

Anything Douglas Bond writes is a fascinating read.

—JOEL BELZ



The Betrayal

*A Novel
on
John Calvin*

DOUGLAS BOND

Contents

Note to the Reader	11
1. April 1918: The Bombardment	13
2. The Confession	19
3. The Accusative Case	21
4. Shorn Head	29
5. The Voice of God	37
6. The Scourge of God	41
7. The Plague Closes In	47
8. Frank Next Door	59
9. Carriage Ride	65
10. My New Gown	75
11. The Price of Learning	85
12. Fledged on the Prey	93
13. Paris Burning	99
14. My Chapeau	109
15. My License	117
16. Changes Afoot	125
17. Orleans	139

Contents

18. Light in Bourges	153
19. Seeking Calvin	171
20. Cost of Quietude	183
21. Providence	191
22. Martyr Burning	209
23. Cop Speaks Out	217
24. Flight!	227
25. To Angouleme	235
26. Caves and Wine	245
27. Royal Feasting	257
28. The Institutes	265
29. A Violent World	277
30. Fiery Farel	287
31. Geneva	295
32. Lausanne Debate	305
33. Banished!	315
34. Strasbourg	331
35. One Hundred Deaths	345
36. Triumph at Last	359
37. The End	373
Timeline of the Reformation and John Calvin's Life	377
Guide to Further Reading	381

1

April 1918: The Bombardment

IN THE WAR-TORN VILLAGE of Noyon-le-Sainte in northern France an old man, clutching the hand of a little boy, mused on the war to end all wars. After three and a half years of bloody stalemate, it seemed less like a war to end war and far more like a war that would just never end. In spite of the endless cycle of artillery barrage, infantry advance, and entrenchment, inexplicably the cathedral, the town hall, the Renaissance library, and various medieval buildings remained standing, awaiting the next cycle of war. Still more importantly to the old man, his house, Grain Place, as it had been known for centuries, remained standing. And he had his music and his books.

That night, windows shrouded in black, he opened the volume he had been reading. A biography originally penned in 1577 by Jérôme-Hermès Bolsec, the old man's copy had been printed in 1875. Far more a vengeful diatribe than a proper biography, the old man had read enough not to think of it as real history; nevertheless, the scandalous rant against a man Bolsec must have intensely hated was entertaining. Perching his reading glasses

on his nose, and leaning toward the lantern, he had only just recommenced reading when suddenly the house shuddered to its foundation stones.

"Grand-père!" cried the little boy at his feet. "Qu'est-ce que c'est?"

The old man knew what it was. Snatching the boy's hand, he ran through the house into the back garden, hoping to get the little one to the bomb shelter in time. There was nothing an old man or a mere boy could do; the defense of the town and of the Oise valley was entirely up to the British Fifth Army.

Shifting troop strength to the Western Front in April of 1918, Kaiser Wilhelm II ordered his German army to redirect the gaping mouths of its massive artillery, capable of firing one-ton ordnance over nine miles, and to commence thundering destruction on the Allied defenders and on what remained of the town of Noyon-le-Sainte. The apocalyptic Hindenburg-Ludendorff Offensive had begun.

Holding the trembling boy in his arms, the old man listened to the earth-shaking staccato of German artillery raining death and devastation on the village above them. And then would come the infantry advance. With deadly accuracy, the British defenders who had survived the barrage valiantly went to work with their Enfield rifles, *pee-ooing* death into the waves of German infantry advancing on the town. The Germans responded with the heavy gut-lurching chattering of machine gun fire, cutting down all life in its path, valiant or otherwise. But the old man had seen enough of modern war. He knew that at the last it would be the coordinated artillery fire, the molten shrapnel, and the erupting debris that would carve out a path of death and devastation for the German advance through his village, his home, and his life.

When at last the echoing of heavy guns had lapsed into an eerie silence, the old man and the boy slowly emerged from the bomb shelter. What met their senses seemed like a microcosm of the death of civilization. Everywhere the air was thick with acrid smoke and the stench of death. The complete absence of laughter, of the cheery sounds of children at play, of chattering housewives, of yapping dogs, created a silence so palpable that it unhinged the mental faculties of some who had inexplicably survived.

