THE JOHN CALVIN BIBLE COMMENTARIES

GENESIS
24 - 50

Commentaries On Genesis 24 - 50 John Calvin

Contents:

John Calvin - A Biography

Commentaries On Genesis 24 - 50

Chapter 24.

Chapter 25.

Chapter 26.

Chapter 27.

Chapter 28.

Chapter 29.

Chapter 30.

Chapter 31.

Chapter 32.

Chapter 33.

Chapter 34.

Chapter 35

Chapter 36.

Charter 27

Chapter 37.

Chapter 38.

Chapter 39.

Chapter 40.

Chapter 41.

Chapter 42.

Chapter 43.

Chapter 44.

Chapter 45.
Chapter 46.
Chapter 47.
Chapter 48.
Chapter 49.
Chapter 50.
Footnotes

Commentaries On Genesis 24 - 50, John Calvin Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck 86450 Altenmünster, Germany

ISBN: 9783849620790

www.jazzybee-verlag.de admin@jazzybee-verlag.de

John Calvin - A Biography

By William Barry

This man, undoubtedly the greatest of Protestant divines, and perhaps, after St. Augustine, the most perseveringly followed by his disciples of any Western writer on theology, was born at Noyon in Picardy, France, 10 July, 1509, and died at Geneva, 27 May, 1564.

A generation divided him from Luther, whom he never met. By birth, education, and temper these two protagonists of the reforming movement were strongly contrasted. Luther was a Saxon peasant, his father a miner; Calvin sprang from the French middle-class, and his father, an attorney, had purchased the freedom of the City of Noyon, where he practised civil and canon law. Luther entered the Order of Augustinian Hermits, took a monk's vows, was made a priest and incurred much odium by marrying a nun. Calvin never was ordained in the Catholic Church; his training was chiefly in law and the humanities; he took no vows. Luther's eloquence made him popular by its force, humour, rudeness, and vulgar style. Calvin spoke to the learned at all times, even when preaching before multitudes. His manner is classical; he reasons on system; he has little humour; instead of striking with a cudgel he uses the weapons of a deadly logic and persuades by a teacher's authority, not by a demagogue's calling of names. He writes French as well as Luther writes German, and like him has been reckoned a pioneer in the modern development of his native tongue. Lastly, if we term the doctor of Wittenberg a mystic, we may sum up Calvin as a scholastic; he gives articulate expression to the principles which Luther had stormily thrown out upon the world in his vehement pamphleteering; and the "Institutes" as they were left by their author have remained ever since the standard of orthodox Protestant belief in all the Churches known as "Reformed." His French disciples called their sect "the religion"; such it has proved to be outside the Roman world.

The family name, spelt in many ways, was Cauvin latinized according to the custom of the age as Calvinus. For some unknown reason the Reformer is commonly called Maître Jean C. His mother, Jeanne Le Franc, born in the Diocese of

Cambrai, is mentioned as "beautiful and devout"; she took her little son to various shrines and brought him up a good Catholic. On the father's side, his ancestors were seafaring men. His grandfather settled at Pont l'Evêgue near Paris, and had two sons who became locksmiths; the third was Gerard, who turned procurator at Novon, and there his four sons and two daughters saw the light. He lived in the Place au Blé (Cornmarket). Noyon, a bishop's see, had long been a fief of the powerful old family of Hangest, who treated it as their personal property. But an everlasting quarrel, in which the city took part, went on between the bishop and the chapter. Charles de Hangest, nephew of the too wellknown Georges d'Amboise, Archbishop of Rouen, surrendered the bishopric in 1525 to his own nephew John, becoming his vicar-general. John kept up the battle with his canons until the Parliament of Paris intervened, upon which he went to Rome, and at last died in Paris in 1577. This prelate had Protestant kinsfolk; he is charged with having fostered heresy which in those years was beginning to raise its head among the French. Clerical dissensions, at all events, allowed the new doctrines a promising field; and the Calvins were more or less infected by them before 1530.

Gerard's four sons were made clerics and held benefices at a tender age. The Reformer was given one when a boy of twelve, he became Curé of Saint-Martin de Marteville in the Vermandois in 1527, and of Pont l'Eveque in 1529. Three of the boys attended the local Collège des Capettes, and there John proved himself an apt scholar. But his people were intimate with greater folk, the de Montmor, a branch of the line of Hangest, which led to his accompanying some of their children to Paris in 1523, when his mother was probably dead and his father had married again. The latter died in 1531, under excommunication from the chapter for not sending in his

accounts. The old man's illness, not his lack of honesty, was, we are told, the cause. Yet his son Charles, nettled by the censure, drew towards the Protestant doctrines. He was accused in 1534 of denying the Catholic dogma of the Eucharist, and died out of the Church in 1536; his body was publicly gibbeted as that of a recusant.

