this letter with a Brief, dated 29 May, 1597, in which he commends his zeal, worthy of a true servant of God, called to work in the Lord's vineyard; congratulates with him on the progress of religion in those countries, attributing it to his apostolic labours and diligence, and encouraging him to persevere therein. He enjoins him to persist in striving to accomplish the task entrusted to him, which, although so difficult, was not to be entirely despaired of; and concluded by saying, that since it was the work of God, and was undertaken with a hope of divine assistance, so it ought to be pursued with full confidence.

Animated and stimulated by this Brief, the Saint returned twice more to Geneva, to confer with Beza. The last time he was accompanied by his intimate friend Faber, then declared President of the Genevese by the Duke of Nemours. Francis perceiving that

the whole visit was gliding away in ceremony and compliment, quite foreign to *his* purpose, and moreover being fearful of interruption unless he at once entered upon the important subject, enquired what books those were, laid aside in a corner of the room, and so thickly covered with dust as plainly to show that they were not much used by the heresiarch. Beza answered that they were the works of the holy Fathers, of which he made no great account: "and I," said the Saint, "could not easily express how highly I esteem them." Taking up one of them, he wiped off the dust with his cloak, and opening it, found it to be by Saint Augustine. It seems to have been directed by divine dispensation; for he soon fell upon a passage which gave rise to a long argument on grace and justification. Beza asserted that there was no necessity for man's co-operation with the motions of grace; for that God continually presses the hearts of men, and compels them to work; but the Saint, whose experience had taught him how sweet and persuasive are the attractions of grace, proved the contrary by this similitude: "As a well-constructed clock denotes all the hours of the day, through the agency of the main-spring, which it would not do without this impelling power; so with regard to the justification of man, God first touches and urges him on to compunction of heart, and then man, by the effort of free will, seconds the impulse given by God; that is to say, he concurs with grace, and going on with it, perfects all the other acts requisite to justification; there is, however, this difference between the clock and the motion of our hearts, that in the former the main-

spring necessarily moves the wheels, whereas grace moves *without* doing violence to our free-will; instead of *impelling*, it does but *attract* with the chains of charity and of Adam, as holy Scripture expresses it; it attracts us with its chaste caresses and delights, proportioned to the heart of man, to which liberty is natural. This is what holy Scripture implies, when it tells us that God has placed fire and water before man, and that it is in his power to choose which he pleases. According to philosophy, this choice implies an entire and total liberty of determining for oneself, without being *compelled* by grace; for if the case were otherwise, how could God declare "Blessed is he who could transgress, and hath not transgressed; and who could have done evil, yet hath not done it?" Both the Old and New Testaments prove this truth, and the Fathers of the first five centuries are all in favour of this assertion.

Beza admired the ready tact of the holy man, which could in a moment find similitudes and arguments suited to his purpose. After discussing several most important points (in which if he did not yield he certainly wavered), he took Francis by the hand in a most friendly manner, and pressing it, said: "If I am not in the right path, I daily beseech our Lord in His infinite mercy to bring me back to it;" words drawn from the very bottom of his heart, as much by the power of the Saint's wisdom as by the amiability of his demeanour. He repeated his words in the same familiar way before Faber, Boland, and some others; and thus they separated. It was these expressions which induced Francis to go again to

Geneva, and seek a private interview with Beza, where, without witnesses and without disputation, he could frankly tell him his sentiments. In effect, on his arrival he told him at once that he was not come to argue, but to speak with open heart on the most important of his affairs, namely, his return to the Catholic Church. He entreated him to take in good part what he was going to say with all freedom, and to attribute it to the esteem and affection which he felt for him, and to zeal which induced him to speak on a point whereon his eternity depended. Beza, won by the cordiality of the Saint, replied, that he was convinced of the sincerity of his intentions: that he wished him to speak with all freedom, as it was impossible to refuse him his esteem and confidence, though it was in vain to hope for that which he would never obtain. Francis, taking advantage of the favourable dispositions of the other, answered by beseeching him to reflect that old age warned him of approaching death, and ought to remind him that the time of mercy was passing away, to give place to the time of justice; and this ought to determine him to return to that faith which he had imbibed with his mother's milk; that he was not to suppose that the early lights which he had in the bosom of the Catholic Church were extinguished, and that it was now the time to profit by them; that God well knew the motives which had induced him to forsake the creed of his ancestors, for that nothing was hidden to Him. He owned that his conversion would draw upon him the hatred of the Calvinists, but it would secure him the love of the angels, and it was glorious to be persecuted for Christ's

sake. That he might have no fear of being impoverished in consequence of his change of religion, he was commissioned by the Pope to offer him an annuity of four thousand golden scudi, and to give him double the value of such of his furniture and books as he might be unable to remove from Geneva, promising, moreover, every security that he might require, assuring him that he did not make these offers by way of bribing him, for every one knew (and Francis better than any one else) that he was not a man to regulate his creed according to his interests; but that His Holiness did not think it right that, if he abandoned Calvinism, he was to lose its advantages, hence he offered what would suffice for his maintenance, and compensate for the losses to be incurred. His Holiness was anxious, too, that he should improve his condition, as well as his faith. Francis added, that he was now speaking to him perhaps for the last time on the part of God, conjuring him most earnestly to reflect on his proposals, for which, if not accepted, he would some day repent in vain. He had owned that a man might be saved in the Catholic Church; therefore he ought to return to it for greater security, since the Catholics, amongst whom there were so many and learned men, did not allow as much of Calvinism; that, in so important an affair, one ought to choose the safest side, without considering one's reputation, since it is meritorious in him who has strayed from the right path to endeavour to re-enter it; and even supposing that he should on this account sink in the estimation of the Calvinists, *this* could be nothing in comparison with the loss of his soul.

Beza remained silent, and with his eyes fixed on the ground, listening to the Saint with great attention, and there is reason to believe that the reproaches of his conscience were working upon his heart, whilst the words of Francis were sounding in his ear. The Saint wondered what his irresolution would lead to, and judging others' hearts by his own, was hoping that Beza was about to submit to the known truth; but rarely does it happen that a man obstinate in malice, and long addicted to evil habits, becomes converted in his old age; and still more rarely are the authors of heresy converted. History records, as far as I know, no other instance of such conversion, but that of Berengarius. For *this*, graces of the highest order are required, and the demerits of such a man are too great for one to expect these graces. Beza is a proof of this. His final answer was, that, though he believed salvation was attainable in the Catholic Church, he did not despair of salvation in the communion to which he then belonged. Francis deemed it inexpedient to press him further at that moment, to leave him time to reflect on the proposals he had made, trusting that a few more visits would satisfactorily conclude an affair which seemed to be going on so well. But the time was passed; the Saint's visits raised the suspicions of the Genevese, who set watch round their minister, and plotted the massacre of Francis if ever he ventured there again. Some writers affirm that the wretched man (having neglected present opportunity) later strove in vain to obtain an interview with the Saint, which was peremptorily refused by those who surrounded him; and that

repenting of his apostacy, he retracted his errors in presence of some of the ministers, in consequence of which, his attendants gave out a report that intense pain following his previous deep studies had made him rave. But as he died in the hands of the Calvinists, it is difficult to say how the case really stood. It is certain that he desired he might be buried in the cloisters of St. Peter, in Geneva as he was; and he was the first whom the Calvinists buried there; though it is said that they afterwards removed the body within the city walls, lest the Savoyards should disinter and burn it, as they affirmed to be the case with regard to the remains of Calvin.

There is, however, reason to believe that as the wish to live licentiously had led him to apostatize, as is very evident from some of the works he composed when in the prime of life, so was he retained in heresy till his death, by the liberty of gratifying the passions which Calvinism tolerated. The Lord Des Hajets, Governor of Montargis, a great friend of Francis, being at Geneva, became intimate with Beza, whose joviality and pleasing conversation attracted him; Beza on his side being equally pleased with Des Hajets. One day when the two were together without other witnesses, Des Hajets familiarly asked him what was the most powerful motive and reason of his adherence to the reformed sect. Beza was silent, (shame made him so,) but summoning a beautiful young lady who lived in his house, said, "there is the motive which convinces me, and which binds me to my religion." The gentleman was astonished at these words, for as Beza was then advanced in years, he had not suspected

him of being adicted to a vice which so fearfully blinds the intellect, hardens the heart, and which has caused even the wisest man to apostatize, as holy Scripture tells us. Des Hajets recounted this incident himself to Giarda, one of those who wrote the Saint's life in Italian.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GOOD DEEDS OF THE SAINT IN GENEVA. IS CHALLENGED
TO A CONFERENCE BY THE MINISTERS. CONVERSION
OF ONE OF THEM, ETC.

IF Divine Justice led the Saint to Geneva that he might confound one impious man, divine mercy destined him to console some faithful souls; hence those journeys, dangerous as they were, which proved useless to Beza, were not so to others, better disposed than he was. God was pleased to reward the labours of the Saint, although they seemed unavailing, as far at least as the chief object of them was concerned. We will relate some of his acts in Geneva, of which the greater part are unknown to us, having been performed in secret.

As he was leaving Beza's house after his first visit, he met a soldier belonging to the garrison of Allinges, who told him that at the house of Abraham Joly, there was a Catholic acquaintance of his, at the point of death. The Saint immediately went to him, he turned to the persons who were in the room, and with an air of mingled majesty

and affability desired them to leave the place. No one dared to refuse, although they suspected his intention; he heard the poor man's confession, which was a long one, and pronounced the words of absolution, to the immense consolation of the dying Catholic, just as his last breath hung on his lip.

It is believed that he very frequently administered the sacraments in Geneva, for he used to carry some consecrated particles in a small case hung round his neck, and thus gave communion to the Catholics in secret. The first time that he went to see Beza, on arriving at the inn, he asked for a private room where he could take a little rest; when a Catholic girl, a servant in the house, took the opportunity of speaking to him, and of making her confession. She knew him only by repute and by sight, having been present at the disputation between him and La Fay. After the absolution, the Saint asked her whether she would wish to communicate, which he found she might do, as she had not yet broken her fast. The good girl supposed this to be impossible, seeing that the Saint could not celebrate Mass in the town, and she never dreamt of his carrying the Blessed Sacrament about with him; in fact, she thought communion could only be given in the Mass, and with the assistance of a clerk; but he, seeing how much she desired it, explained to her, that under actual circumstances neither Mass nor clerk was necessary. He made her prepare herself, and dividing one of the five hosts which he had brought for other persons, he told her that their guardian angels would act as clerks; he then gave her holy communion, a happiness of which she had

long been deprived. It would be difficult to describe either her consolation or his, notwithstanding the serious risk to which he was exposing himself; for a cruel death would have been the inevitable consequence had the Genevese detected him in the act of administering the sacraments within the precincts of their Babylon. This young woman, who was called Anne Jaqueline Favre, and was afterwards the first portress or tourière of the order of the Visitation, was favoured by God with many lights, was endowed with remarkable innocence, and was much esteemed by our Saint, who used to extol her as a person of great virtue. We shall have occasion to speak more of her hereafter.

Don Lorenzo Bertrand relates, that when the Saint was taken to see the council chamber, he perceived a portrait of Calvin, under which were these words:—

*"Hoc vultu, hoc habitu Calvinum sacra docentem
Geneva felix audit;
Cujus scripta piis toto celebrantur in orbe,
Malis licet rigentibus."*

*"With such a countenance and such a mien,
Calvin unfolded once the sacred page
To blest Geneva; all good men approve
His doctrines, tho' the wicked foam with rage."*

His zeal could not conceal the anguish occasioned by such ill-bestowed praise. Moderating himself, however, he asked his companion's permission to read the eulogy in a different way; he did this because there were some Calvinists present; and then, by the mere change of three words, he completely turned the meaning, saying:—

"Hoc vultu, hoc habitu Calvinum insana docentem
Geneva demens audit;
Cujus scripta piis toto damnantur in orbe,
Malis licet rigentibus."

"With such a countenance and such a mien,
Calvin perverted once the sacred page
To mad Geneva; all good men condemn
His blasphemies; the wicked foam with rage."

But now all the ministers of the various provinces assembled to consult together on the best means of arresting the conversions, now become of daily occurrence. They decided on challenging him to a public dispute, trying to persuade each other that his successes were more owing to his eloquence and fluency of speech, than to anything else. The Saint was informed of their plans, and was most anxious to have them carried into effect; and would give them no peace until they appointed the day and the place of meeting. Thonon was decided upon; but when the day came, the ministers did not make their appearance; alleging such frivolous pretexts, as well showed that cowardice was the real cause of their absence: he then offered to meet them at Geneva, whither he was willing to repair, accompanied only by six priests; challenging the whole body of ministers there, and offering to use no other books than those printed at Geneva; although he knew that most of them had been mutilated or falsified by the Calvinists, to suit their own purpose. His proposal terrified them: all were silent; and with the exception of one, all of them withdrew.

This one was a minister of the Pays de Vaud, subject to Berne, who, stimulated by the hope of rising in the opinion of his party, or ashamed that

his colleagues should shrink from encountering the Provost of Sales, went to Thonon, and, to his own great advantage, was convinced: the piety and learning of the Saint cleared his mind, and expelled obstinacy from his heart; he openly acknowledged the truth and sanctity of the Roman Catholic Church, and returned home quite a different man. The Bernese perceived that he was wavering—(his public abjuration had been deferred to a more convenient time), and accordingly they brought him to trial, and quickly sentenced him to death.

Francis was most anxious to bring the Huguenots to a public disputation, and tried every means to bring it about, but to no purpose: the ministers were as bold in provoking him to a dispute, whenever he was at a distance, as they were ingenious in inventing plausible excuses against doing so, whenever he was close at hand.

We will conclude this chapter with a trait of Francis, trifling if considered only in itself, but worth a treasure when considered in its origin, as being a sign of deep humility, and as showing how well the Saint could unite heroic action with the practice of the ordinary virtues, (or, as he would call them, the little virtues,) a point which he afterwards much insisted upon, and which is most useful to those who practise it. One day he was sitting alone in his room, mending his coat, and had forgotten to lock the door; a gentleman unexpectedly entered, and was much surprised at finding him so employed; nor did he fail to tell him that such an act was degrading to his rank and character: "Indeed, my lord," rejoined Francis, "I see no

impropriety in mending with my own hands, a rent which I myself have made." This act and these words contributed much to strengthen the gentleman in the faith, for he was one of the Saint's converts: so true it is that humility is esteemed and admired even by those who only know it by name; it is a virtue which serves as the basis of faith, as the angelical Doctor, St. Thomas, teaches. To avoid repetition, we may add that later, when he was bishop, the Duke of Nemours caught him stitching some of his clothes, and good humouredly joked with him on the occasion; he answered that every Christian ought to wear the livery of Jesus Christ, that is to say, His poverty, which he had no other opportunity of practising, than in such little lowly acts as those.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONTINUATION OF THE MISSION. FRANCIS WRITES IN
DEFENCE OF THE HOLY CROSS.

IN July of this year when Francis assisted at the synod assembled by the bishop in Annecy, he judged it necessary to make an exact relation of the affairs of the Chablais to all the clergy of the diocese; and he did it so minutely, that every one was convinced he ought to have some further assistance, it being utterly impossible that he alone, with the scanty help he then had, could superintend so vast a province. Great was the applause with which his recital was greeted; the bishop could not sufficiently

express his delight, whilst the rest praised his apostolic labours, and blessed the Lord for such a number of conversions.

He asked for and obtained some coadjutors, who were to be either of the Society of Jesus, or Capuchins. He returned with these to the Chablais; but before dispersing them through the various localities of the district, he conferred with them at Annemasse, upon the means best calculated to promote conversions. It was decided that Father Cherubino, of Moriana, preacher to the prince, should be consulted, and requested to solicit whatever was judged necessary, from his Highness. In the meantime he left the Jesuits in the Bailiwick of Ternier, and the Capuchins in that of Gaillard; these were afterwards joined by members of other Orders, chiefly Dominicans; whilst Francis himself went back to Thonon.

Having received a favourable answer from Father Cherubino, he resolved without loss of time, to introduce the devotion of the 'Quarant' ore,' at Annemasse. He imparted his design to the bishop, and to his coadjutors, who, having approved of it, he ordered at the same time, a sort of drama, representing the sacrifice of Abraham; he did this to allure and please the people; the play was the joint production of the two Lewis of Sales, the one his cousin, the Canon, and the other his brother, who, besides philosophy and laws, was likewise an excellent poet.

On returning from court, Father Cherubino assured Francis that the Prince could not possibly be better disposed towards their plans; and arrange-

ments were accordingly made for the 'Quarant' ore,' to commence on the seventh of September, which fell that year on a Sunday. The Catholics assembled in such numbers, that the Genevese, in alarm, sent out troops to close the passes, as if they anticipated a tumult. When this news reached Thonon, the neophytes were so panic-stricken, that when it was time to form the procession, not one of them had the courage to be the cross-bearer; but the Saint, with his usual fortitude, was resolved that the procession should take place, and accordingly, desired Roland to walk forward with the cross. The hymn of the Holy Cross was intoned, and Francis, in surplice, closed the procession. This generous proceeding, and the presence of the Saint, encouraged the people; and though when they first set out, the Saint closed the procession, they were soon joined by so many other people, that instead of being at the end, he was in the middle of the line. In this manner they walked a distance of five leagues, over no easy road, singing psalms, hymns, and litanies. Scarcely had they reached Annemasse, than they were met by the Confraternity of the Holy Cross, from Annecy, come to assist at the solemnity. Francis welcomed them most cordially, and had the satisfaction of finding the members increased in number, and all very fervent; this confraternity had walked along, singing the litanies with great devotion, and gave much edification by the modesty and order in which they pursued their way, the greater part being bare-foot, and carrying their rosaries in their hands. After embracing his cousin, the Canon, who was the Prior of the Bro-

therhood, they all went direct to the church, which still bore evident marks of the ill-usage it had received from the hands of the heretics, who had reduced it almost to a ruin. The Catholics did their best to repair the damage, by covering it, and stopping the holes with tapestry, sail-cloth, and what else they could procure; the day closed with a motett, sung in honour of our Blessed Lady.

On the following morning the bishop celebrated solemn Mass, having gone over expressly to add to the solemnity of the ceremonies. After the Gospel, Francis preached with his usual devotion and eloquence, and then opened the sweet devotion of the 'quarant' ore.' Each one had his hour appointed for adoration; the Brotherhood of the Holy Cross coming first in rotation. Several processions came from the neighbouring villages. Francis made a discourse to each fresh set as it arrived, so that, during the three days, he preached twelve sermons. The bishop had the consolation of witnessing the abjuration of two entire villages, one of which contained seven hundred persons, and the other three hundred. Clothed in white, they made a renunciation and abjuration of the errors which they had hitherto professed.

In this manner were the ecclesiastical functions restored, actually within sight of Geneva, in a province where for many long years, nobody would have ventured to attempt such a thing; and the Church regained possession of places from which heresy had rudely expelled her. The decorum and magnificence of our religious ceremonies contributed not a little to the conversion of many; for they not only honour the majesty of God, but they touch the

hearts of the people. To effect this, of course they must be accompanied by an interior spirit, and be done with earnestness. If the hair of one's head, that is to say, the vilest part of man, is cared for, and cut with regularity, who could be bold enough to transgress the rules which, in the service of God, render the worship which we owe to Him, more uniform, more majestic, and more respectful?

The ceremony concluded with a solemn 'Te Deum,' sung with music, and the people were filled with heavenly benedictions. But the holy provost was not yet satisfied; taking advantage of the vast concourse of people, he would solemnly erect a Cross, of which he had already raised several in various parts of the province, to the great annoyance of the heretics.

Before Calvinism had gained possession of Geneva, there was a famous cross on the way-side, named Philibert's cross, from him who erected it. It was entirely of stone, having a crucifix on one side, and an image of our Blessed Lady on the other. The heretics had broken this to pieces, as they did with all the rest; but the Saint thought the present a good opportunity for repairing it; the three steps still remained, on which a pillar was placed, and a wooden cross attached to it, time not allowing him to procure a better. As soon as the cross was fixed on the column, he solemnly blessed it, and some hymns were sung in honour of it. The ceremony took place in presence of a large assemblage of people; many went even from Geneva; the Catholics out of devotion, and others out of curiosity. As the bishop was unwell, Francis officiated on the

occasion. A metal plate was added, bearing an epigram in French, composed by Francis, signifying that the Catholics did not adore stone or wood, but Jesus, who died upon the wood, and whose death has rendered the cross worthy of veneration, embellished as it was by the blood of Jesus. He afterwards wrote some theses in defence of the respect shown to it by Catholics; and these tracts were circulated throughout the Chablais, and even in Geneva.

This proceeding, which filled the angels with joy, enraged the devils, who roused one of their agents, (that is to say, one of the ministers of Geneva,) to write against the honour paid to the cross. La Fay contrived to have a work published, though without the author's name, full of errors and false propositions, and well calculated to confirm the prejudices of the heretics, as well as to mislead incautious Catholics. The Saint undertook to refute this work, at the request of the Bishop and of the Confraternity of the Holy Cross, entitling his book "the Standard of the Holy Cross." The treatise was divided into four books; in the first he treats of the name of the cross, its power, and of the reasons why it ought to be honoured, drawing his proofs from the early writers, from the Sacred Scripture, and from the preservation, invention, antiquity and dignity of the same. He shows that the cross is a memorial, representing to us the infinite charity of Jesus Christ, who would shed all His blood for us; he called it a shield, and a remedy against all evils, a holy means of honouring Jesus Christ crucified, whom it places before our eyes. In the second, he speaks of the

manner in which the cross and crucifix were depicted by the ancients; of the apparition to Constantine the Great, of the very ancient use of the cross in holy things, of the salutation and invocation of it, of the titles which the Church gives it. He mentions one authority, Arnobius, a famous writer of the early ages; he then alludes to the similitude there is between it and the brazen serpent, and of the chastisements wherewith Almighty God has sometimes punished those who profane His holy wood. In the third book he defines the sign of the cross, showing that it is the device of a Christian, and that it was even used in the old law. He treats of the Church ceremonies, and shows how useful is the sign of the cross in blessings and exorcisms, and of its power against the devils on many occasions. In the fourth book he treats of the honour and prayer due to the holy cross; he shows how we may, in one sense, worship even created things, though in another sense, worship is due to God alone. He shows that the Catholics are unjustly blamed on account of the respect they show to it and to holy things, because it is not absolute, not having for its end those objects taken materially, but only relatively, as being interiorly referred to God. He concludes, that as in the days of the apostles, the cross of Christ was persecuted by His enemies, (which Francis could not write without tears,) so now will there always be some to oppose the honour shown to it, (and he particularly names, as being most opposed to this veneration,) the Talmudists, Samaritans, Mahometans, and Wickliffites; nor can we be surprised, that as the reign of Antichrist draws near, his forerun-

ners should always be in the field. The Church, however, aims only at knowing and preaching Jesus Christ crucified. She does not see Jesus without the cross, but with the cross, and on the cross; and he concludes by protesting with the apostles, that he never would glory in aught, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This little work was not given to the public as soon as he could have wished, because our Lord was pleased to favour him with the cross, by sending him an illness, as he himself says in the dedication, which is addressed to the Duke of Savoy, but when it did come out, none of the heretics ventured to answer it. The Catholics had good reason to look on this as a proof of the excellence of the book, a book which equally shows the keenness of the intellect, and the piety and learning of the Provost of Sales. From a letter however which he wrote to Madame de le Flechère, in 1609, we find that at last one of the ministers had ventured a reply; "But," adds the Saint, "he did it in such a manner that my friends will not let me think of noticing it, they tell me that the book is its own best defence, and that nothing further need be added. The work was reprinted at Paris, under the title of "*Pantologia*," that is, universal speaker; but the Saint, who abhorred those grandiloquent titles, was excessively mortified when he heard of it, and said, 'An architect must be a fool, who should make a door larger than the mansion.'

During the time of the quarant'ore, Father Cherubino said in one of his sermons, that the Catholic missionaries positively must bring about a public disputation, whereupon the ministers wrote to say they

were prepared for it. Nothing remained to be done, but for the canon of Sales to go over to Geneva, and make the necessary arrangements of time and place. But even then they contrived excuses and pretexts for withdrawing from their promise; they actually retracted in writing, what had been done by their own orders. So much did they dread the learning and moderation of the Saint and his companions.

