

CALVIN'S VIEW OF LIFE

THE MEANING OF ALL EXISTENCE TO JOHN CALVIN



"I give you my heart, O Lord - promptly and sincerely!" (Calvin's motto)

by

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CALVIN'S VIEW OF LIFE AND THE MEANING OF ALL EXISTENCE

"**God [the Father], by the power of His Word and His Spirit**, created the Heavens and the Earth out of nothing." Thus begins the famous Christian Theologian John Calvin's view of life and the meaning of all existence.¹

The Triune God, Calvin continues, "produced things inanimate and animate of every kind. He arranged **an innumerable variety of objects in admirable order** - giving each kind its proper nature, office, place and station.... Thus Heaven and Earth were adorned most richly, and copiously supplied with all things - like a large and splendid mansion gorgeously constructed and exquisitely furnished. At length, **man** was made - man, by the beauty of his person and his many noble endowments, the most glorious specimen of the works of God."

This, of course, is exactly what the Holy Bible initially declares about **the Triune God**. 'In the beginning, **Elohim** created the Heavens and the Earth.' Genesis 1:1. 'And **Elohim** said, "Let **Us** make mankind in **Our** image!"' Genesis 1:26.

"**Elohim**," Calvin comments here,² is "a noun of the plural number. Thence the inference is drawn that the three Persons of the Godhead are here noted.... The Scripture...always recalls us to the **Father** and **His Word** and **Spirit**.... Christians thus properly contend from this testimony, that there exists a plurality of Persons in the Godhead.... There is something in **man** [as God's image] which refers to **the Father and the Son and the Spirit**"- such as man's body/soul/spirit and humanity's father/mother/child and church/state/society *etc.*

Then, continues Calvin,³ "God decreed to honour man...so that he should have authority over all living creatures [Genesis 1:28]. He appointed **man...lord of the World**.... This authority was given not only to Adam, but to **all his posterity as well as to him**.... Men were created to employ themselves in some work....

"Let him who possesses a field...endeavour to hand it down to posterity...**even better cultivated!** Let **everyone** regard himself as the **steward of God in all things which he possesses!**..."

"**Man was the governor of the World**.... God, from the beginning, imposes a **Law** upon man, for the purpose of maintaining the **right**.... Our life will **then** be ordered rightly - if we **obey** God, and if His will be the **regulator of all our affections**."

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All of the arts and sciences, declares Calvin, were designed for man - by which he should glorify God. "In attestation of His wondrous wisdom, both the Heavens and the Earth present us with innumerable proofs...which astronomy, medicine, and all the natural sciences are designed to illustrate.... In each of the works of God...the divine perfections are delineated as

in a picture, and the whole human race thereby invited and allured to acquire the knowledge of God - and, in consequence of this knowledge, true and complete felicity."⁴

On the science of **chronology**, Calvin is of the opinion that "nothing is more natural than for spring, in its turn, to succeed winter, summer spring, and autumn summer. But in this series the variations are so great and so unequal - as to make it very apparent that every single year, month and day, is regulated by a new and special providence of God."⁵

On numbers and **mathematics**, Calvin believes that the superstitious Chaldeans "abused an honourable name when they called themselves mathematicians - as if there were no scientific learning separate from those arts and diabolic illusions!"⁶ In reality, however: "To investigate the motions of the heavenly bodies, to determine their positions, measure their distances and ascertain their properties - demands skill, and a more careful examination!"⁷

Regarding **astronomy** as a representative of the spatial sciences, Calvin greatly approved of the fact that "astronomers investigate with great labour whatever the sagacity of the human mind can comprehend.... This study is not to be reprobated, nor this science to be condemned - [just] because some frantic persons [such as astrologers and sceptics] are wont boldly to reject whatever is unknown to them. For astronomy is not only pleasant, but also very useful to be known. It cannot be denied that this art unfolds the admirable wisdom of God." Those men "who have expended useful labour on this subject, are to be honoured - so that they who have leisure and capacity, ought not to neglect this kind of exercise."⁸

Indeed, "when we behold the Heavens, we cannot but be elevated by the contemplation of them to Him Who is their great Creator. And the beautiful arrangement and wonderful variety which distinguishes the courses and station of the heavenly bodies, together with the beauty and splendour which are manifest in them, cannot but furnish us with an evident proof of His Providence."⁹ For "a simple survey of the World should of itself suffice to attest a Divine Providence. The Heavens revolve daily. Immense as is their fabric, and inconceivable the rapidity of their revolutions, we experience no concussion - no disturbance in the harmony of their motion!"¹⁰

As regards **kinematics** or the science which studies movement as such, Calvin claims that God "moves and invigorates all things by the virtue of His Spirit - and that, according to the peculiar nature which each class of beings has received by the Law of Creation."¹¹ Yet the fact that the Spirit is the ultimate cause of all movement, does not exclude His use of intermediate created agents (such as angels) to this end. For "there is no motion, no agitation under the Heavens - unless He has inspired it by His angels."¹² Indeed, when God's scientists "investigate the motions of the heavenly bodies...the mind takes a loftier flight, and obtains brighter views of His glory."¹³

In the fields of **physics and chemistry**, "there is no element and no part of the World" which is not fascinating.¹⁴ Calvin was deeply interested even in rust and "dross and other impurities in metals."¹⁵ Thus he wrote: "Seeing, then, that the Lord has been pleased to assist us by the work and ministry of the ungodly in physics..., let us avail ourselves of it lest by neglecting the gifts of God spontaneously offered to us we justly be punished for our sloth!"¹⁶

Also the science of **biology** is praised. Without the Logos or Word of God, "were it not that His continued inspiration gives vigour to the World - everything that lives would immediately decay, or be reduced to nothing."¹⁷

Yet the Logos also gives life through created agents, such as the **sun**. "How admirably does it foster and invigorate all animals by its heat, and fertilize the Earth by its rays, warming the seeds of grain in its lap, and thereby calling forth the verdant blade! This it supports, increases, and strengthens with additional nurture. Till it rises into the stalk and still feeds it with perpetual moisture, till it comes into flower; and from flower to fruit which it continues to ripen till it attains maturity.

"In like manner, by its warmth, trees and vines bud, and put forth first their leaves, then their blossom, then their fruit. And the Lord, so that He might claim the entire glory of these things as His Own - was pleased that light should exist and that the Earth should be replenished with all kinds of herbs and fruits before He made the sun!"¹⁸

On the **natural sciences** in general, then, Calvin believed that "if we would avoid a senseless natural philosophy - we must always proceed with this principle, that everything in nature depends upon the will of God, and that the whole course of nature is only the prompt carrying into effect of His orders."¹⁹ Further: "I do not want to reject the knowledge extracted from the order of nature, but I prize it and praise it as a unique gift of God!"²⁰

In the **psychic** sphere, "whatever we conceive in our minds is directed to its end by the secret inspiration of God."²¹ Yet even in the secondary sense, consciousness and knowledge do not proceed principally from the mind - but more fundamentally from the soul, and thence through the mind. For knowledge must not be ascribed "to man's intellect or...the faculty itself...[but] to the soul which is endued with the power of understanding."²²

Psychology or the science of the soul is succeeded by **logic** or the science of correct reasoning and understanding. For "one of the essential properties of our nature is reason, which distinguishes us from the lower animals. Just as these, by means of senses, are distinguished from inanimate objects. For although some individuals are born without reason, that defect does not impair the general kindness of God. But it rather serves to remind us, that whatever we retain - ought justly to be ascribed to the Divine indulgence."²³

Now the chief reason why **Christ** is called the **Word** of God or the **Logos**, is "because He is the eternal Wisdom and Will of God." He as the Light of the World created all men "to have understanding" - even unregenerate men. Indeed, His "light rays are [so] diffused over all mankind" that "there is no man, therefore, whom some perception of the eternal light does not reach."²⁴

We now come to the **cultural sciences** in general. Strictly speaking, these include also the sciences of (human) psychology and logic referred to immediately above. Here, it is of importance to note that to Calvin "agriculture, architecture, shoemaking, and shaving, are [all] lawful ordinances of God."²⁵ When engaged in consciously to God's glory, these and other callings are not 'secular' (*sic*) but truly 'sacred' and holy.

For example, with regard to "the **function of magistrates**, the Lord has not only declared that He approves and is pleased with it, but moreover has strongly recommended it to us." To Calvin, it is clear that magistrates have "a commission from God [and] that they are invested with divine authority." Consequently, "no man can doubt that civil authority is, in the sight of God, not only sacred and lawful but the most sacred and by far the most honourable of all stations in mortal life."²⁶

The science of **history** is highly valued by Calvin. "Thus it behoves the faithful," he writes, "to be employed in reflecting on the histories of all times - so that they may always form their judgments from Scripture about the various destructions which privately and publicly have befallen the ungodly."²⁷

As regards **language**, it is of interest to note that Calvin regards Christ as the "Speech" of God.²⁸ "Language is the impress of the mind." Even after the confusion of the tongues and the separation of mankind into different nations at the tower of Babel, God "willed that the sacred bond of society among men far separated from each other should be retained, by their possessing a common language among themselves."²⁹

In **sociology**, Calvin would have us remember that "the term 'neighbour' comprehends the most remote stranger" - although "the closer the relation, the more frequent our offices of kindness should be. For the condition of humanity requires that there be more duties in common between those who are more nearly connected by the ties of relationship, or friendship, or neighbourhood."³⁰ For "everyone should rather consider that however great he is, he owes himself to his neighbours and that the only limit to his beneficence is the failure of his means."³¹

In **economics**, Calvin evidently believed in some degree of economic value inherent in the precious objects. This is evidenced by his rhetorical question: "Has He [God] not given qualities to gold and silver, ivory and marble - thereby rendering them precious above other metals or stones?" Yet economics is not an end in itself. For God "created food...not only for our necessity, but also for our enjoyment and delight." Indeed, "in clothing - the end was, in addition to necessity, comeliness and honour. And in herbs, fruits, and trees - besides their various uses - gracefulness of appearance and sweetness of smell" are important.³²

This necessarily leads to a consideration of **aesthetics**. For well does Calvin observe that "the Lord adorned flowers with all the beauty which spontaneously presents itself to the eye; and the sweet odour which delights the sense of smell....