Meanwhile, young John was going through his own trials at the University of Paris, the dean or syndic of which, Noel Bédier, had stood up against Erasmus and bore hard upon Le Fèvre d'Etaples (Stapulensis), celebrated for his translation of the Bible into French. Calvin, a "martinet", or oppidan, in the Collèege de la Marche, made this man's acquaintance (he was from Picardy) and may have glanced into his Latin commentary on St. Paul, dated 1512, which Doumerque considers the first Protestant book emanating from a French pen. Another influence tending the same way was that of Corderius, Calvin's tutor, to whom he dedicated afterwards his annotation of I Thessalonians, remarking, "if there be any good thing in what I have published, I owe it to you". Corderius had an excellent Latin style, his life was austere, and his "Colloquies" earned him enduring fame. But he fell under suspicion of heresy, and by Calvin's aid took refuge in Geneva, where he died September 1564. A third herald of the "New Learning" was George Cop, physician to Francis I, in whose house Calvin found a welcome and gave ear to the religious discussions which Cop favoured. And a fourth was Pierre-Robert d'Olivet of Noyon, who also translated the Scriptures, our youthful man of letters, his nephew, writing (in 1535) a Latin preface to the Old Testament and a French one — his first appearance as a native author — to the New Testament.

By 1527, when no more than eighteen, Calvin's education was complete in its main lines. He had learned to be a

humanist and a reformer. The "sudden conversion" to a spiritual life in 1529, of which he speaks, must not be taken quite literally. He had never been an ardent Catholic; but the stories told at one time of his ill-regulated conduct have no foundation; and by a very natural process he went over to the side on which his family were taking their stand. In 1528 he inscribed himself at Orléans as a law student, made friends with Francis Daniel, and then went for a year to Bourges, where he began preaching in private. Margaret d'Angoulême, sister of Francis I, and Duchess of Berry, was living there with many heterodox Germans about her.

He is found again at Paris in 1531. Wolmar had taught him Greek at Bourges; from Vatable he learned Hebrew; and he entertained some relations with the erudite Budaeus. About this date he printed a commentary on Seneca's "De Clementiâ". It was merely an exercise in scholarship, having no political significance. Francis I was, indeed, handling Protestants severely, and Calvin, now Doctor of Law at Orléans, composed, so the story runs, an oration on Christian philosophy which Nicholas Cop delivered on All Saints' Day, 1532, both writer and speaker having to take instant flight from pursuit by the royal inquisitors. This legend has been rejected by modern critics. Calvin spent some time, however, with Canon du Tillet at Angoulême under a feigned designation. In May, 1534, he went to Novon, gave up his benefice, and, it is said, was imprisoned. But he got away to Nerac in Bearn, the residence of the Duchess Margaret, and there again encountered Le Fèvre, whose French Bible had been condemned by the Sorbonne to the flames. His next visit to Paris fell out during a violent campaign of the Lutherans against the Mass, which brought on reprisals, Etienne de la Forge and others were burnt in the Place de Grève; and Calvin accompanied by du Tillet, escaped — though not without adventures — to Metz and Strasburg. In the latter

city Bucer reigned supreme. The leading reformers dictated laws from the pulpit to their adherents, and this journey proved a decisive one for the French humanist, who, though by nature timid and shy, committed himself to a war on paper with his own sovereign. The famous letter to Francis I is dated 23 August, 1535. It served as a prologue to the "Institutes", of which the first edition came out in March, 1536, not in French but in Latin. Calvin's apology for lecturing the king was, that placards denouncing the Protestants as rebels had been posted up all over the realm. Francis I did not read these pages, but if he had done so he would have discovered in them a plea, not for toleration, which the Reformer utterly scorned, but for doing away with Catholicism in favour of the new gospel. There could be only one true Church, said the young theologian, therefore kings ought to make an utter end of popery. (For an account of the "Institutes" see) The second edition belongs to 1539, the first French translation to 1541; the final Latin, as revised by its author, is of 1559; but that in common use, dated 1560, has additions by his disciples. "It was more God's work than mine", said Calvin, who took for his motto "Omnia ad Dei gloriam", and in allusion to the change he had undergone in 1529 assumed for his device a hand stretched out from a burning heart.

A much disputed chapter in Calvin's biography is the visit which he was long thought to have paid at Ferraro to the Protestant Duchess Renée, daughter of Louis XII. Many stories clustered about his journey, now given up by the best-informed writers. All we know for certain is that the Reformer, after settling his family affairs and bringing over two of his brothers and sisters to the views he had adopted undertook, in consequence of the war between Charles V and Francis I, to reach Bale by way of Geneva, in July, 1536. At Geneva the Swiss preacher Fare, then looking for help in his propaganda, besought him with such vehemence

to stay and teach theology that, as Calvin himself relates, he was terrified into submission. We are not accustomed to fancy the austere prophet so easily frightened. But as a student and recluse new to public responsibilities, he may well have hesitated before plunging into the troubled waters of Geneva, then at their stormiest period. No portrait of him belonging to this time is extant. Later he is represented as of middle height, with bent shoulders, piercing eyes, and a large forehead; his hair was of an auburn tinge. Study and fasting occasioned the severe headaches from which he suffered continually. In private life he was cheerful but sensitive, not to say overbearing, his friends treated him with delicate consideration. His habits were simple; he cared nothing for wealth, and he never allowed himself a holiday. His correspondence, of which 4271 letters remain, turns chiefly on doctrinal subjects. Yet his strong, reserved character told on all with whom he came in contact; Geneva submitted to his theocratic rule, and the Reformed Churches accepted his teaching as though it were infallible.