CHAPTER XXV.

HE GOES TO MORIANO. HIS ILLNESS—RECOVERY—
DEVOTES HIMSELF TO SERVE THE PESTIFEROUS. RE-
TURNS TO THONON.

THE holy missionary was not satisfied with his labours, unless they were incessant. Towards the end of the year 1597, the Duke of Savoy went to Moriano, to oppose Lesdigières, then a heretic, who at the head of his heretical troops, had entered the states of His Highness. This prince, who was as valiant in war as he was religious in peace, easily regained what his enemies had taken by surprise, and then stopped at Barraux, to complete the fortifications he had ordered there. Francis thought this a good opportunity of consulting him, and started suddenly from Thonon. On his arrival at Barraux, he represented to the Duke the state of religion in the Chablais, which was rather damaged by the war. He solicited and obtained various things, the piety of the prince granting all that his discretion sug-

gested. When he was on the point of taking leave on his return to Thonon, the Duke requested him to have a discussion with an obstinate heretic who fought under his banner; this was Maurice de Broti, colonel of the regiment of the Chablais. His Highness bade him in his presence declare to the Provost of Sales the motives which bound him to the sect of Calvin, and he obeyed. Scarcely had the dispute begun, than the Duke, feigning other business, left the two champions in his own room, whilst he had the patience to remain listening at the door for full three hours. When De Broti had not another word to say for himself, the Duke entered the room again, saying, "Well, which of you two is the victor? De Broti, do you yet perceive the truth of our religion?" The Colonel replied that he knew little more of theology than the name, that he was unequal to carry on a war, for which he had no weapons, either offensive or defensive; that he felt the full force of the provost's arguments, and would consult his ministers upon them; and he entreated His Highness to be convinced that he would give his assent to the truth, and embrace it wherever he discovered it to be. The Duke clearly saw that Broti was wavering, and was more than half convinced. He had great hopes therefore of his conversion, which, in effect, occurred a few months later, to the great delight of the prince. Francis then set out on his return to the Chablais, carrying with him the increased esteem of his sovereign.

Almost immediately on his arrival at Annecy, he was seized with fever, and he who was more solicitous for the welfare of the people of Thonon than for his

own life, recommended his dear flock to the care of Father Cherubino, and then resigned himself with all patience to his sufferings, exhibiting the resignation of a saint. The complaint gained ground daily, and his life was despaired of, to the immense regret of the Catholics of Thonon, who well knew that they were the innocent cause of his illness, and that it had been brought on by his over exertions for their welfare and their conversion. The Bishop was absent from the city at the time, and when the news reached him, it so far distressed him, that he likewise fell ill. But God, who destined him to do still greater things for His glory, soon restored him to health and strength, and this at the very time when the plague began its ravages in Savoy. He at once began to devote himself, together with the Father Guardian of the Capuchins, to the service of the pestiferous, to the evident risk of his own life.

The Saint seems to have been impelled by strong motives of charity to undertake this work. "It is only reasonable," said he, "that I should hasten there where necessity is most pressing. In the Chablais I know there are many persons far more competent than myself to convert heretics; I can therefore easily be dispensed with there; but the plague-stricken are in great danger of being forsaken by every one; the fear inspired by this scourge, makes strange impressions on the minds of men, insomuch that parents forsake their children, husbands their wives, and what is still worse, pastors abandon their flocks, in consequence of which the latter die without sacraments, deprived of those helps

appointed by God to facilitate their passage to a blessed eternity." He considered, too, that it is but seldom that we have the opportunity of practising wholly disinterested charity, and, consequently, that it was his duty to embrace the present opportunity; since life is but of little importance, whilst dying well is of the utmost consequence. He likewise recalled to mind the sayings and the examples of the saints, more especially the fresh remembrance of what the holy Cardinal Borromeo had done for the Milanese, who, being satisfied that it was a work of perfection to assist the pestiferous, needed no further reasons to oblige himself to stay at Milan, and serve them with his own hands.

When the good Bishop of Geneva became aware of the Saint's determination, he resolved to defeat it, well knowing how necessary his life was to the welfare of the diocese, and his presence to the province of the Chablais; urged by the love of a father for so dear a son, he made use of his authority as bishop, and gave him precise orders to join him immediately at Annecy. Francis, convinced that he was obeying God when he complied with the will of his superiors, and that he could never succeed in any undertaking prescribed by himself, without special vocation, went to the bishop, and explained to him the motives which induced him to dedicate himself to the service of the pestiferous; but when he saw that his prelate disapproved of them, he submitted at once, and in obedience to his orders returned to Thonon, where he was received as an angel of the Lord. And we may here remark that such was the invariable conduct of the Saint; never did he adhere

to his own opinions, deeming it obstinacy to oppose oneself to the will of superiors. Certainly nothing can be more dangerous than to persist in the path we have chosen for ourselves, and under the pretext of greater perfection to withdraw from obedience and the known will of superiors; nevertheless, it sometimes happens that we imagine ourselves called upon to do things, when in reality the vocation only proceeds from our own will and fancy. This is a dangerous illusion, which often damages our own and others' souls, destroying the fruit of the most holy enterprises.

Before the Saint returned to Thonon, a certain Genevese theologian, who had ventured to dispute with Father Cherubin, took himself off; for, having been convinced by the Capuchin, he thought it best to avoid a meeting with the Provost, who was looked upon as a still more able controversialist. This flight prejudiced the Calvinist cause, and many conversions were the consequence of it. Amongst others, that of Ferdinand Bouvier deserves special notice; he belonged to the Pays de Vaud, but resided at Thonon. He had read the work against the Mass written by Mornay, and took it to Francis, to see whether he could answer it. Not finding him at home, he left the book upon the table, marking some of the leaves where he thought the arguments most unanswerable. The Saint soon returned, and immediately began to examine the book, from which he tore five or six leaves filled with the most horrible blasphemies; the gentleman took an early opportunity of calling again, when Francis apologised for having so ill-used the book, and

assured him that he was ready to show him that not a single page in it was free from falsehood, as in fact he did, and then proved the truths of Catholicity so clearly, that the heretic was convinced; he asked for time, however, to write to the ministers of Geneva to see whether they could defend Mornay, but finding that none of them could invalidate the Provost's arguments, he promised to make his abjuration, which he afterwards did, with abundance of tears, in the hands of the Bishop.

About this time a furious storm was raised against Father St. Esprit, the Capuchin. He happened to hear a sermon somewhere out of town, delivered by Viret, and as the latter quitted the church, the father asked him for the proofs of some of the assertions made in the sermon. As usual with those Calvinist ministers, Viret's only answer was a volley of abuse, which obliged the father to speak somewhat in a high tone. This enraged the congregation, just then issuing from the service, who threatened to put an end to him, and one, more audacious than the rest, called him a hypocrite, violently seized him and separated him from the minister; even the women took up stones to pelt him. Fortunately, at this very moment the Provost came up, and by the imposing majesty of his countenance, arrested the fury of the people, and then, by the gentleness of his expostulations, he appeased them; he reminded them that he had been sent there by the prince to preach and to argue, but that they were seriously damaging their own cause by having recourse to stones instead of argument. He thus rescued the good father from his danger, but he privately advised

him never again to use bitter and cutting expressions. The Saint himself was so cautious in this particular, that he never raised his voice, and never employed an injurious epithet; once only did he in the ardour of preaching, apply an opprobrious term to Calvin, to the astonishment of his hearers, who had never known such another instance; and he deeply regretted it, although he had uttered it without any extraordinary emotion; imitating in this respect, those two great lights of the Church, Augustin and Thomas, who spared the erring, whilst they sedulously endeavoured to confute their errors.

There were some religious, who, seeing him so composed in the very height of disputation, fancied him but ill calculated to bring about the conversion of heretics, as if abuse and incivility were more convincing than argument; but it is doubtful to me, whether they ever converted as many as the Saint, who, when reproved for his over gentleness, used to allege as his sole excuse, that he had never employed invectives without regretting it. Experience had taught him that his mode of proceeding succeeded best, for having to deal with self-opinionated and proud people, he knew they could not bear contempt, and were even unwilling not to be made much of; that little was to be done, unless their good will could be gained; that the example of Jesus Christ, so mild, so humble, and so patient, taught him to act as he did; and that it was better to employ the time in expounding the truths of religion, than in confuting the falsehoods of heresy, concluding that men are always more willing to be led by love and charity, than by severity and rigour.

Now, as he was a perfect imitator of our Blessed Lord, so did He deign to confer on him the power of working miracles; just at this time he raised a dead child to life—the case was as follows: He had been long endeavouring to convert a lady who was very obstinate in heresy, and one day he happened to meet her when she was almost distracted with grief on account of the death of an infant son. Her grief was materially aggravated by the fact of the child's having died without baptism, which she herself had unfortunately deferred. As the misfortune was irremediable, she was inconsolable, and was actually giving the necessary directions for the funeral, when she met the Saint, the universal consoler of the afflicted. She threw herself at his feet, conjuring him to help her, and promising to become a Catholic if he would recall her son to life, even were it only for time sufficient to administer baptism. The Saint accepted the condition, and impelled by his zeal for souls, he prayed so fervently that God condescended to his desires. The child returned to life, was baptised, and survived two days; the reader may easily guess what must have been the consolation of the parents, who, in gratitude to God, became Catholics; many eye-witnesses of the miracle were likewise converted. Father Cherubin announced the fact from the pulpit.

This was but another instance of the verification of our Saviour's words, that they who trust and have faith in Him, shall work wonders like unto His, in testimony of the truths of religion—miracles being the letters-of-credit which He gives to those whom He destines to the conversion of infidels.

CHAPTER XXVI.

QUARANT' ORE IN THONON. ARRIVAL OF THE DUKE AND
OF CARDINAL DI MEDICIS.

ST. FRANCIS of Sales was fully convinced that those ecclesiastical ceremonies which do such honour to the majesty of God, are also most efficacious in moving the hearts of men, especially of heretics, who have nothing of the sort to give outward expression to their faith. After consulting his colleagues and obtaining their approbation, he deemed it advisable to appoint the devotion of the Quarant' ore, and have it celebrated twice a year at Thonon, hoping thus to repair in some degree the insults offered to the adorable Sacrament, and also to give the Calvinists an opportunity of admiring (if nothing more) the beautiful order observed in the functions of the Church. The Bishop of Geneva approved of the idea, and it was carried into effect with great solemnity and magnificence. As many as forty processions from different places, went to do homage to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, which was exposed in the Church of St. Hyppolitus. We may imagine how vast must have been the concourse of people, since all these processions were in addition to the usual congregation. There were pious plays to gratify the people, besides a sermon every hour, sometimes in the church and sometimes in the streets, and places where the procession halted.

Prayers, alms, confessions, communions, and reconciliations were without number; and what was still better, upwards of nine hundred persons abjured heresy, and were admitted to the fold of Christ.

The Duke was at this time in Savoy, and wishing to assist at the ceremony, would gladly have had it deferred; but as it had been fixed, and the invitations given for the twentieth of September, it was deemed expedient to continue it on his arrival, rather than fail in the appointment. His Highness had crossed the mountains to meet the Cardinal di Medicis at Thonon, who was returning from France, whither he had gone as legate à latere. After ten years of war and strife, peace was concluded by the treaty of Vervins. The Duke of Savoy was likewise included in the peace, but the question of the restitution of the Marquisate of Saluzzo was undecided. The Duke occupied it during the turmoils of France, to prevent the heretics from getting possession of it, who would then have had every facility for infesting his states, besides which, he had other claims to it. The decision, within a year, was submitted to the Pope, who was to decide to which of the two princes it should be ceded. Policy therefore warned the Duke to show all honour to the Legate, to render him favourable to his pretensions upon the marquisate, not doubting but that His Holiness would be influenced by the opinion of the Cardinal.

The Duke, therefore, went to greet him on the confines of his states, and then to give him the meeting at Thonon. And here we may admire Divine Providence, which directed various events to the glory of our Saint, and for the general con-

version of the Chablais, much promoted by the meeting of these two illustrious personages; for had it not been from a fear of the contagion which then prevailed in Savoy, the legate would not have passed through Thonon, nor would the Duke have made so long a sojourn there. The latter arrived just at the conclusion of the "quarant' ore;" his presence was a terrible blow to the heretics, who had been flattering themselves that something or other would occur to prevent his coming, but when they really saw him, they were pretty sure of what would follow; their first audience confirmed their apprehensions, for he showed himself as courteous to the Catholics as he was cold and reserved towards the Calvinists.

The Duke immediately turned his thoughts to a repetition of the "quarant' ore," as a pleasing reception to the Cardinal, and he gave orders for the decoration of the church of St. Augustin, where the procession was to commence, and that of St. Hyppolitus, where the solemn function was to take place. The best painters in Italy were employed, and all his most valuable effects were contributed towards their embellishment. Triumphal arches were erected at the gates, and in the public places through which the legate had to pass, and the city palace was magnificently prepared for his reception.

On being informed by a courier that the legate was approaching Savoy, His Highness entered a boat and sailed up the Rhone, to meet him on the very borders of his dominions; and after welcoming and complimenting him, the Duke returned to Thonon by a shorter road than the Cardinal, intending to give him a public entry into the city on the

following day, which was the last of September. First went forth the clergy, with the Bishop of Geneva at their head, accompanied by several other bishops of Savoy and Dauphiny, who advanced as far as a league from Thonon; they were followed by the Duke, with his court, his guards, and all the flower of the Savoyard nobility. Having met and saluted him, he conducted him in the first place to the church of St. Hyppolitus. After spending a long time in prayer, he was taken to the palace where he was to lodge, but he went thither through the most private streets, requesting His Highness to permit him to retire without pomp, as he wished his first passage under the triumphal arches to be made when he was following the Blessed Sacrament, as indeed it was fitting that it should be carried in triumph through a city from whence it had for so many years been banished.

When the legate reached his apartments, he received all the City deputations; but the Duke, who was always at his side, perceiving that Francis kept himself quite behind all the courtiers, stepped forward, and taking him by the hand, led him to the Cardinal, and presenting him, said, "My Lord, I present you the apostle of the Chablais; in him you behold a man blessed by God, and sent to us by heaven. Inflamed with zeal for the salvation of souls, he was the first to come and sow the word of God in these provinces. At the risk of his life he has planted crosses and re-established the faith here, from whence it had been so long banished. If I have used the sword of secular power to second

his enterprises, it cannot be denied but that all the honour of the good work is due to him."

The humble Francis knelt, and bent forward to kiss the border of the legate's robe; but he prevented this, and raising him, embraced him, saying that he was already aware of his merits, and was obliged to him for his zeal. He exhorted him to persevere in the good work, assuring him that he would take care (as he was in duty bound) to inform the Pope of all that he had done. The Saint replied in terms of such extreme modesty, as to render himself still more estimable to the Cardinal. All these honours overwhelmed the Saint with confusion; but were like daggers to his enemies the Huguenots; who never expected that the Duke could thus favour and distinguish one who was the object of their hatred and envy.

The rest of the day was spent in making the necessary preparations for the procession which was to open the "quarant' ore;" and which was to take place the next day, at the expense of the Duke. On the following morning the Duke repaired to the Cardinal's lodging, and conducted him to the church; where in his pontifical dress, and with his mitre on his head, he received the abjuration of Peter Lepetit, a Calvinist minister, and of several other distinguished personages, who had been converted by the Saint, but whose public reception into the Church had been purposely delayed for this solemn occasion. Lepetit discoursed for a whole hour, giving the motives which had induced him to renounce Calvinism and embrace Catholicity; when the absolution was given, two choirs of music gave out a solemn

thanksgiving; then the bishop sang Mass, after which the procession of the Blessed Sacrament was formed; the canopy being borne by the Duke or Savoy, Prince Amadeus of Savoy, and two ambassadors from Friburg. The Blessed Sacrament was followed by the legate, the nuncio, and three bishops with their respective retinues; all carrying lighted tapers, and accompanied by an immense concourse of people, many attracted by devotion, and no small number by curiosity. After the procession, of which it would be impossible to describe the magnificence, Father Cherubin preached; and during the three days that the devotion lasted, our Saint delivered ten sermons. The next day, the Duke and his whole court communicated. Towards evening the Confraternity of the most Blessed Sacrament proceeded from the church, carrying a large wooden cross, to a country-place where there had formerly been a very handsome cross, and erected it in presence of the Duke, the bishops and the Saint, amidst the exhilarating strains of a fine band of music. The Duke himself would assist in erecting it; he knelt down on the ground, kissed it, and threw his arms round it with tender devotion, to the great edification of all the spectators.

It would be difficult to describe the annoyance of the heretics, as they witnessed the progress of Catholicity. They knew nothing of cardinals and bishops, except from the caricatures drawn by their ministers, and the calumnies which they invented against them; but when they saw the modesty and piety of the legate, the bishops and their suites, they were excessively mortified; more especially as, pre-

vious to the legate's arrival, the enemies of the Church had publicly announced that his pomp, luxury, and delicacy would clearly reveal him to be a true minister of antichrist. But he, though fatigued by a long journey, assisted at all the prayers by day and night, as well as at the sermons; was ever ready to receive the abjuration of heretics, distributed abundant alms, and employed his influence in obtaining favours from the Duke for meritorious persons, and the like. The calumnies were but too well confuted; for all who approached him found him always occupied in matters of piety, or beneficial to his neighbour, not allowing himself a single moment for recreation.

Francis had expected that the legate would spend some time in Thonon; but was informed that he would quit at the conclusion of the quarant' ore. Deeming his presence and authority necessary for the re-establishment of the faith, he went to him, and in the name of the Church in the Chablais, entreated him to prolong his stay at Thonon at least for a few days more; but the cardinal, who had received express orders from the Pope to hasten his return to Rome, was unable to gratify the holy man. He told him, however, that he need not be uneasy, since the prince was so extremely well-intentioned; adding, that having recommended the affair to his Highness and the nuncio, he hoped to be more useful to him at Rome than at Thonon, especially as there were several matters requiring the concurrence of his Holiness.

Reconducted with the same honours as had marked his arrival, he took his departure on the day pre-

fixed, after having warmly recommended the affairs of religion; the issue proved how advantageous the Saint's precaution was, when he asked him to speak in behalf of the Catholic cause.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FRANCIS BEFORE THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

AFTER the legate's departure, the ambassadors from Friburg were admitted to an audience with the Duke. They had no further commission than that of complimenting his Highness in the name of their cantons, on the gratifying progress of the faith in the Chablais, and to exhort him to complete a work so honourable to the zeal of a great prince. But when the ambassadors from Berne and the deputies from Geneva were introduced in their turn, they made very different propositions. They began on some unimportant topics, under pretext of which they had been admitted; but soon began to harangue with great warmth in favour of liberty of conscience, entreating the Duke to adhere to the treaty of Nyon, and to give them a precise answer, saying that they were ordered by their superiors to ascertain his real intentions. The Duke answered that he had no intention of leaving Thonon, without first regulating the affairs of religion; but that he had yet to consult his council upon the subject; after which he assured them he would let them know his determination. At the termination of the audience he assembled his councillors, amongst whom he would have Francis

of Sales to take a seat. He stated his motive for summoning them, as well as the request of the ambassadors; and then appealed to their judgment, as to what would be most expedient in such circumstances. Opinions were divided on the subject, but the majority recommended that affairs should remain in their present state, in order not to exasperate the Swiss at a moment when the French arms might be directed against Savoy, on account of the marquisate of Saluzzo. They advised his Highness to postpone the execution of his plans, and to continue labouring in the conversion of the Calvinists by the use of the same means which have hitherto succeeded; then no one would have any reason to complain, whilst, more or less, the object would be gained, more slowly it is true, but, at the same time, more safely.

The Saint's opinion was diametrically opposite to this, which he contested with much vivacity. As soon as the Duke made him a sign to speak, he strongly represented that uniformity of belief was the best support of the state; and this more especially when Calvinism was in question, the principles of which are far from inspiring those sentiments of respect and fidelity which are due from subjects to their sovereign. He added, that this heresy, unlike some others, is not satisfied with impugning some speculative point of faith, leaving its foundations, its morals, and politics intact; on the contrary, Calvinism upsets everything, respecting the authority of sovereigns little more than that of the Church; hence it is but seldom that it rebels against the latter without rising against the former. For a proof of this they had only to look at the republic-

anism of the Low Countries, and in Scotland the authority of the sovereign was all but annihilated. Attempts to the same effect were made in England, whilst the demand of Nantes had done little less than establish a republic in the middle of a kingdom, where the royal authority had ever been particularly respected, until heresy had insinuated itself there. "But," continued he, "without looking to distant countries for confirmation of my assertions, you need only to cast your eye on Geneva and the Chablais to comprehend what Huguenots are capable of. You may still see the devastating effects of their revolt." Hence he inferred that it was risking all if they were tolerated, and nothing if they were banished. A Catholic sovereign is always looked upon by them as the enemy of their sect, therefore he is always odious to them; and they are ever ready to league with his enemies, in order to secure their protection on every occasion. It was evident that heresy is a monster which is never submissive, except when it is depressed and humbled. They need not fear that the people would abandon their homes and property to go and implore succour in foreign lands; but that even if a few should do so, they would soon return and appeal to the clemency of their prince. Finally, he said, that after what had been done, it would be hazardous either to retreat, or to stand still, because the heretics would ascribe this to want of courage, and would lead them to undervalue the authority of the sovereign; nay, it would encourage them to usurp authority themselves, and call in the aid of the Swiss and Genevese. It was therefore expedient to let them know that they

might hope for everything from his own goodness, not from those strange intercessions, on which they declared their hopes to be grounded.

So far the Saint had only adduced political motives, and, as it were, against his will, in reply to those who recommended other measures; but, filled as his heart was with a sincere piety, which shone through all his actions, he ended his address by telling the Duke that when the interests of God were in question, some reliance was to be placed in Providence; that if Constantine, Theodosius, and other princes who had expelled idolatry from their states, had always listened to the dictates of human prudence and worldly policy, paganism and infidelity would still reign, instead of being little more than known by name; that, it is God who supports and establishes thrones, and when the sovereigns who fill them, employ their power in making Him reign in the hearts of their subjects, He would in return pour blessings on their kingdoms, thus recompensing their zeal for the propagation of religion.

The holy man, perceiving that some of the councillors were still unwilling to yield, and were muttering that the country ought to be left to the ministers, as stipulated by the treaty of Nyon. Instead of exasperating them, he turned to the duke, and with a holy freedom said aloud, "Most serene prince, if you leave the Calvinist ministers in possession of these provinces, you hazard the loss both of your kingdom here below, and of heaven above; and a hand's breadth of the latter is worth more than all the kingdoms of the world; these preachers were only suffered to remain provisionally, therefore you

are not bound to retain them; there can be no convention between Christ and Belial." The Duke had listened attentively to the whole of his address, and, struck by the last words, exclaimed, "It is settled: let no one say another word to me on this subject." He dismissed the council, acceding to the request of the Saint, and decreeing the expulsion of the ministers from his dominions; that the Calvinists should be deprived of all charges and dignities; that an exact examination should be made of the ecclesiastical benefices and revenues usurped by the heretics, and now unjustly possessed by them, that they might be restored and applied to the maintenance of Catholic pastors and missionaries, the restoration of churches, and the foundation of a college for the Jesuits at Thonon; and lastly, that the Catholic religion should be the only one publicly exercised in the Chablais and the Bailiwicks. Some of the councillors represented that this would not be carried into execution without strife; but the Duke, who had given his promise to the legate, was resolute, and signified as much to the ambassadors, reminding them that as the Bernese, when in occupation of the country, had, by the exercise of absolute power, compelled the people to embrace the new doctrines; so he, their lawful prince, having recovered his possessions, was resolved to restore them to the Catholic faith. The deputies from Berne had not expected such a blow; they resolved, nevertheless, to resist it by reply. Being invited to dine with the Duke, they renewed their entreaties that matters might be left in their actual state; but finding this to no purpose, they fell back upon the treaty of Nyon, and re-

quested that they might retain at least three of their ministers. The Duke answered that though the treaty was but provisional, he would consent to their wish, provided three Catholic priests were received at Berne; this appeared the worst alternative of the two, they therefore hastily departed, that they might not witness what they foresaw would be done to the prejudice of their misnamed reform.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE DECREES CARRIED INTO EFFECT—CONVERSIONS IN CONSEQUENCE. LABOURS OF ST. FRANCIS OF SALES CONTINUED.

