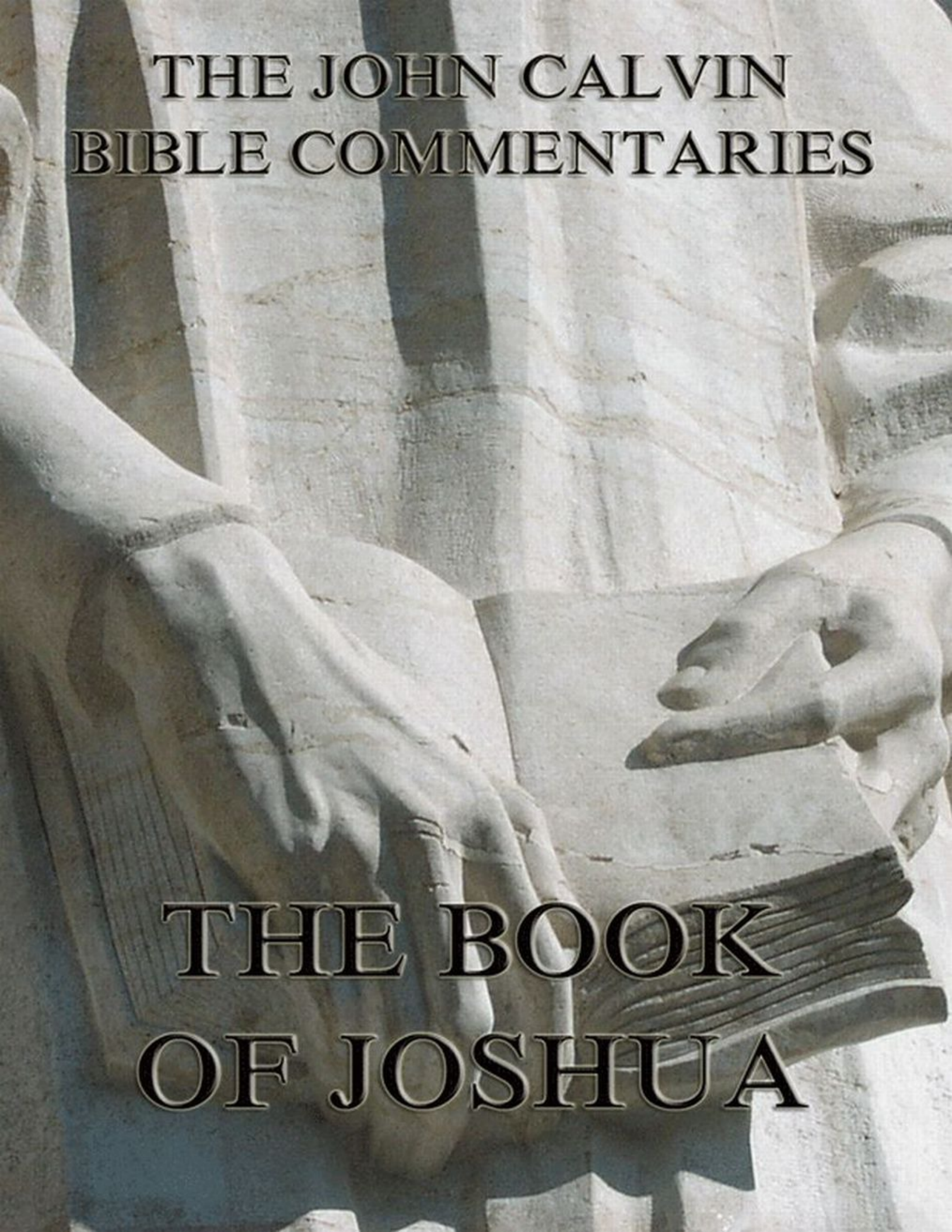

THE JOHN CALVIN BIBLE COMMENTARIES

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Commentaries On The Book Of Joshua

John Calvin

Contents:

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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'Evêque near Paris, and had two sons who became locksmiths; the third was Gerard, who turned procurator at Noyon, 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 well-known 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 Doumergue 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 educatlon 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 Noyon, 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 y 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 THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The Commentary On Joshua was the last literary labor of its venerable Author. When he engaged in it, his constitution, which had never been strong, was completely worn out by excessive exertion, and almost every line of it must have been dictated to his amanuensis during momentary intervals of relief from severe bodily pain. On this point we possess authentic documents which leave no room for doubt.