"Should it be unlawful for us to enjoy that beauty and that colour? What? Has He not so distinguished colours as to make some more agreeable than others? Have done, then, with that inhuman philosophy which, in allowing no use of the creatures but for necessity, not only maliciously deprives us of the lawful fruit of the divine beneficence - but cannot be realized without depriving man of all his senses, and reducing him to a block!"³³

For "sculpture and painting are gifts of God...which the Lord has bestowed upon us for His glory and our good."³⁴ Indeed, "among the other things which are suitable as a means of recreation, and of giving pleasure - music has a primary place!"³⁵

Calvin has much to say about law and the civil magistracy in the closing chapters of his *Institutes*. He had a very great esteem for legal science. But, he asks, "which of the [heathen] philosophers ever acknowledged that a politician is nothing else but an instrument guided by the hand of God? Yea, rather - they held that good management on the part of man [rather than on the part of God through the agency of man] constituted the chief cause of the happiness of the social body!"³⁶

Too, Calvin even treats of the science of ethics or moral philosophy. He concedes that the heathen "philosophers do intreat of manners very excellently and with great commendation of wit."³⁷ Yet "whatever the [heathen] philosophers may have ever said about the chief good, it was nothing but cold and vain. For they confined man to himself - while it is necessary for us to go out[side] of ourselves to find happiness" - namely in God!

"The chief good of man is nothing else but union with God, and this is attained when we are formed according to Him as our exemplar."³⁸ This is achieved by being regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and by then following the Ten Commandments as the basis of all true ethics - a clear exposition of which Calvin gives us especially in his *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, and which he further summarizes in his *Institutes*.³⁹

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Thus Calvin liberated both the natural and the cultural sciences from their Babylonian captivity to the Deformed Church of the Middle Ages. "All human labour is of equal value," he insisted. For, especially as regards Christians, "all are in the Lord's service and contribute towards the maintenance of human society."⁴⁰

"All craftsmen of whatever kind, who serve the needs of men, are ministers of God."⁴¹ Also "agriculture is commanded by God."⁴² As even the modern critical philosopher Farrington had to concede, Calvin caused a complete revolution in the intellectual circles of his day, when he described even manual labour as a *vocatio Dei* - a "calling of God." Even slavery was and marriage is a **divine calling**. Cf. First Corinthians 7:4-24.

Romanism shook to her sacerdotal foundations! The Christian laity - the "people of God" - then re-asserted their Scriptural "priesthood of all believers" both inside and outside the institutional Church, as enjoined by Peter of old. First Peter 2:9. And they asserted the kingship of all believers, too. Henceforth, Christ would be served not merely in the institutional Church - but also in every relatively-sovereign sphere of this His Universe.

Hear Calvin's injunctions to all Christians on 'How to use this present life'! Says he: ⁴³ "The last thing to be observed is that the Lord enjoins every one of us, in all the actions of life, to have respect to our own **calling**. He knows the boiling restlessness of the human mind; the fickleness with which it is borne hither and thither; its eagerness to hold opposites at one [and the same] time in its grasp; its ambition! Therefore, lest all things should be thrown into confusion by our folly and rashness - He has assigned distinct duties to each in the different modes of life. And that no one may presume to overstep his proper limits, He has distinguished the different modes of life by the name of '**callings**.'

"Every man's mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned him by the Lord - so that he may not always be driven about at random. So necessary is this distinction, that all our actions are thereby esteemed in His sight - and often in a very different way from that in which human reason or philosophy would esteem them!

"There is no more illustrious deed even among philosophers, than to free one's country from tyranny. And yet, the private individual who stabs the tyrant - is openly condemned by the voice of the heavenly Judge.

"But I am unwilling to dwell on particular examples. It is enough to know that in everything, the call of the Lord is the foundation and beginning of right action. He who does not act with reference to it will never, in the discharge of duty, keep the right path. He will sometimes be able, perhaps, to give the semblance of something laudable - but whatever it may be in the sight of man, it will be rejected before the throne of God. And besides, there will be no harmony in the different parts of his life.

"Hence, he only who directs his life to this end, will have it properly framed. Because, free from the impulse of rashness, he will not attempt more than his calling justifies - knowing that it is unlawful to overleap the prescribed bounds. He who is obscure, will not decline to cultivate a private life - so that he may not desert the post at which God has placed him.

"Again, in all our cares, toils, annoyances and other burdens - it will be no small alleviation to know that all these are under the superintendence of God. The magistrate will more willingly perform his office; and the father of a family confine himself to his proper sphere. Every one in his particular mode of life will - without repining - suffer its inconveniences, cares, uneasiness and anxiety: persuaded that God has laid on the burden. This, too, will afford admirable consolation - that in following your proper calling, no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have a splendour and value in the eye of God!"

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It is true, of course, that man fell into sin - and gets punished. "But yet," observes Calvin, "the asperity of this punishment is mitigated also by the clemency of God. Because something of enjoyment is blended with the labours of men.... God mercifully softens the exile of Adam by still providing for him a remaining home on Earth, and by assigning to him a livelihood from the culture - although the laborious culture - of the ground."⁴⁴

God shows His clemency in sending Christ. God so promised, right after the fall (at Genesis 3:15). Thus, "God leaves some remains of dominion to man.... He promises, under the reign of Christ, the complete restoration of a sound and well-constituted nature.... Although after the fall of man the beasts were endued with new ferocity, yet some remains of that dominion over them which God had conferred on him in the beginning were still left.... The same dominion should continue....

"The fact that oxen become accustomed to bear the yoke; that the wildness of horses is so subdued as to cause them to carry a rider; that they receive the pack-saddle to bear burdens; that

cows give milk and permit themselves to be milked; that sheep are mute under the hand of the shearer - all these facts are the result of this dominion.... The Prophet...especially mentions 'birds of the air' and 'beasts of the field' because this kind of dominion is visible.... But at the same time the general statement reaches much farther - to the Heavens and the Earth and every thing that they contain!" God has given dominion over all things to human beings. "He has destined all the riches both of Heaven and Earth for their use."⁴⁵

"The Lord has been pleased to assist us by the work and ministry of the ungodly in physics, dialectics, mathematics, and other similar sciences. Let us avail ourselves of it - lest, by neglecting the gifts of God spontaneously offered to us, we justly be punished for our sloth!" For "natural perspicacity is a gift of God. And the liberal arts and all the sciences by which wisdom is acquired, are gifts of God!"⁴⁶

"The dominion mentioned in Psalm 8 was lost to us in Adam," comments Calvin.⁴⁷ "It must again be restored, as a donation. Now the restoration begins with Christ as the Head. There is, then, no doubt but that we are to look to Him whenever the dominion of man over all creatures is spoken of.... Here, 'the World to come' is not that which we hope for after the resurrection - but that which began at the beginning of Christ's Kingdom [already in Genesis 3:15f]. But it will no doubt have its full accomplishment in our final redemption."

At that future time, "all creatures shall be renewed.... Beasts, as well as plants and metals.... There is no element and no part of the World which, being touched as it were with a sense of its present misery - does not intensely hope for a resurrection.... All creatures...look for that day which shall openly exhibit the glory of the children of God." And "God is constantly urging nature foreword - to its goal and perfection." Meanwhile, "there is no part of our life and no action so minute that it ought not to be directed to the glory of God."⁴⁸

As a result of the fall, many brilliant humans have become profane. Nevertheless, Calvin insists: "In reading profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator. If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth - we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to Him, not to reject or condemn truth wherever it appears. In despising the gifts, we insult the Giver!"⁴⁹

This is so, because Christ through His Spirit still operates upon all men - either savingly or unsavingly. Indeed, He started so acting right after the fall. That is why even the wicked offspring of the wicked Cain were enabled to develop architecture and cattle-ranching and music and metallurgy and poetry. Genesis 4:17-24.

Calvin comments:⁵⁰ "With the evils which proceeded from the family of Cain, some good has been blended. For the invention of arts and of other things which serve to the common use and convenience of life, is a gift of God by no means to be despised and a faculty worthy of commendation. It is truly wonderful that this race, which had most deeply fallen from integrity, should have excelled the rest of the posterity of Adam in rare endowments.... I understand Moses to have spoken expressly concerning those arts as having been invented in the family of Cain - for the purpose of showing that he was not so accursed by the Lord but that He would still scatter some excellent gifts among his posterity....

"Let us then know that the sons of Cain, though deprived of the Spirit of regeneration, were yet endued with gifts of no despicable kind. Just as the experience of all ages teaches us how widely the rays of divine light have shone on unbelieving nations for the benefit of the present life.... We see at the present time that the excellent gifts of the Spirit are diffused through the whole human race.