To carry out his intentions in favour of religion, the Duke gave orders that all the heretics should meet him the following day at the palace, and there learn his will upon the subject. At the hour appointed, he made his appearance, accompanied by his guards, the regiment of Martinengo being meanwhile posted in the square and at the gates, to repress all disturbance, whilst the rest of the troops formed a double file occupying the road from the Duke's lodging to the city palace. These precautions terrified the Calvinists, who at once foresaw that the Duke could have recourse to rigour if he found it necessary, but they had no idea of his real object. If the common people were thus awed, the higher classes already assembled in the palace were yet more astounded. His Highness made a sign for silence, and then informed them that though he might

at once use authority to recall them to the obedience of the Church, from which they had been driven by the violence and threats of the Bernese, it had been his object to employ mildness and benignity; therefore, for the last four years he had left them to preaching, conferences, and the exhortations of excellent ecclesiastics, of whom the Provost of Sales there present deserved the chief glory, as being the most distinguished of them all: that it was gratifying to him to know that gentleness and persuasion had been used to win their good will, and convince their intellects— anxious as he was to devise such measures as would contribute to their greatest advantage—that they had been exhorted in public and in private, not without great profit, seeing that the majority had already returned to the bosom of the Church; but as there were still some few who remained deaf to the voice of their mother the Church, and of their sovereign who loved them as a father, and who, by not following the example of the rest, were ruining themselves both for time and eternity, he declared that he would no longer tolerate such obdurate characters in his states; their very obstinacy proclaiming them the enemies of God, of the Church, and the sovereign; that he had allowed them full time to consider what they ought to do, and he now desired that the good should be separated from the bad. Let those who were willing to embrace the religion of their prince pass on to the right side, whilst those who persisted in remaining as they were, were to pass over to the left.

The Duke then ceased speaking, to allow the people time to make their choice. Francis and some

other Catholics endeavoured to convince the heretics that their best interests in every way suggested compliance with the recommendation of the Duke; their words were so efficacious, especially those of the Saint, that a very small number remained at the left hand, though two or three of the most distinguished were amongst them. Then the Duke, turning to those who were at his right hand, accosted them in such terms of affability as completely gained them; he told them that he looked upon them henceforth as his good and faithful subjects; that his regard for them would oblige him to grant any favours they might ask. He next addressed himself to the contumacious thus: "Since you dare to declare yourselves in my presence, the enemies not only of myself, but of God, begone! quit my states, without a hope of ever re-entering them. I despoil you of your charges and dignities; I had rather be without subjects than have such as you, whom I should always have reason to distrust." He then made a sign to his guards, who ordered them out of the audience-chamber. He, moreover, desired that his determination should be committed to writing, and an edict for it to be drawn up. He commissioned, under letters patent, his attorney-general to visit all the churches of the Chablais, and to take a general inventory of all the ecclesiastical benefices and revenues that had belonged to them prior to the rebellion, giving also strict injunctions that these revenues should be employed according to the will of the Bishop, the Provost, and the dean of Geneva. Francis, the dean, and the government official, set out at once, and soon returned with the necessary

documents, from whence it appeared that there were formerly upwards of seventy parish churches in the Chablais, besides monasteries, chapels, colleges and hospitals. The holy man devoted himself with such ardour to the enterprise, combining such vigilance with such indefatigable toil, as seem to have been really superhuman; and such as clearly to show that the finger of God was there. The Duke insisted upon the provisional restitution of ecclesiastical property, intending to send Francis to Rome later, to obtain from His Holiness the confirmation of his arrangements. The dean Claude d'Angeville was appointed economist-general of all the churches of the Chablais and Ternier, since the Provost was not always destined to remain there.

In the course of the afternoon, Francis, (who had requested the Duke to allow the obstinate ones a little more time,) brought over the greater number of them, but the rest, including Messrs. de Brote, Joli, and de Prez, crossed the lake and withdrew to Nyon. But it is much easier to meet a ready grievance than to submit to the privations of a long exile. The banished men expected that the Bernese would take up arms at their request, and so re-establish Calvinism in the Chablais; but they soon perceived that nothing of the sort was intended; moreover, they felt that they were burdensome to their hosts, and accordingly wrote to Francis, entreating him to obtain permission for their return. In hopes of being able to convert them, the holy man obtained safe-passports for them from His Highness, who could refuse him nothing. As soon

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as they returned he began to confer with them, and had the satisfaction of converting them.

De Brote, who was determined to have no cause for after-self-reproach, showed the arguments employed by Francis to La Fay of Geneva, who was so little able to controvert them, that De Brote found no difficulty then in abjuring Calvinism, more especially after La Fay admitted that salvation was attainable in the Catholic Church.

After the abjuration, he and his companions were very favourably received by the Duke, who rejoiced exceedingly at seeing that province with the three bailiwicks entirely restored to the Church; most anxiously did he endeavour to maintain them in this good state, providing all that was necessary to this effect. The out-posts were well garrisoned to protect them against the emissaries of Geneva; he insisted on the restoration of the parish churches, and the restitution of the bells belonging to them, which had been removed to the fortress of Allinges; and he provided for the maintenance of pastors and missionaries; he regulated the distribution of alms, to take place from time to time, prohibited the circulation of heretical works, ordered that festivals should be observed, as well as the fasts prescribed by the Church; he expressly desired the governors and magistrates to second the bishop, and not to permit the public profession of any other religion but the Catholic, taking care to punish delinquents. In fine, the fifteen articles which Francis had presented to him, were signed by him on the 12th of November, thus signalizing the zeal and piety of his noble heart.

But nothing contributed more towards the re-establishment of Catholicity than his own regularity of conduct, and the striking example of piety which he gave during his six weeks residence at Thonon. He assisted at all the public prayers with a modest recollection that edified the most embittered. He confessed and communicated several times with great devotion. He distributed copious alms, so judiciously, that the province long felt the beneficial effects thereof. In a word, he proved that politics, when combined with piety, can effect what they please. That the Catholic religion was peacefully re-established in the Chablais, was, under God, owing no doubt to St. Francis of Sales, who underwent such immense labours in order to effect it. Notwithstanding this, no small share of the glory of this good work is due to the Duke, whom the Saint highly extols in his preface to the "Introduction to a Devout Life;" in the dedication of his "Standard of the Cross;" and in the second epistle of the first book of it; commendations of great weight, because, as we read in a manuscript containing his homilies, '*præclarum est a laudato laudari.*' 'It is a noble thing to be praised by him who deserves praise.'

CHAPTERS XXIX. AND XXX.

DEPARTURE OF THE DUKE. FRANCIS GOES TO SALES.

PROPOSED FOR THE COADJUTORSHIP OF GENEVA.

ACCEPTS IT BY OBEDIENCE. DANGEROUS ILLNESS.

PREPARES TO GO TO ROME.

THE presence of the Duke seemed to be still necessary at Thonon, in order to give stability to the affairs of the revived Church. Nevertheless towards the end of the sixth week, he found himself obliged to depart. Alphonsus d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, having died without issue, Clement VIII. attempted to unite that city with the Holy See, alleging, that as a feodary, it so devolved as a matter of right; he, therefore, refused the investiture to Cæsar d'Este, who, as the nearest relative, laid claim to it. Those powers that were friendly to the house of d'Este took up arms, to obtain by force, what the Pope refused to supplication. The Pope, who had with great promptitude taken possession of the city, likewise had recourse to arms to defend his new acquisition. He endeavoured to uphold his right by means of Censures, and his Censures by means of the sword, so that, in a short time the whole of Italy was up in arms. The Duke, fearing lest the peace so long enjoyed by his states might be disturbed hastily re-crossed the mountains, to stand on the defensive, and to endeavour to effect an accommodation; and such was the case, thanks to the intervention of various potentates.

About this same time Francis repaired to Annecy, for both the Duke and the Bishop were anxious to send him to Rome, to solicit the requisite authorizations from the Pope. It was desirable, therefore, that he should first confer with the Bishop, and make memoranda of the different subjects to be discussed. Francis was considered to be the best qualified for this purpose, as being most conversant with the wants of the Chablais, the conversion of which had cost him so much.

He returned to Annecy, after spending four years and some months in his apostolic labours. From Annecy he went on to Sales, to gratify his parents, who received him with extraordinary demonstrations of affection and delight, exulting in his glorious success. In the meantime the Bishop was meditating how he could duly recompense the indefatigable exertions of the Saint, who had brought back so many of his wayward sheep to the fold. In the first place he ordered the Commissary of the Ecclesiastical revenues of the Chablais to repay him all the expenses incurred by him in the course of the mission; but he, with a noble generosity worthy of himself, refused to accept this re-imbusement, saying that he would on no account consent thus to diminish the sum destined to the parochial clergy, and the present necessities of the Chablais, and that he would much rather suffer himself, than see the rectors stinted, to the injury perhaps of those committed to their care. This refusal was highly admired by the Bishop, who well knew the circumscribed state of the Provost's finances; he extolled his sanctity, and resolved to choose him for his coadjutor.

He had already mentioned this idea to several devout and prudent personages connected with the diocese, who unanimously advised his Lordship to take advantage of the Provost's journey to Rome, and secure the Pope's consent to the project. Nothing further remained but to propose it to the Saint himself. Whilst the bishop was watching for a favourable opportunity for doing this, a dream quickened his decision. One night he dreamt that wolves were furiously worrying his flock, and in spite of his utmost exertions, succeeded in carrying off some of his lambs, for he had no one to assist him in repelling the attack. So thoroughly was his mind agitated by what it beheld, that he thrice cried out aloud for help, which awakened one of his chaplains, who hastened to him, and found him plunged in distress. When informed of the circumstance, he endeavoured to console him, reminding him of the zeal, learning, and sanctity of the Provost of Sales, who belonged to his diocese; therefore he had nothing to fear, Francis alone being equal to many, whilst there were several more ecclesiastics whom he would ever find ready to assist him in emergencies. Hereupon the Bishop exclaimed, "Where are you, my son? Why do you not come to the support of my old age?" Having regained his composure, he dismissed his chaplain, and passed the rest of the night tranquilly. On the following day, when the Saint went to converse with him on the affairs of the Chablais, the good prelate opened his heart to him, saying, that when he reflected on his obligations to him, for having with so much toil wrested three provinces of his diocese out of the hands

of the heretics, and when he reflected on his age and infirmities, which prevented him from labouring at a time when the diocese was so much enlarged as to require more assiduous zeal, and more indefatigable vigilance than ever; on all considerations, then, he needed his aid, and wished to have him for his coadjutor in life, and his successor at his death. He doubted not that his humility would make him fancy himself inadequate to such a post, but this very idea would only prove that he was the more worthy of it. As for himself, he owned that he should tremble at the thought of offering it to any one else, but offered it to him with pleasure, fully convinced that he would exactly fulfil all the obligations annexed to such a charge. He besought him to render this service to himself and to the diocese, or rather to Jesus Christ, who, through him had elected him, that, by consenting, he would free him from all the anxiety which he felt when unable fully to discharge all the duties of his ministry.

The humble Francis was astounded at such a proposition; the confusion of his ideas for some time suspended his utterance, but, regaining his usual peace of heart, temporarily disturbed, he answered the bishop, that as long as he lived he would always find him ready to devote the little talent which he possessed to the relief of his Lordship, but that he certainly had neither merit nor qualification suited to episcopacy. He expressed himself deeply obliged for the proffered favour of a dignity which every one reveres, which many covet, but of which none can over-rate the charge; that he was so persuaded that episcopacy was a burden oppressive even to an

angel's shoulders, that he could not possibly desire it, and he concluded by saying, that seeing such an immeasurable distance between the dignity and his talents—a deficiency which he better understood than any one else, he entreated him to look elsewhere, and choose some one more deserving of the honour and eminent dignity than himself, observing that the diocese was not without its worthy men.

The Bishop had foreseen that the humility of the Saint would make him refuse the coadjutorship, and therefore was prepared to contest the point with him. He therefore said that he knew there would be presumption in thinking oneself able worthily to discharge so holy a ministry, which can be more safely refused than accepted. But, might there not likewise be obstinacy in refusing it when God calls to it? Moses, in humility, excused himself from undertaking the guidance of the people of Israel, but afterwards accepted it in obedience, and not to oppose the will of God. And in this point he may be proposed as a model to all who are destined to govern souls; to undertake this without a vocation from God is presumption, but when called, there is merit in submitting oneself, hoping for those aids which the Almighty never refuses to those who trust entirely in Him. He bade him look at the example of the saints, and conform himself to it, for he could assure him that he had not selected him without first consulting God, and the best informed and the most worthy persons of his diocese, and that he felt more and more certain that God would have him to be the pastor of His people. He con-

cluded by citing the opinion of St. Gregory, who, though he advises us to shun dignities, requires that we should place our back beneath the burden, when raised to it by persons who are beyond the reach of suspicion, and in the manner prescribed by the holy canons. He assured him that plebeians, patricians and clergy, wished to have him made a bishop, whilst his bishop and his sovereign were conjointly endeavouring to impose the charge upon him. It was evident, therefore, that by these means God intended to place him on the candlestick, that he might completely exterminate heresy out of the diocese.

The Duke was indeed most anxious that Francis should be a bishop, and when he was informed that Monsgr. Granier was dangerously ill, he, of his own accord, expressed the wish that the provost of Sales should be his successor; so that when the Bishop of Geneva applied for the Sovereign's consent, his Highness instantly granted it; as if he had foreseen that Francis would be the person selected. Notwithstanding all this, the holy man could not lay aside his fears; declaring that he could not make up his mind to accept so perilous a dignity; feeling that he had not strength to carry it. He referred to the many examples of those who had been ruined by elevation, though illustrious for virtue in their private station. This it was that terrified him, and therefore he implored the bishop to leave to Providence the care of finding him a successor.

As Francis thus persisted in his refusal, the bishop thought it best to say no more that day; he merely recommended him to consult God in an affair of such

importance, lest self-love should be the motive which made him so pertinaciously refuse to feed the Lord's flock, to take charge of which is surely the effect of divine love. He thus took leave of him for the time, but renewed his instances through the medium of their friends, who willingly exerted themselves to extort a consent, which it was easy to foretell would be of such advantage to the diocese. This would easily be inferred from his previous career, his learning, his zeal, and the piety which breathed in his every action. But the holy man was immovable; so, to escape the entreaties which molested him so much, he withdrew to Sales. This was precisely what the bishop wished, thinking that he would be unable to resist the authority of his parents. He followed him, therefore, to Sales, and renewed his entreaties in their presence, but Francis persevered in his refusal, adducing all those reasons which are so opposed to the spirit of the world, saying, that whoever accepted such a post, ought to be very certain that it was the divine will, at which worldlings scoff, even intriguing to secure such a dignity. He called the title of bishop a title of labour, though worldlings call it one of dignity, and concluded, that under the mitre were a thousand anxieties, involving the obligation of feeding the sheep of Christ, though worldlings think but of the splendour of the one, and of nourishing themselves with the milk of the other. The Bishop was therefore obliged to return without gaining his point, to his own great regret, and to the regret of all good people, who deemed the refusal prejudicial to the interests of the Church and of souls.

Monsignor Granier was most anxious to obtain from the Provost of Sales a consent, which he felt convinced would prove the safety of his diocese; he knew that he could securely entrust it to his vigilance; he used his best endeavours to this purpose, but seeing that all was useless, he despatched his head chaplain, a very worthy ecclesiastic, over to Sales, with orders to use every possible persuasion to gain the holy man's consent, and then, if he still refused, he was to command him in the Bishop's name, and in virtue of holy obedience, to submit. The priest, named Peter Critain, was the particular friend of Francis. He undertook the commission, and made all the representations he could to shake his purpose, but the Provost still held out, and excused himself by saying that a coadjutor would so materially diminish the revenues of the bishop, which at present were scarcely sufficient for the decent maintenance of his establishment, that he could not consent to see him reduced to still greater straits. "Moreover," he said, "I am not born to command, but to obey. It will be better for his Lordship to make use of me in whatever way he can; he will ever find me most ready to serve him, instead of obliging me to accept a charge wholly beyond my strength; whereas there are so many in the diocese much better qualified than I am." Then Critain, setting aside his reasons on the score of insufficiency, told him that he was commissioned by the bishop, to order him in virtue of holy obedience, to accept the brevet containing the placet of His Highness; hereupon he placed it in his hands, conjuring him to

submit, seeing that this was so manifestly the will of God.

At these words his repugnance to the dignity seemed, as it were, subdued by the authority of the Church and of God, with which the prelate was invested. He walked up and down the room for some time in silence, and with his arms crossed upon his breast; then he said, "Let us go over to Thorens and celebrate the Mass of the Holy Ghost. I will serve yours, and you mine, and when we have thus prayed, we will do what God shall inspire." They went to Thorens accordingly, and it was observed that whilst the Saint was saying Mass, his face shone with remarkable brilliancy, the vestiges of which were apparent, even after his thanksgiving. His dread of the dangers which he foresaw, will enable us to guess how great was the fervour of his prayers, whilst on the other hand he was disposed to obey; nevertheless, he knew how much his obedience would cost him; but at length, finding his heart restored to peace, he conceived it to be the will of God that he should obey, so after Mass when Critain asked what answer he was to give the bishop, Francis replied, that if he might be believed, it was his wish to hold the last place in the house of God; that he had done violence to his own principles when he accepted the Provostship, which he had only done to appease the remonstrances of friends: that even this dignity was beyond his deserts, nor could he conceive how his Lordship could compel him to accept a prelacy, of which he was even unworthy. However, if the bishop really desired it, he was ready to obey in spite of all his repugnance, and

that he would beseech the Lord to forgive the fault he was committing in choosing a person so ill qualified for this important charge, and not to impute to himself the failings which his incapacity would occasion. In conclusion, he entreated Crêtain to keep silence on all that had passed between them. But he, exulting in the joy which he knew he should impart to the good bishop, related it all in confidence to the parents of the Saint and to the canon of Sales. Then returning to Annecy, he repeated all that had occurred to his Lordship, who, so far from believing that this election would inculcate him before God, publicly declared (as soon as he knew that Francis had consented) that he believed the best act of his life was that of choosing his dear son the Provost of Sales to be his coadjutor. The whole diocese rejoiced at the event. Geneva alone was in dismay, seeing that now all chance of restoring Calvinism in the Chablais was at an end, with the prospect moreover of fresh losses and discomfiture. The clergy, the nobility, and the people, returned thanks to God, ascribing to Him the success of the negotiation, whilst the thoughts and feelings of Francis ran in quite another direction.

In fact, no sooner had he given his consent, than he was overwhelmed with a deeper sense of grief than he had ever before experienced in his whole life. His mind was concentrated on the consideration of his new state in which he was placed by obedience, and though he had accepted it only as being compelled by obedience, its dangers did not seem to be lessened on this account. He felt as if he were cast upon the sea in the midst of a terrific

storm, exposed to a thousand shoals, where those were to be most apprehended which were best concealed. In the bitterness of his heart, he incessantly repeated, "Lord, save us, we perish!"

Visits of congratulation, of which he received so many, were like martyrdom to him. People were surprised at his affliction; but he told them that it was more than enough to have to answer to God for his own soul, without being held responsible for the souls of many others.

He went over to Annecy, where he deplorably remonstrated with the bishop for imposing such a command, beseeching him—if he would not have compassion on his weakness—at least to consider the terrible account he would have to give to God for this unfortunate election; and urging that there was still time to repair the mistake, if he would but take back the brevet and relieve him from the obedience. The bishop embraced him affectionately, exhorted him to confide in the Lord who called him, assured him that there were evident signs that God required him to be a bishop, and therefore he might expect special helps from Him, sufficient to render him a Saint. He would not take back the brevet, having already given notice to His Holiness through the medium of Cardinal de Medici, with whom he had discussed the matter at Thonon, in the hope that the Pope would approve of it, not only on the score of personal esteem, but likewise to gratify the wishes of the cardinal. He therefore desired Francis to prepare for his journey to Rome, to obtain the requisite authorizations for the plans proposed in the Chablais; his presence and tact being necessary to

explain matters of much importance to the well-being of the converts.

All these exhortations, however, did not remove the idea of the dangers which would beset him in the episcopal state; they haunted him to such a degree as to deprive him of sleep; his blood became heated, and a violent fever set in, which soon reduced him to death's door. The Countess of Sales, in her affliction, reproached herself for having concurred in extorting the fatal consent, which it was likely would cost the life of her son. She went to attend upon him, and would never quit his bed-side. All his friends and acquaintances were exceedingly grieved at the prospect of so irreparable a loss to the diocese, all having well-grounded hopes that an election in which the finger of God so visibly appeared, would turn to the advantage of the Church.

His malady gained ground daily, and the doctors despaired of his life. His mother was commissioned to announce this to him, which caused her a grief which it would be impossible to describe. Being a lady of remarkable virtue, she first adored the dispensations of Divine Providence, and then in terms dictated by prudence and maternal love, she told her son that his complaint was in such a state, that he might now prepare to go and enjoy the reward of his labours in heaven. Francis seemed astounded at the intelligence. The sorrows of death and the fears of hell assailed him. He thought he had not as yet done meet penance for his sins; and with many groans he began interruptedly to ejaculate the words of Job and Ezechiel. "Suffer me a little while, O Lord, that I may bemoan my grief before I

go to the land of darkness, from whence there is no return; the land that is covered with the shades of death; for I have sinned, and have not done meet penance. Too grievously have I sinned. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul, and I will say to God, Do not Thou condemn me; where shall I hide myself from Thy anger? In the midst of my days shall I go down to the gates of hell? Shall my life be thus cut off by the weaver before it is fully spun out?" Then, with holy David, he added, "Reprove me not, O Lord, in Thy wrath; convert me to Thee, and save my soul, for there is no one who is mindful of Thee in death. Every night I will water my bed with my tears." Thus did the holy man pray, resolving to put his affairs in order and to regulate his life better in the event of his recovery. All at once a heavenly light beamed upon his mind, and he consoled himself with this wise reflection, which I could wish to see engraven in the minds of all who fear death. "I can only hope for salvation from the Lord: divine mercy will be as necessary to me later as it is now, and will be as favourable to me at this time as at any other." Hence, encouraging himself, he said, "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth. O my soul, why art thou afflicted? Hope in God, for I will now and for ever confess that He is my Saviour and my God!" These thoughts and expressions restored calm to his heart, and he thenceforward found consolation in that which afflicted all his friends. His peace of mind increased with his bodily pains, and his confidence in God was never greater than at the moment when his life was despaired of.

Amidst the universal regret on account of his illness, that of the good bishop was so excessive as to throw him into a dangerous illness. He would be informed not only from hour to hour, but almost from moment to moment, how the invalid was going on, and ordered one or other of his attendants to remain constantly with Francis, and to bring him word what remedies were prescribed, and what effects they produced. The Chapter of the cathedral, in dismay at the prospect of losing a head which was such an honour to it, went in a body to bid him a last farewell, and receive his blessing. Whilst each of the canons stood weeping at his bed-side, entreating him to give them some brief instruction, the holy man, summoning up his remaining strength, spoke to them so efficaciously of the vanities of the world, of the uncertainties of this life, and of the beauty of virtue, as to excite their astonishment, all of them acknowledging that he had never spoken with more elegance and strength of mind. He gave appropriate advice to each one in particular, disclosing their imperfections to them, and prescribing salutary remedies proportioned to each one's necessities. Having thanked them, and recommended himself to their prayers, he gave them his blessing, and they withdrew, deeply moved and grieved.

