

*'Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly!... He shall be like a tree.... His leaf also, shall not wither.... Whatever he does, shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.... The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.... The way of the ungodly, shall perish!'* Psalm 1:1-6.

O, the blessednesses of the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly! Calvin comments: "It shall always be well with God's devout servants, whose constant endeavour it is to make progress in the study of His Law.... From His characterizing the godly as 'delighting' in the Law of the Lord, we may learn...that those only are worthy students of the Law who come to it with a cheerful mind and are...delighted with its instruction....

"There is...an implied contrast between the vigour of a tree planted in a situation well watered, and the decayed appearance of one which...soon withers on account of the barrenness of the soil in which it is placed.... The children of God constantly flourish.... The ungodly are carried away by the sudden tempest, or consumed by the scorching heat....

"The ungodly...are like the chaff which the wind drives away'.... He will be even as chaff or refuse, whenever God chooses to cast him down...with the Breath of His mouth.... Ungodly persons shall be entirely deprived of their pleasures....

"The Lord daily executes judgment.... But because this is done only partially in this life, we must look higher.... Even in this world, the prosperity of the ungodly begins to pass away as often as God manifests the tokens of His judgment.... They have no part with the assembly of the righteous.... We must patiently wait for the day of final revelation, in which Christ will separate the sheep from the goats....

"God is the Judge of the world.... It follows that it cannot but be well with the upright and the just. While, on the other hand, the most terrible destruction must impend over the ungodly.... He is the certain Avenger of wickedness.... At length, He will visit them with destruction."

Calvin remarks in his *Institutes* III:17:10 & II:7:13: "Blessed is the man that does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly!... Psalm 1:1....

"There are not various rules for life, but one perpetual and inflexible rule.... Therefore, when David describes the righteous as spending their whole lives in meditating on the Law (Psalm 1:2), we must not confine to a single age an employment which is most appropriate for all ages -- even to the end of the world!...

"It is well if we thus press onward! Our whole life is a race.... After we have finished our course, the Lord will enable us to reach that goal to which at present we can only aspire!" The godly flourish, but the ungodly shall perish! And you?

*'How long will You forget me, O Lord? For ever?!... O Lord my God, lighten my eyes -- lest I sleep the sleep of death!... But I have trusted in Your mercy! My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation!... Because He has dealt bountifully with me!'* Psalm 13:1-6.

Calvin comments: "David, being afflicted not only with the deepest distress, but also feeling himself...overwhelmed by a long succession of calamities and multiplied afflictions, implores the aid and succour of God.... In the close, taking courage, he entertains the assured hope of life from the promise of God -- even amidst the terrors of death....

"It seems to David, so far as could be judged from beholding the actual state of his affairs, that he was forsaken by God. At the same time, however, the eyes of his mind -- guided by the light of faith -- penetrated even to the grace of God, although it was hidden in darkness.... The infirmity of the flesh could not hinder David from seeking God, and having recourse to Him....

"The words 'How long' (and) 'For ever?!'..., give us to understand that for the purpose of cherishing his hope and encouraging himself in the exercise of patience, he extended his view to a distance.... He teaches us therefore, by his example, to stretch our view as far as possible into the future -- so that our present grief may not entirely deprive us of hope....

"O Jehovah my God, enlighten my eyes -- lest I sleep in death!... He had put the mercy of God in the first place.... To 'enlighten the eyes' signifies...to give the Breath of life.... The word 'sleep' -- as it is used in this passage -- is...being put for death.... David confesses that unless God cause the light of life to shine upon him, he will immediately be overwhelmed with the darkness of death.... Certainly, our confidence of life depends on this!... Although the world may threaten us with a thousand deaths, yet God is possessed of numberless means of restoring us to life....

"I trust in Your goodness! My heart shall exult in Your salvation!... The Psalmist...makes use of this hope as a shield to repel those temptations -- with the terror of which he might greatly be distressed.... He...declares it to be his resolution to continue firm in his reliance upon the grace of God, and in the hope of salvation. With the very same confidence, all the godly ought to be furnished and sustained!... We may not be wholly free from sorrow, but it is nevertheless necessary that this cheerfulness of faith rise above it -- and put into our mouth a song, on account of the joy which is reserved for us in the future!"

In his *Psychopannychia*, Calvin adds: "When you hear that the wicked man sleeps, do you think of a sleep of his soul?" No! "How can there be sleep, amid such anguish? The wicked are like the tempestuous sea which cannot rest!... Isaiah 57:20.... When David wished to describe the bitterest pang of conscience, he says (Psalm 13:3): 'Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death!'"

But David's eyes were enlightened! So, when he fell asleep and died, he would not enter 'the sleep of death' -- but the sleep of life! Of life, everlasting! Will that be your lot, when you die?

*'Preserve me, O God!... I have set the Lord always before me!... My flesh too shall rest in hope, for You will not leave my soul in the grave!... You will show me the path of life..., fullness of joy! At Your right hand, there are pleasures for evermore!'* Psalm 16:1-11.

Calvin comments: "The Psalmist...explains...he is not afraid of death. There is nothing wanting which is requisite to the completion of his joy.... It follows, that no one truly trusts in God but he who takes such hold of the salvation which God has promised him -- as to despise death!...

"David...entertains the...assurance of eternal salvation, which freed him from all anxiety.... As if he had said: 'There will always be ready for me a way of escape from the grave, so that I may not remain in corruption!...' If therefore Christ, Who is the Firstfruits of those who rise again, did not come forth from the grave -- they would remain for ever under the bondage of corruption!...

"This however did not prevent David from assuring himself of exemption from the dominion of death by right -- seeing Christ, by His rising from the dead, obtained immortality not for Himself individually but for us all.... He was wholly and perfectly exempted from the corruption of the grave, so that He might call His members into His fellowship and make them partakers of this blessing....

"David after death was, in the course of time, reduced to dust.... He was not exempted from corruption. It is the same with respect to all the faithful, not one of whom becomes a partaker of incorruptible life without first being subjected to corruption....

"The question however may be asked -- 'As Christ descended into the grave, was not He also subject to corruption?...' The life of Christ would be exempted from the dominion of the grave, inasmuch as His body even when dead would not be subject to corruption....

(Calvin adds in his *Institutes* III:25:3: "It would not be proper to be made equal to Him in all respects. It is said in the Psalm (16:10), 'Neither would You permit your Holy One to see corruption'.... A portion of this confidence appertains to us, according to the measure bestowed on us. Yet the full effect appeared only in Christ Who -- free from all corruption -- resumed a spotless body!")

"The Psalmist...explains the way in which God would exempt him from the bondage of death -- namely, by...bringing him at length safely to the possession of eternal life.... This passage touches upon the difference...between true believers and aliens...with respect to their everlasting state.... David here speaks of 'the path of life'.... It means the prolongation of his natural life.... The way of life...must undoubtedly be viewed as extending to a blessed immortality.... None but the faithful who are contented with His grace alone, can be truly and perfectly happy."

As David declared: 'Preserve me, O God!... You won't leave me in the grave!' You too?

*'Keep me...from the wicked that oppress me -- from my deadly enemies who surround me!... As for me..., I shall be satisfied when I awake, with Your likeness!'* Psalm 17:8-15.

Calvin comments: "David triumphs.... God...assured him...that one day, he will enjoy the privilege of...beholding Him.... 'To behold God's face' is nothing else than to have a sense of His fatherly favour, with which He...causes us to rejoice by removing our sorrow but also transports us even to Heaven.... Although He may hide His face...for a time, He causes...again in due season to behold His bright countenance...."

"I shall be satisfied!" Some interpreters...restrict this -- to the resurrection at the last day.... I readily admit that this satisfaction of which he speaks, will not in all respects be perfect before the last coming of Christ...

"(But) to me, it seems...suitable to refer the word 'awake' to David.... When the favour of God shall again have arisen and shone brightly upon him, he declares that then he will recover spiritual strength and enjoy tranquillity of mind...."

"So long as we continue in this state of earthly pilgrimage, 'we walk by faith -- not by sight'.... Let each of us awaken...from his lethargy, so that we may now be satisfied with spiritual felicity -- until God in due time brings us to His Own immediate presence and causes us to enjoy Him!"

Also in his *Institutes* II:10:17 & III:25:9-10, Calvin adds: "The holy fathers under the Old Testament were not ignorant that in this world, God...never gives His servants the fulfilment of what is promised them.... They doubted not then..., a time would at length arrive when the divine promises would be fulfilled. This is attested by such expressions as these: 'As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Your likeness!' (Psalm 17:15)...."

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead'...(Acts 24:15).... The prophecy that death shall be swallowed up in victory (Hosea 13:14) will only then be completed..., (in) the day...on which He will manifest His glory to us...(First Corinthians 15:54).... With this accords David's sentiment..., 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness!' (Psalm 17:15)."

Finally, in his *Psychopannychia*, Calvin concludes: "Rest is not yet full and perfect.... (It) has no end, till it has arrived where it was tending.... The eyes of the elect look to the supreme glory of God as their final good. Their desire is always moving onward, till the glory of God is complete.... This completion awaits the Judgment Day. Then will be verified the saying: 'I will be satisfied when I awake with beholding Your countenance!' (Psalm 17:15)...."

"We will celebrate our triumph and enjoy the fruits of victory, when our head shall be raised above death in glory -- that is, when death shall be swallowed up in victory. This is our aim.... It has been written: 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake with beholding Your glory!' (Psalm 17:15)."

*'The sorrows of death surrounded me.... The sorrows of the grave compassed me about; the snares of death overtook me.... In my distress, I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God. He heard my voice.... He sent from above; He took me; He drew me out!'* Psalm 18:3-16.

Calvin comments: "David...begins to recount the undoubted and illustrious proofs by which he had experienced that the hand of God is sufficiently strong and powerful to repel all the dangers and calamities with which he may be assailed.... When in his distresses he had been reduced to extremity, he had betaken himself to God for help -- and had wonderfully been preserved....

"The Hebrew word *chebleey* means 'cords' or 'sorrows' or any deadly evil which consumes a man's health and strength, and which tends to his destruction.... 'Cords' (or 'snares') agrees better with the verb 'compass about' (or 'surround') -- the import of which is that David was on all sides involved and entangled in the perils of death....

"What follows concerning 'torrents' (or 'sorrows'), implies that he had been almost overwhelmed by the violence and impetuosity of his enemies against him -- even as a man who is covered over the head with floods of water, is almost lost. He calls them 'the torrents of Belial' (or 'wickedness'), because it was wicked and perverse men who had conspired against him.

"The Hebrew word *Belial* has a wide signification.... The more generally received opinion is that it is compounded from these two words *beli* ('not') and *yaäl* ('to gain advantageously') -- to denote that the wicked...obtain no advantage....

"The Jews...employed this word to designate every kind of detestable wickedness.... David by it, meant to describe his enemies who basely and wickedly plotted his destruction....

"In the following verse, he again repeats 'that the corruptions or cords' (or 'sorrows') 'of the grave had compassed him about'.... He uses a verb which signifies 'to beset,' 'to enclose' or 'to surround'.... He adds immediately after -- 'the snares of death'....

"This, then, is the description of the dangerous circumstances into which he was brought.... It enhances and magnifies so much the more, the glory of his deliverance!...

"'In my distress'.... It was a very evident proof of uncommon faith in David -- when, being almost plunged into the gulf of death, he lifted up his heart to Heaven by prayer.... In saying that he 'cried (out)' -- he means...the ardour and earnestness...which he had in prayer.... By calling God 'his' God, he separates himself from...the despisers of God.... When David was forsaken and abandoned in the world and all men shut their ears to his cry for help, God stretched forth His hand from Heaven to save him!" For He heard!

'He sent down from above!' The sorrows of the grave surrounded me, but He drew me out!

