

ROBERT HALDANE AT GENEVA

(1816-17)

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One of the pivotal events of the Reformation was the arrival of a young unknown Frenchman at Geneva in 1536. He was a mere transient; the Council did not even ask his name when they granted Farel's request that he might lecture in the Cathedral. "Ille Gallus" was John Calvin who remained to set his stamp on Geneva. It is remarkable that two hundred and eighty years later a Scotsman should have arrived at Geneva to restore the work that the Frenchman had first wrought there. Robert Haldane's ambition to be a missionary was fulfilled when the end of the Napoleonic War opened the Continent. In 1816 he visited Paris, where a chance acquaintance directed him to Geneva. He was in his 52nd year — nearly twice as old as Calvin when he arrived at Geneva. He had good cause to exclaim, "Ichabod, for the glory has departed from Israel." Not only was Calvinism dead, but the Divinity of Christ was no longer preached; Arians and Socinians were in possession of a fallen Church in which the people had lost interest. This middle-aged Scottish gentleman had none of Calvin's brilliance; he was not even a university graduate and he had an imperfect command of the French language. But he had a sure grasp on the fundamentals of the Gospel, a patient but persistent plan of appealing to Scripture instead of attacking his opponents, and a fearlessness that never overstepped the limits of reasonable courtesy. Like Calvin, he made the Epistles of Paul live once more. "He digged again the wells of water which the Philistines had stopped: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them." Merle d'Aubigne was surely right when he said that Robert Haldane's visit to Geneva was "one of the most beautiful episodes in the history of the Church."

I

To understand the work of Haldane adequately, one must have a general impression of the development of Swiss Protestantism.^[1] The great age of the Reformation closed with the death of Bullinger at Zurich (1575) and Beza at Geneva (1605). German-speaking Switzerland had now passed from Zwinglianism to Calvinism. Geneva, though outside the Swiss Confederation, still took the lead in religion. She produced a succession of eminent

divines. Through Diodati she was the only Canton to adopt officially the decrees of the Synod of Dort (1616). Through Francis Turretin she confirmed that ultra-Calvinist Confession, “the Helvetic Consensus,” drawn up by Heidegger of Zurich (1675). There was no yielding to the more liberal interpretations of Calvinism such as the “Saumur Theology” of the French Reformed. George Goyau has pointed out that the urge to rigid uniformity was the natural result of Geneva’s exposed situation (*Une Ville-Eglise*, Paris, 1919). From the episode of the “escalade” (1602), when the Savoyards attempted to scale the walls by night^[2] to the more serious threats of Louis XIV, the city-state was in a condition of continual defense. Geneva was impoverished, financially and culturally, by the long strain. Its theology was in keeping with its beleaguered position. It was “a swallow’s nest,” menaced by marauders. It presented a solid front against the heretical disintegration sketched by Bossuet in his *Variations of Protestantism*.

The early 18th century saw the end of Louis XIV’s aggression. For Geneva in particular and Switzerland in general, this meant the beginning of a new age of security, which relaxed tension and inevitably modified Calvinist orthodoxy.^[3]

By the early 18th century Basle, Neuchatel and Geneva seemed to have attained the reasonable goal of a humane orthodoxy under Werenfels, Osterwald and Alphonse Turretin. Only Bern and Zurich continued to tread the high and narrow path of the *Helvetic Consensus*. Geneva, unfortunately, was unable to stem the drift towards rationalism of a disintegrating type.^[4] Under Jacob Vernet (1698-1789) the City of Calvin passed through the downward stages of Arminianism, Arianism and Socinianism. The Trinity and the Divinity of Christ were dropped in revised catechisms which were made compulsory (1788 and 1814). A rationalistic version of the Bible appeared in 1805. Voltaire, who resided for a quarter of a century near Geneva, poured scorn on the “shame-faced Socinians.” Rousseau was another hornet, whose influence was potent with the young. The French Revolution had the two-fold effect of unleashing the forces of unbelief and of causing an influx of Romanists. After 1815 Geneva was restored to the control of her political and ecclesiastical oligarchy. These men had learned nothing by their vicissitudes. Even Romanticism had failed to reveal the natural beauty of their surroundings; “their eyes were holden.” They remained entirely 18th century in outlook, with a contempt for all

“mysteries” and “enthusiasts.” Evangelists like H. L. Empaytaz were hardly more successful than Zinzendorf. Rationalists were just as ready to persecute as the orthodox. A few country pastors like Peschier and Cellerier were faithful to the Gospel. Some young theologues (Empaytaz, Guers, Bost) formed “*la Societe des Amis*” for the cultivation of the spiritual life, but it flickered out for want of leadership. Richard Wilcox, a Welsh Calvinistic Methodist, visited Geneva and preached a Revival; as a mechanic, an “industrial,” he was inadequately equipped for his task. Yet he prepared the way for the mission of a great Scotsman.