Scarcely had they left him, when he swooned, and for the space of an hour was thought to be dead, all attempts to revive him proving useless. But his soul was not asleep, for at that very time the devil was assailing him with ferocious temptations, suggesting to his mind, weakened as it was by bodily infirmity, the most subtle arguments or the schools

against the real presence of our Divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; nor could he at the moment discover any solid answer; but at length, by invoking the holy name of Jesus, and protesting that he would believe even what he could not understand, he succeeded in dispelling the temptations. On recovering himself, he recollected the solution of the subtleties, but he would never disclose them, fearing lest they might prove a stumbling-block to weak minds, especially as there are many who can comprehend difficulties, but are incapable of seizing the force of replies. Once only he mentioned to his brother Lewis, with whom he frequently discussed theological topics, what had happened to him on this occasion, but recollecting himself he also pointed out wherein consisted the equivocation, and forbade him ever to repeat it.

As he appeared to be somewhat better the next day, the musicians of the cathedral went to visit him, and by way of recreating his mind a little, offered to sing a motett. He accordingly begged they would sing that of St. Mary Magdalen, beginning with, "My heart burns to see God." It would be impossible to describe the emotions of his heart as he was listening to the music. He next asked them to sing the psalm, "As the hart pants after the fountains of water, so does my soul desire Thee, O God." When the musicians retired he shed abundance of tears, and then recited the 'Miserere,' after which he again fainted. The doctors determined on trying an experiment in order to revive him, and one of them mixed a quantity of potable gold in some broth, when the Saint, who was not entirely unconscious, asked him what he was

doing. By way of answer the doctor made use of these words of our Divine Lord, "That which I do ye know not now, but ye shall know it later." Whereupon, the sick man, in whom virtue was strong, although his body was weak, corrected him, telling him that he ought never to profane the words of Christ, nor employ them excepting to holy purposes, nor utter them otherwise than with great respect.

The golden mixture soon produced its effect, so that the bishop's servant who came to make his enquiries, was able to congratulate with him, and to tell him that the doctors pronounced him improved. This good news was such a solace to the worthy prelate that he was soon able to leave his bed.

Francis too progressed favourably, and in a few days recovered both health and strength. God, who destined him to great things, prolonged a life which was to be entirely devoted to His service, and that of the Church. His cure was considered miraculous; every one returned thanks to God; and it was then clearly shown how much the joy, both of clergy and people, depended on the life of the holy man.

But now restored to health, and willing to show his gratitude to God, he redoubled his labours, and began to make the preparations necessary for his journey to Rome.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HIS JOURNEY TO ROME.

HAVING recovered his strength, Francis started for Rome, accompanied by the bishop's nephew,

Signor di Chisè, canon of the cathedral. The bishop had made this arrangement, suspecting that when once at Rome, the holy man would give himself no concern about the co-adjutorship, or rather, that he would do his best to be relieved of it. And here we cannot but admire the disinterested conduct of the uncle and of the nephew. The bishop might certainly have chosen the canon for his successor; he had for several years satisfactorily assisted him in the government of his diocese. He was a man of undoubted merit, and the Pope and the Duke would probably have ratified the choice. But the good prelate consulted not flesh and blood. Seeing that Francis surpassed him in worth, he gave him the preference, and the canon had sufficient virtue not to complain; on the contrary, he volunteered to press the cause forward, and to proceed to Rome expressly to promote that which would make Francis his superior; whereas it might seem that he ought to be his subject. Whilst the bishop was tasting that holy joy, with which God, even in this life, recompenses those who prefer His Divine service before all other things, and was calmly awaiting the favourable issue of the affairs recommended to the two travellers, they crossed the Alps, and remained a few days at Turin, to negotiate with the Duke and the Nuncio, who gave them letters of introduction to the ambassador of Savoy, and to Cardinal Aldobrandini, requesting their influence; then pursuing their journey, they halted at Modena, where they found the president Faber, who was then in Italy, arranging affairs for the Duke of Nemours. Whilst the Saint, like another Enoch, was walking with God, and intent upon the interests

of God, the devil raised a new scheme. As he could not endure the man-God, so neither would he leave without temptation a man who lived like an angel.

As Francis was about entering a town, his horse fell, and the Saint rose from the ground with his dress covered with mud. He was obliged to stop at the first inn he reached, and not having a second suit of clothes, by reason of his voluntary poverty, a French gentleman, who happened to be travelling with him, lent him one of black velvet to put on whilst his own were cleaned. Unwilling to appear abroad thus elegantly equipped, he remained alone in his own room, whilst his companions sallied forth to see whatever there was in town worthy of observation. His door was suddenly opened, and a lady of modest deportment and of great beauty, entered the room. The cavalier's dress prevented her from suspecting Francis of being an ecclesiastic, and, struck by his handsome appearance, she immediately conceived guilty projects, and made her proposals accordingly. Francis was astounded at finding such wantonness coupled with such exterior modesty; and answered in a manner to have made her enter into herself, had she not been a woman of unbounded effrontery. She ridiculed his corrective admonitions, and continued inciting him to sin; whereupon he was sadly embarrassed, wishing on one side to spare the reputation of the guilty woman, and on the other to extricate himself from so perilous a position. He threatened, and then advanced towards the door, but the female detained him, precisely at the moment when Roland was entering the room, who at a glance perceived the

object of the guilty woman, and the purity and triumph of the new Joseph. Anxious to conceal what had occurred, Francis reproved his servant for his prolonged absence, and bade him conduct the lady to her own apartment, as she had made a mistake, and had entered the room destined for him, instead of the one intended for herself. But Roland saw that malice, and not inadvertence, had brought her where she was. On resuming their journey, Roland repeated the affair to his companions, expressing his surprise at the woman who, at first sight, looked very modest, and had excited his respect. Francis, ever ready to excuse his neighbour, replied that possibly she might be what she seemed, but that each of us may encounter certain moments of danger, when we are scarcely master of ourselves; God so permitting, in order to discover our weakness to us, to inspire us with diffidence of self, and to oblige us to have recourse to Him. Hereupon he took occasion to speak of the dangers to which young persons are apt to expose themselves, by a too free intercourse with those of a different sex; saying that all caution was advisable even when necessity or convenience demands this intercourse: the fear of God, and care of their reputation prevent many from treating with suspicious persons, who nevertheless easily confer with virtuous females, fearing no ill consequences where we find a conduct that wins both esteem and affection. He added that this was one of the most crafty artifices of self-love, because, regard for the virtue is often insensibly transferred to the person, and the heart, imagining the first beginnings of the

vicious affection to be nothing more than the original esteem of the individual's virtue, a chain is woven by degrees, and not discovered until it is too strong to be broken. He strongly insisted on attention to the admonition of the apostle, who warns us to be on our guard, lest what began in the spirit should end in the flesh. He admitted that it was but seldom these pernicious effects went so far as to become exterior faults, but notwithstanding this, no precaution could be too great in guarding against these dangers, God being more jealous of the heart even than of the body; nor will He endure a rival. And although they may be free from abominable guilt, He holds Himself at a distance from those who attach themselves unduly, even to persons whom they deem virtuous. With these, and other similarly edifying conversation, as circumstances gave rise, he beguiled the tedium of the journey until they reached Rome, where, by the advice of the President Faber, the Saint procured a lodging near San Salvatore in Lauro.

CHAPTER XXXII.

S. FRANCIS IS FAVOURABLY RECEIVED BY THE POPE, AND
EXAMINED FOR THE BISHOPRIC.

ON his arrival at Rome, Francis lost no time in paying his respects to Cardinal de Medici, who welcomed him with extraordinary demonstrations of esteem and affection. He enquired about all the

Saint had been doing in the Chablais since His Eminence had been there, and examined the memorials which were to be presented to His Holiness, as well as his own verbal requests, promising the support of his influence, and offering to introduce him himself to the Pope. He accordingly conducted him on the appointed day to kiss the feet of His Holiness. The Pope then had the satisfaction of conversing with that great man, of whom he had heard so much. He questioned him minutely on those topics which most interested him, and the Cardinal again repeated the numerous conversions, of which he himself had been an eye-witness,—his apostolic labours, his zeal, his piety, and then concluded thus:—"Here, then, most holy Father, is the apostle of the Chablais, and the prop of re-nascent Catholicity in those countries." The humble man embraces toil, but cannot endure praise, which is its first reward. The holy man attributed all the success of the mission to his bishop and his associates, acknowledged the many favours obtained from God, and then informed him of all that was yet requisite towards the maintenance of the new church of the Chablais, and generally of the state of the diocese, according to the information taken, and the notes drawn up, which were reduced to ten heads.

1. To compel the Knights of SS. Maurice and Lazarus to maintain the curates.

2. To unite some benefice, even cloistral, to the theological prebends, which no one would accept, because they were so poor and laborious.

3. Permission for the bishop to impose some tythe

or pension on the abbeys or priories, towards the support of poor curates who had not sufficient income.

4. Faculties to grant dispensations within the fourth degree of relationship for contracting marriage, many of his diocesans being too poor to apply to Rome, and in some villages almost all the inhabitants being interconnected. He moreover requested power, at least *in foro conscientiae*, to dispense those already married.

5. To empower the bishop, his vicar-general, and ten or twelve others deputed by him, to absolve heretics, or those who have relapsed into heresy, in order to facilitate conversions, and this to be granted in perpetuity. Moreover, to permit the reading of heretical works to the said deputies, that they may be able to confute the falsehoods published in them.

6. To exempt the bishop from the payment of tythes, in consideration of his scanty revenue, and the heavy expenses which he is obliged to incur, as they might be exacted instead from the richer benefices.

7. Permission for the canons of the cathedral, who for the most part are doctors, and of noble birth, to have (besides the canonry) a parish to rule by means of competent vicars, the revenues of the canons not surpassing sixty ducats annually.

8. To exempt some of the villages from burdens which savour more of paganism than of the liberty of the Church, though they are in favour of the bishop; such as heirship to those who die without issue, who are prohibited from making a will, even in favour of their poor relatives; such as obliging

the inhabitants of certain villages to watch at night in the marshes to prevent the croaking of the frogs whilst the bishop slept; such as preventing the wear of black garments, and confining the people to the use of grey. Power for the bishop to relieve his subjects from such burdens, substituting in exchange a small tax, as the bishop ought to be content to be the father of his people, without exacting services discreditable to his ministry.

9. To empower some prelate to reform certain abbeys and monasteries of the diocese, where religious discipline was so far degenerated as to tolerate scandal in the inmates.

10. To unite the priory of St. Hyppolitus in Thonon, to the revenues of the chapter, permitting the canons of the cathedral to remove thither from Annecy, where they had found shelter with the bishop, obliging all to go to Thonon for residence, where they would be better able to labour for the conversion of heretics.

Such were the articles submitted by the Saint to the Pope. We know not why the last was not carried into effect, as all the others were in due time; His Holiness immediately consented to some of them, the rest were referred to the consideration of Cardinal Baronius, and the archbishop of Bari, the nuncio at Turin.

But not one of the requests was so gratifying to the pontiff as that presented by Canon Chizè in the name of his uncle, namely, of bestowing the coadjutorship of Geneva on the Provost de Sales, His Holiness foreseeing that such an arrangement would

turn to the immense advantage of the faithful, and to the discomfiture of heresy. The petition stated that the Bishop of Geneva being upwards of fifty years of age, twenty of which had been spent in the government of that diocese—that being liable to infirmities which disqualified him for ruling so vast a bishopric, comprising six hundred parishes, whereof sixty-four had recently returned to the communion of the Church, and that these required the consecration of churches, altars, and cemeteries, with other functions beyond his strength; that, convinced moreover of the nobility, piety, learning, and sanctity of Francis of Sales, Provost of the cathedral, he besought His Holiness to constitute him his coadjutor and successor, allowing him at the same time to retain his provostship, (the annual income of which was only eighty ducats,) and the curacy of Petit-Bornand, whose revenues did not amount to two hundred ducats, and to have a fourth part of the Episcopal revenues—that this appointment was desired by the sovereign, the bishop, the clergy, and all the people who had witnessed his heroic conduct, preaching in the midst of heretics at the risk of his own life, the consequence of which had been numerous conversions; finally, observing that as he progressed every day, the favour would be agreeable both to God and men.

This petition was presented to the Pope when Francis was absent; upon which his Holiness remarked that he had never alluded to the coadjutorship in his audiences, and accordingly sent for him, and opened the subject himself, saying that he admired this great humility joined to such distin-

guished merit; he expressed himself highly gratified with the Bishop's choice, extolling it in presence of the Cardinals, and desiring the holy man to return three days hence, to be examined in his presence.

Francis was somewhat startled at this order, the Bishops of Savoy, like those of France, being exempted by privilege from this examination. He did not deem himself bound to represent this circumstance to his Holiness, but mentioned it to the Count di Verva, the Duke's ambassador at Rome; not from any apprehension of the examination, but that he might not give umbrage to the Gallican Bishops, and that no innovation might result from the circumstance. The ambassador demanded an audience of the Pontiff, who, suspecting the cause of it, prevented him by saying that he had desired the Coadjutor of Geneva to appear for his examination on the following Monday; not because he intended to examine those bishops nominated by the Duke of Savoy, but for his own special satisfaction, wishing to judge for himself of the talents of a man whom fame so distinguished above others, and also that he might be able to do honour to this faithful servant of the Lord. He likewise added that he had discerned in him, in the course of private conversation, a deep fund of learning, which a public examination would bring to light, and would also raise him in the estimation of the College of Cardinals and of all Rome.

This explanation satisfied the count, who accordingly informed the Saint that he had better prepare himself against the appointed day; but the brief

interval of time, together with multiplicity of other affairs, prevented him from having recourse to books. He made his preparation therefore at the foot of the crucifix, with fasting, and by the Sacrifice of the Mass. Having recommended himself to the prayers of his friends, he repaired on the day fixed to the place of examination; and as he passed the church of St. James Scozza-Cavalli, he entered, and kneeling down, offered up the following prayer, with many tears and deep feelings of humility: "O my Lord, if Thou foreseest that I shall become a useless servant in the episcopacy, and that I shall not be fit to govern souls that are so dear to Thee, I beseech Thee not to permit me to answer correctly; but rather so ordain that my ignorance may be manifest, that I may be covered with confusion in presence of Thy vicar, and that this examination may be a source of ignominy to me." It was in these holy dispositions that he entered the appointed hall, where the Sovereign Pontiff was seated on his throne, surrounded by eight of the cardinals, amongst whom were, de Medici, and Borghese, both afterwards Popes,—Frederick Borromeo and Baronius, besides twenty archbishops and bishops, several abbots, generals of religious orders, and doctors. The Saint felt undismayed in presence of the imposing assembly, representing the terrestrial Jerusalem, for he was accustomed to treat with the Divine Majesty, and to walk in the presence of the most Blessed Trinity, and of the Blessed spirits. The case was widely different with a Spanish prelate, who was to undergo his examination the same day. He had been for several years a lecturer in canon

law, and was by no means deficient in learning. He had every reason, therefore, to expect success and honour; nevertheless, the presence of the Pope and his distinguished followers so appalled the poor man, that he dropped down as one dead. He was conveyed home, but nothing could restore him; the Pope sent his own physicians, together with an assurance that he was so well convinced of his competency to the bishopric, that he conferred it on him without examination; but the blow proved fatal, remedies were useless, and he died that very day. Now, as this untoward event occurred at the time when the examination of Francis was about to commence, no one could have been surprised had he been unnerved by it. The Lord, however, supported him, as He always does the humble, and his fortitude and presence of mind became the theme of general admiration.

THE EXAMINATION OF ST. FRANCIS OF SALES.

When the examination began, the Saint was on his knees before the Pope. After the general interrogatories, the examiner asked him which of the sciences he had studied. He replied, that he had studied laws and theology. He was next asked in which of the two he would wish to be examined. He left the decision to His Holiness, but was told that he was to decide it himself; to which he replied, that as this was the case, he would endeavour, with the aid of God, to answer upon questions of theology, as being the most suited to his vocation. Then the Pope, who was a very learned man, began the examination, which was afterwards carried on by the rest,

until thirty-five questions of the most sublime theology had been proposed to him. He answered them with such order, clearness, and modesty, as to win the esteem of every one. Amongst the rest, Bellarmin, who was not as yet a cardinal, asked him in what the vision of God formally consisted. Hereupon a long dispute ensued, Bellarmin contesting the Saint's arguments; but he maintained his point so ably, that his opponent at length concurred with him. The Pope, who had opened the examination, would likewise close it. He asked him, whether bishops could dispense from the irregularities incurred by occult sin. The Saint answered affirmatively, according as it was decided by the Twenty-fourth Session of the Council of Trent, *Cap. VI. de Reform.*; and removed some objections which the Pope made against this opinion; whereupon he asked him whether bishops could absolve from heresy? Francis again answered affirmatively, alleging that the Council had likewise so decreed in the chapter cited. Then His Holiness (who by a Bull had recently, for just reasons, revoked this power which the Council had conceded to the bishops) said to him, "Son, it is not thus that we understand it." The humble Saint bowed profoundly, and with the submission of a true and obedient son of the Church, replied, "Most Blessed Father, if your Holiness does not so understand it, neither will I thus understand it henceforward." The whole assembly applauded this act of humility, after having admired his eminent learning; whilst the Sovereign Pontiff, as if impatient to express his delight, rose from his seat, declaring he had never

experienced as much satisfaction from any of the examinations at which he had assisted. He warmly embraced him, bathing his cheeks with joyful tears; saying, as he gave him the kiss of peace, "Drink water out of thy own cistern, and the streams of thy own well. Let thy fountains be conveyed abroad, and in the streets divide thy waters."—Prov. v. 15. He then declared him co-adjutor to the bishop of Geneva, and bishop of Nicopolis; giving orders for expediting the requisite bulls. The cardinals and prelates, as well as his Holiness, loaded him with praise, so that the Saint, who had besought the Lord to put him to confusion if it were not His will that he should be a bishop, returned covered with glory, and esteemed by the whole Court of Rome, unquestionably the keenest in detecting merit, and the least likely to be misled in its decisions.

We may here remark, that when the Pontiff, moved as we may piously believe by the Holy Ghost, applied to him the above-cited text from the Proverbs, telling him to drink of the waters of his cistern, and from the spring of his well, ordering him to expand and overflow his waters, that so all places might thus be irrigated, his mission was not to be limited to a single diocese, like that of other bishops, but was a general and universal mission like that of the apostles; for the Pope sent him in the name of Jesus Christ to cast abroad his wisdom through the whole world, which is precisely to disperse the waters of wisdom, of which, like a fountain, he was full, in order that every one might drink at pleasure. And it would seem that the providence of God approved the commission of

His vicar, since He destined him in these latter ages to revive piety in every place and state. He was no private Saint—his labours benefitted many provinces, whilst his works, on all subjects, imparted his learning to every grade, and to all the sons of the Church. Having restored religion, he founded new congregations, reformed the clergy and monasteries, inspired piety and devotion in the people, and smoothed the path to heaven, truly making himself all to all that he might gain all to God.

We must not pass unnoticed two letters which the Saint wrote from Rome to his cousin the canon de Sales, in one of which he tells him that he was to be examined in three days, after which, as soon as he could find leisure, he would inform him whether God showed him justice by humbling him, or mercy by enabling him to answer satisfactorily, adding, that in either case it would become him to bless the Lord.—March 20, 1599. In the second, he tells him that God had not subjected him to confusion in his examination, although looking only at himself, he had expected it. He then adds, “I assure you, the Vicar Chizè quitted the consistory in higher spirits than myself. This friend is but too anxious to write to Savoy to give an account of the paternal goodness with which His Holiness has honoured me, and which obliges me more than ever to be an obedient son and an affectionate servant of the holy Roman Church. Whatever our friends may write of me, remember it is the characteristic of benevolence to exceed in speaking well of one’s friends, as it is of one’s enemies to exaggerate defects; in fine, what we are before God, that we are, and no more.—26th March, 1599.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE FRIENDSHIPS WHICH HE FORMED IN ROME—
HE RETURNS TO PIEDMONT BY WAY OF LORETO.

THE great achievements, as well as the eminent learning of Francis, were much discussed at the court of Rome, and led him into the society of the most distinguished personages there. He frequently visited the Cardinal di Medici, afterwards Pope under the name of Leo XI., who had so high an opinion of him, that after his election to the chair of St. Peter, he intended raising him to the cardinalate, as he certainly would have done, if death had not carried him off twenty seven days after his elevation. Cardinal Borghese, who likewise was Pope under the name of Paul V., contracted a close friendship with him, which proved of great advantage to the Saint; for, as affairs proceed very deliberately at Rome, this cardinal contrived to accelerate the business of Francis, as he wished. He inquired minutely into the recent events of the Chablais, and of the means likely to bring back Geneva; in all of which he found in the Saint as much to admire as to revere. Cardinal Baronius, to whom the Pope had referred him for consultation on several matters, was never weary of conversing with him, often going to his house to take him up in his own carriage. One day when the Cardinal invited him to sit by his side in one of the principal seats, the humble Francis,

modestly but firmly declined, and remained standing, saying that it became him to act as a scholar towards his master. "I will sit at the feet of Gamaliel." Baronius presented him with a copy of his *Annals* just then printed. Father Bellarmine frequently visited him, and was one of his most intimate friends, as we gather from their epistolary correspondence at a later period, after Bellarmine was honoured with the purple.

But of all his friends in Rome, none was more according to his own heart than Father Juvenal Ancina, a native of Fossano, and a priest of the Congregation of the Oratory. He was made bishop of Saluzzo at the same time that Francis was appointed to the coadjutorship of Geneva. Juvenal had been present at his examination, and when a few days later he visited the Saint, he congratulated him on his success. Francis acknowledged the compliment in terms dictated by solid piety and modesty, whereupon Ancina exclaimed, "Ah, my lord, I rejoice much more in knowing that you are truly humble than that you are truly learned."

It would be difficult to find two distinguished personages more congenial than Francis and Juvenal. Conformity of disposition, of manners, and of state, linked them intimately together, and this union which was maintained through life, is, as we may piously conjecture, continued in heaven. Both excelled in learning and piety, and they resembled each other in heart and mind. Solely intent on the functions of their ministry, they both possessed meekness, simplicity, a contempt of riches, and were both universally beloved. Such was their love for

the poor, that to relieve them they often deprived themselves of absolute necessities. It is no wonder, therefore, that this uniformity of character should have attached them to each other.

Francis became acquainted with several other fathers of the said congregation, particularly Thomas Bosio and Peter Consolino; he moreover frequently conversed familiarly with them all, and conceived such an esteem for the institute, that he afterwards introduced it into Thonon, as will be seen later.

We learn the sentiments of Francis on finding himself treated so kindly and respectfully in a city which is styled the capital of the Christian world, from the following confidential communication to one of his friends. "How happy do I deem those, who, like the great Cardinal Borromeo, know how to live disengaged from self! who seek true glory, yet who care not to acquire it excepting in Him who was crucified! This is to be truly great and generous. All the rest is nothing. The honour of the world is a continual fever, it has its intervals, and springing as it does from human causes, cannot be eternal. That vain applause which our feelings so eagerly covet, and which rob us of the good use we might make of it, is so frail that a slight shower suffices to wash it away. Pindar had acquired a vast poetical fame, but forfeited it by one bad verse that slipped from his pen. This should teach us not to seek glory except in the exercise of faith, hope, and charity; these are our richest ornaments here below, and charity will be our associate throughout eternity. In the meantime I beseech our Lord never to permit me to have any other honour than

this; all the rest is vanity, torment, and affliction of spirit."

Thus do the Saints speak and act. Hence Francis was neither flattered by the praises, nor enchanted by the delight of conversing with so many illustrious men. To satisfy the cravings of his insatiable zeal, he was wholly intent on procuring the briefs of which he stood in need; and having obtained them, he hastened to take leave of His Holiness, and receive his blessing. The Pope desired him to have immediate recourse to himself in all cases requiring the apostolical authority. He entrusted him with a brief for the Bishop of Geneva, in which he congratulated him on his admirable choice in the person of his coadjutor; and in another brief granted certain privileges tending to promote the conversion of the whole of the Chablais.