*'The Lord lives!... Let the God of my salvation be exalted!... He delivers me from my enemies!... You lift me up!... You have delivered me.... Great deliverance He gives to His king...and to His Seed for evermore!'* Psalm 18:46-50.

Calvin comments: "David declares...'God lives!'... He is endued with Sovereign Power. Further..., His works...manifest to us that He lives!... He is therefore said to 'live' -- inasmuch as He shows, by evident proofs of His power, that it is He Who preserves and upholds the world....

"'Jehovah lives!' -- and therefore, 'blessed be my Strength!'... God does not simply live in Himself..., but displays His vital energy in the government of the whole world.... 'My Strength' is here to be understood...(as) 'Him' Who bestows strength!"

David, "if...not...preserved by the hand of God..., could not...have escaped in safety. 'My Deliverer from my enemies..., You have lifted me up from those who had risen up against me!'... We are to understand the lifting up of which he speaks, in that he was wonderfully raised up above the power and malice of his enemies -- so that he might not sink under their violence....

'Therefore will I praise You, O Jehovah, (among the Heathen)!' In this verse, he (David) teaches us that the blessings God had conferred upon him..., are worthy of being celebrated...so that the fame of them might reach even the Heathen!... The meaning therefore is: 'O Lord, I will not only give You thanks in the assembly of Your people..., but Your praises shall extend to a greater distance...through the whole world!'...

"This passage contains a prophecy concerning the Kingdom of Christ.... Paul very properly and suitably proves from this text...the calling of the Gentiles.... Romans 15:9.... The ears of the Gentiles were opened...when God adopted them, and called them to Himself by the Gospel....

"David here does not so much recount by way of history the singular and varied instances of the grace of God which he personally had experienced -- as predict the everlasting duration of His Kingdom.... By the word 'Seed' we are...to understand...that Successor of David of Whom God had spoke in Second Samuel 7:12, promising that He would be a Father to Him.

"His Kingdom would continue as long as the sun and the moon would shine.... The prophecy must necessarily be viewed as descending to Him Who was to be King not for a time, but for ever. David therefore commends his Seed to us..., which fully applies...to the Only-begotten Son of God.... We shall then only duly profit in the study of this Psalm, when we are led by the contemplation of the shadow and type -- to Him Who is the Substance!"

Only in Christ the son of David, is there any lasting continuance. Christ alone is the 'Seed.' The praise of Jehovah the God of David -- His Anointed One -- is ultimately a praising of the Father of Jesus Christ through Whom the Lord lives and keeps on delivering me!

*'You have brought Me into the dust of death!... The wicked...pierced My hands and My feet.... They...cast lots upon My vesture.... Save Me!... I will declare Your name!... In the midst of the Congregation, I will praise You!... They that seek Him, shall praise the Lord.... All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn to the Lord!... The nations shall worship before You! For...the Lord...is the Governor among the nations!... Their seed shall serve Him!... They shall come and shall declare His righteousness to a people that shall be born -- because He has done it!' Psalm 22:15-31.*

Calvin comments: "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, when hanging on the cross..., made use of these very words (Matthew 27:46).... The Son of God...descended even to Hell.... 'You have brought Me to the dust of death!...' The dreadful encounter of our Redeemer with death...was forced from His body.... (By) His descent into Hell..., He tasted the wrath of God...due to sinners...

"In this Psalm, Christ is described to us by the Spirit of prophecy. The heavenly Father intended that in the Person of His Son, those things should visibly be accomplished.... How can this be applied to Christ?... He was more mightily delivered, than if God had prevented Him from falling a victim to death.... It is a much greater deliverance to rise again from the dead, than to be healed of a grievous malady. Death, therefore, did not prevent Christ's resurrection!...

"All the ends of the Earth shall remember!...' David stops not at his own person, but...under himself as a type he describes the promised Messiah.... David's name, I admit, was great and renowned among the neighbouring nations. But what was the territory which they occupied, in comparison to the whole world?... The foreign nations whom he had subdued, had never been converted by him to the true worship of God!.... (Through Christ,) the Gentiles...would again come to embrace the true religion from which they had fallen away....

"The Kingdom is Jehovah's, so that He may rule over the nations!...' This passage I have no doubt agrees with many other prophecies which represent the throne of God as erected, on which Christ may sit to superintend and govern the world.... This conversion was effected only under the management and government of Christ.... Christ we know penetrates with amazing speed from the East to the West..., in order to bring into the Church the Gentiles from all parts of the world.

'Their seed shall serve Him!... They shall come and shall declare His righteousness to a people that shall be born -- because He has done it!...' The perpetuity of the Church is here abundantly proved.... God begets and multiplies His Church.... Christ is here expressly invested with authority over the Church.... Our heavenly Father has committed all His chosen ones to the protection and guardianship of His Own Son.... The Holy Spirit...commends to us the publication of Christ's resurrection!"

As Christ Himself exclaimed: 'I will praise God for saving Me from all distresses' -- unto absolute victory, beyond the grave! Is that also your expectation?

*'The Lord is my Shepherd.... He restores my soul.... Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.... You prepare a table before me.... Mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the House of the Lord -- for ever!'* Psalm 23:1-6.

Calvin comments: "It is the duty of a good shepherd to cherish his sheep -- and when they are diseased or weak, to nurse and support them. David declares...this was the manner in which he was treated by God. 'The restoring of the soul'...is of the same import as 'to make anew' or 'to recover'....

"True believers, although they dwell safely under the protection of God, are notwithstanding exposed to many dangers.... As a sheep, when it wanders up and down through a dark valley, is preserved safe from the attacks of wild beasts and from harm in other ways by the presence of the shepherd alone -- so David now declares that as often as he shall be exposed to any danger, he will have sufficient defence and protection in being under the pastoral care of God....

He says...'I will fear no evil..., for Your staff and Your crook comfort me!'.... When David reflected on the adversities which might befall him, he became victorious over fear and temptations in no other way than by casting himself on the protection of God.... It is not against the common and ordinary calamities of life only, that he opposes the protection of God. But against those which distract and confound the minds of men with the darkness of death....

"David here makes an allusion to the dark...dens of wild beasts.... When an individual approaches, he is suddenly seized...with an apprehension and fear of death.... God, in the Person of His Only-begotten Son, had exhibited Himself to us as our Shepherd.... Lift our eyes to behold it! And, keeping them fixed upon it, tread all fears and terrors under our feet!...

"David...now repeats...what he has...declared concerning the beneficence of God.... By His liberality, he is supplied with all that is necessary for the maintenance of this life. When he says 'You prepare a table before me' -- he means that God furnished him with sustenance.... Although many malicious persons envy his happiness and desire his ruin..., yet God does not desist from showing Himself liberal towards him....

"'Surely goodness and mercy!' Having recounted the blessings which God had bestowed upon him, he now expresses his undoubted persuasion of the continuance of them to the end of his life.... When he said to himself before that even amidst the darkness of death he would keep his eyes fixed in beholding the providence of God, he sufficiently testified that he...continued shut up in the Word of God.... He entertains the hope that as the goodness of God never fails, He will be favourable towards him even to the end!

"'I will dwell in the House of Jehovah (for ever)!'.... He does not confine his thoughts to earthly pleasures or comforts.... The mark at which he aims, is fixed in Heaven.... To reach this, was his great object in all things!" For God is with me, even in the valley of the shadow of death!



Psalm 30:5

After weeping, comes joy to those who live in God's favour!

*'O Lord, You have brought up my soul from the grave! You have kept me alive, so that I should not go down to the pit!... For His anger endures but a moment. In His favour, is life... When I go down to the pit, shall the dust praise You?... O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You for ever!'* Psalm 30:2-12.

Calvin comments: "In this Psalm, he (David) celebrates God's favour to him -- in restoring him.... Under this word, seems to be denoted a double blessing -- both his restoration to life, and to his kingdom.... David had been brought as it were from the grave to the life-giving air.... He was preserved by the favour of God... When he was at the very point of death, he directed his supplications to God alone....

"The life of man is in danger in many other ways than merely from disease.... David was restored to life, whenever the Lord delivered him from any grievous and extreme danger.... 'You have brought up my soul from the grave!'... He compared the darkness of that period, to a grave and pit into which he had been forced to throw himself hastily -- to protect his life.... As one restored to life..., he proclaims that he had marvellously been delivered from present death -- as if he had been restored to life after he had been dead....

"'Life' is opposed here to 'for a moment' -- and consequently signifies long continuance.... God's anger is but of short duration, while His favour is continued towards us during the whole course of our life.... Whoever therefore directs his mind to meditation upon the heavenly life, will never faint under his afflictions -- however long continued!...

"Deaths innumerable continually hover before our eyes.... 'What profit is there in my blood?'.... The term 'blood' here signifies death, not life. As if David had said, 'What profit will Your derive from my death?'... It would be unsuitable to the character of God to take him out of the world by an untimely death....

"By enquiring in the end of the verse 'Shall the dust raise You?' -- he does not mean that the dead are altogether deprived of power to praise God.... If the faithful, while encumbered with a burden of flesh, exercise themselves in this pious duty -- how should they desist from it, when they are disencumbered and set free from the restraints of the body?....

"'My glory may sing praise to You!' In this verse, he more fully expressed his acknowledgment of the purpose for which God had preserved him from death.... David adds immediately after, 'I will celebrate Your praise for ever!'... His meaning therefore is -- 'O Lord, as I know that You have preserved me for this purpose -- that Your praises may resound from my tongue. I will faithfully discharge this service to You, and perform my part even unto death!'"

After weeping, comes joy to those who live in God's favour! Do you?

*'Have mercy upon me, O Lord!... My strength fails...and my bones are consumed.... I am forgotten like a dead man.... Many...devised to take away my life.... My times are in Your hand.... Save me, for the sake of Your mercies!... Let the wicked...be silent in the grave!' Psalm 31:9-17.*

Calvin comments about David's "misery.... He says that 'his eyes, his soul and his belly were consumed with grief'.... He was thus tormented and vexed by these calamities.... He had for a long time been inured to the endurance of troubles.... His afflictions were incredibly severe....

"Saints often have a severe and arduous conflict.... Yet...no accumulation of troubles has overwhelmed them.... Being consumed with grief, he felt his life and his years sliding away and failing.... David bewails...the grievousness of his calamities....

"I am forgotten as one dead!'... He was as completely blotted out of all men's remembrance, as if he had been dead. The memory of some men after their death, flourishes for a time among survivors. But it more frequently vanishes. For there is no longer any intercourse between the quick and the dead, nor can the living be of any further service to the dead....

"David, seeing the steadfastness of his faith in opposition to the assaults of the temptations..., denies that he had ever fainted.... He stood firm in his hope of deliverance, by God.... While he pines away with grief and is deprived of all strength, he is nevertheless supported by so strong a hope that he ceases not to call upon God....

"Let us mark his manner of speech: 'I have said, "You are my God!"'... Certainly it is an undoubted proof of genuine faith when, however fierce the waves are which beat against us, and however sore the assaults by which we are shaken, we hold fast this as a fixed principle that we are constantly under the protection of God and can say to Him freely: 'You are our God!'

"My times are in Your hand!'... Lord, it is Your prerogative.... You alone have the power to dispose of both my life and my death!... He mused on the various revolutions and manifold dangers which continually hang over us.... He nevertheless confidently reposed upon the providence of God.... He not only denominates God the Governor of the world in general, but also affirms that his life is in His hand.... Whatever trials...might befall him, he was safe under His protection....

"He encourages himself to hope..., by setting before him 'God's goodness'.... To be 'silent in the grave' implies that death, when it befall the ungodly, restrains...them from doing further injury."

As Calvin says in his *Institutes* I:17:11: "David, considering the various turns which human life undergoes as it rolls..., betakes himself to this...: 'My times are in Your hand!' (Psalms 31:15).... By 'times' he meant to express that howsoever unstable the condition man may be, the vicissitudes which are ever and anon taking place, are under Divine regulation!" Till God's face shines again on those who have been wasting away! What shall your lot be?