Such was the stranger whom Farel recommended to his fellow Protestants, "this Frenchman", chosen to lecture on the Bible in a city divided against itself. Geneva had about 15,000 inhabitants. Its bishop had long been its prince limited, however, by popular privileges. The vidomne, or mayor, was the Count of Savoy, and to his family the bishopric seemed a property which, from 1450, they bestowed on their younger children. John of Savoy, illegitimate son of the previous bishop, sold his rights to the duke, who was head of the clan, and died in 1519 at Pignerol. Jean de la Baume, last of its ecclesiastical princes, abandoned the city, which received Protestant teachers from Berne in 1519 and from Fribourg in 1526. In 1527 the arms of Savoy were torn down; in 1530 the Catholic party underwent defeat, and Geneva became independent. It had

two councils, but the final verdict on public measures rested with the people. These appointed Farel, a convert of Le Fevre, as their preacher in 1534. A discussion between the two Churches from 30 May to 24 June, 1535 ended in victory for the Protestants. The altars were desecrated, the sacred images broken, the Mass done away with. Bernese troops entered and "the Gospel" was accepted, 21 May, 1536. This implied persecution of Catholics by the councils which acted both as Church and State. Priests were thrown into prison; citizens were fined for not attending sermons. At Zürich, Basle, and Berne the same laws were established. Toleration did not enter into the ideas of the time.

But though Calvin had not introduced this legislation, it was mainly by his influence that in January, 1537 the "articles" were voted which insisted on communion four times a year, set spies on delinquents, established a moral censorship, and punished the unruly with excommunication. There was to be a children's catechism, which he drew up; it ranks among his best writings. The city now broke into "jurants" and "nonjurors" for many would not swear to the "articles"; indeed, they never were completely accepted. Questions had arisen with Berne touching points that Calvin judged to be indifferent. He made a figure in the debates at Lausanne defending the freedom of Geneva. But disorders ensued at home, where recusancy was yet rife; in 1538 the council exiled Farel, Calvin, and the blind evangelist, Couraud. The Reformer went to Strasburg, became the guest of Capito and Bucer, and in 1539 was explaining the New Testament to French refugees at fifty two florins a year. Cardinal Sadolet had addressed an open letter to the Genevans, which their exile now answered. Sadolet urged that schism was a crime; Calvin replied that the Roman Church was corrupt. He gained applause by his keen debating powers at Hagenau,

Worms, and Ratisbon. But he complains of his poverty and ill-health, which did not prevent him from marrying at this time Idelette de Bure, the widow of an Anabaptist whom he had converted. Nothing more is known of this lady, except that she brought him a son who died almost at birth in 1542, and that her own death took place in 1549.

After some negotiation Ami Perrin, commissioner for Geneva, persuaded Calvin to return. He did so, not very willingly, on 13 September, 1541. His entry was modest enough. The church constitution now recognized "pastors, doctors, elders, deacons" but supreme power was given to the magistrate. Ministers had the spiritual weapon of God's word; the consistory never, as such, wielded the secular arm Preachers, led by Calvin, and the councils, instigated by his opponents, came frequently into collision. Yet the ordinances of 1541 were maintained; the clergy, assisted by lay elders, governed despotically and in detail the actions of every citizen. A presbyterian Sparta might be seen at Geneva; it set an example to later Puritans, who did all in their power to imitate its discipline. The pattern held up was that of the Old Testament, although Christians were supposed to enjoy Gospel liberty. In November, 1552, the Council declared that Calvin's "Institutes" were a "holy doctrine which no man might speak against." Thus the State issued dogmatic decrees, the force of which had been anticipated earlier, as when Jacques Gouet was imprisoned on charges of impiety in June, 1547, and after severe torture was beheaded in July. Some of the accusations brought against the unhappy young man were frivolous, others doubtful. What share, if any, Calvin took in this judgment is not easy to ascertain. The execution of however must be laid at his door; it has given greater offence by far than the banishment of Castellio or the penalties inflicted on Bolsec — moderate men opposed to extreme views in discipline and doctrine, who fell under

suspicion as reactionary. The Reformer did not shrink from his self-appointed task. Within five years fifty-eight sentences of death and seventy-six of exile, besides numerous committals of the most eminent citizens to prison, took place in Geneva. The iron yoke could not be shaken off. In 1555, under Ami Perrin, a sort of revolt was attempted. No blood was shed, but Perrin lost the day, and Calvin's theocracy triumphed.

"I am more deeply scandalized", wrote Gibbon "at the single execution of Servetus than at the hecatombs which have blazed in the autos-da-fé of Spain and Portugal". He ascribes the enmity of Calvin to personal malice and perhaps envy. The facts of the case are pretty well ascertained. Born in 1511, perhaps at Tudela, Michael Served v Reves studied at Toulouse and was present in Bologna at the coronation of Charles V. He travelled in Germany and brought out in 1531 at Hagenau his treatise "De Trinitatis Erroribus", a strong Unitarian work which made much commotion among the more orthodox Reformers. He met Calvin and disputed with him at Paris in 1534, became corrector of the press at Lyons; gave attention to medicine, discovered the lesser circulation of the blood, and entered into a fatal correspondence with the dictator of Geneva touching a new volume "Christianismi Restitutio," which he intended to publish. In 1546 the exchange of letters ceased. The Reformer called Servetus arrogant (he had dared to criticize the "Institutes" in marginal glosses), and uttered the significant menace, "If he comes here and I have any authority, I will never let him leave the place alive." The "Restitutio" appeared in 1553. Calvin at once had its author delated to the Dominican inquisitor Ory at Lyons, sending on to him the man's letters of 1545-46 and these glosses. Hereupon the Spaniard was imprisoned at Vienne, but he escaped by friendly connivance, and was burnt there only in effigy. Some