II

Robert Haldane was born in London on 28th February, 1764, of an ancient Perthshire family. Educated at Dundee and Edinburgh High School, he joined H.M.S. *Monarch* as a midshipman, under his uncle, Captain (later Viscount) Duncan. In 1781 he was transferred to the *Foudroyant* (Captain Jervis, later Earl St. Vincent). He had the experience of active service against the French till the peace of 1783 brought his naval career to a close. One circumstance was providential in linking his early life with his real vocation. Gosport, near Portsmouth, was his headquarters, and he had a good deal of time to put in while on shore. Instead of wasting it, he came under the influence of the Rev. David Bogue (1750-1825), son of a Berwickshire landowner, a licentiate of the Church of Scotland who had been settled as minister of the Congregational Church at Gosport. Mr. Bogue was a man of Evangelical principles and sound scholarship. He was one of the founders of the London Missionary Society, as well as the historian of the English Dissenters (1689-1808), and a fighter for freedom in Church and State; his name became known abroad, and he received the degree of D.D. from Yale College in 1815.

Young Haldane spent some months under his tuition at Gosport and afterwards traveled with him on the Continent. James Haldane, the younger brother,^[5] entered the service of the East India Company in his 17th year, and also came under the influence of Dr. Bogue, who selected a library for him to take to sea (books of Evangelical devotion predominating). It is remarkable how this able clerical tutor set his mark for life on the Haldane brothers. Dr. Bogue’s principles may be summed up as a zeal for political liberty that was bound up with opposition to the coercive power of an Established Church,

impatience with its sluggishness and pomp, and active enthusiasm for Evangelism at home and abroad.

After spending two sessions at Edinburgh University and undertaking “the Grand Tour” of the Continent according to fashionable tradition, Robert Haldane settled down on his estate of Airthrey, near Stirling — a romantic, sylvan spot at the foot of that miniature mountain range, the Ochils (1786). Ten years of happy married life as an enlightened landowner failed to satisfy the deeper longings of his soul. He associated with Evangelical parish ministers around Stirling, and was one of the few lairds who supported the French Revolution, even in its earlier stages. His biographer has remarked that his conversion was neither sudden nor violent.

“It was the act of God, and, as such, mysterious in its origin, decisive in its character and effectual in its results. The good seed had been deeply implanted in his own heart, and that of his brother, by the loving piety of an affectionate and God-fearing mother.”^[6]

Robert Haldane’s growing experience of life quickened the growth of the seed. He explains that for some time his religion was superficial because he did not realize his need of Christ’s atonement and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

“When politics began to be talked of, I was led to consider everything anew. I eagerly caught at them as a pleasing speculation. As a fleeting phantom, they eluded my grasp; but missing the shadow, I caught the substance . . . I obtained in some measure the solid consolations of the Gospel, so that I may say, as Paul, ‘I was found of them that sought me not.’”

The course of his spiritual illumination was partly due to reading standard books on the Evidences of Christianity (Butler, Paley, etc.), and partly to talks with individuals ranging from Dr. Innes, minister of Stirling, to Clam, the journeyman mason of Menstrie.

When James Haldane finished his adventurous career at sea on board the *Melville Castle*, he read and discussed religion, like his brother; books like Fuller’s *Comparison of Calvinism and Socinianism*, instead of holding him to Christianity as mere acceptance of orthodox views, brought him round to the need for personal surrender to Christ. Henceforth both brothers were eager to

seek an outlet in Christian Evangelism. Although James was more impetuous, it was Robert who first decided to venture all for the Kingdom of God. In 1796 he decided to sell Airthrey and invest £25,000 in a Mission to Bengal, with the collaboration of his good friend, Dr. Bogue. “Christianity is everything or nothing!” he declared. William Carey, whom the Rev. Sydney Smith derided as a “consecrated cobbler,” was struggling with inadequate means at Serampore, the Danish settlement near Calcutta, refused admittance as a missionary by the East India Company. But not even the influence of Robert Haldane and the pleading of Wilberforce could make the Company relent; they made their dislike of his advanced political principles an excuse for refusing permission.