His Holiness was still further struck with admiration of Francis, when he found he did not so much as mention (still less ask for) the bulls for the coadjutorship, leaving it all to Providence. When, however, he was on the point of leaving Rome, he left the care of this business to a gentleman of Talloire, named Quoex, more that he might not appear disrespectful to the character of the episcopacy than anything else, and not to be negligent in an affair which every one declared to be the work of God, than from any desire to have them. Later, when he had occasion to write several times to Quoex on other business, he never once alluded to his coadjutorship bulls, which in effect were not received till a much later period. His friends reminded him that the delay was occasioned by the

non-payment of the usual fees to the Dataria, he having left no money in Rome for this purpose. But he replied, that having taken pains to treasure up a commodity quite different from money, he neither would nor could disburse any for such a purpose. He was told that his friends ought to do it for him. "No," said the Saint, "I will not be a bishop at the expense of my friends. If God intends me to be one, He will know how to arrange the expediting of the bulls, without my disbursing anything." And so it proved, for the Pope gave orders to have them drawn up and forwarded to him gratuitously.

The Saint left Rome in company with the Canon di Chizè, and returned by the way of Loreto, to visit the holy House. He was lodged by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, who honoured him highly, as did also the bishop, who showed them the manuscripts of the works he was composing. Here, for a second time, did he give vent to the holy affections of his heart, returning thanks to the great Mother of God for the conversion of so many heretics, renewing his vows, and consecrating the remainder of his days to the service of the Lord, who, having so recently delivered him from a dangerous illness, demanded, no doubt, in return, all the affections of his soul for Himself, and all His labours for His glory.

As he was examining the many treasures belonging to the Church, he said he wished His Holiness would devote some part of them in waging war against the enemies of the faith, and other works of piety; as we might easily believe our Blessed Lady would take delight in seeing the offerings made to her subserve to the liberation from the

hands of the Turks, of so many souls redeemed by the blood of her Son, yet left in such imminent danger of perishing; whereas, the treasures heaped up in the holy house, as they were, served to allure the corsairs, who would perhaps some day or other contrive to carry them off.

From Loreto he passed on to Bologna, where he was favourably received by the archbishop. At Milan he had the satisfaction of meeting with a copy of the life of St. Charles, (not then canonized) and on reaching Turin, he halted, to await the return of the nuncio, who was making the visitation of Piedmont, but was expected home in a few days. The Canon di Chizè, however, went forward, to give an account of their journey to the bishop.

Francis lost no time at Turin; he presented his Bulls to the Duke, requesting the execution of them. The petitions presented to His Holiness were according to the Duke's orders, all having been drawn up as was arranged before he left Thonon. He therefore expected that the Duke would look on this as his own work, and would consider the conversion of the Chablais as the most glorious event of his reign, and that, consequently, he would approve of the decisions of His Holiness. But it is no new thing in this world to see private interests succeed to the prejudice of such as are general. The Saint had to encounter powerful opposition, which was only overcome by the force of his reasons, adduced with all the charms of his persuasive gentleness, which nothing could withstand, as the following chapter will testify.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OPPOSITION OF THE KNIGHTS OF SS. MAURICE AND
LAZARUS.

To make the following details more intelligible, we must go back a little, and examine foregone events. When Catholicity was banished from the Chablais and the Bailiwicks by the people of Geneva and Berne, Gregory XIII., who foresaw that it might one day be restored, also foresaw that if the heretics did but gain possession of all the Church revenues, this would be a great obstacle to the said restoration. Accordingly, to obviate this inconvenience, he united the revenues with those of the military Order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus, the two orders, through the application of Duke Emmanuel Philibert, declared Grand-Master by the Pope, having become one, and resumed their former vigour and lustre. The measure was certainly prudent, as it was of importance that the property should be entrusted to those who could protect it against the enemies of the faith. This Order was distinguished in military annals, comprising within its ranks, at this very time, the flower of the Savoyard nobility, and had always been ready to oppose the violence of the Calvinists, who were thus held in check, and were fearful of drawing on themselves all the arms of Savoy and Piedmont.

The annexation of the Church revenues had materially enriched the Order, whilst the patronage of

the Duke, who conferred the honours of it, was proportionately increased.

It now became necessary to prevail on his highness to consent to the severance of the property of the abbeys, curacies, and priories of the Chablais, from the property of the Order, that it might be restored to its original proprietors. Francis had the courage to make the proposal to the Duke, and proved that this was necessary to the maintenance of the faith, and he so earnestly pressed the affair that before going to Rome he obtained what he wished. But when he thought all was settled, and that the Duke had only to give his orders to the senate, and to the chamber of peers, to verify, in the form usual north of the Alps, the Pontifical Bulls, the Commendatories of the order appealed to his highness, beseeching him to suspend the execution. Thus the provost seemed compelled either to give up an enterprise on which depended the preservation of religion in those provinces, or else to array against himself the enmity of all the nobility of Piedmont and Savoy. To this we may add, that the Duke, as Grand-Master, had his own private interest against permitting the execution of the bulls, being both judge, and a party concerned in the affair. It was a delicate conjuncture, for a person of Francis's character, who found himself entrusted with the interests of God, which he could not sustain without prejudicing the interests of his sovereign. Certainly there appeared but little chance of a satisfactory conclusion of the affair. How could he expect it, seeing that the measure must necessarily be approved by the royal council, some of the members of which were actually

commendatories of the Order, whilst others were connected with them either by the ties of consanguinity or of friendship? Many of the councillors, moreover, had no great affection for our Saint, who, against the plurality of voices, had at other times obtained what he desired from His Highness. It was probable, therefore, that many would be glad of the opportunity of opposing his design, which they resisted even from the first. Any one else would have been deterred by lesser difficulties than these; but these were not the only ones he had to contend against.

The opposition of the knights appeared well grounded, because the bull of Gregory XIII. expressly declared that in the event of the re-establishment of religion in the Chablais, the commendatories should not be bound to do more than allow the curates a sufficient maintenance, retaining the rest of the revenues for themselves. This stipulation had been partially carried into effect in 1598, therefore the knights affirmed that nothing further could be required of them. In consequence of the representations of the Saint, Clement VIII., regardless of this article, declared by his bull, that the effects made over to the Order by Pope Gregory, should be entirely restored to their original purposes, and that none of the ecclesiastical benefices should be retained by the knights. Contrary to the usual custom of the Roman court, none of the parties interested had been cited or heard; the Pope had been satisfied with the consent of the Duke, as Grand Master of the order. This was a fresh pretext for demur. Time was demanded in

order that they might lay their claims before the Pope, which would be the very thing to entangle the affair, and to prolong it, so that it would be impossible to see when it would come to an end.

Francis dreaded these delays, well knowing that to defer providing learned and pious pastors for the new-born congregations would be highly injurious to the interests of the faith; nor could he hope to procure such if they were only to receive what the knights would deem a sufficient income, all laws requiring that they who labour in the Lord's vineyards should be supported, and the apostle assigning a double portion to those who, labouring the most, deserve the best. He knew too that it would be difficult to find men who could or would undertake such a task solely for that reward which is to be expected from the Lord. How were they to be provided with books, ecclesiastical and household furniture, and bestow alms, if they were barely to receive a sufficiency? He was convinced that they would be unable to subsist, and that their ministerial functions must be interrupted to enable them to procure temporal necessities, in consequence of which they would abandon their posts as soon as they found a chance of improving their condition. Francis was indeed in a state of great perplexity, nor was the Duke less so. He could not deny having consented to the arrangements as negotiated at Rome, and having approved of the dismemberment of the revenues as necessary; moreover, his great regard for the Saint made him unwilling to abandon him after having encouraged him to undertake the affair. But princes have their own interests, and have many

things to look to, as much and perhaps more than other people. It was very probable that France would soon take up arms against him on the subject of the marquisate of Saluzzo, hence it would be imprudent to offend his nobles, whose aid he would then require. He imparted his difficulties to Francis, as well as the complaints of the knights, and desired him to furnish his reply to them in a couple of days. Finding himself exposed to the contradictions of men, the Saint had recourse to God, his ordinary refuge, and one which he had so repeatedly found efficacious. At the foot of the crucifix he filled his heart with light and strength, and then made his appearance in the royal audience chamber, where he presented his answer. He opened it with a species of apology, and of protest that he pretended to no right over the property mentioned in the bull, and that he had no other interest in it, than that of zeal for the augmentation of the kingdom of God; that it was far from his wish to take part against the knights, whom he honoured, looking on himself as the humble servant of all, and of their order. Nevertheless, in obedience to his Highness, he undertook to explain the intentions of the Pope. He showed that it became his Highness to support a measure obtained at his desire—a measure tending to the advantage of his subjects, and which he, Francis, as merely his minister, was bound to carry into effect—that the welfare of the people ought to be the first law; and as one soul and one Mass were worth more than all the patronage of the Duke, the bull of Pope Clement ought to have its full force, even though the knights had neither

been cited nor heard, because the bull of Pope Gregory, (their sole pretext of demur) was comprised within it. His Holiness had for most important reasons derogated from it—it belongs to bishops in consequence of faculties imparted to them by the Council of Trent, to assign suitable revenues to the parochial clergy, even by taking the fruits of the benefices, Pope Gregory's bull itself conferring this faculty—this dismemberment was absolutely necessary, and was scarcely sufficient for actual emergency. He concluded by entreating the Duke to give immediate effect to the bull.

The Duke desired the knights to give due consideration to this reply. Being unable to controvert it, they sought by procrastination to prevent the bull from being carried into effect, which was also the policy of his Highness, who hoped at a later period to be able to gratify Francis with safety to himself. In the meantime he ordered a handsome sum of money to be given him, to reimburse him for the heavy expenses he had incurred in the course of the mission; but the Saint, with his usual disinterestedness, not only refused to accept it, but willingly offered to continue the expense until the case should be adjudicated.

He clearly proved to his Highness that to delay the execution of the bull, was to ruin the good work already accomplished with so much difficulty. He likewise represented that his prolonged sojourn at Turin was detrimental to the affairs he had to transact beyond the mountains, and therefore entreated him to depute some official person who, together with the bishop, might be empowered to apply the revenues,

at least according to the intentions of the bull, and according to the necessities of the country; he concluded by telling his Highness that he left to his zeal and piety the arrangements necessary for the foundation of a college for the Jesuits in Thonon, as had been already determined.

At length, overcome by his own piety, as much as by the solicitations of the Saint, the Duke gave orders that letters patent should be expedited, declaratory of his will that the bull should be carried into effect; and he deputed Charles de Rochette, first president of the senate of Savoy, and the Chevalier Joseph de Ruffia, grand-prior of the province of Piedmont, to take the necessary steps in concert with the bishop. Having gained the cause, which truly was the cause of God, Francis took leave of the Duke, and after dispatching some other affairs with the nuncio, he set off to Chambery, where the bull was submitted to, and passed the senate; from thence he proceeded to Annecy, where he was welcomed by the bishop and by all the clergy, with the esteem and affection due to his merits and his labours.

He had obtained from the nuncio an exemption from the payment of the tithes for the Bishop of Geneva; that theologians might enjoy the benefit of prebends, and that a preacher should be established at Evian on the revenues of a prebend of the abbey of Abondance, as had formerly been the case, and as was now settled by the negociation committed to the bishop by the Pope. And here we see the foresight of Francis, to whom was due the support as

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well as the re-establishment of the faith in the Chablais, and which cost him an incalculable amount of toil and application.

Whilst he was sedulously occupied in carrying out the intentions of the bull and in restoring parishes, he heard that his Highness was just arrived in Chambery, on his road to France, where he hoped to come to terms with the king on the subject of the marquisate of Saluzzo. The Saint immediately started thither, and made fresh requests in favour of religion; these were so reasonable that the prince acceded to them. They compelled the purchasers of church property to restore what they possessed, or had acquired from the heretics in the first invasion, because, as he said, the conversion of the Chablais had rendered these alienations completely invalid. The interests of God and of religion were to be opposed by the interests of those who would suffer by these restitutions; to this may be added the bad faith of the purchasers, for how could they acquire this property from those whose only right was that of might? The less guilty in this respect were indemnified, the Saint suggesting various lawful and just measures for this purpose. He thus recovered the priory of Thonon and Drallians, the deanery of Anthy, the curacy of Armoy, and some other benefices.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FOUNDATION OF THE HOLY HOUSE AT THONON.

THE Saint's design of transferring the cathedral of Geneva from Annecy to Thonon being defeated, he was not disturbed on this account, though he knew his neophytes would suffer in consequence. But he immediately turned his mind to another great work of piety—the foundation of a college; the plan was approved and seconded by the Duke, the Bishop, and Fathers Cherubin and St. Esprit, the associates of our Saint.

One of the greatest benefits resulting from the indefatigable zeal of St. Francis of Sales, was the foundation of the Holy House at Thonon, (as this college was called,) a foundation due as much to his solicitude, as to the munificence and piety of Charles Emmanuel.

The holy man perceived the convenience of the city of Geneva, where the concourse of strangers was great, and the neighbourhood could not well be deprived of it and its commerce, without being driven back on Lausanne, the second stronghold of apostasy. There was no other place throughout the country where youth could go to study the sciences, the liberal arts, or mechanics, while residence there exposed them to the loss of faith; he saw, moreover, that amongst the Catholics there was no retreat for the new converts, whose property was

confiscated by the Calvinists; those Catholics, on the contrary, who embraced Calvinism, at once found both riches and wives in Geneva, advantages which enticed many to renounce their faith. He determined, then, to found a house in Thonon, where all the arts and sciences should be taught, and where those who abjured heresy could be trained and educated on Catholic principles, and which would be most useful to souls, especially if every one contributed thereto according to his means. He proposed his plan to his companions and to the bishop, who encouraged him to solicit the approval and concurrence of the prince, who at once consented to the proposal, and was most anxious to see it carried into effect. Nothing more was needed but the authorization of the Pope, who remitted the affair to Cardinal di Giuri, and he pursued it with great ardour. At length all delays and difficulties attendant on such matters in the court of Rome, were removed, and Clement VIII. expedited a bull, dated 13th September, 1599, whereby the Holy House was instituted. In it it was decreed that the house should be governed by a prefect and seven secular priests, who should be obliged to observe the rules of the Roman Fathers of the Oratory, and granted to the college the privileges, immunities, and favours enjoyed by all other universities, especially those of Bologna and Perugia. That the house might not be unprovided with necessary sustenance, to the college funds were added three conventual priories, namely, of San Joyre, of Nantua, and of Contamina, which were then in commendam; although this union was not to take place till after the death of the actual possessors.

It was afterwards taken under the protection of the Holy See, and of one of the cardinals of the Roman Church, namely, Baronius, whilst Francis, who was the author of the foundation, was named prefect; he, together with other ecclesiastics, was empowered to draw up such statutes as he deemed expedient, and to change them as times and circumstances should require. In fine, plenary indulgences were granted to all who should enter to live in that house, on the day of their entrance, or for visiting the church on the festival dedicated to our Blessed Lady.

Having received this bull, Francis began to form the house; he gave the church of St. Hyppolitus to the college, changing its title into that of "Our Lady of Compassion," and assigned the Church of St. Augustin, dependant on the said priory of St. Hyppolitus, to the fathers of the Society of Jesus. The prince contributed twelve thousand scudi towards the building, and a gentleman, a recent convert, gave eight thousand. Then, with the participation of the bishop, (without whose consent he never did anything,) of the Archbishop of Vienne, of the abbot of Abondance, of some canons of the cathedral of Bergara, knights of SS. Maurice and Lazarus, of the Capuchin fathers, and of some other missionary companions, he drew up the statutes, endeavouring to accommodate them to those of the Oratory, yet changing many things to meet the different object for which the new college was intended.

The rules are so prudent, that by observing them, this little congregation has hitherto maintained its

credit, notwithstanding all the opposition of the malevolent. There are a prefect and a rector who are perpetual. A sacristan and treasurer are elected, and are changed from time to time. The rector has the charge of souls. But the college is likewise governed by two other religious communities, viz., the Capuchins and the regular clerics of St. Paul, who replaced the Jesuits. Thanks to these measures, the profound erudition and the ardent zeal for the conversion of heretics, which so peculiarly distinguished the apostle of the Chablais, his piety, his sweetness, his charity to the poor, have long survived him.

Under the wise direction of these three bodies, which form but one, and have but one heart, the house of the arts still flourishes, though originally founded chiefly for the sake of the new converts, who were educated in piety, as well as formed to some useful profession. This preference is still given to neophytes, who wear a purple dress, and are provided with all necessities. They are admitted from the age of nine to twenty, and number from fifteen to twenty individuals of either sex. There are separate apartments appropriated to different manufactures taught by competent masters, according to each one's capacity; the object being to train them to utility as well as piety.

This little community was no sooner erected than it was joined by the Capuchin fathers, whose labours so materially assisted St. Francis of Sales in bringing back the stray sheep to the fold of Jesus Christ. Their salutary instructions both in the pulpit and

the confessional were now devoted to the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of souls.

As the harvest at this period was abundant, it became necessary to call in additional labourers, and to procure professors to teach the Belles Lettres and sciences in the new college of Thonon, endowed with regal munificence by the Duke. The Jesuits were called, but they withdrew, I know not for what cause, and then St. Francis exerted himself and succeeded in procuring some of the Barnabite fathers. Their church is one of the most magnificent, and the college one of the best regulated that we know of. Perfectly fulfilling the duties of faithful ministers, they are solely occupied in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls. They teach scholastic and moral theology, philosophy, rhetoric, and humanities. Three paid regents instruct the youths in the principles of grammar in three different classes. They moreover officiate in their church in the most edifying manner, and maintain four missionaries, who, by appointment of the Bishop of Geneva, spend six months of the year in giving missions through the various parishes of the province, remaining at their own expense five or six weeks in each. They are no encumbrance to the people, accepting no presents and no alms for Masses. Not content with proclaiming the word of God three times a day, they likewise endeavour to relieve the miseries of the people, by distributing abundant alms. From all this we may infer how great an advantage has been conferred in this royal foundation, by means of which the glory of God is propagated, whilst the faithful are greatly edified.

Through the protection of the Saint, now in heaven, we trust that this work, which owes its origin to his solicitude whilst on earth, may be perpetual.

CHAPTER XXXVI. AND XXXVII.

CONTINUED LABOURS OF ST. FRANCIS.—WAR IN SAVOY.

WHILST Francis was continuing his labours, he received the congratulations of all good people, who rejoiced in the prospect of having him for their pastor; nor was the bishop ever tired of reperusing the brief sent him by the Pope. He had several copies taken, for it contained high commendation of the Saint, as well as of his own choice of him for a coadjutor. As Hilarion Furier, one of the bishop's chaplains, was copying it, the prelate said to him, somewhat prophetically, "Take notice of what you see him do, because the day will come when you will have to answer juridically on these matters;" and so it happened when the cause of the Saint's canonization was introduced.

Just at this time we read of an incident deemed miraculous, though it could not much raise him in the opinion of the people, for they already looked upon him as a saint. He overheard a lady in an adjoining house shrieking under the pains of parturition, and whose life was in danger. He sent his brother, John Francis, with a girdle which he had brought from Loreto, desiring that it should be applied to

the sufferer. No sooner was this done by the matrons who assisted her, than she was immediately delivered, to the astonishment of her friends, who attributed it to the prayers of the Saint; for he had remained in deep recollection and prayer during the time she was in danger.

Equally honourable to him were two letters written by Cardinal Aldobrandini, the Pope's nephew, who was commissioned by his uncle to attend to the affairs of the bishopric; they were transmitted through the nuncio at Turin, and were to the following effect. In the first, he says, "The remedy proposed by the provost of the church of Geneva, to appease the conscience of the people of Thonon on the subject of usury, is not unsatisfactory to our Holy Father. He says that it will be expedient to take advantage of some solemn festival, to which an indulgence is annexed, and exhort the people mutually to forgive and remit the usuries of which they may have been guilty amongst each other, and to do this as a free donative, the confessors using their best endeavours to promote this reciprocal remission. Now this plan is gratifying to His Holiness, who confers all power and authority for carrying it into effect. This and other letters will satisfy the desires and ardent zeal of the provost, who, I can assure you, is highly commended by His Holiness." In the second we read, "Our Holy Father finds from the letters of the coadjutor of Geneva, that it is necessary to validate many marriages contracted by the people of Thonon, within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity; wherefore, opening the bosom of his mercy and clemency

for the salvation of these souls, he concedes and confers, by these letters which he orders me to write, all due authority upon him, to take the necessary expedients."

In consequence of these two letters, the nuncio wrote and told him that he had full power to remedy the disorders arising from these two cases; conceding as sub-delegate, the said power and authority. He availed himself of these powers, to the benefit and consolation of many souls, who had been entangled in a miserable intricacy, from which they saw no means of escape.

For the complete accomplishment of the pontifical bull, and of the patents of his Highness, which had been admitted by the senate and the chamber of peers in Savoy, the bishop called a synod, citing all to appear at it who had any claim to the benefices of the Chablais, and to give an account of such claims; but so few made their appearance, that the bishop at the suggestion of his holy coadjutor, decided on repairing to Thonon for the better arrangement of the affair; they set out, therefore, accompanied by the vicar-general, Chizè, D'Angeville the dean, and some others, including De Rochette, the president, deputed by the Duke, as we have already said.

The Saint pressed the prompt execution of the measure, repeatedly reminding them, that since the sheep were brought back to the fold, it was but just to provide for the pastors who were to watch over them.

Whilst they were concerting measures, and hoping to bring them to a speedy conclusion, war broke

out in Savoy, and obliged them all to return to their respective residences. The new converts would have been seriously injured by this circumstance, if the Saint with his usual zeal and vigilance, had not exerted himself in order to avert the evil consequences of it.

Things can never be so well regulated in this world, as not to be liable to the shocks of contradiction, as St. Francis of Sales fully experienced in the year 1600. Thirty-five curacies were filled up, churches were repaired, and religion triumphant had given a new aspect to the Chablais, insomuch that the people being now undeceived, began to do of their own free will, what before had merely been done under the influence of human respect; but all at once, heresy which is ever ready to seize any opportunity favourable to its designs, was on the point of re-entering this fair province in the wake of the war declared by Henry, king of France, against Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, for the recovery of the marquisate of Saluzzo.

Taking advantage of the civil and religious war which distracted France during the reign of Henry III., the Duke of Savoy took possession of the marquisate, on the plea of some ancient claim, as well as to prevent the heretics from the conquest of it, for, once in their power, it would have been a key to open to them the door of Italy. When Henry IV. ascended the French throne, he insisted on the restoration of the marquisate, whilst the Duke, on his part, resolved to maintain his conquest. This point could not be adjusted at the treaty of Ver-

vins, and had been remitted to the arbitration of the Pope.

The Duke suspected that the Pope was leaping to the side of France, and manifested his distrust in a manner offensive to His Holiness, who therefore refused to arbitrate, and left the parties to settle their differences as best they could. The Duke went in person to meet the king, who received him with every demonstration of esteem and respect, but to all his commendations on the high merits of the prince, he added these words, "But he retains my marquisate." The Duke was convinced therefore that he had no time to lose, as his Majesty was already preparing arms against him, and he hastily recrossed the Alps to raise his own troops, and be in readiness for the encounter.

Lesdiguières followed him almost immediately, whilst the Marshal de Biron entered Bresse. Two provinces were quickly subjected to the king, owing to the treachery of some, and the cowardice of others entrusted with the protection of the passes. The king himself entered the provinces of Faussigny and the Chablais, which not even thought of defending themselves. As he approached Geneva, the Protestants there sent to offer their troops to aid him towards the conquest of the whole country. His Majesty accepted the offer—the Calvinists eagerly re-entered the Chablais to wreak their vengeance on the Catholics, though under the pretence of seconding France. We may easily imagine how religion was threatened; the Duke's troops being shut up in the towns, and the country left to the mercy of the heretics. The priests were driven away, and bene-

fices were seized by the Calvinists, whilst the neophytes, still weak in the faith, could hardly be expected to withstand such a persecution.