extraordinary fascination drew him to Geneva, from which he intended to pass the Alps. He arrived on 13 August, 1553. The next day Calvin, who had remarked him at the sermon, got his critic arrested, the preacher's own secretary coming forward to accuse him. Calvin drew up forty articles of charge under three heads, concerning the nature of God, infant baptism, and the attack which Servetus had ventured on his own teaching. The council hesitated before taking a deadly decision, but the dictator, reinforced by Farel, drove them on. In prison the culprit suffered much and loudly complained. The Bernese and other Swiss voted for some indefinite penalty. But to Calvin his power in Geneva seemed lost, while the stigma of heresy; as he insisted, would cling to all Protestants if this innovator were not put to death. "Let the world see" Bullinger counselled him, "that Geneva wills the glory of Christ."

Accordingly, sentence was pronounced 26 October, 1553, of burning at the stake. "Tomorrow he dies," wrote Calvin to Farel. When the deed was done, the Reformer alleged that he had been anxious to mitigate the punishment, but of this fact no record appears in the documents. He disputed with Servetus on the day of execution and saw the end. A defence and apology next year received the adhesion of the Genevan ministers. Melanchthon, who had taken deep umbrage at the blasphemies of the Spanish Unitarian, strongly approved in well-known words. But a group that included Castellio published at Basle in 1554 a pamphlet with the title, "Should heretics be persecuted?" It is considered the first plea for toleration in modern times. Beza replied by an argument for the affirmative, couched in violent terms; and Calvin, whose favorite disciple he was, translated it into French in 1559. The dialogue, "Vaticanus", written against the "Pope of Geneva" by Castellio, did not get into print until 1612. Freedom of

opinion, as Gibbon remarks, "was the consequence rather than the design of the Reformation."

Another victim to his fiery zeal was Gentile, one of an Italian sect in Geneva, which also numbered among its adherents Alciati and Gribaldo. As more or less Unitarian in their views, they were required to sign a confession drawn up by Calvin in 1558. Gentile subscribed it reluctantly, but in the upshot he was condemned and imprisoned as a perjurer. He escaped only to be twice incarcerated at Berne, where in 1566, he was beheaded. Calvin's impassioned polemic against these Italians betrays fear of the Socinianism which was to lay waste his vineyard. Politically he leaned on the French refugees, now abounding in the city, and more than equal in energy — if not in numbers — to the older native factions. Opposition died out. His continual preaching, represented by 2300 sermons extant in the manuscripts and a vast correspondence, gave to the Reformer an influence without example in his closing years. He wrote to Edward VI, helped in revising the Book of Common Prayer, and intervened between the rival English parties abroad during the Marian period. In the Huguenot troubles he sided with the more moderate. His censure of the conspiracy of Amboise in 1560 does him honour. One great literary institution founded by him, the College, afterwards the University, of Geneva, flourished exceedingly. The students were mostly French. When Beza was rector it had nearly 1500 students of various grades.

Geneva now sent out pastors to the French congregations and was looked upon as the Protestant Rome. Through Knox, "the Scottish champion of the Swiss Reformation", who had been preacher to the exiles in that city, his native land accepted the discipline of the Presbytery and the doctrine of predestination as expounded in Calvin's

"Institutes". The Puritans in England were also descendants of the French theologian. His dislike of theatres, dancing and the amenities of society was fully shared by them. The town on Lake Leman was described as without crime and destitute of amusements. Calvin declaimed against the "Libertines", but there is no evidence that any such people had a footing inside its walls The cold, hard, but upright disposition characteristic of the Reformed Churches, less genial than that derived from Luther, is due entirely to their founder himself. Its essence is a concentrated pride, a love of disputation, a scorn of opponents. The only art that it tolerates is music, and that not instrumental. It will have no Christian feasts in its calendar, and it is austere to the verge of Manichaean hatred of the body. When dogma fails the Calvinist, he becomes, as in the instance of Carlyle, almost a pure Stoic. "At Geneva, as for a time in Scotland," says J. A. Froude, "moral sins were treated as crimes to be punished by the magistrate." The Bible was a code of law, administered by the clergy. Down to his dying day Calvin preached and taught. By no means an aged man, he was worn out in these frequent controversies. On 25 April, 1564, he made his will, leaving 225 French crowns, of which he bequeathed ten to his college, ten to the poor, and the remainder to his nephews and nieces. His last letter was addressed to Farel. He was buried without pomp, in a spot which is not now ascertainable. In the year 1900 a monument of expiation was erected to Servetus in the Place Champel. Geneva has long since ceased to be the head of Calvinism. It is a rallying point for Free Thought, Socialist propaganda, and Nihilist conspiracies. But in history it stands out as the Sparta of the Reformed churches, and Calvin is its Lycurgus.

COMMENTARIES ON GENESIS 24 - 50

CHAPTER 24.