The missionary project having failed, James and Robert Haldane decided to engage in joint evangelistic work in Scotland. As laymen, who intended to spend their lives in itinerant preaching, they did not find that the National Church had room for them in its machinery. Moreover, they detested the luke-warm Moderatism that was still influential in the Church of Scotland. The Seceders and the Relief Church concentrated on the “joined members” who attended their meeting houses: the Haldanes sought to reach the churchless multitude by preaching in the open-air or in any kind of building available.

In 1799 the Haldanes left the Church of Scotland and adopted the elastic “Congregational way” which they had learned from Dr. Bogue, though they later embraced Baptist views. Between 1798 and 1810 £70,000 was spent on the training of preachers and evangelists; a colossal “tabernacle” seating 3,000 was built in Leith Walk, Edinburgh (now the Playhouse cinema). The Haldanes, as the Wesleys of Scotland, employed lay preachers on a large scale from the Tweed to Shetland. They were Dissenters in practice rather than in theory.^[7] They gladly co-operated with Evangelical ministers of the Church of Scotland^[8] and Anglican Evangelicals, like Charles Simeon, Edward Bickersteth and Rowland Hill were their earnest collaborators.

Twenty checkered years of failure and success had not damped Robert Haldane’s youthful ardor. In the summer of 1816 he hastened through the press his book on *The Evidences and Authority of Divine Revelation* (2nd ed. 1834), which was based, not only on good reasoning (as was the case with the apologetics of Warburton, Paley and Co.), but on a glowing Christian

experience of the saving power of the Gospel. From his youth up, he excelled as a reasoner in the Socratic method. He would strip from the enemies of historic Christianity their boasted claims to candor and philosophy; he would reduce them to humiliating self-refutation; he would marshal his arguments and use them adroitly as a skillful tactician; he would call for surrender. “Give in and know that I the Lord am God!” Such an advocate for Christ, whose arguments were winged with ardor and tipped with eloquence, was likely to appeal to the trained mind of Young Geneva. The Scotsman was ready to win the Latin temperament for Christ.

The Peace of 1815 had already swung open the door of the Continent. As the Holy Spirit prevented Paul from entering Bithynia and turned him towards Europe, so Haldane was directed from India to that strategic center of Protestantism, the City of Calvin. He was sent where his gifts would be of greatest service, just as Carey was deflected from his dream of the South Seas to India and Livingstone was directed to Africa rather than China.

“For many years I had cherished the idea of going to France, with the view of doing something to promote the knowledge of the Gospel in a country in which I had been three times before as a traveler. Accordingly, when the return of peace rendered my design practicable, I went to the Continent. Being, however, unacquainted with a single individual there, and therefore unable to arrange any particular plan of action, I feared that my object might prove abortive; and, in consequence, when asked, before I left Scotland, how long I expected to be absent, I replied, ‘possibly only six weeks.’ The Lord, however, was pleased to open a wide and effectual door, leading me in a way that I knew not, and my residence abroad continued about three years.”^[9]

III

When Haldane arrived in Paris, a chance acquaintance came to his aid unexpectedly: Mr. Hillhouse, who belonged to the staff of the American Embassy, kindly supplied him with information about the present condition and prospects of Continental Protestantism. He therefore decided to call on the only two individuals able to help him in his task. He found Pastor Moulinie at Geneva, but could make very little of him, as he acquiesced in everything said or suggested. From age, he turned to youth. M. Galland, a licenciate, he discovered newly ordained at Berne — “very ignorant

respecting the Gospel, but willing to inquire.” After eight days of close conference he resolved, after some hesitation, to return to Geneva. Galland held out the unpromising inducement that there was a young country pastor named Gausson at Satigny, who would “listen to his statements, draw himself up, but not answer a word.” There was also the prospect of meeting at Geneva Professor Sack of Berlin (he might go on to Germany if he despaired of Switzerland). He was more hopeful after meeting Miss Greaves, “a pious and zealous English lady” at Lausanne; at Basle he was not much impressed by that flaming evangelist, Me. De Krudener (the Aimee Semple Macpherson of her age), but he liked M. Empaytaz, her young chaplain, who had just hurled his thunderbolt against the Venerable Company.