Though Francis had more reason than any one else to dread the heretics who hated him to the very death, he resolved to stand forward against them, as a wall to the house of Israel. His first thought was to write to Cardinal Joyeuse, who had great power in France; and then, with consent of the bishop, to repair to Grenoble, and procure letters of recommendation from the Duke of Nemours to the king, beseeching him not to allow the Calvinists to preach in the Chablais, or in any way innovate the existing position of religion there. Having obtained the letters, he returned to Annecy, and entered the town by one gate as the king was entering it by another. He drew up several memorials to present to his Majesty, together with the letters from the Duke of Nemours; they were presented by the Bishop of Grenoble, who was received by the king with all the courtesy usually shown by him to persons of merit, especially prelates. He assured the bishop that for the love of God and the Church, and also from respect to himself, (for he knew he had ever faithfully discharged his pastoral duties,) he would not permit anything to be done to the prejudice of religion in the Chablais. Words worthy of his most Christian Majesty, and words which restored the good bishop's courage.

No sooner had the king quitted Annecy, than a report reached the town, that the property and benefices possessed by the order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus, had been confiscated for the benefit of the

king. His Lieutenant-General Monglan had given this order at the suggestion of the heretics, whose errors he had embraced. So great an evil as this required a prompt remedy, which no one but Francis was able to effect. His presence only could console and animate the neophytes, and recall the dispersed pastors. He started for the Chablais, and had not walked more than an hour, when he was taken prisoner by the soldiers, who suspected from his appearance that they had picked up a rich prey; they accordingly led him to the Seigneur de Vitry. In this event man had one design and Almighty God had another. When de Vitry found out who he was, he seemed almost ready to worship his prisoner; he gazed on the servant of God with veneration, and listened to him with pleasure, noticing that he breathed an air of sanctity. He undertook to carry the king's intentions into effect, giving precise orders that their houses should be restored to the parish priests, as well as their property, and thus the heretics were humbled. De Vitry desired the captain of the king's guards, then serving under him, to present the holy man to the king, who was then in Chambéry, assuring him that the monarch would welcome and favour him, as his merits deserved; but the Saint gratefully declined the offer, saying that though he had the highest veneration for so great a king, he did not think he ought to visit him; that at present such a step would expose him to censure, but at another time he would be glad of the honour. He was now in arms against the Duke of Savoy, whose subject Francis was. It was to be hoped that peace would soon be restored, and then

it would indeed be gratifying to him to pay his respects to his Majesty. De Vitry admired the prudence and modesty of the Saint, praising in a Savoyard what, in similar circumstances, he would be glad to notice in the subjects of the king. He took leave of Francis with regret, and deemed himself fortunate in making acquaintance with a man so accomplished and so well adorned with every virtue.

Taking advantage of the Marquis de Vitry's good will, he obtained from him the requisite patents, and then set out to make the general visitation of the diocese of Geneva, more especially of the parishes of the Chablais; and he succeeded so well, notwithstanding the war, that he everywhere restored order, appointed missionaries to counteract the designs of the Calvinists, and re-established all the parish priests.

He went first to Allinges, and it was astonishing to see with what courtesy he was received by General Monglan, although a heretic, who then was in command of the fortress. Letters from de Vitry and the bishop, informed him of the rank and merit of the holy man. Not only did he readily comply with the will and orders of the king, but he likewise approved and commended them. At the request of the Saint he granted safe-conducts to the curates and other priests; thus showing the esteem he entertained for so illustrious a personage; he moreover restored the sequestrations, and forbade the ministers who accompanied the troops from disseminating their doctrines among the people.

On quitting Allinges, Francis gave himself up to

labours and journeys for the advantage of religion; ever on the move, recalling and encouraging the clergy, dispersed and intimidated by the war. He raised the spirits of the inmates of the Holy House, worked wonders everywhere for the support of religion assailed in the very provinces where he had planted it with so much toil. It was looked upon as quite miraculous that this war proved of so little advantage to the heretics, and under God, the glory of this was ascribed to St. Francis. It must, however, be admitted that the king likewise contributed thereto; he separated his interests from those of God, and would not allow religion to be interfered with, insisting on its being maintained in the same state as it was previous to the war; he resisted the solicitations of the Calvinists, who fought in great numbers under his banner, nor would he on any account consent to the re-establishment of their errors.

Francis being recalled by his bishop, repaired to Annecy towards the end of October, and put the finishing stroke to the affairs of the Chablais, uniting some of the smaller parishes, which singly were not able to support a curate, assigning competent revenues to them all. He made arrangements with the owners of the benefices, who were bound to furnish the parochial clergy with a moderate competency.

Thus, after infinite toil, dangers, sufferings, vigils, anxieties and journeys, the Catholic faith was restored by St. Francis of Sales in the finest provinces of the kingdom of the Allobroges, so that with good reason he is styled the apostle of that country.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PEACE RESTORED. HE PREACHES THE LENT AT ANNECY. DEATH OF HIS FATHER—A SHORT SKETCH OF HIM.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, so fruitful in remarkable events, these things took place at Annecy, and Cardinal Aldobrandini endeavoured to make peace between the king and the Duke. The successes of the former alarmed the whole of Italy; all the princes were anxious that the banners of the fortunate king should be carried to some more distant locality, and that a war which threatened the ruin of their states should be brought to a close. Our Lord was pleased to bless the mediation of the Legate Aldobrandini; peace was concluded and proclaimed at Lyons on the 17th January, 1601. The king ceded the marquisate of Saluzzo to the Duke, and the Duke surrendered Bresse and his other territories beyond the Rhone as far as Geneva to the king, so that the arrangement was advantageous to both parties; nevertheless, it was said that the king had bargained like a merchant, and the Duke like a prince; because the marquisate, considered in itself only, was inferior in value to the countries ceded by his Highness; but this treaty quite shut the king out of Italy, and rendered the Duke wholly independent of France. Peace having restored tranquillity and good order

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in Savoy, Francis was requested by the syndicate to preach the Lent at Annecy. The people, who had so long loved him, eagerly desired to behold him again in their pulpit, having been deprived of his sermons during his missions in the Chablais. Although after such inconceivable fatigues, he must have stood in need of repose, his affection for the city would not allow him to refuse what was so earnestly solicited. In imitation of our divine Saviour and of the Baptist, he prepared himself for preaching by a retreat, in which he disciplined himself by prayer and study; but his retirement was interrupted by the intelligence of the dangerous illness of his father the Count of Sales; the alarm of his family was aggravated by the advanced age of the invalid. Francis immediately hastened to Sales, and found him in evident danger; the presence of his son highly consoled him, for from the date of his elevation to the priesthood, and from respect to his well-known virtue, he looked up to him as a father. He made his general confession to the Saint, received the Viaticum from him, and all the assistance needed to a happy death; he was never weary of hearing him discourse on spiritual things. Night and day was Francis at the bedside of his dying father, and though his heart was penetrated with the deepest grief, he had sufficient self-command to be able to console and support his sorrowing mother and the rest of the family.

Almighty God, however, spared him the most bitter drop of grief, by so disposing things that he should not be present at his father's death. The invalid appeared to rally, and his physicians affirmed

that, if he did not quite recover, at all events Francis might safely leave him during Lent. Relying on the opinion of the doctors, the Saint, with his father's full consent, returned to Annecy, and began his Lenten sermons with his accustomed ardour and success. God blessed his apostolic labours. Not only did his hearers frequently apply to him the words of the Jews in allusion to our Saviour, "He speaketh as no man hath ever spoken;" they were likewise moved to repentance, and would privately repair to him and restore usuries, lay aside animosities and confess their sins, so that the writers of the time tell us that the city of Annecy resembled a well-regulated religious house.

On the 5th of April, when the Saint was on the point of entering the pulpit to preach on the gospel of Lazarus dead and raised to life, news was brought him of his father's death, and of the affliction of the bereaved mother and family, who were anxiously awaiting his arrival at home, both for their own consolation, and that he might give the necessary directions for the funeral, and so forth. This painful intelligence was more than sufficient to disturb any other heart in a conjuncture when he stood in need of all his presence of mind. He loved his father with all the affection of a dutiful son, and was loved by him more than any of his other children; and yet, after recollecting himself for a moment, and offering the sacrifice of one so well loved, he made an act of resignation to Divine Justice, (which condemns all mankind to die,) adored God who lives for ever and ever, and then had the courage to enter the pulpit, preaching with so much calm zeal, that no

one had an idea of his grief, until at the close of his discourse he requested the prayers of his audience for the dear departed, and their consent for him to go and pay the last honours where they were so justly due.

Francis was not one of those who parade their firmness and glory in being insensible to the dictates of nature; nevertheless, every one admired his fortitude in such trying and, for the moment, unlooked-for circumstances; but still greater was their surprise and admiration when, having devoted the remainder of Friday and the following day to his duties at home, they saw him enter the pulpit on Sunday, so that no sermon was omitted in consequence of his afflicting loss, for Saturday was always a free day.

He proved the truth of the apostle's words, that the just man lives by faith, for faith supported him under all the trials of this life; and though it did not prevent him from feeling the stroke, at least it imparted such fortitude as to save him from disquietude of soul. To the generality of mankind, this seems insensibility, but it is virtue; it seems hard-heartedness, but it is respectful submission to God's orders. The sterling worth of the Count of Sales made him beloved by all; his loss therefore must have been a poignant grief to his affectionate son, but the will of God sweetens every bitter, and to His will the will of Francis was ever inseparably united. The reader will tolerate a short digression in the following slight sketch of the father of our illustrious Saint.

Francis, Lord of Sales, was the son of the third

Lord John, and of Claudina of Charensonay. He was born in the year 1522, precisely one hundred years before the death of his son. His earlier years were devoted to study, and he was appointed page to the prince of Luxembourg, Count of Martigues, who possessed many lands in Savoy. At this court he acquired the noble accomplishments befitting his rank, and received honourable appointments from his patron. He afterwards served his most Christian Majesty in the cavalry of the Duke d'Estamps, and distinguished himself at the sieges of Disier and Landrecy, as well as on other occasions, for which he was honourably rewarded. Being invited to serve the Duke of Nemours, he frequented the French court, and proved himself an able diplomatist in various embassies entrusted to him. On returning to his own country, he married Frances de Sionas, a damsel of distinguished rank, beauty, and virtue; he having completed the fortieth year of his age. Later than this, he gave proofs of his valour and prudence, and was accordingly admitted to the counsels of his sovereign. In 1565 he appeared at the head of the nobility of the Genevese and Faussigny, in the city of Annecy, when James of Savoy, Duke of Nemours, held the states-general of the country, and showed his experience and wisdom in unravelling the most intricate affairs, drawing upon himself the commendation of the prince and the applause of all. By command of Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, he entered Annecy, and rescued it from fire and sword, delivering it from the troops of Count Raconis, who were bent on its destruction. Laden with years and merits, and

blessed with a numerous progeny, he sought repose in his castle of Sales. He was endowed with an elevated mind and solid judgment, he was courageous in enterprise, moderate at table, sparing of his words, courteous in manner, eloquent in discourse, the enemy of vain display, and he was respected by his equals and beloved by all. He was remarkable for his liberality to those who required it, and most charitable to the poor, administering justice to all under him with unswerving rectitude.

But there was nothing in which he more signalled himself than in his love for the Catholic religion. Such was his contempt for heresy, that he used to say nothing should induce him to embrace a religion which he had seen born, alluding to Calvinism, which he said was his junior by twelve years. We have already mentioned his kindness towards converts and poor Catholic families. He communicated at least once a month, a most unusual thing in those days, and during his last illness received holy communion three times. From the first year of his son's ordination, he placed himself under his direction, to the great advantage of his soul. When he found himself at the point of death, he summoned all his children then at Sales, and like the ancient patriarchs, gave suitable advice to each one and his blessing to all, constituting Francis Coadjutor of Geneva, their eldest brother, to be their father in his stead, and enjoined them to obey him, remitting the care of his family to his consort the Lady of Sales. He calmly and holily expired at the age of seventy-eight, fortified with all the rites of the Church, with the crucifix in his hand, and

assisted by the vicar of Thorens. He was buried with all due honour in the parish church of Thorens, followed to the grave by his children, relatives, dependants, a vast concourse of the nobility, and what is still more, by multitudes of poor who received an abundant alms both of food and clothing on the occasion. The Dominican fathers from Annecy assisted at the solemnity. From the year 1469 they have been under the obligation of accompanying the Counts of Sales to the tomb.

He and Frances de Sionas his wife had thirteen children, seven sons and six daughters, of whom only eight survived their infancy. Francis, the first born, has been the glory of the house of Sales, dear to God and man; and if the Church triumphant received him into glory, the Church militant venerates him as one of her greatest saints.

Gallois, a man of great piety and prudence, married, and had seven children, who left no issue. He died young, in the arms of the holy bishop, who was his director. Amongst his children, Joseph deserves mention; he was a religious of the order called Barnabites, and expired just after celebrating Mass at the altar of his saintly uncle, recently canonized, saying, like the holy old Simeon, "Now will I depart in peace," as if he had only waited for this happiness. On descending from the altar, he went to his bed, asked for and received Extreme Unction, and then calmly resigned his soul to God.

Lewis was much honoured by his sovereign, and on many occasions signalized his piety towards God, his fidelity to his prince, his charity to the poor, his

prudence and his valour. He was tenderly loved by his saintly brother, whom he honoured as a father. He was twice married and had several children, one of whom was Charles Augustus, afterwards prince-bishop of Geneva. The edifying life of Count Lewis of Sales was given to the public by the Canon d'Anteville.

John Francis was the successor of our Saint in the episcopal chair, and the worthy imitator of his virtues, as will be seen elsewhere.

Gasparda was married to the daughter of the Lord of Cornillon; she was one of her holy brother's dearest spiritual daughters; their correspondence proves that she was a lady of great piety and prayer, who knew how to use the world as if she used it not. It was in one of his letters to her, that he said we ought to live in this world with our minds raised to heaven, remembering that in a short time our bodies will be in the grave.

Bernard, Baron of Sales and Thorens, was by the Saint's management declared head of the family, and married to one of the daughters of the Baron de Chantal. The Bishop of Bellay has left us a description of the virtues of this admirable couple, under the names of Chrisanto and Daria.

Janus de Sales was a knight of the order of St. John of Malta, field-marshal and commander-in-chief of the cavalry of Savoy. He was appointed governor of Nizza, in which town he introduced the Visitation Order founded by his brother. His greatest delight was converse with the religious on God and on pious subjects. He died in this distinguished post, leaving behind him a high opinion of

his virtue and valour. His last words were, "O how good and joyful a thing it is that brethren should dwell together in union!" He was the last but one of the brothers, who went (as his edifying life gives reason to believe) to be united with the rest for a blissful eternity.

Joanna was the youngest of the family, and was confided to the care of the Baroness de Chantal, with whom she died, to the great regret of that lady, as well as of her mother and of the holy bishop. Such were the brothers and sisters of our Saint.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

EXPULSION OF THE HERETICAL ASSAILANTS FROM THE CHABLAIS. FRANCIS GOES TO PARIS.

THE saints find their repose in labour. Toil succeeds toil like the links of a chain, rendering their lives admirable, and their example worthy of our imitation. Francis is but another illustration of this assertion. No sooner had he completed his Lenten course than he anxiously hastened to the Chablais. He heard that the heretics had entered the province in arms, accompanied by some other ministers, intending to re-establish them there. They easily drove away the curates who had no protection or assistance. The Saint saw that nothing but force could keep them down, since treaties of peace did not bind them. He repaired to Allinges, and consulted the governor, Baron de Brotte, who despatched

a regiment of soldiers, and these speedily dislodged the intruders from two villages in which they had fortified themselves. Thus did corporal arms punish those who had so often been discomfited by the spiritual weapons of the Saint, though no reasoning could divest them of their obduracy. The parish priests were then recalled, and his sermons confirmed several parishes in the faith.

Having adjusted this affair, he next turned his thoughts towards Gex, one of the three Bailiwicks, where the faith had hitherto made little progress. Being on the other side of the Rhone, it was more difficult of access, and was in the more immediate vicinity of Geneva; the Calvinist ministers had consequently greater influence there. As the country had changed its sovereign, having been recently ceded to France, Francis had no longer the same authority as when it belonged to Savoy, although it still formed part of his diocese. With deep regret did the holy man reflect on the thirty-five parishes of which the Bailiwick is composed, thus left in error, or at least in danger of falling into it, well knowing at the same time that he could not extend his mission thither without the protection of the king. He consulted his bishop on the project he had formed of going to France, in order to secure to himself the liberty of labouring in the conversion of his diocesans. The prelate, who with little strength to labour, had great zeal for the propagation of the faith, approved the plan, though very reluctant to lose his services and help towards the discharge of his pastoral functions. To ensure all due respect for his coadjutor when in Paris, he convoked a general

assembly of the clergy of his diocese, in order that he might appear as the deputy for the whole of the clergy of Geneva.

All things being prepared, he was provided with the necessary patents of the deputation, and judging that it was advisable to secure patronage at the court of France, he passed through Burgundy and obtained letters of introduction from the Baron de Luz. His friends wished him to be consecrated before he set out, that he might appear in the costume of the prelacy; but the Saint humbly replied that as long as Monsignor Granier lived, he would neither change his position in the Church nor the colour of his clothes. He embarked to cross the Saonne, against the advice of every one, for the river was then fearfully rapid and much swollen by long-continued rain. The vessel was, in truth, in great danger of sinking, its preservation was looked upon as miraculous by the president Faber and his son René, who with some others were the travelling companions of our Saint, many, indeed, attributed it to the prayers and confidence of the holy man, who, when all the rest were in consternation, calmly assured them that no accident would befall them, although they found it difficult to reach the opposite shore. They succeeded in accomplishing this at the very time when Francis was on his knees absorbed in prayer. And whilst they, surrounding him, declared that God had saved many sinners for the sake of one just man, he endeavoured to change the thought, by telling them that their good fortune was wholly due to the goodness of God, in whom it behoved us always to confide, but more

especially when travelling with a view to the promotion of His glory.

He was welcomed to Dijon by his intimate friend the Baron de Luz, who treated him with great honour, in consequence of which he was visited by the most distinguished members of the parliament and city. Almighty God used this opportunity of making him known, and this contributed materially at a later period to the profit of many souls, to the foundation of the order of the Visitation, and to the glory of God; for being afterwards invited to Dijon by its inhabitants, whose esteem he had gained, he effected vast projects, as will be detailed in due time.

Having obtained letters of recommendation from the Baron, who had many friends at court, and who stood high in the good graces of the king, he set out for Paris. His influence no doubt disposed both the sovereign and the court to favour the coadjutor of Geneva, of whom the Baron's letters spoke in the most advantageous terms. As soon as his Majesty had read them, he gave him such unequivocal proofs of his esteem, as to awaken the jealousy of many, who endeavoured to ruin him, and would have succeeded had the prince been a less clear-sighted man, or had the virtues of the Saint been of a less sublime character; but, being what he was, he stood beyond the reach of suspicion in the mind of him whom base insinuations were intended to mislead.

On his arrival at Paris, although he placed great reliance on the recommendations of the Baron, he would nevertheless avail himself of the intervention

of the Pope's nuncio, more especially as the affairs he had to treat upon were those of religion. The Bishop of Camerino was then acting as nuncio; the Saint had become acquainted with him at Rome; he therefore informed him of the motive of his journey to Paris, and requested his interest with the king and his ministers. Remembering how highly the coadjutor of Geneva was esteemed at the court of Rome, he promised him his assistance, and offered to accompany him to the royal presence. The two accordingly went together, when Francis was received by the king with all the affability that won for him the respect of foreigners, as well as the devoted affection of his own subjects. The Saint presented his letters from the bishop and from the Baron de Luz, and made an eloquent harangue on the subject of his mission. His noble bearing pleased his Majesty, and raised him in the opinion of the courtiers. The king condescendingly replied that he had not forgotten all the good he had heard of him in Savoy, and assured him that justice should be administered; he then sent him to Villeroy, the secretary of state.

At this epoch the Calvinists were all powerful in France; the liberty of publicly professing their so-called reform, granted by the edict of Nantes, had perverted many. Great part of the nobility was Calvinist, filling high charges and offices, whilst the court swarmed with heretics. The king himself, though sincerely converted, had been brought up in that creed, and favoured it much for the sake of the many belonging to it, who had signalized themselves in his service, and their influence counterbalanced

that of the Catholics, so that the demands of Francis were strongly opposed.

He had scarcely opened the subject to Villeroi, than he rejected his proposals, warmly contesting his arguments. But the Saint was not to be daunted so easily; he pleaded his cause with such energy, that at length the secretary asked him to commit his views and wishes to paper, that he might examine them at leisure. He accordingly drew up and presented his memorial, which contained two fundamental articles. The first regarded the re-establishment of Catholicity in that province where the heretics would not permit liberty of conscience to Catholics, a severity not tolerated in any other part of the kingdom. The second was to compel unjust possessors to restore ecclesiastical property to its lawful owners, suggesting various means to facilitate the restitutions, with the least inconvenience to those who had to surrender them. The secretary disputed both articles, saying that as Gex was but recently conquered, and was situated so far from the centre of the kingdom, it would be very hazardous as yet to attempt any innovation on the score of religion. The government would thereby render itself odious. The new subjects would find in it a pretext for rebellion, which the Swiss Calvinists would readily second, all of which would turn greatly to the prejudice of France. It would be extremely ill-judged to do anything at present that could excite to arms; after so much civil and foreign war the kingdom sighed for peace, and the edict of Nantes showed at how great cost the king had been glad to purchase peace. He concluded, therefore,

that notwithstanding all his zeal for the progress of the Catholic religion, he was compelled, as it were, to wait for more favourable circumstances, since it was safer to defer an undertaking, than to enter rashly upon it, when there was little or no chance of success.

The Saint maintained his ground, and said that he could not conceive that so great a monarch as the king of France could not attempt in his states what the Duke of Savoy had successfully carried out in his—that he had had the honour of being present at the Duke's council when the same propositions were made with regard to the Chablais, and that the councillors had adduced the very same reasons in opposing them, but that the wise and prudent prince had not deemed them of sufficient weight to be entertained, and that if the said territory were at present under the Duke's dominion, he would at once enter upon his apostolic functions there, under his orders and without the least fear. The people there were but too glad to live quietly, and were by no means in a state to rebel—that even if they had the will, they had not the means, having no leader, no ammunition or arms, no fortresses, and no experience. Nor need he fear that Geneva would oppose the king's will, for that little republic had too much reason to court the protection of France. Neither would the Swiss, for such a handful of territory as Gex, think of breaking a league which formed their own security, and rendered them formidable to their enemies. Besides, if they did not venture to favour the fugitives from the Chablais against the Duke,

was it likely they would break with France for such an object?

It was not his wish that violence should be used towards any one, but it was only reasonable that the state in question should submit to the same laws as the rest of the monarchy. It was clear that the edicts which permitted the free exercise of Calvinism, likewise decreed that Catholicity should be re-established in all those countries from whence it had been banished; he therefore entreated him to interpose for him with the king, that he might, under his protection, labour in the territory of Gex, as he had begun to do whilst he was still subject to the Duke, for it was but right to promote the restoration of a creed, which the king professed in so edifying a manner. By so doing there could be no doubt but that he was upholding the cause of God, in which case God would reciprocally uphold his throne, and that He would not permit such good intentions to be frustrated.

These and other similar arguments finally triumphed over Villeroi, who promised to present his memorial to the king; but as his Majesty set off to Fontainebleau, the affair was thus delayed, and Francis was obliged to prolong his sojourn in Paris far beyond his original intention.

CHAPTER XL. AND XLI.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES IN PARIS. HE PREACHES BEFORE
THE KING. FUNERAL ORATION ON THE DUKE DE
MERCŒUR.

It seemed a mischance, but was in effect a dispensation of Providence, that Francis should have been detained in Paris, for God employed him in many things of importance to His glory. His reputation stood so high, that he was just the person to succeed in difficult enterprizes; the city and the court seeming to vie with each other in showing him marks of honour. They who had accompanied the king to Savoy, related all they had heard of his piety, learning, and indefatigable labours in behalf of religion in the Chablais, the dangers to which he had exposed himself, and the generosity with which he had risked his life to promote the faith. Others recounted his conferences with Beza, whom, if he had not converted, he had at least convinced, and had compelled him to own that salvation was attainable in the Catholic Church; it was, moreover, affirmed that he had placed Beza under the necessity of returning to the Church, but that he stifled the dictates of conscience from a mistaken notion of honour, if from no more guilty motive.