"Moreover, the liberal arts and sciences have descended to us from the Heathen. We are indeed compelled to acknowledge that we have received astronomy and other parts of philosophy, medicine, and the order of civil government - from them. Nor is it to be doubted that God has thus liberally enriched them with excellent favours, so that their impiety might have the less excuse."

As regards "astronomy, medicine and all the natural sciences...those who are more or less intimately acquainted with those liberal studies are thereby assisted and enabled to obtain a deeper insight into the secret workings of divine wisdom.... These are so employed as the Providence of God is thereby more fully unfolded....

"The human mind...is naturally influenced by love of truth.... We see that the minds of all men have impressions of civil order and honesty.... All are not equally able to learn all the arts..., [yet] there is scarcely an individual who does not display intelligence in some particular art." This fact "should lead every individual for himself to recognize it as a special gift of God.... There are most excellent blessings which the Divine Spirit dispenses to whom He will, for the common benefit of mankind." For God "fills, moves and invigorates all things by the virtue of the Spirit....

"How then can we deny that truth must have beamed on those ancient lawgivers who arranged civil order and discipline with so much equity? Shall we say that the philosophers in their exquisite researches and skilful description of nature, were blind? Shall we deny the possession of intellect to those who drew up rules for discourse, and taught us to speak in accordance with reason? Shall we say that those who, by the cultivation of the medical art, expended their industry on our behalf, were only raving? What shall we say of the mathematical sciences? Shall we deem them to be the dreams of madmen?

"No! We cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects, without the highest admiration - an admiration which their excellence will not allow us to withhold. But shall we deem anything to be noble and praiseworthy, without tracing it to the hand of God? Far from us be such ingratitude - an ingratitude not chargeable even on Heathen poets who acknowledged that philosophy and laws and all useful arts were inventions of the gods!

"Therefore, since it is manifest that men whom the Scriptures term 'natural' are so acute and clear-sighted in the investigation of inferior things - their example should teach us how many gifts the Lord has left in possession of human nature, notwithstanding of its having been despoiled of the true good.... Let us not forget that...the knowledge of those things which are of the highest excellence in human life, is said to be communicated to us by the Spirit!"⁵¹

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To Calvin, the Triune God created a tri-un-iverse - a creation exhibiting a pluri-formity amidst its un-ity. "Not only is there a difference between heavenly bodies and earthly, but even the heavenly bodies and the other stars differ from each other" (First Corinthians 15:40f).

Indeed, "the World was set in order by God's wisdom. For it is wonderful how the waters mingle with the ground, and yet retain their own habitation and are restrained from covering the Earth. In the Earth itself, there is also amazing variety. We see in one part mountains, and in another small hills. There are meadows, forests, and fields of corn. Indeed, man's industry contributes to this variety.

"But we see how God has fitted the Earth for different purposes. Here, then, shines forth the wonderful wisdom of God. When again he [Jeremiah 10:12] speaks of the Heavens, he says that they have been expanded by God's knowledge.... He means...God's singular wisdom may be seen on the Earth and in the Heavens."⁵²

The Triune God "fills, moves, and invigorates all things by the virtue of the Spirit - and that according to the peculiar nature which each class of beings has received by the Law of Creation."⁵³ God's "power, wisdom, goodness and righteousness...are clearly exhibited - although they are too vast for our limited understandings to comprehend."⁵⁴ Indeed, "making a full enumeration of the works of God...would be an endless task.... If a small portion of the works of God make us amazed, how inadequate are our feeble minds to comprehend the whole extent of them!" Moreover, "nothing in the World is confused.... The vast variety of things mixed together in it, are arranged with the greatest wisdom."⁵⁵

Now "as soon as we acknowledge God to be the supreme Architect Who has erected the beauteous fabric of the Universe - our minds must necessarily be ravished with wonder at His infinite goodness, wisdom and power."⁵⁶ "Moses declares animals were created 'according to their species.' For this distinction carried with it something stable" - in that it could be asked: "To what purpose do distinct species exist - unless that individuals, by their several kinds, may be multiplied?"⁵⁷ Indeed, "there is certainly nothing so obscure or contemptible, even in the smallest corners of the Earth - in which some marks of the power and wisdom of God may not be seen.... When a man, from beholding and contemplating the Heavens, has been brought to acknowledge God - he will learn also to reflect upon and to admire His wisdom and power as displayed on the face of the Earth, not only in general but even in the minutest plants."⁵⁸

Furthermore: "Philosophers, who have more penetration into these matters than others, understand how the stars are arranged in such beautiful order that notwithstanding their immense numbers there is no confusion.... The course and revolutions of the sun and moon and stars are regulated by the marvellous wisdom of God.... He gave that law to them which remains inviolable.... All the laws of nature...remain unchangeable.... [God's] faithfulness as to the laws of nature, changes not."⁵⁹

God's Providence is absolute, having reference "both to the past and the future.... In overruling all things - it works at one time with means; at another, without means; and at another, against means.... It is certain that not a drop of rain falls, without the express command of God..... Some mothers have full provision for their infants, and others almost none - according

as it is the pleasure of God to nourish one child more liberally, and another more sparingly.... God takes a special charge of every one of His works.... Each species of created objects is moved by a secret instinct of nature."⁶⁰

Thus, "how great the Architect must be Who framed and ordered the multitude of the starry host so admirably that it is impossible to imagine a more glorious sight! So stationing some and fixing them to particular spots, that they cannot move; giving a freer course to others, yet setting limits to their wanderings. So tempering the movement of the whole as to measure out day and night, months, years and seasons - and at the same time so regulating the inequality of days, as to prevent everything like confusion....

"These few examples sufficiently explain what is meant by recognizing the divine perfections in the creation of the World. Were we to attempt to go over the whole subject, we should never come to a conclusion - there being as many wonders of divine power, as many striking evidences of wisdom and goodness, as there are classes of objects...great or small throughout the Universe!"⁶¹

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Now, after the advent of God's Son in the flesh, **His Kingdom is constantly expanding** - in terms of the comprehensive sweep of Christ's Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). Insists Calvin:

"The Father will deny nothing to His Son which relates to **the extension of His Kingdom to the uttermost ends of the Earth**. But in this wonderful matter, Christ is introduced as presenting Himself before the Father with **prayers** - in order to illustrate the free generosity of God in **conferring upon men the honour of constituting His Own Son Governor over the whole World**.... We must apply it to Christ Who alone has **subdued the whole World to Himself and embraced all lands and nations under His dominion**....

"Christ is immediately armed with power to destroy...**kings and their armies** who are hostile to Him.... They are being broken into pieces by various methods - till they **become His footstool** [Psalm 110:1].... **The Gospel is an iron rod** [Psalm 2:9 cf. Revelation 2:27].... Paul's [Second] Epistle to the Corinthians [10:4]...teaches that the Ministers of Christ are furnished with spiritual weapons to **cast down every high thing** which exalts itself against Christ."⁶²

Furthermore: "**The Kingdom of God is continually growing and advancing to the end of the World**.... To whatever extent iniquity abounds in the World - to such an extent the Kingdom of God, which brings along with it perfect righteousness, **has not yet come**."⁶³

The Psalms, indeed, are full of predictions about the ongoing expansion of Christ's Kingdom here on Earth even as it is in Heaven. Thus Psalm 47 "teaches that the glory which then shone under the figure of the material sanctuary, **will diffuse its splendour far and wide** when God Himself will cause the beams of His grace to shine **into distant lands** - so that **kings and nations** may be united into fellowship with the children of Abraham.... **The Kingdom of God...would be extended to the uttermost boundaries of the Earth**...so as to occupy the **whole World** from one end to the other."⁶⁴

Calvin prays to God: "May we never doubt but that under the government of Your Christ, You can **again gather together the whole World!**... We shall at length know that **we have not in vain put hope in You**, and that our prayers have not been in vain - when Christ shall exercise the power given to Him for our **salvation** and for that of the **whole World**."⁶⁵

"Psalm [67] contains a prediction of Christ's Kingdom.... The **whole World** was to be **adopted** into a **privileged** relationship with God...to trust in the continuance and **increase** of the divine favour.... Here we have a clear prophecy of that **extension** of the grace of God by which the **Gentiles** were [to be] **united**...with the posterity of Abraham.... The consequence would be to **increase** the fear of His name, since **all** the **ends** of the **Earth** would...**submit** themselves with greater **cheerfulness** to His government."⁶⁶

In Psalm 72, comments Calvin, "the Kingdom of Christ...would be **extended** from the rising of the sun to its going down"; from East to West. "**The King** chosen by God in Judea will obtain so complete a **victory** over all His enemies **far and wide**, that they shall come...to **pay Him homage**.... **The whole World** will be brought into **subjection** to Christ's authority.... **The nations will become convinced** that nothing is more desirable than to receive from Him **Laws and Ordinances**.... That Kingdom would be **extended** even to the **utmost** boundaries of the **Globe**."⁶⁷ Cf. too Revelation 15:4 & 21:24-26.