*'Blessed be the Lord! For He has shown me His marvellous kindness.... For I said, in my haste: "I am cut off from before Your eyes!" Nevertheless, You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried to You!' Psalm 31:21-22.*

Calvin comments: "The Psalmist...declares that the goodness of God in preserving his life, was wondrously displayed.... David lay open to every blow, and had been exposed to every sort of injury. He boasts that in his nakedness and destitution, the assistance of God had been of greater service to him than...an impregnable fortress would have been!..."

"I said, in my haste: "I am cut off from before Your eyes!"... David here confesses that for his distrust, he deserved to be deserted by God and left to perish.... But...he hesitates not to publish the shame of his fault.... It means that he had been...carried headlong to entertain the thought that he was neglected by God.... Although David was stricken with fear, he did not faint under the trial.... This persuasion did not continue (to be) fixed in his mind!..."

"David's faith had never been overthrown by this temptation.... For he immediately adds that God 'had heard the voice of his supplications'.... If his faith had been extinguished, he could not have brought his mind earnestly to engage in prayer!... Therefore this complaint was only a lapse of the tongue, uttered in haste...."

"This confession of David...serves to magnify the grace of God.... His faith, although severely shaken, had not altogether been eradicated -- because he ceased not, meanwhile, to pray!"

"The saints often wrestle in this manner with their distrust -- that partly they may not despond, and that partly they may gather courage and stimulate themselves to prayer. Nor does the weakness of the flesh, even when they are almost overthrown, hinder them from showing that they are unwearied and invincible champions before God...."

"David had been preserved without any deservings of his own.... God's immeasurable goodness, strove with his unbelief!"

Calvin adds in his *Institutes* III:2:17: "Faith must be certain and secure.... Believers...are...far from thinking that their consciences possess a placid quiet -- uninterrupted by perturbation.... Whatever be the mode in which they are assailed, we deny that they fall off and abandon that sure confidence which they have formed of the mercy of God...."

"How far his (David's) mind was from being always at peace, is declared by innumerable complaints.... 'I said, in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes!' (Psalm 31:22)."

But God! For the Lord hears and blesses those who pray, when they feel cut off! And you?

*"The Angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.... What man is he that desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?... The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the Earth!" Psalm 34:7-16.*

Calvin comments: "The Angel of God, armed with invincible power, constantly watches over us...on every side -- to aid and deliver us from all evil.... God takes care of the godly....

"The hand of God is stretched out to succour them in due season, when they are reduced to the greatest straits and know not to what side to turn. So that the issue always shows that we seek not in vain from Him, whatever is necessary to the sustenance of life....

"All men...desire to live in the enjoyment of happiness. But He censures severely the blindness...which men exhibit, in the forwardness of their desires and the vanity of their endeavours to obtain happiness.... A happy life...God bestows only upon the sincere and upright in heart....

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous'.... In saying that 'the ears of the Lord are open to their cry' -- He teaches that the man who is wantonly and unjustly persecuted will find a ready and suitable remedy in all affliction, by calling upon God as his Avenger....

"The wicked....by reason of their impunity harden themselves in sin. God is watching -- so that He may 'cut off their remembrance from the Earth' (First Peter 5:10).

"He speaks particularly of this kind of punishment, because the ungodly not only expect that they shall be happy during their whole life, but also imagine that they shall enjoy immortality in this world.... If it is objected that good men experience the contrary...(and) after having long been afflicted at length find no help or comfort -- I reply that the aid which God affords to the righteous is not always made manifest..., but yet He so alleviates their troubles as never to forsake them....

"As soon as they fall..., God chastises them -- and often...more severely than the reprobates whom He spares to utter destruction (to destroy them everlastingly).... Yet...good men will find that God has not promised them help in vain against...the wicked."

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* I:16:7 & III:3:8 & III:20:40 "that 'the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the Earth' (Psalm 34:16)... 'Depart from evil, and do good!' (Psalm 34:14)....

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry' (Psalm 34:15).... (But) doubt and perplexity hang over the prayers of those in whose minds the belief is not firmly seated that 'the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous' (Psalm 34:15)." So then, desire life and love many days -- in order to see good!

*'Many are the afflictions of the righteous. But the Lord delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones.... Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.... The Lord redeems the soul of His servants. And none of them that trust in Him, shall be desolate!'* Psalm 34:19-22.

Calvin comments: "God is the Deliverer of His people, even when they are brought very low -- and when they are as it were half-dead.... Our spirits begin to fail.... (But) God is nigh to the faithful, even when their hearts faint and fail them -- and they are ready to die...."

"By this means, His power shines forth more clearly -- when He raises us up again, from the grave!... The faithful should thus utterly be cast down and afflicted -- so that they may breathe again in God alone.... Having prostrated ourselves in the dust before Him -- may He raise us up!... God departs not from us, even when we are...almost deprived of life.

"'Many are the afflictions of the righteous.' The Psalmist here anticipates the thought... 'How can it be that God has a care about the righteous, who are continually harassed with so many calamities and trials?'.... We ought to remember...that although God governs the righteous and provides for their safety, they are yet subject and exposed to many miseries.... If they were exempted from every kind of trial, their faith would languish!...

"It is therefore necessary that they should be exercised with various trials -- and especially for this end, so that they may acknowledge that they have been preserved wonderfully by God amidst numberless deaths.... God, Who can as easily deliver them a thousand times, as once from death -- will never disappoint their expectation!

"What he adds concerning their 'bones' -- seems not a little to illustrate the truth of this doctrine and to teach us that those who are protected by God shall be free from all danger.... Christ also says that 'the very hairs of our head are all numbered!' (Luke 12:7)...."

"But 'malice shall slay the wicked!'... Their wickedness...shall fall upon their own heads.... All the wicked enterprises of the wicked..., shall turn to their own destruction.... Those, says he, who hate the righteous -- shall be destroyed.... The same thing David confirms in the last verse, in which he says that 'Jehovah redeems the soul of His servants'.... By the word 'redeem' there is expressed a kind of preservation.... It is necessary that we should first be adjudged or doomed to death, before God should appear as our Redeemer.... David specifies this as a principal mark by which they may be known -- that they trust in God on Whom also their salvation depends."

Calvin also adds in his *Institutes* II:10:16: "Nor can those things...said as to the prosperous success of believers, be understood in any other sense than as referring to the manifestation of celestial glory.... 'The Lord redeems the soul of His servants' (Psalm 34:12)." None who trust the Lord, shall be left desolate! Do you so trust?

*'Lord, You preserve man!... Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.... For with You is the fountain of life. In Your light, we shall see light!.... The workers of iniquity are fallen. They are cast down, and shall not be able to rise!' Psalm 36:6-12.*

Calvin comments: "David...maintains that the world is full of the goodness and righteousness of God.... In saying that the goodness of God is 'unto the Heavens' -- David's meaning is that, in its greatness, it is as high as the Heavens....

"When it is added in the end of the verse: 'O Jehovah, You preserve man!'..., God vouchsafes to extend His providential care.... He provides for the wants of men.... God condescends to gather together under His wings the mortal offspring of Adam....

"'With You is the fountain of life'.... He means that there is not a drop of life to be found without Him, or which flows not from His grace.... Men are altogether destitute of light, except in so far as the Lord shines upon them....

"This is true of the light of this life. How shall we be able to behold the light of the heavenly world, unless the Spirit of God enlightens us?.... We must maintain that the measure of understanding with which men are by nature endued, is such that 'the light shines in darkness, but the darkness does not comprehend it' (John 1:5)!...

"Men are enlightened only by a supernatural gift. But it is the godly alone who perceive that they derive their light from God....

"As the wicked rush boldly to the destruction of good men, lifting up their feet to tread upon them and having their hands ready to do them wrong -- David entreats God to restrain their hands and their feet.... 'The workers of iniquity are fallen!'....

"David beholds by the eye of faith, as if from a watch-tower, their destruction. He speaks of it with as much confidence -- as if he had already seen it realized....

"When it is said 'they are thrust down' -- the meaning is that they are agitated with doubt, and totter as in a slippery place, so that in the midst of their prosperity they have no security. Finally, it is added that they shall fall into utter destruction, so that it can never be expected that they shall rise again!"

Calvin also adds in his *Institutes* II:2:20: "Human nature possesses none of the gifts which the elect receive from their heavenly Father through the Spirit of regeneration.... For thus speaks the congregation of the faithful by the mouth of the Prophet: 'With You is the fountain of life; in Your light, we shall see light' (Psalm 36:9)." With God is the fountain of life, but the wicked are cast down! Do you see that light?

*'Evildoers shall be cut off. But those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the Earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.... But the meek shall inherit the Earth!'* Psalm 37:9-11.

Calvin comments: "'The wicked shall be cut off!'... The happiness and prosperity which the ungodly enjoy, is only a mask or phantom....

"First, in saying that 'the wicked shall be cut off' -- He intimates that they shall flourish fresh and green, till the time of their destruction shall arrive.... Secondly, in allotting the Earth to the godly -- saying 'they shall inherit the Earth' -- He means that they shall live in such a manner as that the blessing of God shall follow them, even to the grave!...

"The present condition of men is to be estimated by the state in which it will terminate.... The children of God...are exercised by a severe conflict for the trial of their faith.... He speak of them...as those that 'wait upon the Lord'....

"The possession of the Earth which He promises to the children of God, is not always realized to them. Because it is the will of the Lord that they should live as strangers and pilgrims in it. Neither does He permit them to have any fixed abode in it -- bur rather tries them with frequent troubles, so that they may desire with greater alacrity the everlasting dwelling-place of Heaven....

"Yet, in the midst of this disquietude, the possession of the Earth of which David here speaks is not taken away from the children of God. For they know most certainly that they are the rightful heirs of the world.... Our reason is so dull, that we cannot comprehend what it is -- to possess the Earth!... Yet the faithful truly feel and understand that this promise is not made to them in vain.... Having fixed the anchor of their faith in God, they pass their life every day in peace....

"'Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be!'... David..., wishing to guard us against a rash and hasty judgment, exhorts us to be quiet for a little while -- till the Lord cuts off the wicked entirely.... True believers...should suspend their judgment for a time.... But exercise their thoughts in meditation upon divine providence, until God shows out of Heaven that the full time has come....

"He now speaks of them, as 'the meek'.... This He does, not without good reason.... God preserves His Own people in a wonderful manner.... It is hope alone therefore which of itself produces meekness.... From this passage..., Christ has taken that which is written in Matthew 5:5....

"While the ungodly shall be agitated with inward trouble and God shall encompass them on every side with terror, the faithful shall rejoice in the abundance of peace.... They are sustained by the tranquillity of their minds -- so that, accounting all the trials which they endure to be only temporary, they now rejoice in hope of the promised rest!" For those that keep on waiting upon God, shall inherit the Earth! Shall you?

*'The Lord knows the days of the upright!... Their inheritance shall be for ever! They shall not be ashamed in the evil time!... But the wicked shall perish!... The enemies of the Lord...shall consume into smoke!'* Psalm 37:18-20.

Calvin comments: "Nothing...is more profitable for us, than to have our eyes continually set upon the providence of God, which alone can best provide for us everything we need. On this account, David now says that 'God knows the days of the righteous'....

"This doctrine we ought to improve, as a source of consolation under every vicissitude.... We may be harassed in various ways and distracted by many dangers which every moment threaten us with death. But this consideration ought to prove to us -- a sufficient ground of comfort!...

"Our days are numbered by God.... We ought to enjoy, in this pilgrimage of ours on Earth, as much peace and satisfaction as if we were put in full possession of our paternal inheritance and home! Because we are regarded by God -- David from this concludes that our inheritance is everlasting!...

"They shall not be ashamed in the season of adversity!... The faithful have no right to expect such exemption as the flesh would desire, from affliction and trial -- but they are assured of deliverance, in the end.... Even in famine and want..., He nourishes us graciously and liberally....