But, above all this, the princess Mary of Luxembourg, duchess of Mercœur, who happened to be at Rome at the same time with Francis, could never

say enough of the esteem in which he was held at the court of Rome, in consequence of his solidity of judgment, and his noble dignity of conduct. She dwelt on the honour shown him by the Pope, that just appreciator of merit, and on his power both in word and work, so that cardinals and prelates were in admiration of his great and varied talents. This was the opinion of all who knew him, or held intercourse with him, and was by no means limited to those who loved the country to which he owed his birth. But nothing gained him higher commendation than his own conduct and regularity of life. This was so conformable to all that was said of him, that they who praised him were readily believed; hence every one was anxious to retain him in France for one of the first-rate bishoprics. In the meantime some unexpected event prevented the regular preacher from giving the usual sermon at the Louvre, when, at the solicitations of Catherine d' Orleans, princess Longueville, Francis was requested to supply his place. He accepted the office with reluctance, not on the plea of having but a very short time to prepare himself, but because he thought it too honourable. Hoping, however, that his labours would not be quite thrown away, he at last consented. Reflecting that the court abounded with Calvinists, as well as with persons who gloried in their impiety bordering on atheism, the fatal consequences of the prolonged war, he resolved in the course of his Lenten sermons to combat impiety as well as heresy. He did this with an earnest dignity free from all affectation, in a style the most appropriate to the divine word, as the writings of the

prophets so well demonstrate. He devoted himself still more closely to prayer and study, from whence he derived his weapons for the destruction of heresy and impiety. His chief book was the sacred Scripture, which he always read on his knees, and with as much respect as if God Himself were speaking to him without a veil. Replenished with those grand ideas of which this book is the fruitful source, he entered the pulpit with a holy daring, perfectly free from anything of human respect. He strove to uproot errors and vices, and to plant in all hearts a seasonable fear of the divine judgments, convincing his auditory of the necessity there was for each one of them to attend to his own salvation, to soften the obduracy of his own heart, and to amend his life by being converted to the Lord. Such was the tenor of his first discourses, which were attended by crowds both of Catholics and Calvinists; indeed, it was affirmed that no court preacher had ever seen the royal chapel better filled. From the very first, fame proclaimed his eloquence, which made the Countess of Perdreuville anxious to hear him. She was one of the most zealous and obstinate of Calvinists, and had baffled many very learned persons who had attempted her conversion, supporting her strongest arguments on four ill-interpreted passages of Holy Writ, which had been riveted on her mind by the ministers. The first day she went to hear him, he happened to preach on the general judgment, a subject by no means bearing upon controversy. She had gone merely from curiosity, to satisfy herself that his sermons were as efficacious as people declared them to be; but as the discourse progressed

she was sensibly affected, and began seriously to think of her conversion. In effect, after several discussions with the holy man, she publicly abjured Calvinism with all her family, a very numerous one; notwithstanding the remonstrances of the ministers, who, up to that time had engrossed all her esteem and respect.

Paris was astounded at this conversion, which raised the reputation of the Saint, and drew still larger audiences when he preached; some stimulated by good, others by evil intentions; heretics attending in vast numbers. He, regardless of their motives, took advantage of their presence, and spoke so well to the purpose that many of them were converted. Amongst the rest, the distinguished family of Raconis, one of the most influential at court. A member of this family went still further; his intercourse with our Saint so completely convinced him of the vanity of earthly things, that he entered amongst the Capuchins and became a celebrated preacher. The Bishop of Evreux, afterwards Cardinal du Perron, was so astonished that he told the king he felt almost tempted to throw his works of controversy into the fire; seeing that he had not succeeded in converting this family, although he had indefatigably laboured at the task, whereas the coadjutor of Geneva had with little or no difficulty won them over to the faith. Such was his opinion of Francis, that when heretics were taken to him, he used to say that he would undertake to convince them with the aid of God, but that to convert them, they must be taken to the servant of God, as he then styled Francis, because he had the happy

knack of winning the hearts of all who approached him. In this he only described the Saint as he really was; for besides being deeply read in matters of controversy, there was something particularly captivating in his manner. His sweetness, patience, and humility subdued many an obstacle, so that the very Calvinists who looked upon him as the scourge of their sect, could not help loving and esteeming him.

He went on with equal success through the Lent, and numerous were the conversions. The same thing that befell St. Austin once happened to him; he completely lost the thread of his discourse, even so far as to forget the subject he intended to speak upon. He therefore started upon controversy, but with such surprising power, that a lady of high rank audibly exclaimed, "It is no longer the Bishop of Geneva who is addressing us, it is certainly the Holy Ghost speaking through his mouth;" adding, that the effect of this would soon be seen; and so it was, for a Protestant young lady who was present, was convinced by his arguments, and after a few conferences with him, abjured her errors. And yet, she had only gone to the sermon to ascertain whether fame had not exaggerated the talent of the preacher; being strongly attached to her own creed, she had never before had a doubt upon the subject.

The zeal of Francis not only strove to bring heretics to the faith, but likewise to win sinners back to grace. He well knew that it was as difficult to cure the maladies of the heart as those of the mind; he laboured therefore more assiduously to disengage the will from vicious habits, than to expel error from the

intellect; because the latter when known, becomes odious, whereas, though we may be convinced of the malice of an object, we have not always courage enough to disengage the heart from it, on account of our natural propensity to evil. Hence, to cure the heart of the tyranny of passion, the holy man proportioned his remedies to each one's condition, but depicted the evils of sin in the most vivid and appalling colours. He terrified the soul with the threats of the divine judgments, demonstrating the baneful consequences of guilt, contrasting with it the delight springing from peace of heart and purity of conscience, together with that anticipated beatitude, the effect of hope, produced by amendment of life. This prudent, charitable, and firm conduct, gained an infinity of souls to God, who would have perished under a more austere guide.

About this time he satisfied the curiosity of a Turk, who proposed to him his doubts on the subject of the Blessed Trinity; and although we do not know whether he was ultimately converted, it was observed that from the time he consulted our Saint, he never expressed an aversion to the holy Name of Christ.

At the end of Lent, the Duchesses of Longueville and Mercœur, who knew how slender his finances were, sent him a handsome purse well filled with gold. The Saint examined the purse, admired the beauty of the workmanship, and then, without so much as opening it, returned it to the bearer, begging him to thank the princesses for the honour they had done him in assisting at his sermons, and for having contributed by their example to the fruit

which had been derived from them, adding that this was all the recompense he desired in this world, that he was resolved to give gratuitously that which the goodness of God had liberally bestowed upon him—that his sole regret was, not to have spoken in a manner more worthy of such a pulpit and of such an audience—that for the rest, it was not altogether his fault, but was rather to be attributed to want of talent than to want of will and diligence. The gentleman reiterated his entreaties, but was not able to subdue that magnanimous heart, ever superior to all earthly things—an act of generosity which was extolled throughout Paris; for, as his charities were great, it was pretty accurately guessed that his finances were very low; hence his disinterestedness and disengagement were all the more admirable.

As apostolic men are thought to gain honour for preaching with holy liberty before kings and princes, so was this glory not wanting to Francis of Sales. Scarcely had he finished his Lenten course, than the business which had brought him to France, required his attendance at Fontainebleau where the court then was.

The king was informed by the Bishop of Evreux of the result of his preaching; and as his Majesty found delight in his familiar discourse, so did he wish to hear him in the pulpit. He accordingly desired him to prepare himself for Low Sunday, when he treated on the affair of salvation and eternity, in presence of the king; and he did this in a manner which raised him highly in the opinion of his auditory. The king admired his eloquence and

learning, and publicly declared that there was no exaggeration on the part of those who told him that this Savoyard was a great man; adding that he had never heard a better preacher, and that he certainly deserved a more lucrative bishopric than the one which had fallen to his lot.

His Majesty continued to listen to him both in public and private. One day when he had spoken with unusual energy, (some of the deputies from Geneva being present at the time,) the king, enchanted by the force of his arguments, asked the deputies what they thought of the good bishop's sermon. "Sire," replied one of them, "if the Duke of Savoy, employed against us, reasons as efficacious as those of the bishop, we would restore the episcopal see, and should probably all go over to his religion." The king said they only did him justice, for he had never heard a preacher who so thoroughly touched the heart, nor one whose exemplary life better seconded his words.

Nor were these the only commendations bestowed on him by the king; the better he became acquainted with him, the more he attached himself to him; he used to call him the Phoenix amongst the bishops, saying that he had noticed, that generally speaking, when bishops were noble they were ignorant; and when they were very learned they had but little piety, so that they were seldom found without some notable defect; but, as for the coadjutor of Geneva, he was at once learned, noble, and devout.

Soon after the king's return to Paris, news arrived of the lamented death of Philip Emmanuel of Lorraine, Duke de Mercœur. This prince had at his

own expense levied troops for the emperor, and led them against the Turks who were fighting in Hungary. He gave such proofs of valour in his first campaign, that the emperor entrusted him with the command of the whole army.

Having first forced, and then protected Alba Royal, and having stopped the siege of Canisse, undertaken by the Turks, he was returning to France for the winter, when he fell ill at Neuremburg, and there died in the sentiments of a true Christian. As he was brother-in-law to the late King Henry III., the reigning monarch ordered all the honours usual to princes of the blood to be paid to his memory. The widowed duchess, in deep affliction under a loss so justly painful to her, would have the Saint pronounce the funeral oration. He accepted the commission, fully satisfied that he might, without charge of flattery, praise a prince who had coupled military valour with unaffected piety. He was still further induced to accept the charge, on account of the gratitude and affection which the house of Sales bore towards the princes of Luxemburg. In fact, the Saint said that the duchess might look on him as the hereditary servant of her family; and on this plea had honoured him with the commission, for his ancestors had for many generations been devoted to the house of Luxemburg.

The oration was precisely suited to the taste of the audience, composed as it was of the chief nobility of France. At the entreaties of the widow and of the princess her daughter, Francis was obliged to give it to the press. It drew forth much praise,

and proved that his intellect was of the highest order. He bestowed all due encomiums on the deceased prince, who had often exposed his life and lost much blood in the cause of God, but he dwelt more especially on his piety. He regularly devoted some time every day to meditation on the eternal truths, and annually set apart a certain sum for the repair or adornment of churches. He touched upon his modesty and moderation in prosperity, as well as his fortitude in adversity, his kindness and consideration for his soldiers, whom he spared as much as possible; his benignity towards the vanquished, his tender charity to the poor, and his justice towards all; treating all as a father rather than as the general of an army, who but too frequently is compelled to tolerate and overlook injustice. He concluded by saying that if vice dishonours a man, no matter what his condition may be, it is still more reprehensible in the great, because their elevated position exposes them to the sight of all men; hence it behoves them to be more circumspect than others, lest they should by unworthy conduct dishonour their rank, and that a brutish greatness supported by luxury cannot be otherwise than contemptible, as our gratitude to God ought to be proportioned to His gifts; and that, generally speaking, it behoves each one to reflect on the fatal moment when death will render us either happy or miserable for a whole eternity.

This discourse which lasted two full hours, and which was delivered in the cathedral in presence of the court and parliament, completely won for him the esteem of the French, insomuch that they plan-

ned all sorts of measures to keep him amongst them. On all the principal feasts he was requested to preach; nor was there any pious meeting or important business, to which he was not invited and his counsel sought. His lodging was continually resorted to by all classes, and he received every one with affability, no matter what their rank or creed might be, giving useful instruction and admonition to all. It is said that during the nine months he spent at Paris, he delivered upwards of a hundred sermons; parishes and religious houses being all eager to hear him, and to profit by his advice. And, as we have already remarked, the holy man certainly possessed all the qualifications of nature and grace calculated to make him excel as a preacher. His personal appearance added dignity to his words. His ideas, though sublime, were intelligible to every capacity; his well-ordered method never wearied the listener; his style was elegant, his gesticulation majestic, but without austerity; his sentences were not elaborate, for he spoke from the abundance of his heart. The fruit of his sermons showed that his words came from his heart, and that his heart was all charity. His learning seemed rather to be infused by grace than acquired by study; those who had once heard him could scarcely relish the sermons of other preachers. One of the members of parliament passed this graceful compliment on the sermons of the holy man: "It cannot be denied that the coadjutor of Geneva has done great good, but he has also committed one great evil, and which will never be cured. He has destroyed our relish for all other preaching but his own."

CHAPTER XLII. AND XLIII.

HIS INTIMACY WITH SEVERAL HOLY PERSONS. CONTRIBUTES TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITES INTO FRANCE. IS CALUMNIATED TO THE KING.

A HEART, over which God holds absolute sway, and which leaves itself to the direction of grace, generally becomes the arbitrator and oracle of its age. Such was precisely the case with Francis whilst at Paris. He was consulted on all affairs connected with the glory of God and the increase of religion.

Peter de Berulle, afterwards Cardinal, was planning the foundation of a congregation similar to that of the Oratory at Rome, and discerning the sublime lights with which our Saint was favoured, consulted him on the subject, and was much helped by him. He also disclosed to him his desire of introducing into France the Discalced Carmelites of Spain, founded some years before by St. Theresa of Jesus. Francis, who highly esteemed the order, not only approved the design, but promoted it to the utmost of his power. Both projects, it is true, met with great opposition; in effect, whatever tends materially to the glory of God, always encounters difficulties which must be overcome, before the object can be attained. But the oppositions were overcome, the Saint employed what interest he had

with the Pope, and with other friends at Rome. Whilst these affairs were under negociation, he had occasion to become acquainted with Mary Aurillot Acarie, better known by the name of Sister Mary of the Incarnation; who, after her husband's death, entered the Carmelite order in quality of lay-sister.

Twice a week the Saint met at her house, Berulle, Andrew Duval, a celebrated doctor of the Sorbonne, and the Lord de Santeuil. Although Madame Acarie's house was a good league from his lodging, he never failed walking thither through all the mud and dirt with which the streets of Paris then abounded. Their discussion on spiritual topics enabled the others to discern what a superior man he was; accordingly they all placed themselves under his direction, to their great satisfaction, and to the great benefit of their souls. He felt the advantage of guiding persons of such exalted virtue, whilst they profited by the sublime lights which he imparted to them, both in their public and private conferences.

Such was their esteem of Francis, that Berulle could never say enough of the fine qualities and virtues which he discovered in him; he used to say that Francis was a living portrait of the Holy Humanity of Jesus Christ, whilst Francis, on the other hand, called Berulle the saint of the age, whom it was impossible to approach without profit, that he was what he himself wished to be, and that he had never met with any one from whom he had derived greater satisfaction.

Speaking of Duval, the Saint said he was a man

fit for everything, and that he honoured him as a father. But above all the rest, Madame Acarie, (who, from the time she became acquainted with him till his departure from Paris, had no other confessor but himself,) profited by his instructions; though Francis was extremely reserved in his researches with regard to the interior of this great soul. She looked upon him as an angel on earth, receiving his advice as oracles from heaven. She derived much light from him, although she herself was at the time a highly enlightened soul. One day as she was accusing herself of certain imperfections, the Saint warned her that they were not matter for absolution, because being involuntary they were not sins, and therefore not sufficient matter for the sacrament. He taught her the difference which there is between them and sin, to the great surprise of Mary, who had often accused herself of them, without ever having been told by her confessors that confession should be made secure, by accusing oneself of some certain determinate sin.

The Saint had a high opinion of this holy soul, and afterwards regretted not having made himself more intimately acquainted with her perfection; for he never ventured to enquire beyond what she of her own accord thought proper to consult him upon. No small proof of his discretion as well as of his humility. Not long before he passed to a better life he was asked whether he could give any information upon the particular graces with which Almighty God had favoured Mary Acarie, who was then dead, but he replied in the negative, giving this as the reason; "Whenever that servant of God addressed

herself to me, my soul was impressed with so great a respect for her virtue, that I never dared to question her; I therefore know nothing more than what she of her own accord thought fit to say, and she spoke far more freely of her faults than of her virtues, or of the favours she received; it is therefore no wonder that I knew so little. I considered her less as my penitent than as a vessel of election, marked by the Holy Ghost as one chosen for His service." He thus mentions her in one of his letters: "The truly devout Mary Acarie was a great servant of God; I heard her confession several times, ordinarily for the space of six months, even during an illness; and I reproach myself much for not having profited as I ought by her holy conversation. She would willingly have disclosed her whole soul to me, but the very great respect which I felt for her, deterred me from encouraging such confidence." In another letter he thanks a friend for sending him a picture of this servant of God, and says that he loved her with a respectful love, and that he was glad to rekindle the sentiments which his almost daily intimacy with her had excited; therefore, the present was both useful and agreeable; adding that he rejoiced exceedingly to hear that her Life was given to the public, because it would be beneficial to many, if it were a faithful portraiture of what she had been, as he had no doubt it would be, considering the worth and the ability of the man who wrote it, (namely, Duval); he concluded by saying that he loved and admired this holy soul, and loved all whom she had loved in this life.

From the expression of the Saint, it is easy to

infer that whenever God communicates many of His gifts to souls, He also establishes a traffic of graces and of virtues, binding them with a sort of dependance one upon another. Hence, though Francis gave many sublime instructions to this great servant of God, who declared that she had never known or heard of certain truths with which he made her acquainted, he on his side asserted that he had profitted by the reflex of those lights cast back upon him from this noble soul, in consequence of the secret commerce of charity and Christian union.

The holy personages before named succeeded in introducing the order of Barefooted Carmelites into France, to the great edification of the kingdom. Indeed, there are many who attribute to their prayers the blessings and prosperity of the country during the last century.

The house at Paris was founded by Catherine of Orleans, Duchess of Longueville, who obtained the king's consent, while Francis procured the necessary bulls from the Sovereign Pontiff. Three of Madame Acarie's daughters were professed in it, and were afterwards the superiors of it. Our Saint rejoiced exceedingly in the accomplishment of the pious mother's wishes, who had long been praying that they might consecrate themselves to God.

In the meantime the Saint's labours increased to such a degree as to endanger his health. He was so fully occupied that he often could not spare time either to eat or sleep, sparing as he always was in both respects. But his labours were so successful that it was a common saying, that the coadjutor of Geneva had the virtue and power of the princes

of the apostles, when sinners were to be brought back to penance, and when heretics were to be won over to the fold of Jesus Christ.

King Henry, who was a just appreciator of virtue and learning, was well aware of the great treasure which he possessed in the person of Francis, and therefore was most anxious to retain him in France, promising pensions and ecclesiastical benefices, and even consulting him on the most delicate affairs of his own conscience. The Saint replied with that holy freedom which characterizes generous minds; and although he knew how dangerous it was to gainsay princes, and that the 'non licet,' 'it is not lawful,' of the precursor of Christ had cost him his life, never would Francis temper or temporize with vice; he reproved him for that which was reprehensible, but with so much sweetness that the most bitter remedies were acceptable from his hands. He was never at a loss for pretexts to disturb that sort of tranquillity which is as dangerous as a storm; on the contrary, he spoke without fear, though with his usual discretion, to the king upon the necessity of observing the laws of God. The world would have been left in ignorance of one circumstance highly honourable to the Saint, if the prince himself had not been witness to it. A gentleman whom he treated with great familiarity, asked his Majesty what it was that made him love the Savoyard bishop so much. He answered, "I love him because he has never flattered me." Words worthy of a king whose admirable benevolence rendered him the delight of his subjects. This fact proves that it is not so much truth which is distasteful to great-

ness, as the manner in which it is advanced, nothing being better suited to princes than truth. Fortune, as one may say, lavishes every other advantage upon them, whereas, as the Wise Man says, "A sincere friend is heaven's gift." Now, as there cannot be equality between a sovereign and his subjects, none dare assume the title of friend when a prince is in question; nevertheless, King Henry IV. wished for friends, and he had them. He knew how to choose, and it was but seldom that he was mistaken in his choice. When he did confer this honour upon any one, he permitted him to take the quality of friend, and to use the rights of one. The following incident is too honourable to the king and to Francis for us to omit it. There happened to be at court a gentleman named Des-Hayes, the governor of Montargis, a very worthy man, to whom the king was much attached; whilst Des-Hayes on his side, was faithful and loyal beyond all suspicion. The king, who was convinced of this, ranked him amongst the few whom he styled his friends. He had observed the very close intimacy subsisting between Des-Hayes and Francis, and one day asked him which of the two he loved best, himself or the Coadjutor of Geneva. The question was embarrassing; the gentleman, however, replied, that the condescension of his Majesty did not make him forget that he was his subject, that, as such, he owed him so much, that nothing should ever make him unmindful of his duty and obligations to him, and that he felt an unbounded zeal and fidelity for his Majesty; but that, though he felt in his heart all that the most tender and respectful affection could inspire, he could not

dare to call it friendship, considering the disparity which must ever be between a monarch and his subjects. The king answered, that he was not examining into what was due from him in quality of subject, because he was fully convinced of his fidelity, but that he wanted him to tell him frankly which of the two he preferred, Henry or Francis. A dissimulating courtier would not have hesitated for a moment as to his answer; he would at once have expressed himself in terms complimentary to the king, and his apparent sincerity would have supplied the place of truth; but Des-Hayes would rather have ruined his worldly prospects than have forfeited the friendship of the Saint; moreover, he deemed it alike unworthy of himself and his affection to dissimulate and lie. Indeed, had he wished to deceive, his countenance would have betrayed him, and have revealed the attachment engraven on his heart.

The king, who loved frank loyalty, enjoyed the gentleman's perplexity, and went on urging him to answer, till at last Des-Hayes seeing that his Majesty would have a straightforward answer, said, that in truth he felt all possible veneration and attachment for the king, but that above all he loved the Bishop of Geneva. His reply pleased the king, who, so far from expressing dissatisfaction, rejoined with a more than royal condescension, "I do not disapprove your sentiments, but I request both you and he to admit me as the third in your friendship." He then told Des-Hayes that he desired the Duke d'Espernon to use his best endeavours to detain the holy man in France, pledging his word to give him

the first vacant bishopric, and in the interim to offer him a pension of four thousand livres. Des-Hayes was transported with delight, rejoicing more in the advantage of his friend, than if it had been his own. He threw himself at the king's feet to thank him, who, raising him up and embracing him, said, "Go, and be beforehand with the Duke d' Espernon. Go yourself, and be the first to convey this news to the Coadjutor of Geneva; go and tell him what I purpose doing for him."

But the Duke had already fulfilled his own commission, and had used his best endeavours to persuade Francis to remain in France, giving the promise of pension and bishopric, but the only answer he could extort from the holy man was, that his Majesty did him too much honour by these offers—that his heroic character was of itself sufficient to captivate all hearts, without offering violence to them by means of benefits, adding, that he considered it to be a fortunate thing to be a subject of so great and beneficent a prince, and that if he consulted his inclinations only, he should have accepted his favours; but as he had been called in spite of himself to the bishopric of Geneva, he conceived himself bound in compliance with his vocation, to remain there to the end of his life. With regard to the pension, he said that his own income sufficed for his subsistence, and that more would only be an incumbrance. When this answer was conveyed to the king, he admired a heart thus disengaged from temporal goods, and said there was something more noble in this contempt of wealth and honours, than in subjugating an empire.

One would suppose that a virtue so universally recognised, would have been beyond the reach of envy and calumny; but there is no sanctity impervious to the assaults of these two monsters, nor place where they reign more audaciously than in the courts of princes. Merit supported by favour, is sure to be attacked, envy being ever ready to blacken it. Francis experienced this at the court of France, where his reputation was attacked by a vile calumny, invented by those who could not bear to see his virtue recognised and proved by the king. He was accused of machinations against his Majesty and the state, of having held secret intelligence with Marshal de Byron, (who seems to have been almost the only Frenchman who ever abused the friendship of the Grand Monarch,) and of attempting to renew the conspiracy. They said his apparent virtue was but well-concealed hypocrisy—that everything was to be feared from him, a foreigner, the subject of a prince who had so often warred against France—and that probably this very prince was at the bottom of the conspiracy—that Francis possessed the art of insinuating himself into the good graces of princes, whom he contrived to make his friends, and that the restoration of religion in the territory of Gex was a mere pretext, the real motive of his presence in France being of a very different nature. These accusations were too vague to make much impression on the king, though he was extremely susceptible on such a point, as well he might be; others, therefore, were adduced, more likely to implicate Francis, and to make him an object of suspicion. They said that he had been

heard to speak in terms of esteem of the marshal—that on entering the church where he was buried he was observed to sigh profoundly, and in one of his sermons had recommended an affair of high importance to the prayers of the auditory. As if no one was to compassionate the marshal, or do justice to his good qualities, which unfortunately his conspiracy obscured, or as if Francis could have no business in hand connected with the glory of God and the advantage of religion to recommend to the prayers of his congregation. At all events, his adversaries concluded by advising his Majesty as a measure of prudence, to seize his papers and person, in order to prevent evil consequences, and then, no doubt things would be discovered, of which a man apparently so virtuous and disengaged from the world would never be suspected.