Psalm 110, comments Calvin, "sets forth the **perpetuity** of Christ's reign, and the eternity of His priesthood.... He affirms that **God conferred upon [the man] Christ supreme dominion**, combined with **invincible** power, with which He either **conquers all His enemies** or compels them to **submit** to Him.... He adds that **God would extend** the boundaries of this Kingdom **far and wide**.... Christ should not reign as King upon Mount Zion only - because **God would cause** His power to extend to the **remotest regions** of the **Earth**."⁶⁸

Indeed, continues Calvin: "While the fullness of days **began** at the coming of Christ, it flows on in **uninterrupted progress** (Isaiah 2:2-4), until He appears the second time for our salvation.... The Prophet here shows that **the boundaries of His Kingdom will be enlarged - so that He may rule** over various **nations**.... Christ is not sent to the Jews only, so that He may reign [merely] over them - but so that **He may hold sway** over the **whole World**."⁶⁹

Also in Isaiah 9, comments Calvin, "God not only **protects and defends** [Christ's Kingdom], but also **extends** its boundaries **far and wide** - and then preserves and **carries it forward** in **uninterrupted progression** unto **eternity**.... We must not judge of its stability from the present appearances of things, but from **the promises which assure** us of its **continuance** and of its constant **increase**."⁷⁰

'Make known His works among the peoples!' - one reads in Isaiah 12:4-5. Comments Calvin: "It ought to be proclaimed not only in one corner, but throughout the whole World.... It would be made known first to the Jews...[and] afterwards spread abroad to **all men**....

"As the Jews proclaimed among the Medes and Persians and other neighbouring nations, the favour which had been shown to them - so, when Christ was manifested, they ought to have been heralds to sound aloud the Name of God **throughout every country in the World**.... The

desire which ought to be cherished among all the godly...is that the goodness of God may be made known to **all** - so that **all** may join in the same **worship** of God.... He shows that it is our **duty to proclaim** the goodness of God to **every nation**."⁷¹

Thus Isaiah 52:15 (*cf.* Matthew 28:19) predicts: 'So shall He sprinkle **many** nations.' Observes Calvin: "Let us **all** come with a true humility to embrace this Redeemer Who is offered to us!... May we be raised up in the majesty given to Him - to be partakers in the life He has won for us, so that He may **grant** this **grace** not only to us but to **all peoples** and **nations** of the **Earth**!"⁷²

Isaiah 60:3 predicts: 'The Gentiles **shall** come to Your light, and kings to the brightness of Your rising.' Calvin comments: "Now He confers on the Church the very highest honour, that she shines with such brightness so as to attract to herself **nations** and **princes**!"⁷³

Isaiah 60:4 enjoins: 'Lift up your eyes round about!' Comments Calvin: "It means that there shall be a **wonderful revolution** in the **World** - so that they who formerly were strangers and dispersed, shall be united in one body. Finally, it denotes the **extension** of the Church to the **farthest** boundaries of the **Earth**."⁷⁴

The same Isaiah 60:4 then further predicts: 'Your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side.' Calvin comments: "I consider the plain meaning to be that both sons and daughters shall **run** together to the Church. That is, that the Church shall have sons and daughters not only at home but abroad, and in the most **distant part** of the **World**.... The womb of the Church shall not be limited to any corner of the World, but shall be extended as **far and wide** as there shall be **space** throughout the **whole World**!"⁷⁵

'Surely the islands shall wait for Me!' - predicts God in Isaiah 60:9. Comments Calvin: "Do not wonder, therefore, that so **many** shall flow into the Church! For 'the islands' which at present sometimes despise and sometimes fight against Me, shall become so attentive to Me as to execute whatever I shall command....

"Besides, the Prophet declares that the **riches** of the **Gentiles**, which he appeared to represent a little before[hand] as the **prey** of the **Church** or the **pride** of **victory**, shall be[come] a **sacred offering to God**. And thus he states more clearly what I have said - that there is nothing which we ought to desire more earnestly than that the **whole World** should bow to the authority of **God**."⁷⁶

Isaiah 60:11 then predicts of the Church that 'your gates shall be open continually' *etc.* Comments Calvin: "The gates shall be open, so that **riches** may be brought into the **City** [of **God**] from **every quarter**. And, as burdens are usually carried in the daytime, the 'day' (he says) will not be enough. So **vast** shall be the **crowd** of those who bring into it precious treasures. And therefore, the carrying will be so constant - that it will be necessary to keep the city-gates open night and day!

"When he says that ['the forces' or the 'wealth' or] 'the **riches** of the **Gentiles** shall belong to the Church - let us not view this as referring to carnal luxury, but to **obedience which the whole World shall render to God**.... What is offered to God, belongs to the Church!"⁷⁷

Isaiah 60:16 predicts of the Church that 'you shall suck the milk of the Gentiles.' Comments Calvin: "It appeared to be incredible that the Church, which had been reduced to calamities so great and so numerous, **would be restored and spread throughout the whole World.** Her condition was desperate. But at length, out of that slender remnant which had as it were been snatched from the burning - to the great astonishment of all, she is restored. And her seed is **spread far and wide - through every part of the World.**"⁷⁸

Then, predicts Isaiah 60:22, 'a little one shall become a thousand.' Comments Calvin: "Let us consider that what **was** said to the **Jews** - is **now** said also of **us**! That is, though we are few in number and inconsiderable and appear to be very near destruction - still the Church cannot perish, but shall be enlarged and multiplied till it becomes very numerous!"⁷⁹

This shall occur, insists Isaiah 61:11, 'before all the nations.' Comments Calvin: "He again shows that the boundaries of the Church shall no longer be as narrow as they formerly were. For the Lord will cause her to fill the whole World!"⁸⁰

In Isaiah 66:18, God promises: 'I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.' Comments Calvin: "He means that the knowledge of God shall be spread throughout the whole World. For the Greeks, Italians, Parthians, Cilicians and other nations had heard nothing about pure religion and the true worship of God. And the whole World was plunged in the deepest darkness of ignorance. He therefore promises that the glory of God shall be known in every part of the World. The word '**nations**' is **emphatic.** For at that time the Lord was known to not more than one people. But **now, He reveals Himself to all.**"⁸¹

At the end of his *Lectures on Daniel* [2:44f to 12:12f], Calvin prays to God: "Grant, I say, that we may raise our eyes upward - and consider how much power You have conferred upon Your only-begotten Son! Grant also that He may rule and govern us by His Spirit; protect us by His faithfulness and guardianship; and compel the whole World to promote our salvation!... **May we never grow weary, but learn to overcome the whole World!**"⁸²

At the end of his *Lectures on Hosea* [6:7-11 to 14:7], Calvin prays to God: "O grant that we, being mindful of these benefits, may ever submit ourselves to You! May we desire only to raise our voice for this end that the whole World may submit itself to You and that those who seem now to rage against You may at length be brought, as well as we, to render You obedience - so that Your Son Christ may be Lord of all!"⁸³

At the end of his *Lectures on Micah* [4:1 to 5:4f], Calvin prays to God: "May we daily solicit You in our prayers and never doubt but that under the government of Your Christ, You can again gather together the whole World, though it be dispersed miserably! May we persevere in this warfare to the end, until we shall at length know that we have not in vain hoped in You - and that our prayers have not been in vain, when Christ shall exercise the power given to Him for our salvation and for that of the whole World!"⁸⁴

At Malachi 1:11, God predicts at the very end of the economy of the Older Testament: 'My Name shall be great among the Gentiles!' Here, comments Calvin, "God shows that He no longer cared [only] for the Jews. For He would bid altars to be reared for Him everywhere and

throughout all parts of the **World** - so that He might purely be **worshipped** by **all** nations.... For the doctrine of **salvation** would be propagated to the **utmost** extremities of the **Earth**.... The worship of God will flourish everywhere!"⁸⁵

* * * * *

At the beginning of the Newer Testament, Christ Himself declares: 'Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law!' Here, Calvin comments: "Christ now declares that **His doctrine** is so **far** from being **at variance with the Law**, that **it agrees perfectly with the Law**.... Devout worshippers of God would never have embraced the Gospel, if it had been a revolt from **the Law**.... Christ declared that **He had not come to destroy the Law**.... He immediately adds...that it is impossible for **even one point of the Law to fail** - and pronounces a **curse** on those teachers who do not faithfully labour to **maintain** its authority....

"While He invites and exhorts the Jews to receive the Gospel, He still retains them in obedience to the Law.... A New Covenant...would **not** be different from the first.... On the contrary, its design was to give a perpetual sanction to the Covenant which He had made from the beginning with His Own people. 'I will write My Law, says He, in their hearts; and I will remember their iniquities no more' (Jeremiah 31:33-34). By these words, He is so far from departing from the former Covenant that - on the contrary - He declares that it will be confirmed and ratified when it shall be succeeded by the New. This is also the meaning of Christ's words when He says that 'He came to fulfil the Law'....

"We must not imagine that the coming of Christ has freed us from the authority of the Law! For it is the Eternal Rule of a devout and holy life.... Let us therefore learn to maintain inviolable this sacred tie between the Law and the Gospel! - which many, improperly, attempt to break.... Sooner shall Heaven fall to pieces, and the whole frame of the World become a mass of confusion - than the stability of the Law shall give way.... There is nothing in the Law that is unimportant, nothing that was put there at random; and so it is impossible that a single letter shall perish....

"Christ here speaks expressly of **the Commandments** of life, or **the Ten Words** which **all** children of God ought to take as **the Rule of their life**. He therefore declares that they who do not restrain their disciples within obedience to the Law, are **false and deceitful teachers**.... They who weaken in the slightest degree the authority of the Law, are unworthy to occupy a place in the Church.... **They who recommend, both by word and example, the keeping of the Law - are honest and faithful Ministers**.... Christ banished from His Kingdom all who accustom men to any contempt of the Law.... Observe the description He gives of good and holy teachers - that they not only by words but chiefly by the example of life exhort men to keep the Law....

