

THE JOHN CALVIN
BIBLE COMMENTARIES

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES
TO TIMOTHY, TITUS
AND PHILEMON

Commentaries On St. Paul's Epistles To Timothy, Titus And Philemon

John Calvin

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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'Étaples (Stapulensis), celebrated for his translation of the Bible into French. Calvin, a "martinet", or oppidan, in the Collège 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 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 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 Lemman 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 Manichaeian 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 ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY, TITUS AND PHILEMON

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IT may be natural to inquire why the Epistles to Timothy and Titus have been less copiously illustrated by popular Commentaries than the other writings of the Apostle Paul. The reason probably is, that they are addressed chiefly to office-bearers, and not to private members of the Church; though they abound largely in those doctrinal statements and practical instructions which every Christian ought carefully to study.

While fewer expositors than might have been desired have devoted their labors to this portion of the word of God, the leading subject of it has been ably handled in a different form. Not to mention the early Fathers, it is sufficient to name "*The Pastoral Care*," "*The Reformed Pastor*," and other kindred works, which have taken their rank among the standard volumes of Christian Theology. *Besides* elaborate treatises, extending over the whole field of ministerial labor, detached parts of it have been sometimes selected for separate illustration. Of every collection of books fitted to make

"the man of God perfect, thoroughly prepared for every good work," (2 Timothy 3:17)

a goodly portion relates to the duties of the pastorate. It has been of unspeakable importance to the interests of religion, and ought to be recorded to the praise of divine grace, that the valuable instructions on this subject to which readers have access derive additional weight from the holy lives and devoted zeal of their authors, who have only inculcated on others what they had faithfully practiced. To all whose views are directed to the sacred

office, or who have already been invested with it, the perusal of such books must be exceedingly advantageous.

Yet here, as in everything else, let us appeal

“to the law and to the *testimony*.”(Isaiah 8:20.)

The foundation of every code of rules for guiding the ministers of Christ must be sought, not in the judgments of uninspired men, however able and judicious, but in the Holy Scriptures, and chiefly in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, the accurate interpretation of which is therefore unspeakably valuable. CALVIN has examined them with his usual skill, and will be heard with profound attention. His candor appears to more than ordinary advantage. Never does he press the words of the Holy Spirit beyond what appears to him to be their natural meaning, or depart from the rigid discharge of his task as an expositor for the sake of giving undue prominence to his peculiar views. On this point it may be sufficient to refer to his remarks on the authority which some ministers of the gospel appear to have exercised over others, as a specimen of his unshaken determination to adhere to the sacred records, and of his utter indifference to any use that might be made of such statements by those whose views of church-government differed from his own. Nowhere is his sterling honesty more conspicuous.

The notes to the present volume are enriched by numerous extracts from a rare work — the Author’s Sermons on the two Epistles to Timothy But for the strong and general desire that posterity should listen to this great preacher, those Sermons would never have seen the light. They were written down, as they flowed from his lips, in the same manner as the extemporaneous Latin expositions of which some account has been given elsewhere. While they are

Expository Discourses, leaving no part of the two Epistles unexplored, they are addressed to the great body of the Christian people, and are distinguished by those homely and striking appeals, and that marvelous felicity of language, which even his biographer Audin reluctantly ascribes to him.

**TO THE MOST NOBLE AND TRULY CHRISTIAN
PRINCE,**

EDWARD, DUKE OF SOMERSET,

**EARL OF HERTFORD, ETC. PROTECTOR OF
ENGLAND
AND IRELAND, AND ROYAL TUTOR,**

JOHN CALVIN

OFFERS HIS SALUTATIONS.

THE brilliant reputation, most noble Prince, not only of your other virtues, altogether heroic, but especially of your distinguished piety, produces so warm a love of you in the hearts of all good men, even of those to whom you are unknown by face, that you must unavoidably be regarded with extraordinary affection and reverence by all right-minded persons in the kingdom of England, on whom hath been bestowed the privilege, not only of beholding with their eyes those benefits which are admired by others who only hear of them, but likewise of reaping all the advantage which a most excellent governor can confer on the whole body of the people, and on every one of its members. Nor is there any reason why the praises bestowed on you should be suspected of falsehood, as if they proceeded from flatterers; for a clear proof of them is to be found in your actions.

When a pupil belongs to private life, and his wealth is moderate, the work of a tutor is attended by difficulty; but you hold the office of tutor, not of the King only, but of a very large kingdom, and you discharge that office with such wisdom and skill, that all are astonished at your success. That your virtue might not shine merely amidst the laws, and in a peaceful state of the commonwealth, God has exhibited it to view in war also, which has hitherto been conducted by you with not less prosperity and valor.