Mr. and Mrs. Haldane arrived in Geneva in the late autumn of 1816. There was much of historical interest — the Cathedral of Calvin, the Auditoire where Knox preached, and the fortifications that for centuries had made Geneva a city of refuge for the oppressed. The lakeside, the Alps, the arrowy Rhone and the glorious sunsets certainly appealed to Robert Haldane. But he had not come to enjoy a holiday or to indulge in historical meditation on ground once familiar to Knox. It was Geneva’s *present* condition that distressed him. He was resolved not to linger there unless he could find an outlet for evangelism. He derived no satisfaction from his conversation with Professor Sack; he got red and confused when young Gausson called. He resolved to quit Geneva for Montauban, the center of the French Reformed Church.

“The Lord, however, is often pleased to overrule our purposes by occurrences which, in themselves, appear trifling, and thus to bring about results that could not have been anticipated.”

M. Moulinie had offered to conduct Mrs. Haldane to see a model of the Alps, a little way out of town. Unable to come owing to a severe headache, the old gentleman had sent M. James, a Divinity student who spoke English. Mrs. Haldane must have found her guide rather preoccupied, for Mr. Haldane plied him with religious questions. Next day, he brought a friend, Charles Rieu.

“I questioned them about their personal hope of salvation, and the foundation of that hope. Had they been trained in the schools of Socrates or Plato, and enjoyed no other means of instruction, they could scarcely have been more ignorant of the doctrines of the Gospel.”

James talked to Rieu far into the night and exclaimed:

“Here is a man who knows the Bible like Calvin!”

Haldane's hopes were heightened; he decided to postpone his departure at any rate. He was detained at Geneva by the voice of Youth, as Calvin had been at Farel's urgent request. The door of opportunity was now open. Like Paul, “he dwelt in his own hired house.” He established his headquarters at 19 Place Maurice on the Promenade S. Antoine. On the first floor he engaged two spacious rooms with folding doors, overlooking the gardens, with a fine view of L. Lemane and the Alps. So many students came to consult him and at such different hours that he started a study circle, meeting thrice a week from 6 pm. till 8 pm. Throughout the winter of 1816-17 twenty to thirty of them took their places regularly on each side of a long table, on which were laid Bibles in French, English, German, etc., besides the original Greek and Hebrew (“*the beau ideal* of the study of theology!” declared Dr. Chalmers on hearing these meetings described at the Free Church Assembly of 1845 by MM. Monod and Merle D.Aubigne). “It was as the expositor of the Bible that Robert Haldane came, and to no other authority whatsoever did he make his appeal.” Human wisdom would not have chosen him as exactly the type of man likely to win Geneva from Socinianism to orthodoxy. He possessed no European reputation as a scholar; he was not even a university graduate; he had never attended a theological seminary. He could speak French, but not fluently. His manners were foreign — dignified, but not vivacious. His well-powdered wig recalled the fashions of the 18th century. His biographer regretted that he would never sit for his portrait. The *Lives* contain a print of his brother James, who had strong, manly features with a fine forehead.

Robert Haldane concentrated on *The Epistle to the Romans*, that Magna Charta of Evangelical Freedom. One might suppose that these young men would have had enough sustained exposition in their Divinity lectures. Actually, God's word was a *terra incognita* to most of them. Two of the students, both famous preachers in their maturity, bore witness to this. Frederic Monod remarked:

“I did not, as part of my studies, read one single chapter of the Word of God, except a few Psalms, etc., exclusively with a view to learning Hebrew, and I did not receive one single lesson of exegesis of the Old or New Testaments.”