In a letter dated 30th November 1563, not quite six months before his death, after alluding to the difficulty he felt in continuing his studies, while both mind and body were exhausted by sickness, he states that he had undertaken a Commentary on Joshua, in compliance with the wishes of his friends, but had not then been able to advance beyond the third Chapter, though he had endeavored to be as brief as possible.

Little more than two months after this letter was written, on 6th February 1564, he made his appearance in the pulpit for the last time; and on 10th March following, the complication of diseases which too plainly indicated that his earthly career was about to close, had become so alarming as to cause an entry in the Register of Geneva in the following terms: — "Arrete que chacun prie Dieu pour la sante de M. Calvin, qui est indispose depuis longtemps, et meme en danger de mort:" — "Decreed that every one

pray to God for the health of Mr. Calvin, who has been indisposed for a long time, and even in danger of death."

Such are the circumstances in which this Commentary was composed, and it is impossible, in reflecting on them, not to admire the indomitable energy which Calvin displayed in proceeding with his task, and in meeting the remonstrance's of those who would have withdrawn him from it, with the heroic exclamation, "Would you that the Lord, when He comes, should find me idle!"

A Work written at such a time, and in such a spirit, might justly claim exemption from criticism; but it has no need of indulgence, and can well afford to be judged by its own intrinsic merits. Viewed merely as an intellectual effort, it displays all the excellencies which characterize the other Commentaries of its distinguished Author: viewed in a higher and better light, it is his dying bequest to the Church — a solemn ratification of the whole System of Doctrine which he had so long, so earnestly, and so successfully promulgated.

As an appropriate conclusion both to the present Volume and the others which have preceded it, a valuable Tract, first published in this country in 1845, has been appended. It contains a Preface by the Rev. William Pringle, its original editor, an Essay from the German of Professor Theoluck, and a series of Extracts from Writers often differing widely from each other, but all concurring in a united testimony to the greatness of Calvin's talents, or the excellence of his character. In the present reprint, the chief change consists in the insertion of Additional Testimonies.

The list of Calvin's Writings, which completes the present Volume, is in accordance with that furnished by his greatest Biographer, Henri of Berlin, and will enable the

reader to comprehend at a single glance the amazing extent of his literary labors.

H.B.

December 30, 1854.

ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

As to the Author of this Book, it is better to suspend our judgment than to make random assertions. Those who think that it was Joshua, because his name stands on the title page, rest on weak and insufficient grounds. The name of Samuel is inscribed on a part of the Sacred History containing a narrative of events which happened after his death; and there cannot be a doubt that the book which immediately follows the present is called Judges, not because it was written by them, but because it recounts their exploits. Joshua died before the taking of Hebron and Debir, and yet an account of it is given in the 15th chapter of the present Book. The probability is, that a summary of events was framed by the high priest Eleazar, and furnished the materials out of which the Book of Joshua was composed. It was a proper part of the high priest's duty not only to give oral instruction to the people of his own time, but to furnish posterity with a record of the goodness of God in preserving the Church, and thus provide for the advancement of true religion. And before the Levites became degenerate, their order included a class of scribes or notaries who embodied in a perpetual register everything in the history of the Church which was worthy of being recorded. Let us not hesitate. therefore, to pass over a matter which we are unable to determine, or the knowledge of which is not very necessary, while we are in no doubt as to the essential point — that the doctrine herein contained was dictated by the Holy Spirit for our

use, and confers benefits of no ordinary kind on those who attentively peruse it. [f1]

Although the people had already gained signal victories, and become the occupants of a commodious and tolerably fertile tract of country, the Divine promise as to the land of Canaan still remained suspended. Nay, the leading article in the Covenant was unaccomplished, as if God, after cooping up his people in a corner, had left his work in a shapeless and mutilated form. This Book, then, shows how, when the intolerable impiety of the people had interrupted the course of deliverance, God, while inflicting punishment, so tempered the severity of justice as ultimately to perform what he had promised concerning the inheritance of Canaan.

This suggests the very useful reflection, that while men are cut off by death, and fail in the middle of their career, the faithfulness of God never fails. On the death of Moses a sad change seemed impending; the people were left like a body with its head lopped off. While thus in danger of dispersion, not only did the truth of God prove itself to be immortal, but it was shown in the person of Joshua as in a bright mirror, that when God takes away those whom he has adorned with special gifts, he has others in readiness to supply their place, and that though he is pleased for a time to give excellent gifts to some, his mighty power is not tied down to them, but he is able, as often as seems to him good, to find fit successors, nay, to raise up from the very stones persons qualified to perform illustrious deeds.