"But the wicked shall perish!... The righteous are satisfied in the time of famine, whereas the ungodly shall perish in the midst of their affluence....

"God brings them to nought.... In calling them 'the enemies of Jehovah' -- He teaches us that they are justly overwhelmed by His vengeance, which they bring upon themselves by their own wickedness....

"He says that they 'shall be consumed...into smoke!' This is...the same...as 'to vanish away quickly'....

"There is no stability or substance in them.... The wicked are consumed into smoke, as fat melts or wastes away."

The doctrine taught here, is that as their fat melts away and gets wholly and rapidly consumed by the fire on the altar of the burnt offering -- so the wicked shall melt away and be quickly consumed in the fire of Jehovah's wrath. The Chaldee translation paraphrases the last clause thus: 'They shall be consumed in the smoke of Gehenna' or Hell!

So the ungodly shall be burnt up in everlasting fire. But the inheritance of the upright, shall be for ever! Which of the two are you?



*'Such...blessed by Him, shall inherit the Earth.... They that be cursed by Him, shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.... Though he falls, he shall not be cast down utterly; for the Lord upholds him.... I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed.... Do good; and dwell for evermore!' Psalm 37:22-27.*

Calvin comments: "The footsteps of the godly, are ordered by the grace of God.... God favours...His Own.... Whatever they undertake, always has a favourable and happy result.... Because the way of the godly is acceptable to God, He directs their footsteps to a happy outcome.... As God sees that the faithful act conscientiously and do not turn aside from the way which He has appointed -- He blesses their efforts....

"'Though he falls, he shall not be cast down utterly!'.... The miseries of the godly are so tempered with God's fatherly mercy, that they do not fail under their burdens. And even when they fall, they do not sink into destruction.... We know that if God smites the reprobate, though it be but very slightly, it becomes the cause of their final destruction." But if "'a just man falls seven times -- he rises up again!" (Proverbs 24:16).... The godly are not only subjected to frequent afflictions in this life, but...are visited with daily trials -- and yet, are never forsaken by the Lord!...

"'I have been young; I have also become old!' The meaning of these words is not in the least doubtful -- namely that David, even when he had become an old man, had not seen any of the righteous or any of their children begging for their bread....

"He leads them, by a variety of afflictions, to fix their thoughts in meditation upon the heavenly life.... An abundance of earthly blessings, sufficient for the supply of all their wants, is promised to the godly. This, however, is always to be understood...that God will bestow these blessings only in so far as He shall consider it expedient....

"They should lift up their minds on high, to that blessed state in which God will largely recompense them for all that is now wanting in the blessings of this transitory life.... We are however certain of this, that God makes such provision for His Own people that, being contented with their lot, they are never in want....

"God's blessing does not terminate with the death of the righteous.... It extends even to his children.... There is...no inheritance more certain to which our children may succeed us than when God, receiving them in like manner into His fatherly favour, makes them partakers of His blessing....

"'Depart from evil, and do good!'... If the meek possess the Earth, then everyone...ought also to endeavour to walk uprightly.... Daily experience shows us that the children of God do not as yet inherit the Earth. Yet...we feel how efficacious the blessing of God is -- which, like a spring that cannot be drained, flows continually.... The righteous have at present this reward!" For God upholds good men, and is merciful to their descendants. And to you?

Psalm 37:28-30      The Lord preserves His saints for ever, and they inherit the land!

*'The Lord loves judgment, and does not forsake His saints. They are preserved for ever. But the seed of the wicked, shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.... The Law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.... The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him.... Wait on the Lord, and keep His way; and He shall exalt you to inherit the land! When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it!'* Psalm 37:28-34.

Calvin comments: "'The Lord loves judgment'.... Righteousness and truth are pleasing to God.... All who lead an upright and blameless life among men, shall be happy.... Everything, at length, must in regard to them -- have a happy and successful result....

"'Jehovah does not forsake His meek ones' -- is, tacitly, very emphatic... The Prophet entreats the faithful to suspend their judgment, until God manifests His displeasure after the death of the wicked.... 'The seed of the wicked shall be cut off'.... The punishment justly due to them, will extend to their children....

"'The righteous shall inherit the Earth'.... This everlasting habitation upon the Earth which is here promised to the righteous, is to be understood!... Although they are surrounded by the troubles and changes which occur in this world, yet God preserves them under His wings....

"He keeps them in safety, as if they were sheltered in a secure haven.... They enjoy in addition to this, that inward peace of mind which is better than a hundred lives.... (It is) a privilege surpassing in value and importance, all others!

"'The Law of the Lord is in his heart'.... It is it alone which prescribes the best rule of life.... 'His steps shall not slide'... This is a promise!... Because the Law of God rules and reigns in their hearts, they 'do not slide' -- but stand to their purpose with firm and determined resolution....

"Many of the children of God, after having been condemned, have suffered a cruel and bitter death. I answer, that their Avenger is nevertheless in Heaven!.... Holy martyrs, after they have been condemned, may also be put to death.... But this is only because it is better for themselves.... God...makes their ashes yield a sweet and pleasant odour....

"'Wait upon Jehovah, and keep His way!... Persevere steadfastly in the service of God!... Hope..., amidst the tumults and troubles of life!... Trust in God!...

"('He shall exalt you to inherit the land!'...) David makes use of the word 'exalt' -- so that we may know that God often stretches forth His hand to the faithful.... He then adds that 'the wicked' shall perish before the eyes of the godly." For 'the wicked are cut off!'

Thus the Lord preserves His saints for ever, and they inherit the land! And you?

*'O Lord, do not rebuke me!... Your arrows stick fast in me.... There is no soundness in my flesh..., neither is there any rest in my bones.... My wounds stink, and are corrupt.... I go mourning, all the day long.... My loins are filled with a loathsome disease.... I am feeble, and sorely broken.... My strength fails me.... The light of my eyes...has gone from me.... In You, Lord, do I hope!... Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation!'* Psalm 38:1-22.

Calvin comments: "David lays a restraint upon his desires.... As if he had said: 'Lord, I am not unwilling to be chastised by You -- but I entreat You...not to afflict me beyond what I am able to bear!'... This prayer...was framed according to the rule of godliness. For it contains nothing but what God promises to all His children....

"David very properly describes the malady under which he laboured, by the term 'the arrows...of God'.... In his sickness..., David views the hand of God.... David's words are as if he had said: 'I have not to do with a mortal man who can shoot his arrows with a force only in proportion to his own strength, but I have to do with God Who can discharge the arrows that come from His hand with a force altogether overwhelming!'...

"He again confirms...he suffered deservedly...in a manner so severe and dreadful.... He was afflicted by the just judgment of God. He has here attributed to his own sins...the weight...which he felt.... The object...which David has in view...is that when he had endured the punishment which he had merited, he might at length obtain deliverance....

"I go mourning ['black'], all day long!...' The word *qooder*..., I have translated 'black'.... Black...has always been a token of grief.... Grief renders men's countenances lean...and black.... The natural colour of his face had faded.... He was like a corpse -- already withered and shrunk....

"Between the thighs and flanks..., there had been a sore.... The word *nikleeh*..., I have rendered 'burning' or 'to consume with fire'.... His...thighs were filled with an inflammatory disease, or...were covered over with putrid sores.... His sufferings were severe, and painful in the extreme....

"What will be the case when we are agitated by violent storms and tempests which threaten a thousand deaths..., when there is no way to escape them? It is...not a great wonder...they carried away the heart of David!... He adds that 'this strength had failed him' -- as if he had compared himself to a dead man.... The light of life was taken away from him." Yet he still prays: "On You, O Jehovah, do I wait!... Make haste to come to my aid, O Lord my salvation!"

Calvin adds in his *Institutes* III:4:16: "David...had honestly pondered with himself.... 'My iniquities went over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me!' (Psalm 38:4).... From the depth of his distress, he cried to the Lord: 'I am overwhelmed and buried.... The gates of the grave have encircled me! Let Your right hand deliver me from the abyss into which I have plunged, and from the death which I am ready to die!'" Though smashed, David kept his hope in the Lord!

*'Lord, make me to know my end and the measure of my days..., so that I may know how frail I am! Behold, You have made my days like a handbreadth, and my age is nothing before You.... Every man at his best state, is altogether vanity!... Every man walks in a vain show (or "image").... And now, Lord, what am I waiting for? My hope is in You!' Psalm 39:4-7.*

Calvin comments David indicates he is "a mortal man whose life is frail.... 'God..., at least make me to know how long You have appointed me to live!... Is...my life...but a moment?... Why do You accumulate upon my head such a load of miseries, as if I had yet many ages to live?'...

"Behold, You have made my days like a handbreadth!' A handbreadth is the measure of four fingers..., a very small measure.... The life of man flies away swiftly, and the end of it...touches the beginning.... Let us count the number of the years, which still remain to me on Earth!...

"Some render the word *chedel* 'mundane' -- and others, 'temporal'; that is to say, that which endures only for a time. If the world 'mundane' is adopted, the sense will be: 'Show me whether You will prolong my life to the end of the world'...

It may...properly be taken for an age.... But in my judgment, the translation ('handbreadth') which I have followed, is much more appropriate....

"He says that 'his age is...nothing before God'.... It is not a thing unknown to him how transitory and passing the life of man is.... David...does not continue to indulge in rash...lamentations but, lifting up his soul in the exercise of faith, he attains heavenly consolation!

'Surely, man walks in a shadow (or a "vain show")'.... He means that there is nothing substantial in man.... David simply declares of every man individually what Paul extends to the whole world, when he says: 'The fashion of this world passes away!' (First Corinthians 7:31)....

The appearance of strength which displays itself in them for a time, soon passes away.... They are only a shadow... Worldly men...admit not that they are mortal, much less do they consider that their life is bounded by the narrow limits of a handbreadth!...

"Now, O Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is toward You!...' Let us learn to press forward, and make still further progress -- in order that, being as it were dead, we may be quickened by God!"

Finally, Calvin states in his *Psychopannychia*: "They (the soul-sleeping Anabaptists) insist on making David our opponent.... He says (Psalm 39:11) that man, if the Lord withdraws His mercy from him, falls away.... We teach that he is supported by the kindness and power of God!"

My age is as nothing before God. Yet I keep hoping upon Him! Do you?

*'Remove Your stroke from me! I am consumed by the blow of Your hand! When You with rebukes...correct man..., You make his beauty to consume away like a moth!... O Lord..., I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner!... O spare me, so that I may recover strength -- before I go hence, and be (here) no more!' Psalm 39:10-13.*

Calvin comments David means "that God would mitigate the punishment (of the 'stroke') which He had inflicted upon him.... For 'I have fainted by the blow of Your hand'.... If God should begin to deal with us according to the...demands of the Law..., all would perish....

"By the term 'rebukes' -- David means severe punishments.... When God makes this rigour to be felt, there is no man who does not forthwith consume or pine away.... Just as the moth...wastes by its secret gnawing a piece of cloth or wood" (*cf.* Isaiah 1:9).

"He alludes to the 'excellency' (or 'beauty') of man, which He says is destroyed...by corruption when God is offended, even as the moth destroys the most precious cloths.... We are overcome by the power of God and...humbled in the dust!...

"'Hear my prayer, O Jehovah!' David gradually increases his vehemence in prayer. He speaks first of 'prayer'; in the second place, of 'crying'; and in the third place, of 'tears'.... David bewailed his condition sincerely, and from the bottom of his heart.... When he calls himself a 'stranger' and a 'sojourner' -- he again shows how miserable his condition was.... He formerly said: 'My days are before You like nothing!' (Psalm 39:5).... God...knows...that men have only a short journey to perform in the world, the end of which is soon reached....

"David entreats God to grant him a little relaxation from his trouble. So that he might recover strength...before he departs from this world.... To ask that -- at least time might be granted to him to die.... There is no hope of his being restored to health....