Scooped and frail, the widow next door sat on a fragment of her front steps—all that remained of her home. Moaning softly, her head bowed and shrouded with a black shawl, she sat rocking, rocking as if thereby to find some comfort for herself. Heaped about her radiated mounds of rubble: the remains of her home, of a Gallo-Roman crypt, of the towers of the cathedral. An instant of thunderous chaos had reduced the village to heaps of debris: order, antiquity, and beauty devolving into crumbled heaps of stone, dust, and matchsticks.

The few buildings still standing looked as if a puff of wind would finish the job. Stones chiseled into columns and arches by master stonemasons of the Middle Ages now seemed to stagger and sway like drunken men. The tinkling of breaking glass broke the stillness; the old man shook his head in wonder: what glass could yet be unbroken after such a bombardment?

Enormous as the loss in buildings, the loss of human life far exceeded all other devastation. Though many had been instantaneously buried as their lives were crushed by hailing stones and molten shrapnel, yet were there many bodies undignified by such a burial. And as the April sun warmed the scene, grotesque corpses swelled in the heat. Others were so disfigured that they had ceased to affright, so inhuman had they become. Still others had

instantly been obliterated, their parts so ground up and mingled with the mud, stone, and earth that they no longer existed, or so it seemed. Hundreds of townsfolk—men, women, and children—had simply vanished without a trace, no mangled body, no dental work to compare with records.

There was a new sound that made the old man frown. Faintly at first: the rumbling of horse-drawn artillery, the clattering of hooves, the mechanical throttling of trucks and the grinding of gears—and the advance of men. German infantry soldiers in spiky helmets would be pouring in to the streets across the town, shoulder-to-shoulder, right arms swinging stiffly, their rifles over their left shoulders, their boots echoing with every tread more fearfully than their artillery had done before them. The old man had seen and heard it all before.

Grain Place had been reduced to a chaotic mound of rubble. Dazed at first, the old man and the boy picked through the debris that had been their home. It had been home to many families over the centuries, the family names obliterated by the forgetfulness of time, as were now its beams and stones by the relentless unforgetfulness of war.

Strewn amid the chaos were tufts of stuffing from a pillow, and there a mangled arm of a chair, here a broken leg of a table, and the battered head and foot of a bed frame. Unlike other mounds of debris that had once been the houses that made up the village, there were no human arms, legs, heads, and feet in the homey mound of rubble that had been Grain Place.

Recognition flashed across the old man's face as he discovered the final remains of his favorite chair, and here and there a page from the Bolsec book he had only the night before hurriedly laid aside to retire to the relative safety of the bomb shelter in the back garden. With a cry, the boy snatched up the shredded remains



"Privileged Calvin had every reason to pray and revel in God's kindnesses, but I, that night, looked heavenward with a scowl. . . .

"God above, if you are there, you are most unkind to me. . . . Therefore, will I not serve you, will I not worship you, will I not obey you. Henceforth, I give of myself to those powers that most work *against* you, *against* your will and ways, and *against* your servants."

"It was a prayer that invigorated me, made me feel emancipated from divine oppression and injustice, the master of myself and my fortunes, the bold possessor of new freedoms."

So begins the private war of one man determined to sell all for a convoluted allegiance, even at the cost of his own soul. Told from the perspective of a sworn lifelong enemy of John Calvin, this fast-paced biographical novel is a tale of envy that escalates to violent intrigue and shameless betrayal.

"Anything Doug Bond writes is, almost now by definition, a fascinating read. But to have his skills attached to the life of John Calvin is a double treat."

— JOEL BELZ, founder, *World* magazine

"If you enjoy reading the fictional works of C. S. Lewis, you will love this book."

— BURK PARSONS, editor, *Tabletalk* magazine

"An exciting read, almost effortlessly and implicitly undoing caricatures about Calvin along the way . . . Calvin and his times brought to life in a page-turner"

— JOEL R. BEEKE, president, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

DOUGLAS BOND heads the English department at Covenant High School in Tacoma and is the writer of several successful historical fiction books. Bond lives with his wife, two daughters, and four sons in Washington State. Visit his website at www.bondbooks.net.


PUBLISHING
FOUNDED BY PHILIP BOND • NEW CREDIT RISK FREE

WWW.PRBOOKS.COM

COVER ART: SHUTTERSTOCK
DESIGN: THE DESIGNWORKS GROUP, JEFF MILLER

ADULT HISTORICAL FICTION

ISBN: 978-1-59538-125-4

EAN



5 1489



© 781599-281254