Genesis 24:1-67

- And Abraham was old, (and) well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed
 Abraham in all things.
 Abraham autem senex venit in dies, et Iehova benedixerat Abraham in omnibus.
- 2. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: 2. Et dixit Abraham ad servum suum seniorem domus suae, qui praeerat omnibus qui erant ei, Pone nunc manum tuam sub femore meo:
- **3.** And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: **3.** Et adjurabo to per Iehovam Deum coeli, et Deum terrae, quod non capies uxorem filio meo de filiabus Chenaanaei, in cujus medio ego habito:
- **4.** But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. **4.** Sed ad terram meam, et ad cognationem meam perges, et capies uxorem filio meo Ishac.
- 5. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?
 5. Et dixit ad eum servus, Si forsitan noluerit mulier venire post me ad terram hanc, numquid reducendo reducam filium tuum ad terram unde egressus es?
- 6. And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.6. Et dixit ad eum Abraham Cave tibi ne forte reducas filium meum illuc.
- 7. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. 7. Iehova Deus coeli, qui tulit me e domo patris mei, et e terra cognationis meae, et qui loquutus est

mihi, et qui juravit mihi, dicendo, Semini tuo dabo terram hane: ipse mittet Angelum suum ante to, et capies uxorem filio meo inde.

- **8.** And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. **8.** Quodsi noluerit mulier pergere post to, mundus eris ab adjuratione mea ista: duntaxat filium meum ne reducas illuc.
- 9. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.9. Et posuit servus manum suam sub femore Abraham domini sui, et juravit ei super re hac.
- 10. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master (were) in his hand: and he arose, and went to
 Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.
 10. Et accepit servus decem camelos e camelis domini sui, et perrexit: quia omne bonum domini sui erat in manu ejus: et surrexit, et profectus est in Aram-naharaim, ad civitatem Nachor.
- **11.** And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, *(even)* the time that women go out to draw (water).
- **11.** Et genu flectere fecit camelos extra civitatem ad puteum aquae, tempore vespertino, tempore quo egrediuntur mulieres, quae hauriunt.
- 12. And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.
 12. Et dixit, Iehova Deus domini mei Abraham, occurrere fac nunc coram me hodie, et fac misericordiam cum domino meo Abraham.
- **13.** Behold, I stand *(here)* by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: **13.** Ecce, ego sto juxta fontem aquae, et filiae virorum civitatis egrediuntur ad hauriendam aquam.
- 14. And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: (let the same be) she (that) thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

 14. Sit ergo, puella ad quam dixero, Inclina nunc hydriam tuam, et bibam: et dixerit, Bibe, et etiam camelis tuis potum dabo: ipsam praeparaveris servo tuo Ishac: et per hoc sciam quod feceris misericordiam cum domino meo.

- 15. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.
 15. Et fuit, antequam ipse complevisset loqui, ecce, Ribca egrediebatur, quae nata erat Bethuel filio Milchah uxoris Nachor fratris Abraham, et hydria ejus erat super humerum ejus.
- **16.** And the damsel *(was)* very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.
- **16.** Puella autem erat pulchra aspectu valde, virgo, et vir non cognoverat eam: quae descendit ad fontem, et implevit hydriam suam, et ascendit.
- 17. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.17. Itaque cucurrit servus in occursum ejus, et dixit, Potum da mihi nunc parum aquae ex hydria tua.
- 18. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.18. Et dixit, Bibe, domine mi: et festinavit, et demisit hydriam suam super manum suam, et potum dedit ei.
- **19.** And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw (water) for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. **19.** Ubi complevit potum dare ei: tune dixit, Etiam camelis tuis hauriam, donec compleverint bibere.
- 20. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw (water), and drew for all his camels. 20. Et festinavit, et effudit hydriam suam in canale, et cucurrit adhuc ad puteum ut hauriret: et hausit omnibus camelis ejus.
- 21. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.
 21. Porro vir stupebat super ea tacens, ut sciret utrum secundasset Iehova viam suam, an non.
- 22. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten (shekels) weight of gold;
 22. Et fuit, quum complevissent cameli bibere, protulit vir inaurem auream, semissis pondus ejus: et duas armillas, et posuit super manus ejus: decem aurei pondus earum.

- 23. And said, Whose daughter (art) thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room (in) thy father's house for us to lodge in?23. Et jam dixerat, Filia, cujus es? indica nunc mihi, numquid est in domo patris tui locus nobis ad pernoctandum?
- **24.** And she said unto him, I *(am)* the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. **24.** Et dixerat ad eum, Filia Bethuel sum, filii Milchah, quem peperit ipsa nachor.
- 25. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.
 25. Et dixit ad eum, Etiam palea, etiam pabulum multum est apud nos, etiam locus ad pernoctandum.
- **26.** And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. **26.** Et inclinavit se vir, et incurvavit se Iehova.
- 27. And he said, Blessed (be) the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I (being) in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.
 27. Et dixit, Benedictus Iehova Deus domini mei Abraham, qui non dereliquit misericordiam suam et veritatem suam a domino meo. Ego in via, duxit me Iehova ad domum fratrum domini mei.
- **28.** And the damsel ran, and told (them of) her mother's house these things.
- **28.** Et cucurrit puella, et nuntiavit domui matris suae secundum verba haec.
- 29. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name (was) Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.
 29. Et ipsi Ribca erat frater, et nomen ejus Laban: et cucurrit Laban ad virum foras ad fontem.
- **30.** And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. **30.** Fuit autem, quum vidisset inaurem et armillas in manibus sororis suae, et quum audisset ipse verba Ribca sororis suae, dicendo, Sic loquutus est ad me vir: venit a virum, et ecce, stabat juxta camelos, juxta fontem.