"'Lord, as it will not be possible for me to endure Your stroke any longer, but I must indeed miserably perish if You continue to afflict me severely -- at least grant me relief for a little season, so that in calmness and peace I may commit my soul into Your hands before I depart and be no more.... **Not** that David could regard death as the entire annihilation of man -- or that, renouncing all hope of his salvation, he resigned himself to destruction!"

Calvin also adds in his *Institutes* II:10:15: "The value he (David) put upon his earthly habitation, is attested by these words: 'I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner!'... Every man at his best estate, is altogether vanity. Surely every man walks in a vain show. And now, Lord, what am I waiting for? My hope is in You!' (Psalm 39:5-7,12). ('Spare me..., before I go hence and be no more!') He who confesses that there is nothing solid or stable on the Earth, and yet firmly retains his hope in God -- undoubtedly contemplates a happiness reserved for him elsewhere!" To be 'no more' **on Earth**. But elsewhere, in **Heaven!** Lord, hear the prayer of a sojourner here on Earth!

*'God is our refuge!... Therefore we will not fear, though the Earth be removed!... The Heathen raged; the kingdoms were moved. He uttered His Voice -- the Earth melted!... What desolations He has made on the Earth!... The Lord of hosts is with us! The God of Jacob is our refuge!'* Psalm 46:1-11.

Calvin comments: "God is sufficiently able to protect His Own people.... He gives them sufficient ground to expect it....

"The faithful have no reason to be afraid, since God is always ready to deliver them. Nay, (He) is also armed with invincible power....

"When things are so confused that the Heavens seem...to fall with great violence; the Earth to remove out of its place; and the mountains to be torn up from their very foundations -- we nevertheless continue to preserve and maintain calmness and tranquillity of heart!... 'Though the Earth be moved and the mountains fall into the midst of the sea!...', denote a revolution and turning upside down of the whole world!...

"The peoples (or Heathen) raged!... The Church of God is never without enemies, and these are very powerful.... It belongs to God continually to restrain.... His arm is strong enough to break all the efforts of the enemy.... The enemies of the Church came with a dreadful host to waste and destroy it.... Immediately, by 'the Voice of God' -- they...'melted' and vanished away.... Although the whole world rise up against us and confound all things by their increased madness, they can be brought to nought in a moment -- as soon as God shows Himself favourable toward us!...

"Jehovah of armies is with us!...'... That our faith may rest truly and firmly in God, we must take into consideration at the same time these two parts of His character -- His immeasurable power, by which He is able to subject the whole world under Him; and His fatherly love, which He has manifested in His Word.... There is nothing which can hinder our faith from defying all the enemies which may rise up against us!...

"He therefore sets before them the desolations of countries, and marvellous devastations.... We should look for peace from Him -- even when the whole world is in uproar.... The Psalmist exhorts the world to subdue and restrain their turbulent affections, and to yield to...God...the glory which He deserves.... If they proceed to act like madmen..., it will be no difficult matter for Him to stretch forth His arm afar to the Gentiles and Heathen nations, so that He may glorify Himself in every land!"

Calvin adds in his *Institutes* III:2:37 & IV:1:3: "Faith finds...protection in the words of...Psalm 46:1-5 -- 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore we will not fear, though the Earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea!... God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved!'" He is our refuge, even when the Earth melts down!

*'Why should I fear in the days of evil?... They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches -- none of them can by any means redeem his brother! Nor give to God a Ransom for him! For the redemption of their soul is too precious, and it ceases (or continues) for ever -- so that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption!'* Psalm 49:6-9.

Calvin comments: "The people of God must not yield to despondency, even in the most distressing circumstance when their enemies may seem to have enclosed them on every side -- but must rest assured that God...is awake to their condition...."

"Should I fear in the days of evil..., when the hour of my death comes?" No! "The Psalmist...intimates that he would not fear, though crafty and treacherous men laid snares for him.... He would have no fear when his enemies surrounded him -- and in pursuing him, trod as it were upon his heel...."

"They trust in their wealth!...'... Any boasted power which they possess, is fleeting and evanescent.... It were as reasonable to startle at a shadow or a spectre!..."

"None can redeem the life of another.... Their conduct is nothing less than insanity. Some read: 'A man shall not be able to redeem his brother' -- which amounts to the same meaning...."

"None can give a price to God for the Ransom of another!'.... He adverts to the truth that men's lives are absolutely at the disposal of God, and that they never can be extended by any human arrangement one moment beyond the period which God has fixed.

"He enforces the same lesson in the verse which follows, where he states that 'the redemption of their soul is precious'.... The Psalmist would assert that no man can hope to purchase an immortality either for himself or others in this world."

'The redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceases for ever' (Psalm 49:8). "I have rendered the close of verse 8: 'And their continuance for ever'.... The words in verse 9, 'That he should still live for ever,' more fully express the truth."

Calvin also adds in his *Institutes* II:10:17: "Where...is the great stability of the saints who...are not only disturbed but everywhere utterly bruised and oppressed?.... "They that trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches -- none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a Ransom for him!'.... Psalm 49:6-7."

No! For only Christ, Who never boasted about the multitude of His riches but instead became poor for our sakes, could redeem His brother and give Himself for him as a Ransom to God!

None of the greedy can ever redeem his brother! But Christ the Ransom came, and did!

*'Wise men die.... The fool and the brutish person perish.... Man, having been in honour, does not abide. He is like the beasts that perish.... Like sheep, they are laid in the grave.... Death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.... Their beauty shall consume in the grave.... But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave! For He shall receive me!' Psalm 49:10-15.*

Calvin comments: "'Wise men die'.... It is the intention of the Psalmist to censure the folly of those who dream of spending an eternity in this world..., though they cannot but see their fellow creatures cut down daily before their eyes by the stroke of death.... They will not lay to heart their mortality, when surrounded by so many convincing illustrations of it!... All, without exception of discrimination, are involved in the common mortality....

"There is a great difference, so far as the soul is concerned, between man and the brute.... But the Psalmist...was warranted to say of the ungodly, that they die as the beasts. His subject does not lead him to speak of the world to come. He put them (the ungodly) on a level with the meanest of the lower creatures.... The Psalmist's great aim is to show the vanity of the boasting of the wicked -- from the nearness of death, which must join them in one common fate with the beasts of the field.... The ungodly may be compare to the beasts -- 'they perish'!... They go down into the grave, as sheep are gathered into the fold by the shepherd.... The Psalmist...hands them over to death....

"A different fate...awaits the children of God.... Infidel worldlings reject a better life to come.... We may expect a happy outcome..., by coming to that everlasting inheritance which awaits us in Heaven.... The wicked must all be prostrated before...Christ and made His footstool. His members will share in the victory.... The coming of the Lord will resemble the morning, when both the elect and reprobate will wake. The former will then cast aside their lethargy.... Freed from the darkness which rested upon them, they will behold Christ the Sun of Righteousness.... There will dawn ere long, a new morning which will introduce us to a better and an eternal existence!...

"The righteous shall have dominion.... The Prophet does not deny his liability to death; but he looks to God as He Who would defend and redeem him from it.... The saints under the Law lived and died (and)...were directed to another and a higher life to which the present was only preparatory.... The Prophet...hoped for a life beyond the grave...in Heaven.... Our soul, though it appears to vanish upon its separation from the body, is in reality only gathered to the bosom of God -- there to be kept until...resurrection." 'God will redeem my soul from...the grave!' (Psalm 49:15).

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:10:17: "'Wise men die; likewise, the fool and the brutish person perish.... He is like the beasts that perish.... The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.... Psalm 49:10-15.... He more clearly unfolds the hidden doctrine of the resurrection, when He sets up a Kingdom for the righteous -- after the wicked are cast down and destroyed. For what...are we to understand by the 'morning' -- unless it be the revelation of a new life, commencing when the present comes to an end?" Even wise men don't abide but die; yet God redeems my soul!



*'Why, O man, do you boast yourself in mischief?... You love evil.... You love all devouring words.... God shall destroy you for ever!... He shall...root you out of the land of the living.... The righteous too shall see.... I am like a green olive-tree in the House of God. I trust in the mercy of God, for ever and ever! I will praise You for ever!' Psalm 52:1-9.*

Doeg had greatly wronged David. Calvin comments: "The treachery of Doeg must have tended considerably to stagger David's faith.... 'Your tongue reckons up mischiefs'.... David(s)...object in dwelling upon the aggravated guilt of Doeg, was to prove the certainty of his approaching doom.... 'God shall...destroy you forever!'..."

"God shall 'destroy you'; 'take you away'; 'root you out'" -- lay you prostrate; dissolve you by fire; sweep you away; and totally extirpate you, root and branch! "In adding...God would root him out of his 'dwelling-place' or 'tent' and 'out of the land of the living' -- he insinuates...the wicked will be destroyed by God, however securely they...repose...in the vain hope of living on Earth for ever...."

"The righteous too shall see'.... The ruin of Doeg might be expected.... It would promote religion in the hearts of the Lord's people.... The wicked are incapable of profiting by the judgments of God, being blind.... It was therefore only the righteous who could see it.... They are led to reverence Him the more, when they see that He is the Avenger of cruelty and injustice...."

"But I am like a green olive-tree!'.... David was enabled by the exercise of faith to look down upon...Doeg with a holy contempt.... Now we find him rising superior to all.... He compares himself, in the confidence of coming prosperity, to a green olive.... The destruction of Doeg could only communicate comfort to his mind..., convincing him that God was the avenging Judge of human cruelty.... He would advance him to renewed measures of prosperity!"

I am like a vigorous olive-tree! David "'hoped in the goodness of God'" -- for ever! "His confidence would extend itself far into futurity. He declares...that his hopes were stretched unto eternity!.... He surrenders himself entirely to God, in all that regarded this life -- or his death. The passage puts...the grand distinction between the genuine children of God, and those who are hypocrites.... The one class abides for ever in the steadfastness of a well-founded hope -- while the other is driven away in the vanity of its false confidences."

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* III:20:26 & !:10:17: "David was repeatedly delivered by the power of God.... 'The righteous...shall see'...(Psalm 52:6).... David calls upon God to give him what he asks..., so that the righteous may...be...encouraged to hope.... 'I am like a green olive-tree in the House of God!' (Psalm 52:8)."

Calvin further says in his *Psychopannychia*, of the ungodly: "The Lord will pluck...your root from the land of the living!'...(Psalm...52:7)." And of the godly: "I will confess to (or "praise") You for ever!'...(Psalm...72:9)." Like a green olive-tree, I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever!

*'He has delivered my soul in peace from the battle...against me.... There were many!... God shall...afflict them!... War was in...(their) heart!... God shall bring them down into the pit of destruction!... Deceitful men shall not live out half their days!... Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved!... I will trust in You!'*  
Psalm 55:18-23.

Calvin comments that God "has redeemed my soul in peace'.... He (David) was so confident of being delivered, that he speaks as if he actually were so -- already!... He says that he had been 'redeemed into peace'....

"What is added, 'they were in great numbers'..., is referring to enemies.... He represent himself as having been beset by a host of adversaries.... David would appear...to speak of enemies, and to refer to the number of them with the view of magnifying the deliverance which he had received....

"God shall...afflict them!...'... The word signifies....'to afflict' or 'punish'.... The longer the wicked are left in the enjoyment of their pleasures, they are only hardened the more in their evil courses.... How insignificant is the course of human life, when compared to the eternity of God!...

"His heart (was) war!...'... He accuses him (the wicked) of waging war in the midst of peace, and thus of being guilty of a breach of faith....

"You, O God, shall cast them into the pit of corruption!...'... He...speaks of his enemies..., to show the...end which awaits them.... The Hebrew word *shaachath* signifies 'the grave'.... They are cast into...'the pit of corruption' -- the word being derived from *shaachath*, to corrupt or destroy.... David means to assert that they would be overtaken not only by a temporary but an everlasting destruction.