Slender as were these proofs, they evidently struck the king, who, judging it prudent to make no hasty demonstration, commissioned those who had given him this information, to keep a close eye on the Bishop of Geneva, in order to clear up the matter. It must be owned, however, that after a little mature reflection on the sanctity of his life, and on the utter improbability of his having any connection with persons who could machinate against the state, the king came to the conclusion that there was not the least likelihood of Francis being at court for any such unworthy purpose, and that it was impossible for so holy a man to mix himself up with so disgraceful an affair, no matter how great an advantage might be derived therefrom.

As Francis had several friends at court, one of

them became acquainted with the accusation raised against him, and without delay hastened to warn him of it. He found him at the parish Church of St. Benedict, in the very act of entering the pulpit to preach. When great danger is in the way, friendship forgets all circumstance of time and place. His friend instantly stopped him, and whispered how the case stood. However innocent the Saint knew himself to be, certainly such a piece of information was calculated to disconcert him at such a moment, well knowing that fearful consequences might follow the suspicions of a sensitive prince. Indeed, we frequently see that persons who are the least capable of crime, are the most terrified and astounded when accused of it. But the holy man relying on his own innocence, on the prudence and integrity of the king, and on the protection of Almighty God, thanked the gentleman, entered the pulpit, and preached with such eloquence and composure, that his friend, not a little surprised, was experimentally convinced of what he had frequently heard De Berulle say, namely, that the most unforeseen accidents could not shake the imperturbable equanimity of Francis. At the end of the sermon the gentleman told him, that his composure actually alarmed him; that he was accused of no less a crime than treason, and therefore any delay was dangerous. He entreated him to look to his own safety, and to endeavour to justify himself from a charge where every circumstance touched on his life and reputation.

The Saint replied that had he been guilty, he would have thought of flight rather than of preaching, but he was easy in the consciousness of inno-

cence; and as he confided in our Lord, he had no notion of flying to the hills like the swallow. He said that he felt so little fear that he would go at once to the king, convinced that God would take care of his reputation, if He intended it in any way to contribute to His glory. His only distress arose from the fear of being unable to justify himself without injuring his calumniators; the gentleman interrupted him, to say it mattered but little at whose expense he justified himself; that his accusers were but scoundrels who deserved to be confounded, and that he should be very glad to see them unmasked. Francis forbade him to speak in such a strain, and hoped to exonerate himself without implicating any one.

He had no occasion of doing so, the king's own reflections had already disabused him. The Saint entered his apartment with his usual serenity of countenance, and his Majesty's quick penetration discerned the innocence of his soul in his tranquillity of feature, and this instantly banished every shadow of suspicion. Before the Saint could say a word, the king assured him there was no need of justification, that the more atrocious the crime of which he was accused, the less was he likely to believe him capable thereof; that he was convinced of his affection, and if needful, would take upon himself to answer for his innocence. The holy man told him that he was so little versed in affairs of state, that he never allowed himself to interfere in them, but even if he could do so, most certainly nothing should ever induce him to attempt so base a crime against a monarch from whom he had received such favours.

Although it was true that he was the born subject of another prince, never had he received from him the slightest orders contrary to the interests of his Majesty; and even if he had, no consideration, no authority should ever be able to make him unmindful of his duties, or induce him to conspire against the meanest man on earth; much less then against one of the greatest and best of princes. He added that they who accused him, had no idea of his ardent zeal for his Majesty, for that he would gladly sacrifice his life for the preservation of his Majesty, bending forward, as he said these words, to kiss the king's hand. The king embraced him, and whispered in his ear, "I am convinced of what you say, but I cannot prevent many reports from coming to my knowledge. Let us henceforward be better friends than ever." And with these words he dismissed him, never after failing to eulogize him whenever occasion offered, and endeavouring to benefit him by all possible means.

Any other man, availing himself of the king's favour, would have demanded justice against his accusers; there were many specious reasons for doing this; respect due to his character seemed to require it. But Francis, on the contrary, had resolved to obtain their pardon, if the king had expressed any intention of punishing them. But princes are obliged to overlook many things, and though like Henry, they may have a deep sense of justice, there are many motives to prevent them from always carrying it into effect.

No sooner had Francis quitted the presence-chamber, than the king asked Des-Hayes the amount

of his income. He was answered that formerly Geneva was one of the richest bishoprics, but that since the rebellion the revenues did not exceed four thousand livres, because the heretics had seized the episcopal property. His Majesty observed that this was indeed a small income for such a man, and desired him to go in his name and offer him a pension, giving immediate orders for the grant to be expedited. Des-Hayes joyfully accepted the commission, and Francis who had already refused a much larger offer, thinking that it might be imprudent to persist in declining the favours of so generous a prince, begged Des-Hayes to thank his Majesty, and to assure him that he could not, with justice to his own feelings, refuse a gift which did him so much honour. However, as he then stood in no need of money, he entreated his Majesty to allow it to remain in the treasurer's hands, to whom he would apply when in necessity. The king at once understood that this answer was nothing else than a genteel refusal, and so much pleased with it, that he declared that he had never been thanked for a favour in more graceful and prudent terms.

He incessantly pressed him to remain in France, employing the influence of his most intimate friends for this purpose, especially the Duchess of Mercœur, the princess of Longueville, Des-Hayes, and some others, but all their persuasions were to no purpose. The holy man declared that he should ever be most submissive to the wishes of his Majesty in other respects, but as he had been called to the bishopric of Geneva, it was his duty to serve it and the country to which he owed his birth.

Thus it was that he despised the world and its honours, and disposed himself to receive a crown of glory. All these refusals confirmed the king more and more in his opinion of the sanctity of the servant of God. His Majesty spoke of him repeatedly, and once said, "The Bishop of Geneva is a man of God, to whose glory he directs all things. He knows not how to flatter, and, sincere as he always is, he is at the same time most unpretending. Never does he deceive; but he honours every one according to his merits." Another time he protested that he loved him, because he saw every virtue in him, without the admixture of a single vice or defect. On other occasions he said, "It were to be wished that the Bishop of Geneva could be in several places at once, for the universal good of the Church and of France." That, in considering him, one beheld the perfection of angels devoid of the failings of men; and that as the rays of light which spread throughout the atmosphere, are nevertheless concentrated in the solar body, so in Francis were reunited the many varied virtues which are distributed amongst the rest of the just. He moreover said that Francis was devout without scrupulosity, and cheerful without dissipation; hence he knew no one more likely to restore its lost lustre to the ecclesiastical state, or check heresy and the novel opinions which infested his dominions; that he possessed piety, learning, humility, gentleness, charity, and the other qualifications necessary to maintain the interests both of Church and state.

The favour of the greatest monarch of his age, had no other effect on our Saint than that of giving

him fresh motives to glorify God, from whom, as he knew, proceeded all the good that was in him, and therefore was he careful to refer all the glory of it to Him alone. By way of humbling himself, he used often to think (as he himself owned to a friend) on the beautiful sentence of St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble: "The evils which I commit are real evils, and are truly my own, whereas, my good works are neither purely good, nor are they purely my own."

CHAPTER LXIV.

HIS RETURN TO SAVOY. DEATH OF MONSIGNOR
GRANIER.

SAINTS are accustomed to look on all events as particular dispensations of Providence, which often adopts imperceptible means for the attainment of its own ends. St. Francis of Sales looked upon the calumny alluded to in the foregoing chapter, as an admonition from God to take his leave of the court. He was well aware of the soundness of the reasons which had hitherto detained him at court, a place where no ecclesiastic should stay without weighty motives; he saw too the blessings which the Lord bestowed on his labours; yet, notwithstanding all this, he resolved to redouble his endeavours to procure a prompt settlement of the affairs connected with the Church in the territory of Gex. He again referred the question to the king, who would gladly have acceded to all his wishes at once, if political

motives had not obliged him to stop half way. He assured him, however, that in due time all his views should be carried into effect; telling him that if he distrusted the zeal of every other man, he was secure of that of the coadjutor of Geneva, and that it would ever produce great effects for the service of God and the state.

Francis, who was more alive to the advantages of religion than to his own, returned him most humble thanks, and promised to avail himself of the royal favour with such discretion, that the evils so much dreaded should not ensue. He next represented that it would be necessary for him to carry letters to the Baron di Luz and the parliament of Dijon, authorizing them to regulate any difference, and remove any obstacles which should impede his projects; and he concluded by supplicating his Majesty to take under his protection and safe keeping all the ecclesiastics of the territories of Gex, Bugey, and Valromey. The king gratified him, and ordered the necessary patents to be drawn up, restoring the exercise of religion in three parishes, and directing the parliament and the baron to assist him if necessary. Then after a nine months sojourn in Paris he took leave of the king, and of the friends and acquaintances who had enjoyed the benefit of his affable and holy intimacy, and to their deep regret set out on his return to Savoy. He had only completed his third day's journey when he received news of the death of the Bishop of Geneva, at which he was deeply affected; for he looked upon him as his benefactor, and honoured him as a father, whilst Monsignor Granier, on his side, loved Francis as a

son. After adoring the inscrutable designs of Providence, and the will of God with his usual spirit of submission, he paid full tribute to the deceased, by his tears, sacrifices, and prayers. And his tears were all the more sincere, in proportion as he was divested of all ambition and desire of the succession. His dread of the episcopacy returned more vividly than ever, and gave rise to many bitter tears, although he deplored the good bishop's loss on the score of his personal merits too. He was of irreproachable life, a gentleman of ancient family, and endowed with wonderful learning. He had been trained from early life in the monastery of Our Lady, at Talloire, belonging to the Benedictines, and here he made his religious profession, and dwelt for several years. Elected prior, he governed the community for many years, delighting in the retirement of his cell, till the Duke of Savoy, who knew his worth, nominated him to the bishopric of Geneva. He ruled his vast diocese for twenty-five years, with so much zeal and charity, that he won universal esteem and affection. He was a most zealous defender of ecclesiastical liberty, and resisted all attempts to oppress it, with a courage worthy of his rank. Austere to himself, he was satisfied with very little, and even after his elevation to the bishopric, he never dispensed himself from any of his rules, which he strictly observed till his death. He loved the poor as his children, depriving himself of everything in order to relieve them, and although his income was but slender, he contrived to give abundant alms. In his latter years he suffered from several infirmities, which only served to unveil the

lustre of his patience. Disengaged from all the things of this world, and from the ties of kindred, he gave a signal proof of the latter, by excluding the Canon, his nephew, from the coadjutorship, (though he was worthy of it, and possessed the qualities of a good bishop,) in order to give the preference to Francis as the most worthy, and because he perceived in him higher merit. He died at Pollinges on the 17th September, 1601, spotless as a swan, having just concluded the great jubilee in Thonon, where he had undergone immense fatigue. His body was buried at Annecy, in the sanctuary of the church of St. Francis, where the canons of Geneva officiate. His memory is in benediction in his diocese, being looked upon as one of the most holy bishops that have filled the see of Geneva. Nothing less than the holy man who succeeded him, could have consoled his afflicted people under their bitter grief at his loss.

As so much of the journey still remained to be accomplished, Francis saw that he could not possibly reach Annecy in time for the funeral solemnities, particularly as he was compelled to make some stay at Lyons on business of importance. He was anxious, however, not to leave so vast a diocese long without a pastor, yet on reaching Savoy he avoided going to Annecy, lest the arrival of the new bishop might give rise to rejoicings, incompatible with the respectful grief due to the late worthy prelate. He repaired to Sales, intending to prepare for his consecration by making the spiritual exercises; and this he knew could easily be done in the retirement of the family castle. The castle of Sales,

situated at the foot of Mount Ferreo, was one of the most delightful in Savoy, on account of the beautiful gardens and shrubberies which surrounded it. A fountain in the centre and a lake at one side of it, added to its charms; the mansion itself was exceedingly convenient and spacious, comprising within its enclosure several courts, halls, and galleries, the latter affording beautiful landscape views over the distant country.

He intended to be consecrated in the parish church of Thorens, at a short distance from Sales, and retired to the castle, to the great consolation of his family, and with great satisfaction to himself; glad to be relieved even for a short time from the turmoils of the world; however, he was obliged to devote a few days to the reception of congratulatory visits from the clergy, the nobility, and others of the diocese. In the meantime he wrote to Father Fourier, of the Society of Jesus, requesting him to come and direct him in the retreat of twenty days, which he purposed making by way of preparation for his consecration. The father arrived just when Francis had satisfied the duties of Christian civility, and was solely intent on prescribing for himself rules suited to his exalted position, under the guidance of prayer, silence, and corporal austerities. Although we have conclusive reasons to believe that he never sullied his baptismal robe of innocence by any grievous sin, he wept an abundance of tears springing from a heart of love, over his sins, as he weighed them in the balance of the sanctuary. The thought of having been the enemy of God previous to his baptism, and of having afterwards been by

His mercy preserved from the ordinary falls of men, filled his soul with sentiments of sorrow, gratitude, and love. In making his general confession, he carried to the sacred tribunal a heart sorrowfully loving, which no doubt secured for him that kiss of peace which our Saviour is accustomed to bestow on penitent souls. Then, as well as on several other occasions, he was observed to be so totally immersed in God, that he would remain half the day kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, unconscious of all that was passing around him, insomuch that gnats and other insects stung him even to blood, without arousing his attention from that which engrossed it.

As the day of consecration approached, his fears seemed to increase. The more he examined the qualities required in a good bishop, the more did he believe himself to be devoid of them—humility showed him nothing but his defects; and looking on himself as a pilot embarked on a tempestuous sea, without skill, experience, sails, or oars, hence he cried out, “Lord, save me, or I perish!” But Father Fourier reassured him, being fully aware of the opposition he had made to his election, and because he saw evident signs that his was a divine vocation, such a purity of heart and other virtues suited to the post, clear to all excepting to Francis himself. Animated then by him, whom he looked upon as the interpreter of the will of God, he endeavoured to fit himself to receive the plenitude of that spirit which is so essential to bishops; redoubling his fasts, macerations of the body, and prayer; continually speaking to God by prayer, or hearken-

ing to Him by reading Holy Scripture. Our Lord bestowed many lights on him at this time, and there are some who believe that he had then a sort of foresight of the religious order which he afterwards founded. Finally, by the advice and counsel of his wise director, he drew up a rule of conduct to be followed in the course of his labours for the salvation of his neighbours, and for the profitable discharge of his pastoral functions. This rule of life was worthy of a bishop, he committed it to writing, signed it with his own hand, and would have it countersigned by his director, in order that the sight of it might refresh his memory, and serve as a reproof whenever he chanced to fail against it.

The constant fidelity with which he observed these rules, has rendered him worthy of the veneration of men, and as they may be useful to every prelate and ecclesiastic, we will transcribe them here.

THE RULE OF LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF SALES AS BISHOP.

OF HIS EXTERIOR DEPARTMENT AND DRESS.

1st, As to the exterior, Francis of Sales, bishop of Geneva, shall neither use or wear silken clothing, or any material more precious than that which he has hitherto been accustomed to. But he will require them to be clean and well adjusted. He shall have no high-heeled shoes because they savour of vanity,

and also because they are forbidden by the statutes of the Church. He is never to enter the church without his rochet and cape, and shall wear the latter out of doors as well as at home, as much as possible. Whenever the weather allows it, he shall wear his cap walking through the town, and always in the church. He shall wear no ring on his finger except the pastoral ring, worn by bishops in sign of their spousal contract with their Church, no less than that given by the husband to his bride. His sash may be of silk, but not of a high price, and his beads shall be suspended to it. He shall not wear perfumed gloves, nor silk and wadded muffs, but only such as are genteel and decent, according to necessity. The strings of his shoes and of his finer upper stockings shall not be of silk. The tonsure on the crown of his head shall be so distinctly marked as to be easily seen. His beard shall be rounded and without moustaches above the upper lip.

OF HIS SERVANTS, AND OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS
HOUSEHOLD.

He shall take care to have no useless or superfluous servant. He shall keep two ecclesiastics, one to act as master of the house and attend to business, the other to assist him at the divine offices. One possibly might suffice, but for the present he shall have two, on account of Andrew di Soasea, doctor of canon law and bachelor of theology, who, being a good preacher, may produce much fruit in the diocese. They shall dress in the Roman fashion, with

great modesty, or else like the priests belonging to the seminary at Milan, that dress being convenient and inexpensive. A secretary and two chamberlains, one for himself the other for the family. One cook and his assistant, and one lackey, dressed in tawney-coloured livery with purple trimmings. None of them shall wear feathers, swords, or any gay colours, nor moustaches, nor their hair long and flowing. They shall confess and communicate on the second Sunday of every month, according to the statutes of the confraternity of the Holy Cross, of which they shall be members, and they shall communicate at the bishop's Mass. They shall daily assist at Mass, and on festivals at all the divine offices in the cathedral. They shall rise at five o'clock in the morning, and the days on which they go to matins, at four. They shall retire to rest at ten at night, before which they shall assemble altogether to recite the litanies. The bishop shall say the prayers, and after the examination of conscience, all shall retire. There shall be a little oratory in every room, a vessel of holy water, some pious pictures, or an *Agnus Dei*.

OF THE RECEPTION OF THE BISHOP'S VISITORS.

Two rooms shall be carpeted, one to receive strangers, and the other for matters of business. There shall always be some one to receive and introduce those who come, with civility and courtesy, taking care to offend no one whomsoever. It would be something most audacious if the prelate's servants should treat the inferior clergy with disrespect;

therefore, those who serve the Bishop of Geneva must take care to treat every one civilly, more especially priests.

OF MEALS.

With regard to his table, it shall be moderate and frugal, as the Council of Trent advises, but clean and neat; priests shall sit at it, and as far as possible, shall have the first seats. They shall all bless the table in turn, and make the thanksgiving after it. But on solemn festivals the bishop shall pronounce the blessing and grace afterwards; as on all days he shall say the prayer "Benedic Domine nos," &c., because the lesser ought to receive the blessing from the greater. Some pious book shall always be read during half the time allotted both to dinner and supper; the rest of the time shall be spent in suitable conversation. He shall dine at ten o'clock, and sup at six. On fasting days he shall not sit down to table to take his collation, and the dinner hour shall be at eleven, and the collation at seven.

OF ALMS GIVING.

It will be advisable to give alms on the same days that the late bishop was accustomed to distribute them in public. They shall be more abundant in the winter than in the summer, especially after the Epiphany, when the poor are more destitute. Vegetables shall be distributed. I know not whether it would be advisable for the bishop to do

this in person when he can do it conveniently, for instance, on Holy Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Holy Thursday he shall give a dinner to the poor, either before or after the washing of the feet. It would be well to make known the alms bestowed on religious of the mendicant orders, and on hospitals, for the sake of example, and to excite the people to charity. As for private and extraordinary alms, prayer will teach what should be done in this respect.

FOR FESTIVAL DAYS.

On all feasts of precept, the bishop shall assist at first and second vespers, at the High Mass, and all the offices recited before and after it. On solemn festivals he shall likewise assist at matins. He shall celebrate and perform the services of the night and day, at Christmas the Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, SS. Peter and Paul, St. Peter ad Vincula, (patron of the Church of Geneva,) the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, All Saints, the anniversary of his consecration, and throughout the octave of the Blessed Sacrament. He shall preach on the previous Sunday, to warn the people to gain the indulgence; on the Sunday within the octave, and on the octave day, when he shall give benediction at the church of St. Clare, both for the consolation of the nuns, and because it is well frequented; and this will be the last benediction given in the city. As much as possible he shall assist at the exercises of the Confraternity of the Holy Cross, the Rosary, and the Holy Cord, but especially

the first named, on account of the communion, which he shall give himself as often as he can. So much for the exterior.

REGULATIONS FOR THE INTERIOR. OF STUDY AND
PRAYER.

With regard to study, he shall endeavour daily to learn something useful and suitable to his state. Generally speaking, he may apply to this purpose some time between the hours of seven and nine in the morning. After supper some spiritual book shall be read for an hour, which shall serve for study and for prayer. In the morning, after his usual acts of thanksgiving, invocation, and oblation, he shall spend an hour in meditation on the subject before prepared. He must always walk in the presence of God, and invoke Him on all occasions. He shall draw his ejaculatory prayers either from his morning's meditation, or from divers objects that present themselves. They shall be vocal or mental, as the Holy Ghost shall excite. He shall make a short collection of them, as aspirations to God, our Blessed Lady, and the saints to whom he has a particular devotion. He shall ordinarily recite the divine office either kneeling or standing. Matins and Lauds shall be said over night. Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None, between six and seven in the morning. Vespers and Complin before supper. The Rosary of the Madonna after Vespers; having bound himself by vow to the daily recital of it. When he foresees that any urgent affair will interfere with his arrangements, he may anticipate the

hour of Vespers and the Rosary. On the festivals, when Vespers and the Hours are said in choir, he may say the Rosary during High Mass.

OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE.

Every morning at nine o'clock he shall go and offer the most holy sacrifice of the Mass, unless hindered by some very pressing necessity. To celebrate with the greater devotion, he shall make a compendium of various conditions and affections, by means of which devotion to this great mystery may be excited: and he shall ponder them as he leaves his room and walks along to the altar. On reaching the sacristy, he shall make his preparation, which is to be neither too short nor too long, in order not to weary those who wait. The same may be said of his thanksgiving after Mass; and he shall maintain a secret gravity whilst celebrating. On going to and fro, he shall avoid speaking to any one, more especially on worldly affairs, the better to preserve the spirit of recollection. On days of devotion it would be well that he should celebrate Mass in the churches, that when the people assemble they may always find the bishop at their head. The same may be said of the fasts of the respective churches, and when there are indulgences. At night he shall say evening prayers with the rest of the family.

ON CONFESSION AND WORKS OF PENANCE.

He shall confess every second, or at the most, every third day, unless necessity ordain otherwise;

and this to the most able confessor he can meet with, whom he shall not change without necessity. He shall sometimes confess in the church, to be seen by all, to serve as an example. Besides the fasts prescribed by the Church, he shall fast on all Fridays, Saturdays, and the vigils of our Lady's feasts.

OF HIS ANNUAL RETREATS.

Every year he shall make a retreat for the space of eight days, and more when he can, during which he is to purify his soul and to examine the success and progress of the past year. After noticing his principal failings, he shall acknowledge them to his confessor, with whom he shall confer on his bad habits and inclinations, and on the difficulties he meets with in the practice of virtue. He shall make extra prayer, chiefly mental, and shall apply the Masses which he himself celebrates, and those which he causes to be celebrated, with the intention of obtaining from God the graces he stands in need of for the government of himself and of his diocese, and shall renew all the good purposes and designs given him by God. For this purpose he shall, before making his confession, read over the memoranda of his former resolutions, making notes and adding such points as experience shall have taught him.

The time for this recollection cannot possibly be determined. The period of the Carnival would do well, in order not to be obliged to witness the dissipation and frivolity of the people, and also because he would then go forth from the desert to preach and do good works, according to the example of our

Lord Jesus Christ, and of His precursor the holy Baptist. When there should seem any chance of drawing the people from dissipation by means of some notable devotion, he might choose for his retreat some week between Easter and Pentecost, in order that the spirit of God acquired during such exercise, may work well during the following solemn festivals, and during the octave of the most Blessed Sacrament. At this time too the world is somewhat less engrossed with business, and the season is favourable then for purifying both soul and body. Indeed, the purification of the body may serve as a pretext for purifying the soul.

END OF VOL. I.

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