J-H. Merle D'Aubigne, in a speech at Edinburgh in 1845, declared:

“When I and M. Monod attended the University of Geneva, there was a Professor of Divinity, who confined himself to lecturing on the immortality of the soul, the existence of God and similar topics. As to the Trinity, he did not believe it. Instead of the Bible, he gave us quotations from Seneca and Plato. St. Seneca and St. Plato were the two saints whose writings he held up to our admiration. But the Lord sent one of His servants to Geneva; and I well remember the visit of Robert Haldane. I heard of him first as a Scotch gentleman, who spoke much about the Bible, which seemed a very strange thing to me and the other students, to whom it was a shut book. I afterwards met Mr. Haldane at a private house and heard him read from *Romans* about the natural corruption of man — of which I had never before heard . . . I remember saying to Mr. Haldane, ‘Now I see the doctrine of sin in the Bible.’ ‘Yes,’ replied that good man, ‘but do you see it in your own heart?’ That was but a simple question, but it came home to my conscience. It was the sword of the Spirit.”

This was the beginning of D'Aubigne's conversion. He who had championed his Socinian professors was one day to be a burning and a shining light of Continental Evangelicalism.^[10]

These conferences (“journs Haldane”) appealed to the students because doctrine was wedded to life; the teacher was in earnest about their souls and the souls of those who might be committed to their pastoral care. With unwearying patience he would listen to ignorant objections, scholarly cavils, and sophisticated attempts to entrap him into inconsistency. His theory of Verbal Inspiration was that of standardized Scottish Evangelicalism a century ago. He refused “to soften the strong features of divine truth”; to mitigate the rigors of Calvinism was to accommodate the Gospel to the likes and dislikes of sinners. But so convincing was his sincerity that he never lacked disciples.

“Even after this lapse of years,” said Monod, “I can picture his tall and manly figure, surrounded by the students, his English Bible in his hand . . . He never wasted his time in arguing against our so-called reasonings, but at once pointed with his finger, ‘Look here, *how readest thou?* There it stands, written with the finger of God.’ He was, in the full

sense of the word, a living concordance.”

As the session advanced, the Faculty of Divinity became more and more jealous of the foreigner who had laid his spell on the souls and affections of their students. Professor Cheneviere, of the Chair of Theology, would walk up and down outside beneath the trees of the Promenade St. Antoine, frowning and taking the names of students immured with Haldane. The pastors instigated the Government to banish him from the canton. When this attempt failed, it was proposed that he should be cited to appear before the Venerable Company. “You will not gain much by that!” remarked a member of that body, knowing how he would annihilate their position.

The Venerable Company, unable to silence Haldane, decided to exclude his students from Genevan pulpits. By the *Reglements* of May 3rd, 1817, every candidate for Ordination had to sign four articles which ruled out any discussion of certain doctrines — the Godhead of the Saviour, original sin, effectual calling and predestination.^[11] The Venerable Company was sore that a stranger should come between them and their students: they forgot that Calvin once came as a stranger to Geneva.

Several years later Professor Cheneviere pointedly attacked Haldane as chiefly responsible for the agitation that upset the Church and caused schism (*Summary of the Theological Controversies which have of late years agitated Geneva*). He described him as a fanatical sectarian, who, obsessed by an abnormal appetite for “the mysterious” in religion, made proselytes whom he “inoculated with his own intolerant spirit” and taught “to despise reason” and “to trample on good works.” Haldane himself answered Cheneviere in a pamphlet published both in English and French (1824). He met his opponent point by point, disclaiming fanaticism, ultra-Puritanism and sectarianism.

“I am free to declare, that never in my life did I hear the Word of God so directly contradicted from the pulpit. In your exclamation, ‘Ah! are we not born pure?’ profound ignorance of the Word of God was manifested, and the whole train of your reasoning proceeded on this assumed principle — a principle not more contrary to the express declarations of Scripture, the conduct of Providence, and the whole plan of redemption, than to the universal experience of mankind. ‘And yet, sir, you are a Theological Professor at Geneva!’”

Haldane does not seem to have been unfair in this controversy, in spite of his

rigid views of predestination and reprobation. Even Daniel Wilson, the saintly Bishop of Calcutta, described Cheneviere as a “a harsh, violent, impracticable man, confessedly a Socinian in principle. He really frightened me by his fierce attack on spiritual religion.” Cheneviere was the chief persecutor of Cesar Malan, a young Genevese minister, a Socinian when he was ordained (1810) — “*messenger sans message*.” Malan’s year of deliverance was 1816; his awakening was completed by reading aloud a passage from *Ephesians* (“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”). On December 31st, 1816, he met Haldane, and felt that here was a kindred spirit. Malan’s philanthropic and educational ideals (he studied under Pestalozzi) were now fired by a new rapture, for he no sooner found salvation by grace than he proclaimed it.