- **31.** And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. **31.** Et dixit, Ingredere benedicte Iehovae, ut quid manes foris? et ego paravi domum, et locum camelis.
- **32.** And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that *(were)* with him. **32.** Et venit vir ad domum, et solvit camelos, et dedit paleam et pabulum camelis, et aquam ad lavandum pedes ejus, et pedes virorum qui erant cum eo.
- **33.** And there was set *(meat)* before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. **33.** Et positum est coram eo, ut comederet: et dixit, Non comedam, donec loquutus fuero verba mea. Et dixit, Loquere.
- **34.** And he said, I *(am)* Abraham's servant. **34.** Dixit igitur, Servus Abraham sum.
- 35. And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.
 35. Iehova autem benedixit domino meo valde, et magnificatus est, et dedit ei pecudes et boves, et argentum, et aurum, et servos, et ancillas, et camelos, et asinos.
- **36.** And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. **36.** Et peperit Sarah uxor domini mei filium domino meo post senectutem suam, et dedit ei omnia quae sunt ei.
- 37. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:37. Et jurare fecit me dominus meus, dicendo, Non capies uxorem filio meo de filiabus Chenaanaei, in cujus terra ego habito:
- **38.** But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. **38.** Sed ad domum patris mei perges, et ad familiam meam, et capies uxorem filio meo.
- 39. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.39. Et dixi domino meo, Forsitan non perget mulier post me.

- 40. And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:
 40. Et dixit ad me, Iehova, in cujus conspectu ambulavi, mittet Angelum suum tecum, et secundabit viam tuam: et capies uxorem filio meo de familia mea, et de domo patris mei.
- **41.** Then shalt thou be clear from *(this)* my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee *(one)*, thou shalt be clear from my oath. **41.** Tunc mundus eris ab adjuratione mea, si veneris ad familiam meam: et si non dederint tibi, eris mundus ab adjuratione mea.
- **42.** And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: **42.** Veni igitur hodie ad fontem, et dixi, Iehova Deus domini mei Abraham, si tu nunc secundas viam meam, per quam ego ambulo:
- **43.** Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw (water), and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; **43.** Ecce, ego sto juxta fontem aquae: itaque sit, virgo quae egredietur ad hauriendum, et dixero ei, Da mihi potum nunc parum aquae ex hydria tua:
- **44.** And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: (*let*) the same (*be*) the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son. **44.** Et dixerit mihi, Etiam tu bibe, et etiam camelis tuis hauriam: ipsa sit uxor, quam praeparavit Iehova filio domini mei.
- **45.** And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew (water): and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. **45.** Ego antequam complerem loqui in corde meo, ecce, Ribca egrediebatur, et hydria ejus erat super humerum ejus, et descendit ad fontem, et hausit: et dixi ad eam, Da mihi potum nunc.
- 46. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her (shoulder), and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.
 46. Et festinavit, et demisit hydriam suam desuper se, et dixit, Bibe, et etiam camelis tuis potum dabo. Et bibi, et etiam camelis dedit potum.

- **47.** And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter *(art)* thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. **47.** Et interrogavi eam, et dixi, Filia cujus es? Et dixit, Filia Bethuel filii nachor, quem peperit ei Milchah. Et posui inaurem super nares ejus, et armillas super manus ejus.
- **48.** And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. **48.** Et inclinavi me, incurvavique me Iehovae, et benedixi Iehovae Deo domini mei Abraham, qui duxit me per viam veritatis, (vel certam fidem,) ut acciperem filiam fratris domini mei filio ejus.
- 49. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.
 49. Et nunc si facitis misericordiam et veritatem cum domino meo, indicate mihi: et si non, indicate mihi, et vertam me ad dexteram vel ad sinistram.
- 50. Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.
 50. Et responderunt Laban et Bethuel, et dixerunt, A Iehova egressa est res: non possumus loqui ad to malum vel bonum.
- 51. Behold, Rebekah (is) before thee, take (her), and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.
 51. Ecce, Ribca coram to, accipe, et vade: et sit uxor filio domini tui, quemadmodum loquutus est Iehova.
- 52. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, (bowing himself) to the earth.52. Et fuit, quando audivit servus Abraham verba eorum, incurvavit se super terram Iehovae.
- 53. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave (them) to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.53. Et protulit servus vasa argentea, et vasa aurea, et vestes, et dedit ipsi Ribcae, et pretiosa dedit fratri ejus, et matri ejus.

- 54. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that (were) with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.
 54. Et comederunt, et biberunt, ipse et viri qui erant cum eo, et pernoctaverunt: et surrexerunt mane: et dixit, Dimitte me, ut vadam ad dominum meum.
- 55. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us (a few) days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.55. Et dixit frater ejus et mater ejus, Maneat puella nobiscum per dies, vel decem: postea ibis, (vel ibit.)
- 56. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.
 56. Et dixit ad eos, Ne retardetis me, quando Iehova secundavit viam meam: dimittite me, et ibo ad dominum meum.
- **57.** And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. **57.** Et dixerunt, Vocemus puellam, et interrogemus os ejus.
- 58. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man?
 And she said, I will go.
 58. Et vocaverunt Ribcam, et dixerunt ad eam,
 Numquid ibis cum viro isto? Et dixit, Ibo.
- **59.** And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. **59.** Et dimiserunt Ribcam sororem suam, et nutricem ejus, et servum Abraham, et viros ejus.
- **60.** And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou *(art)* our sister, be thou (the mother) of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. **60.** Et benedixerunt Ribcae, et dixerunt ei, Soror nostra es, sis in millia decem millium, et haereditet semen tuum portam odio habentium illud.
- 61. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.
 61. Et surrexit Ribea et puellae ejus, et ascenderunt super camelos, et perrexerunt post virum: et tulit servus Ribcah, et abiit.
- 62. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.62. Ishac autem veniebat, qua venitur a Puteo viventis videntis me: et ipse habitabat in terra Meridiana.