Yet the great and numerous difficulties which every person readily perceived that you had experienced did not hinder you from making the restoration of religion your principal object. That consideration is certainly not less advantageous to the public benefit of the kingdom than it is worthy of a Prince; for then do kingdoms enjoy solid prosperity and faithful guardianship, when he, on whom they were founded, and by whom they are preserved — the Son of God himself — rules over them. Thus you could not have established more firmly the kingdom of England than by banishing idols and setting up there the pure worship of God; for the true doctrine of godliness, which had too long been crushed and buried by the sacrilegious tyranny of the Roman Antichrist, cannot but be restored; and what is that, but to place Christ on his throne? And this act, which in itself is excellent, is so much the more praiseworthy on account of the small number of rulers in the present day who own the subjection of their high rank to the spiritual scepter of Christ.

It was therefore a high advantage to this illustrious King, that such a person, related to him by blood, was the guide of his youth; for, although the noble character of his mind is universally applauded, yet, in training him to habits of manly firmness, and in regulating the English Church, so

long as his tender age does not permit him to discharge these duties, such an instructor was much needed. And I doubt not that even now he acknowledges that you were given to him by the peculiar kindness of God, in order that he might soon afterwards receive his affairs from your hands in excellent condition.

For my own part, neither the distance of place nor my humble rank could prevent me from congratulating you on your distinguished success in promoting the glory of Christ. And since it has pleased God to make me one of those by whose labors and exertions he has, in the present day, given to the world the doctrine of the gospel in greater purity than before, why should I not, however widely I am separated from you, express as strongly as I can my reverence for you, who have been appointed, through the extraordinary kindness of God, to be the defender and protector of that very doctrine? And since I had no other proof of it to give, I thought that, at least as an earnest of my regard, it was my duty to offer to you my Commentaries on two of Paul's Epistles. Nor have I selected at random the gift that I should offer, but, in the exercise of my judgment, have selected that which appeared to me to be the most suitable. Here Paul admonishes his beloved Timothy by what kind of doctrine he must edify the Church of God, what vices and enemies he must resist, and how many annoyances he must endure. He exhorts him to give way to no difficulties, to vanquish all dangers by courage, to restrain by authority the licentiousness of wicked men, and not to bestow gifts through eagerness to obtain their favor. In short, in these two Epistles we have the true government of the Church set before us in a lively picture.

Now, since in order to restore the English Church, which, along with almost every other part of Christendom, had been miserably corrupted by the shocking wickedness of

Popery, you employ your strenuous efforts under the direction of your King, and for that purpose have many Timothys under your charge, neither they nor you can direct your holy transactions in a more profitable manner than by taking the rule here laid down by Paul for your pattern. For there is nothing in them that is not highly applicable to our times, and hardly anything that is necessary in the building of the Church that may not likewise be drawn from them. I trust that my labor will, at least, afford some assistance; but I choose that this should be known by experience rather than that I should boast of it in words. If you, most noble Prince, shall approve of it, I shall have abundant reason for congratulating myself; and your remarkable kindness does not permit me to doubt that you will take in good part that service which I now perform.

May the Lord, in whose hand are the ends of the earth, long uphold the safety and prosperity of the kingdom of England, adorn its illustrious King with the royal spirit, bestow on him a large measure of all blessings, and grant to you grace to persevere happily in your noble course, that through you his renown may be more and more widely extended.

GENEVA, *25th July* 1556.

THE ARGUMENT ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

THIS Epistle appears to me to have been written more for the sake of others than for the sake of Timothy, and that opinion will receive the assent of those who shall carefully consider the whole matter. I do not, indeed, deny that Paul intended also to teach and admonish him; but my view of

the Epistle is, that it contains many things which it would have been superfluous to write, if he had had to deal with Timothy alone. He was a young man, not yet clothed with that authority which would have been sufficient for restraining the headstrong men that rose up against him. It is manifest, from the words used by Paul, that there were at that time some who were prodigiously inclined to ostentation, and for that reason would not willingly yield to any person, and who likewise burned with such ardent ambition, that they would never have ceased to disturb the Church, had not a greater than Timothy interposed. It is likewise manifest, that there were many things to be adjusted at Ephesus, and that needed the approbation of Paul, and the sanction of his name. Having therefore intended to give advice to Timothy on many subjects, he resolved at the same time to advise others under the name of Timothy.

In the first chapter, he attacks some ambitious persons who made their boast of discussing idle questions. It may readily be concluded that they were Jews, who, while they pretended to have zeal for the law, disregarded edification, and attended only to frivolous disputes. It is an intolerable profanation of the law of God, to draw out of it nothing that is profitable, but merely to pick up materials for talking and to abuse the pretense of it for the purpose of burdening the Church with contemptible trifles.