"He takes a passing notice of 'the Scribes' - who were labouring to throw a stain on the doctrine of the Gospel, as if it were the ruin of the Law.... The Pharisees debase the Law, so that their righteousness is mere filth. It is a mistake, however, to suppose...that Christ raises His disciples to a higher degree of perfection.... Nothing was farther from the design of Christ than to alter or innovate anything in the **Commandments of the Law**. There, God has once [and for all] fixed **the Rule of Life** - **which He will never retract**. But as the Law had been...turned to

a profane meaning - Christ vindicates it against such corruptions, and points out its true meaning from which the Jews had departed....

"That Christ...intended to make no corrections in the precepts of the Law, is very clear.... For those who desire to enter into life by their good works, He gives no other injunction that to **keep the Commandments of the Law**, Matthew 19:17. **From no other source do the Apostles as well as Christ Himself draw the rules for a devout and holy life!**"⁸⁶

There is, moreover, also an intimate bond between the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. On the latter, Calvin comments: "**The Law of God** is divided into **Two Tables** - of which the former contains the duties of piety and the latter the duties of charity. **So, in)Prayer** - Christ enjoins us to consider and seek the glory of God, and at the same time permits us to consult our own interests....

'Hallowed be **Your** Name! May **Your** Kingdom **come!** May **Your** will be done on **Earth**, as it is in **Heaven!**' [Matthew 6:10].... Because the Word of God is like a royal sceptre, we are bidden here to entreat Him to bring **all men's minds and hearts into voluntary obedience to it**.... God, therefore, sets up His Kingdom by humbling the whole World - though in different ways - taming the wantonness of some, and breaking the ungovernable pride of others. **We should desire this to be done every day - in order that God may gather churches to Himself from all quarters of the World; may extend and increase their numbers; enrich them with His gifts; and establish due order among them.** On the other hand, [may He] **beat down all the enemies of pure doctrine** and religion; dissipate their counsels; defeat their attempts!

"Hence it appears that there is good ground for the precept which enjoins daily progress. For human affairs are never so prosperous as when the impurities of vice are purged away - and **integrity flourishes in full vigour**.... **With ever-increasing splendour, He displays His light and truth** by which the darkness and falsehoods of Satan's kingdom vanish; are extinguished; and pass away....

"By this prayer we ask that He...may bring **all men** under His dominion, and may lead them to meditate on the **heavenly life**.... We therefore pray that God would exert His power both by the Word and by the Spirit, so that the **whole World** may willingly submit to Him... 'till they **all** be made His footstool' (Hebrews 10:13)...to **obey His justice**.... Again, as **the Kingdom of God is continually growing and advancing to the end of the World** - we must pray every day that it may come. For to whatever extent iniquity abounds in the World - to such an extent the Kingdom of God, which brings along with it perfect righteousness, has not yet come."⁸⁷

How long, then, shall it be before we again see progress in the expansion of Christ's Kingdom - after centuries of deformation in His Church? Answers Calvin: "'When therefore you shall see the abomination of desolation which is described by Daniel the Prophet standing in the holy place, let him that reads understand!'" (Matthew 24:15)....

"I must examine the passage which is quoted by Christ.... The Angel [in Daniel 12] predicts what is called the final abrogation...which was to take place at the coming of Christ. For, after having exhorted believers to unshaken constancy, He fixes absolutely the time both of the ruin and of the [Protestant] **restoration**. 'From the time,' says He, 'that the daily sacrifice

shall be taken away and the abomination of desolation set up - there will be 1290 days. Blessed is he who shall wait till he comes to the 1335 days!' (Daniel 12:11-12)....

"I am aware that this passage is tortured in a variety of ways.... As that message was sad and melancholy, He again recalls the Prophet to 'one year' and 'two years' and 'six months.' These words denote both the duration and the close of the calamities.... The Spirit therefore exhorts believers to prepare themselves for the exercise of patience, not only for a single...long period - but to lay their account with enduring tribulations through an uninterrupted succession of many ages....

"The calamity of the Church shall last through a 'time' [and] 'times' and 'half a time' (Daniel 7:25)...by a very long continuance of calamities.... It is customary with men in adversity to compute time not by years or months but by 'days' - a single 'day' being, in their estimation, equal to a 'year.' He says that those will be happy - who bear up to the end of that period.... There is no reason why the Papists should talk so haughtily.... For Christ does not restrict us...to the primacy of the **Roman see**!"⁸⁸

Nevertheless, in Matthew 28:19 the Lord Christ gave an enduring command to His Ministers of the Word and Sacraments. There, He said: 'Go...and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost - teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded!'

There, Calvin comments:⁸⁹ "This passage shows that the full and clear knowledge of God...is at length fully disclosed under the reign of Christ. True indeed, the ancients would never have ventured to call God their '**Father**' (cf. Deuteronomy 32:6 and First Chronicles 29:10 and Isaiah 9:6 & 63:16 & 64:8) - if they had not derived this assurance from Christ their Head [before His incarnation].

"He, the Eternal Wisdom of God [the Father], Who is the fountain of light and life - was not wholly unknown to them [cf. Job 19:25-27 & 28:25-28 and Proverbs 8:12-31 and Luke 7:35 & 11:49 and First Corinthians 1:24-30]. It was even one of their acknowledged principles, that God displays His power by the Holy Spirit [Genesis 1:2 and Job 26:13 & 32:8 & 33:4 and Psalm 33:6-9 etc.].

"But at the commencement of the Gospel, God was far more clearly revealed in three Persons. For then the **Father** manifested Himself in the Son, His lively and distinct image. While Christ, irradiating the World by the full splendour of His Spirit, held out to the knowledge of men - both Himself, and the Spirit [John 14:16 to 16:15].

"There are good reasons why the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are expressly mentioned. For there is no other way in which the efficacy of Baptism can be experienced than when we begin with the unmerited mercy of the **Father**, Who reconciles us to Himself by the only begotten Son. Next, Christ comes forward with the sacrifice of His death.... The Holy Spirit is likewise added; by Whom He washes and regenerates us....

"Thus we perceive that God cannot be known truly, unless our faith distinctly conceive of three Persons in one Essence.... The fruit and efficacy of Baptism proceed from God the

Father adopting us through **His Son** and, after having cleansed us from the pollutions of the flesh through **the Spirit**, creating us anew to righteousness.

"The nature of the apostolic function is clear from the command, 'You must go into **all** the World and preach the Gospel to **every** creature!' (Mark 16:15). **No fixed limits are given them**, but **the whole World** is assigned to be reduced under the obedience of Christ, so that by **spreading** the Gospel as **widely** as they could, they might **everywhere** erect His Kingdom."

Calvin insists: "We should be instant in prayer - so that we may gain **daily increase** of the Spirit. '**Increase**,' I say - because before we can conceive any prayer, we must receive of the first-fruits of the Spirit!"⁹⁰

Needless to say, Christians are thus to erect Christ's Kingdom not only in His Church but also throughout His World of mathematics and science and art and law and everything else. For Jesus does not here say: 'Go into all the **Church**!' Here, He clearly says: 'You must go into all the **World**!'

Affirms Calvin: "Of the elements of the **World**, I should say only this one thing.... They are to be consumed, only so that they may be **renovated** - their substance still remaining the same.... That may easily be gathered from Romans 8:21, and from other passages."⁹¹

Calvin insists:⁹² "There is no element and no part of the World which...is not intent on the **hope** of the resurrection.... All creatures...are sustained by **hope**.... From **hope** comes the swiftness of the sun, the moon, and all the stars in their constant courses; the continued obedience of the Earth in producing its fruits; the unwearied motions of the air; and the ready power of the water to flow. God gives to each its proper task, and...at the same time inwardly implanted the **hope** of renewal.... He gives them a **hope** of a better condition....

"They have a **hope** of being freed...until they...finally bring forth a **joyful and happy fruit**.... Also we ourselves who have the firstfruits of the Spirit...are saved by **hope**.... He promises us **victory** over **every** kind of enemy.... This outcome...is always granted to them - so that they obtain the **victory**!...

"If the **rejection** of the **Jews** has been able to occasion the reconciliation of the Gentiles - will not their reception back be **much more powerful**? And should it not raise them [the Jews] even from the dead?... Since therefore God has marvellously brought life out of death and light out of darkness - how much more, he reasons, we ought to hope that the resurrection of a people virtually dead will bring the Gentiles to life?!....

"The '**fullness** of the Gentiles' means a **great** number.... When the Gentiles have come in, the Jews will at the same time return from their defection to the obedience of faith.... Paul wanted here to point to the **consummation** of the Kingdom of Christ, which is by no means confined to the Jews but includes **the whole World**."

Yet future blessings are not merely international, here on Earth. They are also supraterrrestrial, and even for Heaven! Explains Calvin: "The Prophet [Isaiah 64:4], having mentioned **earthly** benefits, was led on...to **glory** in the **spiritual blessedness** which is laid up

in Heaven for believers.... The Scripture testifies that Christ now holds dominion over the Heaven and the Earth.... The end has not yet come, when all things will be put into a right and tranquil state. Because Christ has not yet finished subduing all His enemies. Now, that must [still] be brought about - because the Father has placed Him at His right hand with the understanding that He is not to resign the authority that He has received until they have been subdued under His power."⁹³

* * * * *

Sadly, the many antichrists and the king-size Antichrist have challenged and still challenge Christ's reign. To Calvin, the Antichrist is neither Pre-Christian nor Post-Christian Imperial Rome - nor an end-time and yet-future One-World Dictator. Indeed, all of these antichrists in the long term do not destroy but only promote the further expansion of Christ's Church and the unfolding of His Kingdom!