"He points to a distinction between them and the righteous. **These** may sink into many a deep pit of worldly calamity; but they arise again! The ruin which awaits their enemies, is here declared to be deadly.... God will cast them into the grave, so that they may rot...(in) death rather than life....

"God shall establish the righteous, so that he shall never fall!...'... None can be said to have reached his goal, but such as have lived and died in the Lord. For to them, and them alone, death as well as life is gain!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* I:17:6: "A special providence watches over the safety of believers.... 'Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved!...'Psalm 55:22.... 'But You, O God, shall bring them (the wicked) down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days!' (Psalm 55:23). Where in this world is there a pit of eternal destruction to swallow up the wicked?!" God delivers my soul both before and after death, but brings the deceitful into the pit! What of you?

*'I will abide in Your Tabernacle for ever!... You will prolong the King's life, and His years like many generations! He shall abide before (the face of) God, for ever! O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve Him! So I will sing praise to Your name for ever, so that I may daily perform my vows!'* Psalm 61:4-8.

Calvin comments: "David..., it is true..., lived to an extreme old age -- and died full of days.... But he did not exceed the period of one man's life.... Therefore...the series of years and even ages of which he speaks, extends prospectively to the coming of Christ....

"Christ must be viewed as living in His members to the end of the world! To this Isaiah (*cf.* 9:7) alludes, when he says 'Who shall declare His generation or age?' -- words in which he predicts that the Church would survive through all ages, notwithstanding the incessant danger of destruction to which it is exposed through the attacks of its enemies and the many storms assailing it. So here, David foretells the uninterrupted succession of the kingdom -- down to the time of Christ....

"'He shall abide before the face of God for ever!...'... A simpler way of expressing what he had said before, 'I will abide in Your Tabernacle for ever'.... He refers to the security and peace which he would enjoy under the protection of God, Who would effectually preserve his life.

"By 'the face of God' must be meant the fatherly care and providence which He extends to His people.... We could not stand a single moment, if His eye did not watch over our preservation....

"The true security for a happy life, lies in being persuaded that we are under divine government.... God would appoint 'mercy and truth' for preserving the king....

"God would gird Himself with clemency and truth, in order to...preserve...the king.... The true defence of the kingdom, was only to be found in the mercy and faithfulness of God.... How easily God can provide the means necessary for preserving His people!"

'So will I sing praise to Your name -- for ever!' "In the concluding words, he expressed his resolution to persevere in the constant celebration of the praises of God -- with a view to fulfilling the vows which he had contracted.... For David, while he applied to God for help..., showed himself uniformly grateful -- when he had experienced deliverance!"

Calvin also says in his *Psychopannychia* that the annihilationistic Anabaptists argue that 'I will praise the Lord in my life...as long as I have being' (Psalm 146:2), means that if David "is to praise the Lord in life and while he has being -- he will not praise him after life...when he has no being!" But Calvin replied: "'I will sing praise to Your name for ever!'...(Psalm 61:8)."

God prolongs the king's life and years, like many generations! And yours?

*'My prayer is to You, O Lord -- in an acceptable time.... Deliver me out of the mire, and do not let me sink! Let me be delivered...out of the deep waters! Do not let the waterflood overflow me; neither let the deep swallow me up!... Do not let the pit shut its mouth upon me! Hear me, O Lord!... Turn to me!' Psalm 69:13-16.*

Calvin comments: "David... 'wept, and...his soul fasted, and...he was clothed with sackcloth' -- which were the tokens of mourning among the Jews.... When he saw things in such a state of confusion, he voluntarily engaged in this sorrowful exercise....

"'But as for me, my prayer is to You, O Jehovah!'... Even...hard treatment could not shake his mind and sink him into despondency....

"Although the faithful in the present day may be unable to make any impression upon the wicked -- yet they will ultimately triumph, provided they...go directly to God to present their prayers before Him.... Although it was now a time of trouble with him (David), and although his prayers seemed to be altogether unavailing -- yet God's favour would have its turn also....

"The only means by which in our affliction we can obtain the victory, is by our having hope shining in us in the midst of darkness. And by our having the sustaining influence which arises from waiting for the favour of God....

"The darkness in which he (David) was now involved, would in due time be dispelled.... A serene and unclouded season of God's favour would succeed....

"'Deliver me from the mire, so that I may not sink!'... He had previously said that he was sunk in the mire.... Now he prays that he may not sink in it (further).... Now, looking to the outcome, although living in the midst of death -- he cherishes the hope of deliverance.

"This is expressed still more clearly in the...15th verse, where he prays: 'Let not the pit close its mouth on me!' Which is as if he had said: 'Let not the great multitude and weight of my afflictions overwhelm me, and do not let sorrow swallow me up!'

"'Answer me, O Jehovah! For Your mercy is good!'... There can be no doubt that he sustained a dreadful conflict.... David...shows that the only consideration which inspired him with hope, was the benignant and merciful character of God....

"He declares both the bitterness of his grief, and the ardour of his desires.... God, in a peculiar manner, invites His servants to him. David...depends on the gratuitous election of God." So too, should we!

Lord, don't let me sink in the mire -- but deliver me! Have you yet prayed like this?

*'Deliver me, because of my enemies! Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see! Let Your wrathful anger take hold of them!... Let their habitation be desolate!... Let them not come into Your righteousness! Let them be blotted out of the book of the living!'* Psalm 69:18-28.

Calvin comments: "By calling upon God 'to draw near to his life' -- which...seemed to have (been) forsaken -- he (David) exhibits a striking proof of the strength of his faith.... God will appear, to deliver him!...

"Let their eyes be darkened, so that they may not see!... I have no hesitation in considering his language as a prayer that God would deprive his (David's) enemies of reason and understanding.... God, whenever He pleases, can strike them suddenly with blindness -- so that they may see nothing....

"Let their habitation be desolate!... He desires that...God would not spare them, even after their death.... He employs the expression...in the same sense in which Isaiah (26:14) speaks of 'the dead'..., thereby denoting those who continue...even in death itself....

"Let them not come into Your righteousness!... Let their wickedness increase more and more!... The wicked are plunged into a deep gulf of wickedness by the just vengeance of Heaven, so that they may never return to a sound understanding -- and so that he who is filthy may become still more filthy (Revelation 22:11)....

"Let them be blotted out from the book of the living!... This...imprecation...is...most dreadful.... He denounces against them eternal destruction..., so that they might be blotted out of the book of the living (Revelation 22:19). For all those must inevitably perish, who are not found written or enrolled in the Book of Life....

"Those whom God openly rejects and casts out of His Church are...said to 'be blotted out!.... (But) none who have once really been the children of God, will ever finally fall away or wholly be cut off!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:10:18 & III:24:9: "'The wicked shall be silent in darkness' (First Samuel 2:9).... Howsoever pleasant the delights of the wicked, they gradually lead down to the chambers of death.... The death of such persons (is) the death of...persons cut off from the hope of resurrection.... 'Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous!' (Psalm 69:28)....

"The words...indicate the abandonment of those who seemed to have a...place among the elect. As is said in the Psalm (69:28), 'Let them be blotted out of the Book of the Living, and not be written with the righteous!'" Let not the wicked be written up in the book of the living!

*'Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high!... I will praise the name of God!... The humble shall see this, and be glad!... You that seek God, your heart shall live!' Psalm 69:29-32.*

Calvin comments: "David...adds immediately afterward, 'Your salvation shall exalt me!'... There is here a mutual relationship stated -- between the sorrow with which he was oppressed, and the help of God by which he hoped to be lifted up....

"He assures himself that the very thing which others considered as a ground for despair, would prove to him the cause of his salvation.... 'Although I now mourn under the pressure of affliction -- yet shall Your salvation, O Lord, exalt me!'....

"Nor does he simply say that he will be raised up. But he expressly speaks of 'being exalted!' And in this, he alludes to fortresses which are set upon high places....

"I will celebrate the name of God in a song!' The Psalmist, now elevated with joy and sustained by the confident hope of deliverance, sings the triumphant strains of victory....

"He laid hold upon the grace of God by assured faith.... God is said here 'to be magnified by our praises'..., because by our praises His name is exalted among men....

"The afflicted have seen it!' ('The humble shall see this!') He here shows that the blessed effects of his deliverance, will extend to others as well as to himself....

"His object in doing this, is partly to commend the goodness and grace of God to true believers, and partly so that...he may prevail with God to succour him.... In the deliverance of one man, a pledge would be given to others, affording them also assurance of salvation....

"Whoever sees God, says he...will nevertheless take courage from my example.... The example of David would afford a ground of rejoicing to all the faithful servants of God, when they should seek a remedy for their afflictions....

"In the concluding part of this verse, there is a change of person -- 'And your heart shall live!'... This apostrophe...expresses the sense the more forcibly....

"In addressing those who were so much under the pressure of affliction as to be laid prostrate like dead men -- he exhibits to their view a kind of image of the resurrection. As if he had said: 'O you who are dead, unto you new vigour shall be restored!'...

"The light which was quenched, is rekindled! And thus, so to speak, recovers life anew!"  
The humble who seek God shall be glad, and keep on living! Shall you?

*Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked!... For You are my hope, O Lord God! You are my trust, from my youth. By You, I have been held up from the womb. You are He Who took me out of my mother's bowels.... You are my strong refuge.... Do not cast me off in the time of old age! Do not forsake me, when my strength fails!' Psalm 71:4-9.*

Calvin comments: "O my God! Deliver me from the hand of the wicked man!"... It is highly probable that he (David) comprehends the whole host of the enemies who assaulted him.... 'For You are my expectation, O Lord Jehovah!...' He does not here simply declare that he hoped in God.... Even from his youth, he had received tokens of the Divine favour....

"Upon You I have been sustained from the womb!"... David...not only celebrates the goodness of God which he had experienced from his childhood, but also those proofs of it which he had received previous to his birth...by which is magnified the wonderful power and inestimable goodness of God in the generation of men....

"Moses declares (Genesis 8:13) that Noah and his household lived ten months amidst the offensive nuisance produced by so many living creatures (within the ark), when he could not draw the breath of life. Have we not equal reason to marvel that the infant, shut up (nine months) within (the ark of) its mother..., can live in such a condition as would suffocate the strongest man?...

"The Spirit therefore justly...commends to our consideration this memorable instance of the grace of God, which is exhibited in our birth and (even in our earlir) generation. When we were born into the world..., did not God -- putting so to speak His hand under us, receive us into His bosom -- what would become of us?... What hope would there be of the continuance of our life? Yes, were it not for this, our very birth would be an entrance into a thousand deaths! God therefore, with the highest propriety, is said to take us out of our mother's bowels....

"The remembrance of the blessings which God had conferred upon him, could not be extinguished by the deepest shades of darkness which surrounded him.... His spirit was neither broken nor enfeebled with shame -- but reposed in God with the stronger confidence, the more he was cast off by the world..... To encourage himself to hope with the greater confidence for a happy outcome to his present troubles, he promises loudly to celebrate the praises of God -- and to do this not only on one occasion, but to persevere in the exercise without intermission....

"David, having just now declared that God had been the protector of his life at his birth and afterwards his Foster-father in his childhood and the guardian of his welfare during the whole course of his past existence, being now worn out with age, casts himself anew into the fatherly bosom of God..... David's prayer, in short, amounts to this: 'O Lord, You Who have sustained me vigorously and strongly in the flower of my youth -- do not forsake me now when I am decayed and almost withered! But the more I stand in need of Your help, let the decrepitude and infirmities of age move You to have compassion on me the more!'" You are my God, from the womb till my old age!

*'I saw the prosperity of the wicked.... There are no bands in their death.... I have been plagued all day long, and chastened every morning.... It was too painful for me -- until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then I understood their end! Surely, You set them on slippery places! You cast them down into destruction! How they are brought into desolation, in a moment! They are utterly consumed!'* Psalm 73:3-19.