- 63. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels (were) coming.
 63. Et egressus erat Ishac ad orandum in agro, dum declinaret vespera: et elevavit oculos suos, et vidit, et ecce, cameli veniebant.
- 64. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.64. Tunc elevavit Ribcah oculos suos, et vidit Ishac, et projecit se de camelo.
- 65. For she (had) said unto the servant, What man (is) this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant (had) said, It (is) my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.
 65. Iam autem dixerat ad servum, Quis est vir iste, qui ambulat per agrum in occursum nostrum? Et dixit servus, Ipse est dominus meus: et accepit velum, et operuit se.
- **66.** And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. **66.** Et narravit servus ipsi Ishac omnia quae fecerat.
- 67. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's (death).
 67. Et introduxit eam Ishac in tabernaculum Sarah matris suae, et accepit Ribcah, fuitque ei in uxorem, at delexit cam: et consolatus est se Ishac post matrem suam.
- 1. And Abraham was old. F455 Moses passes onwards to the relation of Isaac's marriage, because indeed Abraham, perceiving himself to be worn down by old age, would take care that his son should not marry a wife in the land of Canaan. In this place Moses expressly describes Abraham as an old man, in order that we may learn that he had been admonished, by his very age, to seek a wife for his son: for old age itself, which, at the most, is not far distant from death, ought to induce us so to order the affairs of our family, that when we die, peace may be preserved among our posterity, the fear of the Lord may flourish, and rightly-

constituted order may prevail. The old age of Abraham was indeed yet green, as we shall see hereafter; but when he reckoned up his own years he deemed it time to consult for the welfare of his son. Irreligious men, partly because they do not hold marriage sufficiently in honor, partly because they do not consider the importance attached especially to the marriage of Isaac, wonder that Moses, or rather the Spirit of God, should be employed in affairs so minute; but if we have that reverence which is due in reading the Sacred Scriptures, we shall easily understand that here is nothing superfluous: for inasmuch as men can scarcely persuade themselves that the Providence of God extends to marriages, so much the more does Moses insist on this point. He chiefly, however, wishes to teach that God honored the family of Abraham with especial regard, because the Church was to spring from it. But it will be better to treat of everything in its proper order.

2. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant. Abraham here fulfils the common duty of parents, in laboring for and being solicitous about the choice of a wife for his son: but he looks somewhat further; for since God had separated him from the Canaanites by a sacred covenant, he justly fears lest Isaac, by joining himself in affinity with them, should shake off the yoke of God. Some suppose that the deprayed morals of those nations were so displeasing to him, that he conceived the marriage of his son must prove unhappy if he should take a wife from among them. But the special reason was, as I have stated, that he would not allow his own race to be mingled with that of the Canaanites, whom he knew to be already divinely appointed to destruction; yea, since upon their overthrow he was to be put into possession of the land, he was commanded to treat them with distrust as perpetual enemies. And although he had dwelt in tranquility among

them for a time, yet he could not have a community of offspring with them without confounding things which, by the command of God, were to be kept distinct. Hence he wished both himself and his family to maintain this separation entire.

Put, I pray thee, thy hand. It is sufficiently obvious that this was a solemn form of swearing; but whether Abraham had first introduced it, or whether he had received it from his fathers, is unknown. The greater part of Jewish writers declare that Abraham was the author of it; because, in their opinion, this ceremony is of the same force as if his servant had sworn by the sanctity of the divine covenant, since circumcision was in that part of his person. But Christian writers conceive that the hand was placed under the thigh in honor of the blessed seed. F456 Yet it may be that these earliest fathers had something different in view; and there are those among the Jews who assert that it was a token of subjection, when the servant was sworn on the thigh of his master. The more plausible opinion is, that the ancients in this manner swore by Christ; but because I do not willingly follow uncertain conjectures, I leave the question undecided. Nevertheless the latter supposition appears to me the more simple; namely, that servants, when they swore fidelity to their lords, were accustomed to testify their subjection by this ceremony, especially since they say that this practice is still observed in certain parts of the East. That it was no profane rite, which would detract anything from the glory of God, we infer from the fact that the name of God is interposed. It is true that the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham, but he is adjured by God, the Creator of heaven and earth; and this is the sacred method of adjuration, whereby God is invoked as the witness and the judge; for this honor cannot be transferred to another without casting a reproach upon

God. Moreover, we are taught, by the example of Abraham, that they do not sin who demand an oath for a lawful cause; for this is not recited among the faults of Abraham, but is recorded to his peculiar praise. It has already been shown that the affair was of the utmost importance, since it was undertaken in order that the covenant of God might be ratified among his posterity. He was therefore impelled, by just reasons, most anxiously to provide for the accomplishment of his object, by taking an oath of his servant: and beyond doubt, the disposition, and even the virtue of Isaac, were so conspicuous, that in addition to his riches, he had such endowments of mind and person, that many would earnestly desire affinity with him. His father, therefore, fears lest, after his own death, the inhabitants of the land should captivate Isaac by their allurements. Now, though Isaac has hitherto steadfastly resisted those allurements, the snares of which few young men escape, Abraham still fears lest, by shame and the dread of giving offense, he may be overcome. The holy man wished to anticipate these and similar dangers, when he bound his servant to fidelity, by interposing an oath; and it may be that some secret necessity also impelled him to take this course.