Calvin the Augustinian concurred with the A.D. 400 Augustine. The latter said⁹⁴ some "think that the Apostle Paul referred to **the Roman Empire**, and that...he alludes to **Nero** - whose deeds already seemed to be **as** the deeds of **Antichrist**.... I wonder that men can be so audacious in their conjectures!

"Yet it is **not** absurd to believe that these words of the Apostle [in Second Thessalonians 2:7] - 'Only he who now withholds, let him keep on withholding until he be taken out of the way!' - refer to **the Roman Empire**. As if it were said - 'Let him who now reigns [*viz.* the series of Emperors of the Roman Empire], only keep on reigning until he be taken out of the way [at the fall of that Empire in Augustine's own time]!' And 'then the wicked one shall be revealed.' **No one doubts** that this ['wicked one'] means **Antichrist**."

Observes the A.D. 1551f Calvin:⁹⁵ "**We today** must similarly bestir ourselves!... Under **the Papacy**, there is nothing more well-known and common - than the '**future**' [*sic*!] coming of **Antichrist**. And yet, they [**the Papists**] are so dull that they do not see that **his** tyranny is being exercised over them!

"Indeed, entirely the same thing happens to them - as to **the Jews**.... **The Papists** have imagined an **Antichrist** who is to harass the Church for three and a half years [some time yet future]. Here all the marks by which the Spirit of God has pointed out **Antichrist**, appear clearly in **the Pope**.... Those who think that he would be just one man, are dreaming!

"For **Paul**, referring to a [the yet] **future falling away**, plainly shows that it would be a body or a kingdom (Second Thessalonians 2:3). He first foretells a falling away that would spread throughout the whole **Church**, as a sort of universal evil. Then he makes the head of this apostasy **the adversary of Christ, who would sit in God's Temple** and claim...divine honours" - as does the Pope as the so-called Representative or 'Vicar' of Christ (*sic*).

Explains Calvin:⁹⁶ "**We call the Roman Pontiff Antichrist**.... Paul says that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God (Second Thessalonians 2:4).... All the heresies and schisms which have existed from the beginning, belong to the kingdom of **Antichrist**. Yet, when **Paul**

predicts an approaching apostasy, he signifies by this description that this seat of abomination shall then be erected when a universal defection shall have seized the Church - notwithstanding many Members dispersed in different places persevere in the unity of the faith....

"This calamity was neither to be introduced by one man, nor to terminate in one man.... Second Thessalonians 2:3; Daniel 7:25.... It is evident that the Roman Pontiff has impudently transferred to himself some of the peculiar and exclusive prerogatives of God and Christ. It cannot be doubted that he [the Pope of Rome] is the leader and standard-bearer of this impious and abominable kingdom" of Antichrist.

Yet all of the antichrists are merely hiccoughs in history. Even the Antichrist - is but one large wart on the nose of the progress of Christ's Kingdom throughout the World.

Explains Calvin: "The dominion mentioned in the [eighth] Psalm, was lost to us in Adam.... It must again be restored.... Now the restoration begins with Christ as the Head.... We are to look to Him whenever the dominion of man over all creatures is spoken of.... It hence now appears that here the 'World to come' is not that which we hope for after the resurrection, but that which began at the beginning of Christ's Kingdom. But it will no doubt have its full accomplishment!"⁹⁷

Meanwhile, despite Antichrist, God Himself continues promoting the advance of His Own Kingdom. Challenged Calvin: "Which of us would dare to claim for himself one grain of wheat, were we not convinced by God's Word that the Earth was our inheritance? Common sense does indeed hold that the riches of the Earth are naturally intended for our use. But, since our dominion over the World was taken from us in Adam - every gift of God that we touch - is defied by our stains. And it, on its side, is unclean to us - till God graciously helps us and, by incorporating us into the Body of His Son, makes us anew lords of the Earth so that we may legitimately enjoy as our own all the wealth He supplies.

"Paul, therefore, has good reason to connect rightful enjoyment with the Word - by which alone we regain what was lost to us in Adam. For we must acknowledge God as our Father, before we can be His heirs; and Christ as our Head, before the things that are His can become ours."⁹⁸

Of the long-term outcome, there can be no doubt! As Calvin observes: "This is the cause of God.... He will take it in hand, and bring it to a happy outcome.... Whatever resistance we see offered today by almost all the World...to the progress of the truth - we must not doubt that our Lord will finally break through all the undertakings of man and make a passage for His Word.... Let us hope boldly, then, even more than we can understand! He will surpass our thoughts and our hope."⁹⁹

Says Calvin: "We pray, therefore, that God's reign may come - that is to say, that the Lord may from day to day multiply the number of His faithful believers who celebrate His glory in all works, and that He may continually spread on them more largely the affluence of His graces.... Similarly, we ask that from day to day, He may through new growths spread His light and enlighten His truth - so that Satan and the lies and the darkness of his reign may be dissipated and abolished."¹⁰⁰

Let us now look at **some of the antichrists** - all of which ultimately just stimulate the advance of the Kingdom of **Christ**! Post-Christian Judaism has always opposed the advance of Biblical Christianity. When first-century Judaists repudiated Jesus Christ as the Central Person in the Godhead, they lapsed from honouring the Triune God of the Older Testament and instead then adopted their novel brand of Unitarianism. And in so doing, they became a broken-off and faith-less branch of God's olive tree alias the faith-ful people of Jehovah. Matthew 21:23-43 and Romans 2:28-29 & 11:11-16 *cf.* Galatians 6:15-16 and Revelation 2:9 & 3:9.

Too, since about 600 A.D., also **Islam and the Papacy** have become broken-off branches. To Calvin, "**Mahomet**" with his "Al Koran" and "**the Pope**" with "his own decrees...be the two horns of Antichrist."¹⁰¹ When descendants of the Ancient Hebrews would reject the Messiah as the great Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18 *cf.* 28:36), explained Calvin, "the Jews would serve strange gods"¹⁰² in the place of the Triune Jehovah Elohim. Thus **Judaists** alias Anti-Christian "**Jews and such like**," he comments, "have a mere idol in place of God."¹⁰³

Also **Muslims** or "**Turks...have a mere idol in place of God**."¹⁰⁴ For the Apostle John insists: 'Whosoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father' (First John 2:23). Explains Calvin: "The Turks in the present day...proclaim with full throat that the Creator of Heaven and Earth is their God. Yet, by their rejection of Christ, they substitute an **idol** in His place."¹⁰⁵

Indeed, in Second Thessalonians 2:3f, comments Calvin,¹⁰⁶ "Paul...is...speaking...of a kingdom that was to be seized by Satan for the purpose of setting up a seat of abomination in the midst of God's temple. This we see accomplished in **Popery**. Mohammed was an apostate. He turned his followers, the Turks, from Christ.... The sect of Mohammed was like a raging overflow which in its violence tore away about half of the Church."

"It remained for Antichrist to infect the part which was left, with his poison.... Anyone who has learned from Scripture what are the things that belong particularly of God, and who on the other hand considers well what **the Pope** usurps for himself - will, even though he were a ten-year-old boy, not have much difficulty in recognizing **Antichrist**....

"Paul sets Antichrist in the very sanctuary of God. He is **not** an enemy from **outside** but from [inside] the household of faith, and opposes Christ under the very **name** of Christ.... It is **the temple of God**" - *viz.* **the Church** - "in which **the Pope** holds sway....

"The name 'Antichrist' does not designate a single individual, but a single kingdom which extends throughout many generations.... He [Paul, earlier in Second Thessalonians chapter two,] had predicted the **destruction** of the reign of Antichrist; and now describes the **manner** of his destruction. He will be annihilated by the Word of the Lord....

"Paul does **not** think that Christ will accomplish this in a single moment." Yet nevertheless, all in due course, "Antichrist would be completely and utterly destroyed....

"**Christ** will scatter the darkness in which Antichrist will reign, by the rays which He will emit before His coming - just as the sun, before becoming visible to us, chases away the darkness of the night with its bright light. This victory of the Word will therefore be seen in

the World. For [the Spirit or] 'Breath of His Mouth' simply means His Word - as in Isaiah 11:4, the passage to which Paul appears to be alluding....

"True and **sound doctrine**...is represented as being sufficient to put an end to all ungodliness, and as destined at all times to be **victorious** over all the devices of Satan. It is also a commendation, when a little further on the **preaching** of this doctrine is referred to as Christ's 'coming' to us....

"When he adds... 'that the Word of the Lord may **run** and **be glorified**' [3:1f] - he shows that he is concerned...for the **entire Church**.... So that the doctrine of the Gospel may **run** on its course.... The 'course'...means dissemination; while '**glory**' means...that His **preaching** may have **power** and **efficacy** to **refashion men** in the image of God."

Thus, Christ will scatter the darkness in which Antichrist reigns - by the rays which He will emit **before** His coming - just as the sun, **before** becoming visible to us, chases away the darkness of the night with its bright light! True and **sound doctrine** is represented as being sufficient to put an end to all ungodliness and as destined at all times to be victorious. The **forthright and strong preaching** of this doctrine is referred to as Christ's 'coming' to us! So Calvin.

Indeed, the same applies to the conversion of **the Jews** from Judaism to Christianity. Explains Calvin:¹⁰⁷ "The fall of the Jews had resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles. It had, however, this purpose - that the Jews should be stirred up by jealousy, and thus turn their minds to repentance.... If the fall of the Jews could raise up the Gentiles, and their diminution enrich them - how much more would their fullness?.... If the rejection of the Jews has been able to occasion the reconciliation of the Gentiles - will not their reception be much more powerful, and should it not raise them even from the dead?.... Just as He has often at other times restored the Jews, after He had apparently banished them from His Kingdom.... When the Gentiles have come in - the Jews will at the same time return from their defection to the obedience of faith.... 'For God has included all unto disobedience so that He might have mercy upon **all**!'"