Longer shall enough have such corruptions prevailed in Popery; for what else was the scholastic theology than a huge chaos of empty and useless speculations? And in our own day there are many who in order to display their acuteness in handling the word of God, allow themselves to sport with it in the same manner as if it were profane philosophy. Paul undertakes to support Timothy in the correction of this vice, and points out what is the principal

instruction to be derived from the Law; that it may be evident that they who use the Law in a different manner are corrupters of it.

Next, that his authority may not be despised, after having acknowledged his unworthiness he, at the same time, asserts in lofty terms what he became through the grace of God. At length he concludes the chapter by a solemn threatening, by means of which he both confirms Timothy in sound doctrine and a good conscience, and fills others with terror and alarm, by holding out to them the example of Hymenaeus and Alexander.

In the second chapter, he enjoins that public prayers be offered to God for all men, and especially for princes and magistrates; and here, in passing, he likewise makes a remark on the advantage which the world derives from civil government. He then mentions the reason why we ought to pray for all men; namely, that God, by exhibiting to all the gospel and Christ the Mediator, shews that he wishes all men to be saved; and he likewise confirms this statement by his own apostleship, which was specially appointed to the Gentiles. Next, he invites all men, whatever may be their country or place of abode, to pray to God; and takes occasion for inculcating that modesty and subjection which females ought to maintain in the holy assembly.

In the third chapter, after having declared the excellence of the bishop's office, he delineates a true bishop, and enumerates the qualifications required in him. Next, he describes the qualifications of deacons, and of the wives both of deacons and of bishops. And in order that Timothy may be more diligent and conscientious in observing all things, he reminds him what it is to be employed in the government of "the Church, which is the house of God, and the pillar of truth." Finally, he mentions the chief and

fundamental point of all heavenly doctrine — that which relates to the Son of God manifested in the flesh; in comparison of which all things else, to which he perceived that ambitious men were wholly devoted, should be reckoned of no value.

As to what follows, in the beginning of ***the fourth chapter***, the false doctrines about forbidding marriage and various kinds of food, and the absurd fables which are at variance with this doctrine, are severely condemned by him. Next, he adds, that he and all good men, who hold this doctrine, have none for their adversaries but those who cannot endure that men shall place their trust in the living God. At the close of the chapter, he again fortifies Timothy by a new exhortation.

In the fifth chapter, after having recommended modesty and gentleness in reproofs, he reasons about widows, Who at that time were admitted into the service of the Church. He enjoins that they shall not be received indiscriminately, but only those who, having been approved throughout their whole life, are arrived at sixty years of age, and have no domestic tie. Hence he passes on to the elder's, and explains how they ought to conduct themselves, both in their manner of life and in the exercise of discipline. This doctrine the Apostle seals by a solemn oath, and again forbids him to admit any one heedlessly into the office of the eldership. ^{fa1} He exhorts him to drink wine, instead of water, for the preservation of his health. At the close of the chapter, he exhorts him to defer pronouncing judgment on concealed transgressions.

In the sixth chapter, he gives instruction concerning the duty of servants, and takes occasion to make a vehement attack on false teachers, who, by disputing about

unprofitable speculations, are more eager for gain than for edification, and shews that covetousness is a most deadly plague. He then returns to a solemn charge similar to the former, that the exhortations which he now gives to Timothy may not be ineffectual. Lastly, after having taken a passing notice of riches, he again forbids Timothy to entangle himself with useless doctrines.

As to the ordinary Greek inscription, which states that this Epistle was written from Laodicea, I do not agree with it; for since Paul, writing to the Colossians while he was a prisoner, affirms that he had never seen the Laodiceans, those who hold the opinion, which I reject, are constrained to make two Laodiceas in Asia Minor, though only one is mentioned by historians. Besides, when Paul went into Macedonia, he left Timothy at Ephesus, as he expressly declares. He wrote this Epistle either on the road, before he arrived there, or after having returned from the journey. Now Laodicea is evidently at a greater distance from Macedonia than Ephesus is; and it is not probable that Paul, on his return, went to Laodicea, passing by Ephesus, especially since there were many reasons that urged him to visit it; and therefore I rather think that he wrote it from some other place. But this is not a matter of so much importance that I should wish to debate it with those who are of an opposite opinion. Let every person follow his own judgment. I only point out what — at least in my opinion — is more probable.

COMMENTARIES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER 1

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-4

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope;

1. Paulus apostolus Iesu Christi secundum ordinationem Dei Salvatoris nostri, et Domini Iesu Christi spei nostrae:

2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. Timotheo germano filio in fide, gratia, misericordia, pax a Deo Patre nostro, et Christo Iesu Domino Nostro.

3. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine

3. Quomodo rogavi te ut maneres Ephesi, quum proficiscerer in Macedoniam, volo denunties quibusdam, ne aliter doceant;

4. Neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than solidly edifying, which is in faith; so do.

4. Neque attendant fabulis et genealogiis nunquam finiendis, quae quaestiones praebent magis quam aedificationem Dei, quae in fide consistit.

1. *Paul an apostle.* If he had written to Timothy alone, it would have been unnecessary to claim this designation, and to maintain it in the manner that he does. Timothy would undoubtedly have been satisfied with having merely

the name; for he knew that Paul was an Apostle of Christ, and had no need of proof to convince him of it, being perfectly willing, and having been long accustomed, to acknowledge it. He has his eye, therefore, chiefly on others, who were not so ready to listen to him, or did not so easily believe his words. For the sake of such persons, that they may not treat lightly what he writes, he affirms that he is "*an Apostle of Christ.*"

According to the Appointment of God our Savior, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. He confirms his apostleship by the *appointment or* command of God; for no man can make himself to be an apostle, but he whom God hath appointed is a true apostle, and worthy of the honor. Nor does he merely say, that he owes his apostleship to God the Father, but ascribes it to Christ also; and, indeed, in the government of the Church, the Father does nothing, but through the Son, and therefore they both act together.

He calls God *the Savior*, a title which he is more frequently accustomed to assign to the Son; but it belongs to the Father also, because it is he who gave the Son to us. Justly, therefore, is the glory of our salvation ascribed to him. For how comes it that we are saved? It is because the Father loved us in such a manner that he determined to redeem and save us through the Son. He calls Christ *our hope*; and this appellation is strictly applicable to him; for then do we begin to have good hope, when we look to Christ, since in him alone dwells all that on which our salvation rests.

2. To Timothy my own son. This commendation expresses no small praise. Paul means by it, that he owns Timothy to be a true and not a bastard son, and wishes that others should acknowledge him to be such; and he even applauds Timothy in the same manner as if he were another Paul.

But how does this agree with the injunction given by Christ,

(Matthew 23:9,) "Call no man your father on the earth?"

Or how does it agree with the declaration of the Apostle,

"Though ye have many fathers according to the flesh, yet there is but One who is the Father of spirits." (1 Corinthians 4:15; Hebrews 12:9.) ^{fa2}

I reply, while Paul claims for himself the appellation of father, he does it in such a manner as not to take away or diminish the smallest portion of the honor which is due to God. (Hebrews 12:9.) It is a common proverb "That which is placed below another is not at variance with it." The name father, applied to Paul, with reference to God, belongs to this class. God alone is the Father of all in faith, because he regenerates us all by his word, and by the power of his Spirit, and because none but he bestows faith. But they whom he is graciously pleased to employ as his ministers for that purpose, are likewise allowed to share with him in his honor, while, at the same time, He parts with nothing that belongs to himself. Thus God, and God alone, strictly speaking, was Timothy's spiritual Father; but Paul, who was God's minister in begetting Timothy, lays claim to this title, by what may be called a subordinate right.

Grace, mercy, peace. So far as relates to the word *mercy*, he has departed from his ordinary custom in introducing it, moved, perhaps, by his extraordinary affection for Timothy. Besides, he does not observe the exact order; for he places first what ought to have been last, namely, the *grace* which flows from mercy. For the reason why God at first receives

us into favor and why he loves us is, that he is merciful. But it is not unusual to mention the cause after the effect, for the sake of explanation. As to the words *grace* and *peace*, we have spoken on other occasions.

3. As I besought thee. Either the syntax is elliptical, or the particle *i[na* is redundant; and in both cases the meaning will be obvious. ^{fa3} First, he reminds Timothy why he was besought to remain at Ephesus. It was with great reluctance, and through hard necessity, that he parted with a companion so dearly beloved and so faithful, in order that he might laboriously hold the part of his deputy, which no other man would have been competent to fill; and, therefore, Timothy must have been powerfully excited by this consideration, not only not to throw away his time, but to conduct himself in an excellent and distinguished manner.

I wish that thou shouldst forbid any. Thus, by way of inference, he exhorts him to oppose the false teachers who corrupted pure doctrine. In the injunction given to Timothy, to occupy his place at Ephesus, we ought to observe the holy anxiety of the Apostle; for while he labored so much to collect many churches he did not leave the former churches destitute of a pastor. And indeed, as an ancient writer remarks, "To keep what has been gained is not a smaller virtue than to make new acquisitions." The word *forbid* denotes power; for Paul wishes to arm him with power to restrain others.

Not to teach differently. The Greek word (*e[terodidaskalei~n*) which Paul employs, is a compound, and, therefore, may either be translated, "to teach differently," or after a new method, or, "to teach a different doctrine." The translation given by Erasmus, (*sectari,*) "to