Calvin commented: "He (David) saw the present prosperous state of the wicked.... Some explain 'bands to death' as meaning...that the wicked die suddenly.... Diseases...are so many messengers of death, warning us of the frailty and short duration of our life....

"He tells us that he was 'scourged daily'.... As often as the sun rose, some affliction or other was prepared for him.... It is assuredly nothing less than a divine miracle that the Church which is so furiously assaulted by Satan and innumerable hosts of enemies, continues safe."

'It was too painful for me -- until I went into the sanctuary of God! Then, I understood their end!' "I came to acknowledge in good earnest, that men are not created to flourish for a short time in this world..., but that their condition here is that of pilgrims whose aspirations during their earthly pilgrimage should be towards Heaven.... David very properly puts 'entering into the sanctuaries' for 'coming to the school of God'.... His meaning, were this: 'Until God become my Schoolmaster, and until I learn by His Word!'....

"By the 'end' of the wicked, is not meant their exit from the world or their departure from the present life.... But the world 'end' is to be regarded as referring to the judgments of God.... The ungodly...suddenly decay.... All the wicked shall perish miserably.... The end or the last day has not yet arrived!....

"The ungodly continue to stand for a brief season. Yet they are as it were perched on slippery places -- so that they may fall, ere long, into destruction!...

"How they have been destroyed, as it were in a moment!'... Their destruction, being sudden and unlooked for, tends the more effectually to awaken us.... It is said, 'They are consumed'.... God thunders upon them.... He...brings them to nothing, solely by the terror of His Breath.... He inflicts upon the ungodly, judgments of a very severe kind and pursues them with unusual tokens of His wrath -- as if He would make the Earth to tremble, in order thereby to correct our dullness of apprehension!"

Calvin also added in his *Institutes* II:10:16: "Nor can those things...said as to the prosperous success of believers, be understood in any other sense than as referring to the manifestation of celestial glory.... The Psalmist (73:2-17) says...'As for me, my feet were almost gone!'... At length...he concludes...: 'Until I went into the sanctuary of God! Then I understood their end!'" For I have been plagued; but the wicked shall be destroyed!



*'I was like a beast before You. Nevertheless, I am continually with You. You have held me by my right hand. You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me into glory! Whom do I have in Heaven, but You? There is none on Earth that I desire, beside You! My flesh and my heart fail. But God is the Strength (or Rock) of my heart, and my Portion for ever!'* Psalm 73:23-26.

Calvin comments: "David had said -- Lord, although I have seemed in this world to be endured with superior judgment and reason, yet in respect of Your celestial wisdom I have been like one of the lower animals!... 'Nevertheless, I was continually with You!'..."

"The Psalmist declares...that he was with God. He gives Him thanks for having kept him from utterly falling.... He was bereft of judgment, and as it were a brute beast....

"(But) God is always near His chosen ones.... The Psalmist speaks of God as 'holding him by the right hand.' He means that he was by the wonderful power of God drawn back from that deep gulf into which the reprobate cast themselves....

"God...stretched out His hand to hold him up, and prevent him from a fall which would have involved him in destruction.... He upholds us when we stumble, and even lifts us up when we have fallen.

"You shall guide me with Your counsel!"... The Psalmist assured himself that the Lord, since by His leading He had now brought him back into the right way, would continue henceforth to guide him -- until at length He receive him into His glorious presence in Heaven....

"David...gives thanks to God, to look forward with confidence to the future.... He now cherishes the hope that the Divine assistance will continue to be extended to him hereafter....

"To 'counsel' -- there is added 'glory'.... It comprehends the whole course of our happiness from the commencement...upon Earth, even to the consummation which we expect to realize in Heaven. David then assures himself of eternal glory.... Yet he does not exclude the blessings which God bestows upon His people here below, with the view of affording them even in this life some foretaste of that felicity."

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:11:2: "David rises from temporal blessings to the last and highest of all. 'My flesh and my heart fail. But God is the Strength of my heart -- and my Portion, for ever!' (Psalm 73:26).... Those who can venture to speak thus, assuredly declare that their hope rises beyond the world and worldly blessings.... All these things obviously apply not to the land of our pilgrimage...but to...the heavenly city of believers." My flesh fails, but God is my strength -- for ever! Is He also yours?

*'My soul longs...for the courts of the Lord! My heart... cries out for the living God!... They that dwell in Your House..., praise You!... They go from strength to strength.... A day in Your courts, is better than a thousand!... For the Lord God...will give grace and glory!' Psalm 84:2-11.*

Calvin comments: "David complains of his being deprived of liberty of access to the Church.... Some would understand by 'the tabernacles of God' the Kingdom of Heaven, as if David mourned over his continuance in this state of earthly pilgrimage.... In the second verse..., the first verb *kaasaf* signifies 'vehemently to desire'.... David adds 'his soul faints after the courts of the Lord' -- which is equivalent to our pining away.... He was convinced he needed steps...to rise up to Heaven....

"The godly were directed...to the heavenly model.... 'Blessed are they who dwell in Your House!'.... David...testifies that the true worshippers of God offer to Him the sacrifice of praise.... Never will a man praise God from the heart, unless...a partaker of spiritual peace....

"They will go from strength to strength!.... The people of God will come to Zion.... The saints are continually acquiring fresh strength for going up to Mount Zion, and continue to prosecute their journey without weariness or fatigue until they reach the wished-for place and behold the countenance of God.... No visible image of God was there to be seen; but...genuine worshippers found from experience that...they were greatly aided in approaching Him.... The only way in which God becomes reconciled to us, is through the mediation of Christ!...

"For better is one day in Your courts, than a thousand elsewhere!" Unlike the greater part of mankind who desire to live without knowing why, wishing simply that their life may be prolonged -- David here testifies not only that the end which he proposed to himself in living was to serve God, but that in addition to this he set a higher value on one day which he could spend in the Divine Service than upon a long time passed among the men of the world....

"Jehovah God is our sun and shield! (The Lord will give grace and glory!)'.... As the sun by its light vivifies, nourishes and rejoices the world -- so the benign countenance of God fills with joy the hearts of His people.... They neither live nor breathe, except in so far as He shines upon them.... The sentence immediately succeeding -- 'He will give grace and glory' -- might be viewed as meaning that those whom God has distinguished by His grace in this world, will at length be crowned with everlasting glory in His heavenly Kingdom.... After God has once taken the faithful into His favour, He will advance them to high honour and never cease to enrich them!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:11:2 & IV:1:5 that "David rises from temporal blessings to the last and highest of all.... 'My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God!'...(Psalm 84:2).... Those who can venture to speak thus, assuredly declare that their hope rises beyond the world.... David complains...that by...his enemies he was prevented from entering the Tabernacle (Psalm 84).... There is nothing on which believers set a higher value, than on this aid by which God gradually raises His people to Heaven!" Consequently, my soul longs and keeps on crying out for the living God!

Psalm 88:1f

Lord, my life is drawing nigh unto the grave!

*'O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You! Let my prayer come to You!... For my...life draws nigh to the grave. I am counted with them that go down to the pit. I am...free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave.... Shall the dead arise and praise You?... But to You I have cried out, O Lord!' Psalm 88:1-13.*

Calvin comments: "The Spirit of God by the mouth of Heman has here furnished us...with a form of prayer...not (to) faint under any adversities, however severe, which might befall.... He (Heman) continued crying out, 'days and nights'.... He (God) particularly affirms that his life was not far from the grave.... He (Heman) complains that he was, as it were, dead. Although he breathed still among the living, yet the many deaths with which he was threatened on all sides -- were to him so many graves by which he expected to be swallowed up in a moment....

"The Prophet intended to express something more distressing and grievous than common death.... He says that 'he was free among the dead' -- because he was...as it were cut off from the world.... Augustine (says) that Christ is here described, and that He is said to be free among the dead because He obtained the victory over death...so that it might not have dominion over Him....

"He (Heman) bewails his condition as worse than if...he were going down to death by little and little. For we are naturally inspired with horror at the prospect of a violent death.... It is certain that the dead are no less under the divine protection than the living. Even wicked Balaam...was nevertheless constrained to cry out -- 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!' (Numbers 23:10). To say then that God is no longer mindful of man after he is dead, might seem to be the language of a Heathen....

"Faith in the truth that God extends His care both to the living and the dead, is deeply rooted in the hearts of all His genuine servants.... The Prophet, then, was persuaded that the dead too are under the divine protection.... 'Will You perform a miracle for the dead?'... If God did not make haste to succour him, it would be too late -- there being scarcely anything betwixt him and death.... He asks how long God meant to delay -- if He meant to do so till death intervened, so that He might raise the dead by a miracle?...

"When the Psalmist asks: 'Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave?' -- he does not mean that the dead are devoid of consciousness.... Succour men while they are still crying out in the midst of danger, than...raise them up from their graves when they are dead!.... It is not God's usual way to bring the dead out of their graves to be witnesses and publishers of His goodness. When the Prophet affirms that the divine faithfulness...and righteousness 'are not known in the land of forgetfulness' -- some deluded persons foolishly wrest the statement to support a gross error, as if it taught that men were annihilated by death.... God...had designed this world to be...a stage on which to display his goodness towards mankind!"

Let us then now seek the Lord! You too! Before life is drawing nigh unto the grave!

*"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord, for ever!... Mercy will I keep..., for evermore!... I will make...his (the king's) throne to endure like the days of Heaven!"... But You have cast off and abhorred.... You have made his glory to cease.... The days of his youth, You have shortened! You have covered him with shame!... Lord, will You hide Yourself for ever?... Remember how short my time is!... What man is he that lives, who shall not see death? Shall he deliver his (own) soul from...the grave?.... Blessed be the Lord, for evermore! Psalm 89:1-52.*

Calvin comments: "I will sing of the mercies of Jehovah, for ever!... The design of the Prophet...was to fortify the minds of the godly..., so that...they might with confidence hope for the...establishment of the Kingdom.... 'I will keep My mercy to him, for ever!...'... God frequently repeats that He had set up the Kingdom of David with the express design of establishing it for ever.... There being nothing under Heaven of long continuance, 'the days of Heaven' is an expression employed to denote everlasting duration.... This prophecy cannot have its full accomplishment in any, till we come to Christ....

"But You have abhorred and rejected him.' Here the Prophet complains, that in consequence of the decayed state of the Kingdom, the prophecy appeared to have failed.... 'You have shortened the days of his youth'.... The Prophet...does not speak exclusively of any one individual, but compares the state of the Kingdom to the life of man.... God caused the Kingdom to wax old and finally to decay, before it reached a state of complete maturity.... Resembling that of a young man who, while yet increasing in strength and vigour, is carried away by a violent death before his time....

"O Jehovah, will You hide Yourself for ever?...'... He tacitly intimates that all will be well, as soon as God is pleased to look upon His chosen people with a benignant countenance.... 'Remember how short my time is!...'... The Prophet, the more effectually to move God to commiseration, lays before him the brevity of human life.... If we receive no taste of the divine goodness, it will seem that we have been created in vain....

"God has created men, and placed them in the world.... As His goodness extends itself even to the cattle and lower animals of every kind, it cannot for a moment be supposed that we who hold a higher rank in the scale of being than the brute creation, should wholly be deprived of it.... The course of our life...is so brief.... The end for which men were created, was that they should enjoy God's bounty in the present world.... If God does not make haste to bless them, the opportunity will no longer be afforded when their life shall have run out.... 'What man shall live, and shall not see death?' This verse contains a confirmation...concerning the brevity of human life.... No man is privileged with exemption, from the dominion of death....

'Blessed be Jehovah, for ever!...'... The Prophet, after having freely bewailed the calamities of the Church, now...breaks forth into the language of praise.... The design of the writer was to assuage the greatness of his grief..., so that he might entertain the livelier hope of deliverance!" I will sing of the mercies of the Lord unto all generations! Will you too? Blessed be the Lord, for evermore!