* * * * *

Calvin's postmortal eschatology is very sober. The soul stays alive after the death of the body. As he maintains,¹⁰⁸ "**solid comfort** is furnished by Scripture, when it declares 'Blessed are the death who die in the Lord' - and adds the reason: 'for they **rest** from their labours [and their **works do follow them**].' Revelation 14:13."

At death, Christians' souls go straight to Heaven. When their souls are 'absent from the body' - says Paul - they are 'present with the Lord.' Second Corinthians 5:8. As Calvin comments:¹⁰⁹ "Souls loosed from their bodies, live with God. For if, when they are absent from the body, they have God present with them - then certainly they live with Him."

Moreover, Paul also says: 'To me to live is Christ; and to die, is gain I am...having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better!' Here, comments Calvin,¹¹⁰ Paul "asserts that it is indifferent to him...whether he lives or dies - because, having Christ, he deems both [living or dying] to be gain. And assuredly, it is Christ alone who makes us happy both in

death and in life.... Let Christ be with us, and He will bless our life as well as our death - so that both will be happy and desirable for us....

"What Paul now says, is this: 'I desire to die, because by this means I will arrive at union with Christ'.... This he expresses better immediately afterwards - explaining what condition awaits believers after death - that they **dwell with Christ**.... This passage will refute the mad fancy of those who dream that souls sleep when separated from the body. For Paul openly declares that we enjoy **Christ's presence**, on being set free" at the time of our deaths.

Calvin further states,¹¹¹ regarding God's elect, who **die in the Lord** (Revelation 6:11 & 14:13 *cf.* First Corinthians 2:9) - that **unimaginable rest** and "faith and hope...is laid up for them in Heaven (Colossians 1:5)" and that "'where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Matthew 6:21).... All things in Heaven and Earth struggle for renovation.... After our bodies have been consumed with rottenness, they will rise again at their appointed time."

Meanwhile, **before** Christians die: "'A **living dog** is better than a **dead lion**' (Ecclesiastes 9:4)." And right **after** they die: "'The spirit of **man**...goes **upward**, and the spirit of the **beast** goes **downward** to the earth' [Ecclesiastes 3:21]....

"'We go to the **spirits** of just men made **perfect**' (Hebrews 12:23).... Christ is present with them, and receives them into **Paradise** (John 12:32).... They are comforted.... The abode of blessed spirits is designated as the 'bosom of Abraham' [Luke 16:22 *cf.* 23:43]....

"Since Scripture uniformly enjoins us to look with expectation to the advent of Christ, and delays the crown of glory till that period - let us be contented with the limits divinely prescribed to us!... The souls of the righteous, after their warfare is ended, obtain blessed rest - where in **joy** they **wait** for the fruition of promised glory.... Thus, the **final** result is suspended - till Christ the Redeemer appear."

Yet that latter event shall not occur until **after** the millennium. As Calvin states,¹¹² in Revelation 20 (*cf.* John 5:24-29) "John has described a twofold resurrection.... One, of the **soul**, **before** judgment; and another, when **the body will be raised up** [still later].... 'Blessed,' says he, 'are those who have part in the first resurrection.... The first resurrection [of the soul at one's conversion while still here on Earth] is the **only entrance to beatific glory**'" - **hereafter**.

Calvin elaborates on this, against Premillennialism:¹¹³ "The Chiliasts arose, who **limited** the reign of Christ to a thousand years. This fiction is too puerile to need or to deserve refutation. Nor do they receive any countenance from the Apocalypse, from which it is known that they extracted a gloss for their error (Revelation 20:4). Since the thousand years there mentioned, refer not to the eternal blessedness of the Church but only to...the Church militant in this World.

"The whole Scripture proclaims that there will be no end...to the happiness of the elect.... Those who assign **only** a thousand years to the children of God to enjoy..., do not observe how great an insult they offer to Christ and His Kingdom.... The whole grace of God and power of Christ...cannot have their **full** effect, unless [and until] sin is obliterated, death swallowed up, and **eternal** life **fully** renewed" at the **end** of the millennium.

Such, however, occurs only after the Final Judgment - when the New Heaven is united with the New Earth (Revelation 21:1 to 22:5). As the genius of Geneva declares¹¹⁴ of those who would end up there: "They must be purified, before they can be admitted into the Kingdom of God - into which shall not enter anything that defiles (Revelation 21:27)." Such purification occurs to the soul at conversion alias 'the first resurrection' (Revelation 20:5) - and occurs to the body at its final resurrection on the last day (Revelation 20:11-13).

On that last day, the decomposed corpses of all human beings shall be raised from the dead. Already Job (19:25-27) exulted: 'I know my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth! And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God. I shall see Him for myself. My eyes and not those of another shall behold Him - even though my kidneys have been consumed within me!'

Calvin calls the above¹¹⁵ "the most remarkable passage of all.... Job never could have attained to such **fullness of hope** - if his thoughts had risen no higher than the Earth.... It must therefore be confessed that he...must have raised his eyes to a future immortality."

Moreover, in sermons¹¹⁶ on that same passage, Calvin states: "Job adds 'that he knows that his Redeemer lives'.... Job contrariwise says 'I know that my God is alive, and that in the end He will rise up upon the dust'...; but God (he says) can never decay as men do - He will continue in His state, everlastingly.... I believe in Him alone, because He calls me to Heaven and has not created me as an ox or an ass to live here a little while. But He has formed me after His Own image - to the intent I should hope for the inheritance of His Kingdom and be partaker of the glory of His Son....

"He says that his skin was worm-eaten and consumed, and he was as good as dead. And yet he protests that he will not cease looking unto His God.... Furthermore, when Job says 'that he shall see his Redeemer in his flesh' - his meaning is...that he shall be restored to a new state.... Afterward he adds, 'I shall see God in **my flesh**'.... God has assured **me** that He will make **me** strong again.... My eyes then shall behold Him, and none other.... Job then means that he shall see God - in effect, by being set again in his former state."

Paul, observes Calvin,¹¹⁷ says that Christ the Second Adam, "free from all corruption, resumed a spotless body.... He sits in the Heavens, and will come as a judge on the last day for the express purpose of changing our vile body 'so that it may be fashioned like His glorious body'.... The Lord Jesus Christ 'shall change our vile body, so that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body - according to the working of that mighty power whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself' (Philippians 3:21)." Hence Calvin also comments¹¹⁸ that "there is **no** part of us that ought not to aspire after Heaven with whole-hearted desire! We see even in life but chiefly in death, the present meanness of our bodies. But the glory which they will have, conformably to Christ's body, is incomprehensible!"

Calvin observes:¹¹⁹ "By believing in Christ, we pass from death unto life. But we must at the same time remember the words of John, that though we know we are 'the sons of God' - 'it is not yet apparent what we shall be. But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. For we shall see Him as He is' (First John 3:2).... It behoves us to hunger after Christ

alone: to seek Him, look to Him, learn from Him, and learn again - until the arrival of the great day on which the Lord will fully manifest the glory of His Kingdom and exhibit Himself as He is, to our admiring eye (First John 3:2)."

Calvin further comments:¹²⁰ "Our faith can stand only if it looks to the coming of Christ.... We shall be like Him, in that He will conform our lowly body to His glorious body.... Our desire for holiness should not grow cold.... If we hope - it will stir and stimulate us to the pursuit of purity!"

Yet Calvin also insists¹²¹ that although 'there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust' (Acts 24:15) - and of the unjust unto their everlasting damnation - "Christ comes not for the destruction but for the salvation of the World.... In the *Creed*, the life of blessedness only is mentioned.... The end [or purpose] of the resurrection, is eternal happiness [for the elect]....

"Scarcely the minutest part can be described by all that human tongues can say [*cf.* First Corinthians 2:9].... The Kingdom of God will be full of light and gladness and felicity.... Our Lord will share His glory, power and righteousness with the elect. Nay, He will give himself to be enjoyed by them....

"Every kind of happiness is included herein.... Daniel [12:3] says, 'They that be wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament...for ever and ever'.... This is confirmed by our Saviour's promise that they 'shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life' (Matthew 19:29).... There will be so much pleasantness in the very sight, so much delight in the very knowledge - that this happiness will far surpass all the means of enjoyment which are now afforded.... **Fruition**, pure and free from all defect...is the summit of happiness.... I expect with Paul [*cf.* Romans 8:22] a reparation of those defects which first began with sin.... God is constantly urging nature forward, to its goal in **perfection itself!**"

Yet, while the godly shall enjoy the peaceful fullness of human culture, from the mathematical right through to the ethical, on the New Earth forever - the wicked shall be tortured everlastingly in a cultureless Hell. "No peace," says my God, "to the wicked!" Isaiah 57:20-21.

States Calvin:¹²² "Language cannot describe the severity of the divine vengeance on the reprobate. Their pains and torments are figured to us by corporeal things such as darkness, wailing and gnashing of teeth, unextinguishable fire, the ever-gnawing worm. Matthew 8:12 & 22:13; Mark 9:43; Isaiah 66:24.... The consideration on which we chiefly ought to dwell, is the fearful consequence of being estranged from all fellowship with God....