First, we see how, when the wandering of forty years in the wilderness had almost effaced the remembrance of the passage of the Red Sea, the course of deliverance was proved to have been uninterrupted by the repetition of the

same miracle in the passage of the Jordan. The renewal of circumcision was equivalent to a re-establishment of the Covenant which had been buried in oblivion by the carelessness of the people, or abandoned by them from despair. Next, we see how they were conducted by the hand of God into possession of the promised land. The taking of the first city was an earnest of the perpetual aid which they might hope for from heaven, since the walls of Jericho fell of their own accord, shaken merely by the sound of trumpets. The nations, however, were not completely routed by a single battle, nor in one short campaign, but were gradually worn out and destroyed by many laborious contests.

Here, it is to be observed, that arduous difficulties were thrown in the way of the people when the kings entered into a league, and came forth to meet them with united forces, because it became necessary not only to war with single nations, but with an immense body which threatened to overwhelm them by one great onset. Ultimately, however, all these violent attempts had no other effect than to make the power of God more manifest, and give brighter displays of mercy and faithfulness in the defense of his chosen people. In fact, their uninterrupted course of success, and their many unparalleled victories, showed the hand of God as it were visibly stretched forth from heaven.

More especially, a signal proof that they were warring under divine auspices was given when the sun was checked in his course at the mere prayer of Joshua, as if the elements had been armed for his assistance, and were waiting ready to obey him. Again, while the delays which occurred in the progress of the war were useful trials of the constancy of the people, we must not lose sight of another admirable use of which Moses, to prevent them from fainting in their minds, had at an earlier period forewarned

them, viz., that God was unwilling to destroy the nations at once, lest the country, from being converted into a kind of desert, might be overrun by wild beasts.

But the provision which God had thus most graciously made for their security, they wickedly perverted to their own destruction: for having obtained what they deemed a large enough space for commodious habitation, they turned backwards to indulge in sloth and cowardice. This one crime brought others along with it. For after they had been enrolled under the banners of the Lord, they treacherously and disobediently refused to fulfil their period of service, in the very same way as deserters, regardless of the military oath, basely quit their standards. [f2] The dominion of the land, which had been divinely offered, they, with flagrant ingratitude, rejected, by taking possession of only a part.

Moreover, though they had been ordered to purge the sacred territory of all pollutions, in order that no profanation of the pure and legitimate worship might remain, they allowed the impious superstitions which God abhorred to be practiced as before; and though they also knew that the order had been partly given as a security for their own safety, lest, through intermixture with the nations, they might be ensnared by their impostures and insidious arts, yet, as if they had determined to court danger, they left them to furnish the fuel of a dire conflagration.

Their obstinate incredulity betrays itself in their disregard of the penalty denounced against such transgression. But they at length learned by experience that God had not threatened in vain, that those nations whom they had wickedly [f3] spared, would prove to them thorns and stings. For they were harassed by constant incursions, pillaged by

rapine, and at length almost oppressed by tyrannical violence. In short, it was not owing to any merit of theirs that the truth of God did not utterly fail. [f4]

On this point, indeed, a question may be raised: for if the promise given to Abraham was founded on the mere good pleasure of God, [f5] then, be the character of the people what it might, it is absurd to say that it could be defeated by their fault. How are we to reconcile the two things, — that the people did not obtain the full and complete inheritance promised to them, and that yet God was true? I answer, that so far was the faithfulness of God [f6] from being overthrown, or shaken, or in any way impaired, that we here perceive more clearly how wonderful are His workings, who, in unsearchable wisdom, knows how to bring light out of darkness.

It had been said to Abraham, (Genesis 15:18) To thy seed will I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates. Joshua affirms that the event drew near, and was actually at hand. But the Israelites, overcome by sloth, do not reach those boundaries; nay, in settling down of their own accord within narrow limits, they in a manner oppose barriers to the divine liberality. In this way the covenant of God seemed to suffer a kind of eclipse.

And there is no doubt that pious minds were often filled with anxiety when they saw His work cut short. But the punishment inflicted on the people for their wickedness was so tempered, that what might otherwise have been a grievous and perilous trial of faith, was converted into a powerful support. The apparent failure reminded the children of God that they were to look forward to a more excellent state, where the divine favor would be more clearly displayed, nay, would be freed from every

obstruction, and shine forth in full splendor. Hence their thoughts were raised to Christ, and it was made known to them that the complete felicity of the Church depended on its Head. In arriving at this conclusion, they were assisted by new prophecies. For the rehearsal which Joshua here makes of the ancient covenant is applied in the Psalms (Psalms 72 and 89) to the Messiah's reign, unto which time, the Lord had, for the purpose of rendering it more glorious, deferred the full fruition of the promised land. The same thing was exemplified in David, who bore a typical resemblance to Christ, and in whom it was shown that the divine promises were only established and confirmed in the hand of a Mediator.