At Easter, 1817, Malan was invited to preach in the Temple of the Madeleine; he preached righteousness by faith in the Risen Christ — vital, experimental religion instead of lifeless formalism. At first he was heard in profound silence which soon gave place to murmurs of dissatisfaction. The solemnity of his appeal was intensified by the evening shadows. Pointing to a wall on the right of the pulpit, he declared:

“If at this moment the mysterious hand, which once in Babylon wrote silently the death-doom of a vicious king, should come out and write on this wall the story of your life; if the lines should truly declare what you had done and thought, far from the eyes of men and in the secret of your own hearts — which of you would dare to lift his eyes?”

Some of his hearers furtively glanced at the wall, others shrugged their shoulders. After the Benediction Malan strode through the congregation like a soldier drummed out of the army; his relatives turned against him, his wife was greatly distressed. As he crossed the threshold of the temple Robert Haldane stepped up and shook hands with him. “Thank God, the Gospel has again been preached in Geneva! You will be a martyr (literally a witness) to the truth of God in this place.”

Excluded from the schools and pulpits of Geneva for being faithful to Calvin’s Catechism and his Church’s doctrinal standards, Malan went out of the city to preach at Ferney-Voltaire, so long the headquarters of the arch-enemy of the Christian Faith. In 1820 he built “The Chapel of Testimony” in his own garden. But already, by Easter 1817, Haldane felt that a true son of

Calvin had arisen to continue his work. He entirely approved of the spirit expressed by his modest statement: “I am not a theologian. All that I know is the sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ.”

IV

Robert Haldane left Geneva on 20th June, 1817. As Paul heard a voice, “Come over into Macedonia and help us,” so the Apostle to Geneva heard a call from Protestant France, urging him recall the Huguenots to the Evangel. [12] Before setting out for Montauban, he urged his Genevan friends to be steadfast to the Word of God, to shun noise (*eclat*), never to act without mature consultation, and not to expose themselves to needless persecution. He himself had been aware of the pitfalls that lay ahead for anyone who sought to introduce innovations; his one aim was to re-introduce the essential truths of the Gospel, on which the Church of Geneva had been founded. He had become a Baptist in his personal views, but acted consistently on the principle, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.” Unfortunately, a new arrival was to stir up trouble. Haldane was preparing for his journey and actually counting the money brought from the bankers, when a visitor was announced — a Scottish connection. Henry Drummond was in his thirtieth year, a man of wealth and breeding, who also had sold his estate in order to free himself for Christian service. [13] He explained that he was on his way to Palestine, but was driven by a storm into Genoa; he had heard of Mr. Haldane’s doings at Geneva and had decided to come at once. Haldane agreed that it was “a providential circumstance.”

The Venerable Company soon found out that if they had been punished with whips, they were now to be chastised with scorpions. Had they known their New Testament, they might have quoted: “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts 17:6). Drummond openly urged that the students who had been refused ordination should form a new denomination. He stressed the mystical union of Christ and His Church, rather than Justification by Faith. A deputation was sent by the Venerable Company. Professor Cheneviere asked if he was going to teach the same doctrines as Mr. Haldane. Drummond replied by requesting from him a statement of Haldane's doctrines, whereupon the Professor left the hotel in a rage. The troublesome islander refused to be silenced by the Council of State. Asked to leave the city, he followed the neo-orthodox fashion of retiring to