"Those to whom the Lord will thus publicly manifest His anger - will feel that Heaven and Earth and Sea, all beings animate and inanimate, are as it were inflamed with dire indignation against them.... It were easier to plunge into abysses and whirlpools, than endure these terrors for a moment. How fearful, then, must it be - to be thus beset, throughout eternity!"

Meanwhile, as Calvin insists:¹²³ "**Our doctrine** must stand sublime above all the glory of the World, and **invincible by all its power**. Because it is not ours, but that of the Living God and His Anointed Whom the Father has appointed King so that He may rule from Sea to Sea and

from the rivers **even to the ends of the Earth** - and so rule, as to **smite the whole Earth**...with the mere **Rod of His Mouth** and break them into pieces like a potter's vessel according to the magnificent predictions of the Prophets respecting His Kingdom. Daniel 2:34; Isaiah 11:4; Psalm 2:9."

So then, dear reader - are you a real Calvin-ist?

Endnotes

- 1) John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I:14:20.
- 2) *Commentary* on Genesis 1:1 & 1:26.
- 3) *Ib.*, 1:26 & 2:15f.
- 4) *Inst.* I:5:2,10.
- 5) *Ib.*, I:16:2.
- 6) *Comm.* on Dan. 1:4.
- 7) *Inst.* I:5:2.
- 8) *Comm.* on Gen. 1: 6.
- 9) *Comm.* on Ps. 19: 1.
- 10) *Comm.* on Ps. 93: 1.
- 11) *Inst.* II: 2:16.
- 12) *Comm.* on Ezek. 1: 21.
- 13) *Inst.* I:5:2.
- 14) *Comm.* on Rom. 8:19.
- 15) *Inst.* III:10:2.
- 16) *Inst.* II:2:16.
- 17) *Comm.* on John 1: 4.
- 18) *Inst.* I:16: 2.
- 19) *Comm.* on Ps. 147:15.
- 20) *Advertissement contre l'astrologie judiciaire*, in *Op. Omn.* VII:529.
- 21) *Inst.* I: 18: 2.
- 22) *Comm.* on I Cor. 2: 11.
- 23) *Inst.* II: 2:17.
- 24) *Comm.* on John 1:14 and 1:9.
- 25) *Inst.* IV:19:33.
- 26) *Inst.* IV:20:4.
- 27) *Comm.* on Gen. 18:18.
- 28) *Comm.* on Gen. 11:1.
- 29) *Comm.* on John 1:1.
- 30) *Inst.* II:8:55.
- 31) *Inst.* III: 7:7.
- 32) *Inst.* III:10:2. See too Calvin on Gen. 1:28, at endnote 3 above.
- 33) *Inst.* III:10:2-3.
- 34) *Inst.* I:11:12.
- 35) *Opera* VI, col. 170; and VII, col. 469.
- 36) *Comm.* on Ps. 127:1.
- 37) *Comm.* on Rom. 12:1.
- 38) *Comm.* on Heb. 4:10.
- 39) *Inst.* II:8 (*q.v.*).
- 40) *Opera* XXXVII:14.
- 41) *Opera* XXXVI:83.
- 42) *Opera* XXIII:83.

- 43) *Inst.* III:10:6.
- 44) *Comm.* on Gen. 3:17-23.
- 45) *Comm.* on Gen. 3:14-15 & 9:2; and on I Cor. 15:27, referring back to his comments on Gen. 1:28 & Ps. 8:8.
- 46) *Inst.* II:2:16 and *Comm.* on I Cor. 3:19.
- 47) *Comm.* on Heb. 2:5.
- 48) *Comm.* on Rom. 8:19f & I Cor. 10:31; and *Inst.* III:25:11.
- 49) *Inst.* II:2:15.
- 50) *Comm.* on Gen. 4:20.
- 51) *Inst.* I:5:2 & II:2:12-16.
- 52) *Comm.* on I Cor. 14:41 & Jer. 10:12.
- 53) *Inst.* II:2:16.
- 54) *Comm.* on Ps. 77:14.
- 55) *Comm.* on Ps. 104:24.
- 56) *Comm.* on Ps. 19:1.
- 57) *Comm.* on Gen. 1:25.
- 58) *Comm.* on Ps. 19:1.
- 59) *Comm.* on Pss. 19:2 & 148:5 and Jer. 35:25.
- 60) *Inst.* I:17:1 & I:16:5 & I:16:3f.
- 61) *Inst.* I:14:21.
- 62) *Comm.* on Ps. 2:8-9.
- 63) *Comm.* on the *Harmony of the Gospel*, Calvin Translation Society ed., I:320.
- 64) *Comm.* on Ps. 47, preamble, and on vv. 7 & 8.
- 65) *Comm.* on the *Twelve Minor Prophets*, Calvin Translation Society's ed., V:510.
- 66) *Comm.* on *Pss.* (Outline of Ps. 67).
- 67) *Ib.*, on Ps. 72:11.
- 68) *Ib.* (Outline of Ps. 110).
- 69) *Inst.* IV:2:4 & I:14:18 cf. his *Comm.* on Isa. 2:2-4 & 11:4.
- 70) *Comm.* on Isa. (9:7).
- 71) *Ib.*, on Isa. 12:4-5.
- 72) Calvin's 1558 sermon on Isaiah, in (translator) T.H.L. Parker's *John Calvin's Sermons on Isaiah's Prophecy of the Death and Passion of Christ*, Jas. Clarke & Co., London, 1956, p. 44.
- 73) *Ib.*, on Isa. 60:3.
- 74) *Ib.*, on Isa. 60:4.
- 75) *Ib.*, on Isa. 60:3-4.
- 76) *Ib.*, on Isa. 60:9.
- 77) *Ib.*, on Isa. 60:11.
- 78) *Ib.*, on Isa. 60:16.
- 79) *Ib.*, on Isa. 60:22.
- 80) *Ib.*, on Isa. 61:11.
- 81) *Ib.*, on Isa. 66:18.
- 82) *Prayers at the End of 9th and 65th Lectures on Daniel*, in his *Commentary on Daniel the Prophet*.
- 83) *Prayer After the 34th Lecture on Hosea*, in his *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*.
- 84) *Prayer After Micah 7:15 at the End of the 97th Lectures on the Minor Prophets*.
- 85) *Comm.* on the 12 Min. Proph., V:498f.
- 86) *Harm. of the Gosp.*, I:275f (on Matt. 5:17-21).
- 87) *Ib.*, III:20:42; and his comment on Matt. 6:9f (in his *Harm. Gosp.*).
- 88) *Harm. Gosp.* (on Matt. 24:15-28).
- 89) *Inst.* IV:3:4.
- 90) *Comm.* on Acts 1:14.
- 91) *Comm.* on II Pet. 3:10.
- 92) *Comm.* on Rom. 8:17-37f & 11:15,25f.
- 93) *Comm.* on I Cor. 2:9 & 15:25-27.
- 94) Augustine of Hippo-Regius: *The City of God*, XX:19f.
- 95) *Comm.* on I John 2:18.

- 96) *Inst.*, IV:7:25.
- 97) *Comm.* on Heb. 2:5.
- 98) *Comm.* on I Tim. 2:5.
- 99) *Opera Omnia*, 1866 ed., V:684.
- 100) *Catechism or Instruction in Faith* [1537], Lutterworth, London, 1949 rep., 24, 2nd Petition.
- 101) *Sermon 108* on Deut. 18:19-15.
- 102) *Sermon 159* on Deut. 28:36.
- 103) *Comm.* on I John 2:22-23.
- 104) *Id.*
- 105) *Inst.* II:6:4.
- 106) *Comm.* on II Th. 2:3f to 3:1.
- 107) *Comm.* on Rom. 11:11-32.
- 108) *Inst.* III:5:10.
- 109) *Comm.* on II Cor. 5:8.
- 110) *Comm.* on Phil. 1:21-23.
- 111) *Inst.* III:25:1-6.
- 112) *Psychopannychia* (in his *Tracts & Treatises*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958, III:446).
- 113) *Inst.* III:25:5.
- 114) *Inst.* IV:16:17.
- 115) *Inst.* II:10:19.
- 116) *The 71st and the 72nd Sermons on the Nineteenth Chapter of Job*, in *Sermons of Maister John Calvin on the Book of Job*, George Bishop, London, 1574, pp. 335-38.
- 117) *Inst.*, III:25:4.
- 118) *Comm.* on Phil. 3:21.
- 119) *Inst.*, II:9:3 & IV:18:20.
- 120) *Comm.* on First John 3:2f.
- 121) *Inst.* III:25:9-11.
- 122) *Inst.* III:25:12.
- 123) J. Calvin: *Preface to King Francis*, para. 10 (in Calvin's *Inst.*).

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Dr. Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (in Great Britain). During World War II, the Royal Navy appointed Nigel's father W.S. Lee Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Nigel became a Calvinist; had the great privilege of leading both of his parents to Christ; and then became a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal, External Examiner in Ethics for the Stellenbosch Theological Seminary, and a Barrister (or Trial Lawyer) of the Supreme Court of South Africa.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., Dr. Lee attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his ministerial credentials to that denomination; and pastored Congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in N.J.; Visiting Lecturer in Apologetics at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson Miss.; Staley Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis Mo.; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis Tenn.; Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol Tenn.; and incidental Lecturer at several other Colleges, Seminaries, and Universities.

Moving to the Commonwealth of Australia - Dr. Lee was for twenty years the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College. He and his wife Nellie retired in 2000. They have two children, Johanna Paulina who teaches at Parkridge High School and Anna Marie who teaches at Earnshaw State College.