No longer, therefore, does it seem strange that the result promised, after being retarded by the wickedness of the people, was not, fully accomplished till the state of the Church was rightly arranged, seeing that in the person of David the image of the Mediator, on whom the perfect the moderate foretaste which believers received of the divine favor, must have sufficed to sustain [f7] them, preparatory to the more complete realization.

Nor, indeed, was the partition made by Joshua and the heads of the tribes, to whom that duty was intrusted, elusory or fallacious; but the inheritance, in possession of which God had placed them by His own hand, was truly and distinctly divided by His orders. In this respect, too, the sacred observance of the covenant made with Abraham was conspicuous. Jacob, when about to die, had destined certain settlements to some of his children. Had each tribe received its portion simply by the determination and suffrages of men, it might have been thought that they had merely followed the directions of the Patriarch. But when the lot, than which nothing is deemed more fortuitous,

confirmed the prophecy, the stability of the donation [f8] was as clearly ratified as if God had visibly appeared. Accordingly, after the sluggishness of the people put an end to the war, Joshua sent back the tribes of Reuben and Gad, with the half tribe of Manasseh, as if their period of service had expired.

Next follows a remarkable narrative, clearly showing how zealous the Israelites who dwelt in the land of Canaan were to maintain the pure worship of God. For when these two tribes and half tribe had erected a monument of fraternal alliance, the others, thinking that it was an altar intended for sacrifice, and consequently an abomination, immediately determine to declare war, and prepare sooner to destroy their kindred [f9] than allow religion to be torn asunder by a bastard worship. At the same time they are commended for their moderation, in being so easily appeased on obtaining satisfaction, after a sacred zeal had suddenly roused them to arms.

In the end of the book it is shown how anxious Joshua was to advance the glory of God, [f10] and how diligently he endeavored to obviate the fickleness and treachery of the people. With this view, not only the most impressive exhortations, but protestations, were employed, and more especially the covenant was renewed in regular form with the solemnity of an oath. [f11]

CHAPTER 1

Joshua 1:1-4

1. Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spoke unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, **1.** Fuit autem post mortem Mosis, ut Jehova alloqueretur Josue, dicendo, [f12]

2. Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel. **2.** Moses servus meus mortuus est: nunc ergo surge, trajice Jordanem istum tu, et omnis hic populus, ad terram quam ego do illis, nempe filiis Israel.

3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.
3. Omnem locum quem calcaverit planta pedis vestri vobis dedi; quemadmodum locutus sum Mosi.

4. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. **4.** A desserto et Libano isto usque ad flumen magnum, flumen Euphraten, tota terra Hittaeorum usque ad mare magnum ad occasum solis, erit terminus vester.

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1. *Now, after,* etc Here, first, we see the steadfastness of God in watching over his people, and providing for their safety. The sanction given to Joshua's appointment, as new leader by a renewed commission, [f13] was intended to indicate the continuance of his favor, and prevent the people from thinking themselves forsaken in consequence of the death of Moses. Joshua, indeed, had already been

chosen to rule the people; and not only invested with the office, but also endowed with spiritual gifts. But as the most valiant, however well provided, are apt to halt or waver when the period for action arrives, the exhortation to Joshua to make ready forthwith for the expedition was by no means superfluous. Still, however, the call thus formally given was not so much on his own account, as to inspire the people with full confidence in following a leader whom they saw advancing step by step in the path divinely marked out for him. [f14]

2. *Moses my servant,* etc A twofold meaning may be extracted — the one, since Moses is dead, the whole burden has now devolved upon thee, take the place of him to whom thou has been appointed successor; the other, although Moses is dead, do not desist, but go forward. I prefer the former, as containing the inference that he should, by right of succession, take up the office which Moses had left vacant. [f15] The epithet or surname of *servant* applied to Moses, has respect to his government of the people and his exploits; for it ought to be accommodated to actual circumstances. [f16] The allusion here is not to the Law but to the leadership, which had passed to Joshua by the decease of Moses, and God thus acknowledges his servant, not so much with the view of praising him, as of strengthening the authority of Joshua, who had been substituted in his place. And as the people might not have acquiesced sufficiently in a bare command, he promises, while ordering them to pass the Jordan, to give them peaceable possession of the whole country, and of every spot of it on which they should plant their foot. For as nothing tends more than distrust to make us sluggish and useless, so when God holds forth a happy issue, confidence inspires us with rigor for any attempt.