Voltaire's retreat, Femey. There he published at his own expense a new edition of the old French Bible version of Martin, to displace the official Socinian edition of 1805. He also organized the "Continental Missionary Society" to support his revival work. Reckless charges of rationalism against Continental Protestants, Millenarian and (later) Irvingite propaganda, deprived the association of much potential good. Henry Drummond lacked the prudence and poise of Robert Haldane. Instead of following the wise policy of Malan who quietly ignored the hostility of the Venerable Company, he encouraged the excluded students to separate their own account and build a chapel at Bourg du Four (1818); several of them were ordained by English Nonconformists at the Poultry Chapel in London. The dissidents were fortified by Pictet's dictum that "every separation is not a schism, though every schism is a separation." But was it necessary to have two opposition churches? The "Bourg du Four" tended towards Congregationalism; it tended also towards Methodist emotionalism, and was later split by Darbyism. Malan's "Chapel of the Testimony" was strictly Calvinistic in doctrine and administration, losing members to the more eclectic, sectarian body. When Malan was deposed by the Venerable Company in 1823 he applied to the Church of Scotland for admission; he was told, however, that it was legally essential that he study Divinity four years at a Scottish University! He received a certificate of ministerial status from the Scottish Seceders,^[14] and in 1826 was honored with a D.D. by Glasgow University. He became famous as an evangelist all over Europe and was allowed to preach to the World's Evangelical Alliance (1861) from the pulpit of Geneva Cathedral, where he had not spoken for forty years.

Dr. James I. Good, in his *History of the Swiss Reformed Church since the Reformation* (1913), has pointed out that by the close of the 19th century the cause started in such a small way by Haldane had triumphed. By 1885, the 350th anniversary of the Reformation, the Consistory of Geneva was equally divided between rationalists and orthodox. In recent years the sharp separation between rationalists and reactionary conservatives has tended to break down. The liberals have grown more evangelical, and the evangelicals (no longer insisting on the shibboleths of historic Calvinism) have grown more liberal.^[15] It is a sign of the time that the descendants of Professor Cheneviere are now enthusiastic supporters of vital and positive Christianity. It is Romanism and materialism that are the enemies of the National Church

of Geneva to-day.

V

In retrospect, we can now see Haldane's achievement in truer perspective. The Evangelical Revival in Geneva has often been criticized as a foreign movement that introduced the vagaries of English sectarianism — ultra-Puritan ethics, weak emotionalism, morbid fear of culture, sensational preaching. There must have been *some* grounds for caricaturing the adherents of the movement as “Momiers” (“Mummers” — mountebanks at a fair). Henry Drummond must bear a share of the blame for encouraging individualism and fanaticism, though he was nominally Anglican, and his subsequent leadership of the “Catholic Apostolic Church” revealed a strong trend to authoritarianism and ritualism.

Cesar Malan was a man after Haldane's heart. Born evangelist as he was, he believed that reason must be hallowed, not repressed: some of the “Methodists,” as the Revivalists were called, behaved as if it was necessary to abandon reason, intelligence and common sense after their “Conversion.” The revivalists were inclined to build up pious conclaves: Malan, like his forefathers, appealed to the people as a whole. Aware of the dangers of subjective individualism, he was loyal to the orderly traditions and austere worship of the Reformed Church. “Fusion, *confusion*; union, *communion*” he would remark. He was not only an accurate classical scholar, but one of the greatest hymn-writers of the French-speaking world.^[16] He had not the genius of Vinet, in the neighboring canton of Vaud, but he is worthy of an honored place in the European religious scenes of the early 19th century. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th ed.) merely mentions him as the father of Solomon Caesar Malan, tutor in Lord Tweedsdale's family, and later orientalist and English rector, who is allotted over half a column. But for Haldane's encouragement Cesar Malan, at the critical moment of his life, might never have made his splendid stand against the rationalist persecutors (rationalists can persecute, as well as the orthodox when they have the power). The same applies to the band of young “men touched by the hand of God,” who, in desperate need, found in the grave Scottish gentleman an elder brother. To the names of Empaytaz, Guers, Gausson and Pyte (Evangelist of the Pyrenees) we must add that of Felix Nef, the “Apostle of the Alps,” his “grandson in the faith.” Then there was Merle D'Aubigne, won for the faith

by Haldane in his most impressionable years. Me. Blanche Bieler has told the story of this descendant of distinguished Huguenot exiles (*Une Famille de Refuge*, 1929). D'Aubigne spread the faith that he had caught, from Hamburg to Brussels, where, as chaplain to the King of the Netherlands, he was also evangelist till Belgium broke with Holland in 1830. Then came his return to Geneva, his suspension by the National Church (which had yet to learn by experience), his founding, with Gausson, of an Evangelical Divinity School; that was the prelude to world-wide fame as historian of Protestantism and his honored reception in England, Scotland, Germany, etc. Like Dr. Chalmers and Baron Bunsen he was a leader of oecumenical Protestantism in his age.