3. That thou shalt not take a wife. The kind of discipline which prevailed in Abraham's house is here apparent. Although this man was but a servant, yet, because he was put in authority by the master of the family, his servile condition did not prevent him from being next in authority to his lord; so that Isaac himself, the heir and successor of Abraham, submitted to his direction. To such an extent did the authority of Abraham and reverence for him prevail, that when he substituted a servant in his place, he caused this servant, by his mere will or word, to exercise a power which other masters of families find it difficult to retain for

themselves. The modesty also of Isaac, who suffered himself to be governed by a servant, is obvious; for it would have been in vain for Abraham to enter into engagements with his servant, had he not been persuaded that his son would prove submissive and tractable. It here appears what great veneration he cherished towards his father; because Abraham, relying on Isaac's obedience, confidently calls his servant to him. Now this example should be taken by us as a common rule, to show that it is not lawful for the children of a family to contract marriage, except with the consent of parents; and certainly natural equity dictates that, in a matter of such importance, children should depend upon the will of their parents. How detestable, therefore, is the barbarity of the Pope, who has dared to burst this sacred bond asunder! Wherefore the wantonness of youths is to be restrained, that they may not rashly contract nuptials without consulting their fathers.

4. But thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred. It seems that, in the choice of the place, Abraham was influenced by the thought, that a wife would more willingly come from thence to be married to his son, when she knew that she was to marry one of her own race and country. But because it afterwards follows that the servant came to Padan Aram, some hence infer that Mesopotamia was Abraham's country. The solution, however, of this difficulty is easy. We know that Mesopotamia was not only the region contained between the Tigris and the Euphrates, but that a part also of Chaldea was comprehended in it; for Babylon is often placed there by profane writers. The Hebrew name simply means, "Syria of the rivers." They give the name Aram to that part of Syria which, beginning near Judea, embraces Armenia and other extensive regions, and reaches almost to the Euxine Sea. But when they especially designate those lands which are washed or traversed by

the Tigris and Euphrates, they add the name "Padan:" for we know that Moses did not speak scientifically, but in a popular style. Since, however, he afterwards relates that Laban, the son of Nahor, dwelt at Charran, (Genesis 29:4,) it seems to me probable that Nahor, who had remained in Chaldea, because it would be troublesome to leave his native soil, in process of time changed his mind; either because filial piety constrained him to attend to his decrepit and declining father, or because he had learned that he might have there a home as commodious as in his own country. It certainly appears from the eleventh chapter Genesis 11:1 that he had not migrated at the same time with his father. F457

- **5.** And the servant said unto him. Since he raises no objection respecting Isaac, we may conjecture that he was so fully persuaded of his integrity as to have no doubt of his acquiescence in his father's will. We must also admire the religious scrupulosity of the man, seeing he does not rashly take an oath. What pertained to the faithful and diligent discharge of his own duty he might lawfully promise, under the sanction of an oath; but since the completion of the affair depended on the will of others, he properly and wisely adduces this exception, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me."
- **6.** Beware that thou bring not my son thither again. If the woman should not be found willing, Abraham, commending the event to God, firmly adheres to the principal point, that his son Isaac should not return to his country, because in this manner he would have deprived himself of the promised inheritance. He therefore chooses rather to live by hope, as a stranger, in the land of Canaan, than to rest among his relatives in his native soil: and thus we see that, in perplexed and confused affairs, the mind of the holy man

was not drawn aside from the command of God by any agitating cares; and we are taught, by his example, to follow God through every obstacle. However, he afterwards declares that he looks for better things. By such words he confirms the confidence of his servant, so that he, anticipating with greater alacrity a prosperous issue, might prepare for the journey.

7. The Lord God of heaven. By a twofold argument Abraham infers, that what he is deliberating respecting the marriage of his son will, by the grace of God, have a prosperous issue. First, because God had not led him forth in vain from his own country into a foreign land; and secondly, because God had not falsely promised to give the land, in which he was dwelling as a stranger, to his seed. He might also with propriety be confident that his design should succeed, because he had undertaken it only by the authority, and, as it were, under the auspices of God; for it was his exclusive regard for God which turned away his mind from the daughters of Canaan. He may, however, be thought to have inferred without reason that God would give his son a wife from that country and kindred to which he himself had bidden farewell. But whereas he had left his relatives only at the divine command, he hopes that God will incline their minds to be propitious and favorable to him. Meanwhile he concludes, from the past kindnesses of God, that his hand would not fail him in the present business; as if he would say, "I, who at the command of God left my country, and have experienced his continued help in my pilgrimage, do not doubt that he will also be the guide of thy journey, because it is in reliance on his promise that I lay upon thee this injunction." He then describes the mode in which assistance would be granted; namely, that God would send his angel, for he knew that God helps his servants by the ministration of angels, of which he had