On his return from the Continent in 1823, Robert Haldane spent much time over the "Apocrypha Controversy," which might have been better spent otherwise. It was his characteristic limitation that he had not been able to learn from his opponents: opposition merely made him more dogmatic in his convictions about the literal inspiration of the Bible. In successive editions^[17] of his *Exposition of Romans* he attacked the broader views of Tholuck and Moses Stuart as "very dangerous misrepresentations." It was his life, however, that mattered rather than his thought. And when he died on 12th December, 1842, it was felt throughout Britain, as well as in Switzerland and France, that a great Christian had passed on. "Know ye not there is a prince fallen this day in Israel?" He was fittingly buried in Glasgow Cathedral. His brother James survived him nine years.

Merle D'Aubigne, pointing out Haldane's quarters at 19 Place Maurice to a French pastor, exclaimed: "*Voila le berceau de la Seconde Reformation de Geneve!*" If Geneva communicated light to Knox, she received it again from a successor of Knox who, two and a half centuries later, re-lit the candle of the Church's faith in a Divine Saviour.

The Comte de St. George, presiding at a meeting of the Evangelical Society of Geneva in 1852, paid a memorable tribute to Calvin Redivivus: "The Church of Christ knows nothing of the political limits of kingdoms or republics. Geneva remembers with gratitude that it was France that sent her Farel, Calvin and Theodore Beza, nor is she ashamed to trace the origin of the present revival to a pious Scotsman, Robert Haldane."

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Each canton has its own church and traditions; generalization must allow for diversity. Cp. Jas. I. Good's *History of the Swiss Reformed Church* (Reformed Ch. Publications, Philadelphia, 1913).

[2] See Stanley Weyman's novel, *The Long Night*.

[3] Cp. P. Wernle, *Der schweizerische Protestantismus im XVIII Jhrt.* (Tubingen, 1923.)

[4] Space limitations unfortunately preclude elucidation of developments in Geneva up to the time of Haldane.

[5] *The Lives of Robert and James Haldane* by Alexander Haldane, of the Inner Temple. Edinburgh, 1852 (8th ed., 1871.)

[6] *Op. Cit.*, p. 84.

[7] "When Dr. John Brown refused in 1833 to pay the tax . . . for the Established Church, R. Haldane denounced his conduct as 'rebellion against Christ,' and was warmly commended for his action by Dr. Chalmers." (W. B. Selbie: *Nonconformity*, H.U.L., p. 223.)

[8] Cp. G. L. S. Thompson: *The Beginnings of Modern Scottish Congregationalism* (Ph. D. Thesis in New College, Edinburgh; based on the Kinniburgh Papers.

[9] This and further autobiographical data are drawn from his friendly letter to Rev. E. Bickersteth, a pamphlet correcting some mistakes of *A Voice from the Alps* by R. Burgess (Sept. 4, 1839).

[10] L. Maury, *Le Reveil religieux dans L' Eglise reformee a Geneve et en France*, 1810-50; *etude historique et dogmatique* (2 vols., Paris, 1892).

[11] Cp. H. Heyer, *L' Eglise de Geneva, 1535-1907* (Geneva, 1909). A collection of official documents, some relevant to the Revival of 1817.

[12] Owing to space limitation it is impossible to describe this sequel.

[13] See my biography, *Edward Irving and His Circle* (Jas. Clarke, 1937). It is interesting to note that both Haldane and Drummond were men of such social standing as secured them an entree into the highest circles of Geneva. Malan, D'Aubigne and many of their lay supporters were gentlemen of good position, respected in the community. The same was true of Vinet's followers

in Canton Vaud.

[14] The Secession leader. Dr. Heugh, wrote an account of *Religion in Geneva* (Edinburgh, 1844).

[15] The only cantons that still support a State Church are Basle, Bern, Zurich, Vaud and Schaffhausen.

[16] C. Malan's *Vie et Travaux de Cesar Malan* (Geneva, 1869). E. T. (Nisbet, 1869).

[17] London 1836, 37, 38. Edinburgh 1842, 8th ed. 1859, 9th ed. 1874. The modern reader would not be attracted by Haldane's style.