*'A prayer of Moses.... Lord, You have been our dwelling-place, in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or You did ever form the Earth..., even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God! You turn man to destruction!... A thousand years in Your sight are but like yesterday when it is past.... You carry them (men) away.... They are as if asleep. In the morning, they are like grass which grows up.... In the evening, it is cut down, and withers. For we are consumed!' Psalm 90:1-7.*

Calvin comments: "Moses is about to treat...of the brevity and miseries of human life.... This Psalm was composed by Moses.... I have no doubt that he was its author.... God would now renew the grace which He had displayed in old times toward the holy Patriarchs....

"God remains unchangeably the same. God is here contrasted with created being, which...is subject to continual changes.... We mistake, if we measure God by our own understanding.... We must mount above the Earth -- yes, even above Heaven itself -- whenever we think of Him!...

"'You shall turn man to destruction!' Moses...mentions how frail and transitory is the life of men.... He considers what they are made of, and remembers that they are but dust.... Our life...is...a short revolution, in which we quickly complete our circle....

"God...may at length gather them together, into His everlasting inheritance.... Men, when they have completed their circle, are forthwith taken out of the world....

"We foolishly imagine that we shall nestle in this world for ever!... Nor does Moses simply contrast a thousand years with one day. But he contrasts them with 'yesterday' -- which is already gone!...

"'You carry them (men) away, like a flood!... Men, as long as they are sojourners in this world, perform...a revolution which lasts only for a moment.... Death is simply compared...to a flood. For when we have stayed a little while in the world, we forthwith fall into the grave.... This death, which is common to all, is with propriety called an inundation (or 'a flood'). While we are breathing the breath of life, the Lord overflows us by death -- just as those who perish in a shipwreck are engulfed in the ocean....

"Men come forth in the morning, like grass.... They...pass away within a short time.... They wither and decay.... Nothing is more transitory, than our life.... Each of us is soon carried away.... We should not dream of a thousand lives instead of one which is but...a shadow that quickly vanishes away.... Men are by nature so transitory.... Our frail natures...speedily vanish away!"

Lord, we are consumed by Your anger; troubled by Your wrath! 'You turn man to destruction!... You carry men away.... In the morning, they are like grass which grows up.... In the evening, it is cut down, and withers. For we are consumed!' Therefore, repent -- now!

*'All our days have passed away!... We spend our years.... The days of our years are seventy.... If by reason of strength they be eighty, their strength is still labour and sorrow. For it is soon cut off, and we fly away!'* Psalm 90:9-10.

Calvin comments: "Moses, after having briefly taught that men by nature vanish away like smoke -- gathers from thence that it is not to be wondered at, if God exanimates and consumes those whom He pursues with His wrath.... Moses intimates that men hide themselves in darkness....

"For all our days have passed away in Your indignation'.... The whole course of man's life is suddenly brought to an end.... Moses...asserts that this..., which God brought upon His people, was not only for a short time -- but that it was extended without intermission even to death.... Their years passed away....

"The days of our years are seventy'.... What...is the duration of life? Truly, if we reckon all our years, we will at length come to seventy. Or, if there be some who are stronger and more vigorous, they will bring us even to eighty.

"Moses used the expression 'the days of our years'.... When the time is divided into small portions, the very number itself deceives us -- so that we flatter ourselves that life is long.... He permits men to sum up the many thousand days, which are...few years.... He at the same time affirms that this great heap, is soon brought to nothing.

"Let men then extend the space of their life as much as they please, by calculating that each year contains 365 days! Yet assuredly, they will find that the term of seventy years is short..... (Even) he who has reached the age of eighty years, hastens to the grave.... Even then, those were accounted old men and in a manner decrepit -- who attained to the age of eighty years....

"Before men decline and come to old age, even in the very bloom of youth they are involved in many troubles.... This is to be referred to the whole course of our existence in the present state....

"He who considers what is the condition of our life from our infancy until we descend into the grave, will find troubles and turmoil in every part of it.... 'For it swiftly passes by, and we fly away!'....

"As soon as they open their eyes, they see that they are dragged and carried forward to death with rapid haste.... Their excellence is every moment vanishing away!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* III:4:34: "Moses says...'We are consumed.... All our days have passed away.... We spend our years!'.... Psalm 90:7-9."

The days of our years are seventy, and soon cut off! So, once again -- repent now!

Psalm 90:12-14

Teach us to count our days, so that we may acquire wisdom!

*'So, teach us to number our days -- so that we may apply our hearts to wisdom!... O Lord, how long?... Satisfy us early with Your mercy, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days!'*  
Psalm 90:12-14.

Calvin comments: "It indeed seems at first sight absurd to pray, that we may know the number of our years!... Since even the strongest scarcely reach the age of eighty years -- is there any difficulty in reckoning up so small a sum?"

"Children learn numbers, as soon as they begin to prattle.... We do not need a teacher in arithmetic, to enable us to count the length of a hundred -- upon our fingers. So much the fouler and more shameful, is our stupidity in never comprehending the short term of our life!"

"Even he who is most skilful in arithmetic, and who can precisely and accurately understand and investigate millions of millions -- is nevertheless unable to count eighty years in his own life. It is surely a monstrous thing that men can measure all distances outside themselves; that they know how many feet the moon is distant from the centre of the Earth; what space there is between the different planets; and, in short, that they can measure all the dimensions both of Heaven and Earth -- while yet, they cannot number seventy years in their own case" or life!

"It is therefore evident that Moses had good reason to beseech God, for ability to perform what requires a wisdom which is very rare among mankind. The last clause of the verse...teaches us that we then truly apply our hearts to wisdom, when we comprehend the shortness of human life...."

"What can be a greater proof of madness -- than to ramble about, without proposing to one's self any end? True believers alone, who know the difference between this transitory state and a blessed eternity for which they were created -- know what ought to be the aim of their life. No man then can regulate his life with a settled mind, but he who -- knowing the end of it, that is to say death itself -- is led to consider the great purpose of man's existence in this world, so that he may aspire after the prize of the heavenly calling!..."

"O Jehovah -- how long?...'... Moses adds a prayer that God, Who had not ceased for a long time severely to punish His people, would at length be inclined to deal gently with them...."

"They could not fail...to remember that dreadful oath, which He had thundered out against them: 'Surely they shall not see the land...I swore to their fathers! But as for you, your carcasses...shall fall in this wilderness!' (Numbers 14:23,32)..... Moses...bewails their protracted languishing, in the words 'how long?...'..."

"Satisfy (or satisfy) us early with Your good (mercy), and we will be glad and rejoice all our days!'" So, then, Lord -- teach us to count our days, so that we may acquire wisdom! And you too!"

Psalm 91:11

God shall keep all your ways, lest you dash your foot!

*'The Lord...shall deliver you!... You shall not be afraid of...the destruction that wastes!... You shall behold, and see the reward of the wicked!... No evil shall befall you, nor any plague come near your dwelling! For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways!'*  
Psalm 91:2-11.

Calvin comments: "God would prove, at all times, the delivery of His people.... (From) all different kinds of evil..., God is willing and able to deliver us....

"Mention is made of 'the fear of the night'.... The 'arrow'...is instanced..., for the reason...it shoots...with such swiftness that we can with difficulty escape it.... There is no kind of calamity which the shield of the Almighty cannot ward off and repel....

"The believer has the special privilege of being exempted from evils of an imminent and impending nature.... It might be objected that he was but man, and as such exposed with others to death in its thousand different forms.... When universal ruin prevails around, the Lord's children are the objects of His distinguishing care -- and are preserved amidst the general destruction!...

"It behoves us also to be satisfied with apprehending the judgments of God only in some imperfect measure while we remain upon Earth. And leaving Him to defer the fuller disclosure of them, to the Day of complete revelation.

"'You, Lord, protect me!... (No evil shall befall you!... No plague...comes near you!)'.... He speaks of accounting God to be his...refuge.... He defends us from every evil.... It is added, 'no evil shall befall you'.... How are coming evils averted?... Just by our resting with confidence in the protection of God!

"It is true troubles of various kinds assail the believer as well as others. But the Psalmist means that God stands between him and the violence of every assault, so as to preserve him from being overwhelmed.... Those who choose God for their refuge, will dwell safely....

"When...He finds that we still linger and hesitate to approach Him..., He next makes mention of the angels, and proffers them as guardians of our safety.... He does not assign one solitary angel to each saint, but commissions the whole armies of Heaven to keep watch over every individual believer.... The Psalmist adds '(in) all your ways'..., to convey to us...that wherever we go -- we may expect that the angels shall always extend their guardianship to us!"

Calvin also adds in his *Institutes* I:17:11 & I:14:6: "Neither fire, nor water, nor sword can do him harm.... For thus sings the Psalm (91:3-7): 'Surely, He shall deliver you!'.... Angels are the ministers of the divine bounty towards us.... We are told how they watch for our safety.... Christ, the Head of the Church..., 'shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways!' (Psalm 91:11f)." Lest you dash your foot against a stone! Do you so believe?



*'You shall tread upon the lion and adder!... Because He has set His love upon me, therefore I will deliver him! I will set him on high!... I will be with him, in trouble! I will deliver him, and honour him! With long life, I will satisfy him -- and show him My salvation!'* Psalm 91:13-16.

Calvin comments: "He had already spoken of the obstacles which Satan throws in our course, under the figure of a 'stone.' Now he speaks of the formidable troubles to which we are exposed in the world -- under the figures of the 'asp'; 'lion'; 'young lion'; and 'dragon.'

"So long as we are here, we may truly be said to walk amongst wild beasts and such as threaten us with destruction. And in this case, what would become of us -- did God not promise to make us victorious?...

"Because he has trusted in Me, I will deliver him!"... As we are upon the approach of danger..., (we) exercise a due reliance upon the providence of God!...

"We must continually be surrounded by death and destruction in this world, unless His hand is stretched out for our preservation. Occasionally, He assists even unbelievers; but it is only to His believing people that His help is vouchsafed in the sense of His being...their Saviour -- to the end!...

"The expression to 'exalt' or 'lift up on high' -- means...to keep in a state of safety.... God preserves His people..., raising them...to some high and impregnable fortress....

"He shall call upon Me!"... Prayer is properly grounded upon the Word of God.... Believers will never be exempt from troubles and embarrassments. God does not promise them a life of ease and luxury, but deliverance from their tribulations.

"Mention is made of His 'glorifying' them -- intimating that the deliverance which God extends..., is not of a mere temporary nature but will issue at last in their being advanced to perfect happiness! He puts much honour upon them in the world, and glorifies Himself in them conspicuously -- but it is not till the completion of their course, that He affords them ground for triumph....

"Length of days' (or) long life...would be bestowed by God upon all His children, were it not for their advantage that they should be taken early out of the world.... Longevity is never to be compared with eternity. The salvation of God extends far beyond the narrow boundary of earthly existence.... It is to this -- whether we live, or come to die -- that we should principally look!"

Calvin also adds in his *Institutes* II:8:42 & III:20:14: "The help of God is present only with those who walk in His ways (Psalm 91:11); that is, in His calling.... I will be with him, in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him! (Psalm 91:15)." For the Lord delivers those who call upon Him, when troubled! Do you?

*'A Song for the Sabbath Day. It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord...; to sing praises to Your name...; to show forth Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night!... I will triumph in the works of Your hands!'* Psalm 92:1-4.

Calvin comments: "This Psalm contains an exhortation to praise God..., insisting especially upon His justice displayed in the protection of His people and the destruction of the wicked. By such truth, it encourages to the practice of righteousness -- and preserves us from fainting under the cross of Christ....

"There is no reason to doubt ...the...singing (of) this Psalm, as the inscription bears, upon the Sabbath Day.... It was good to have a certain day set apart, for singing the praises of God....

"The reason why the Psalmist appropriated this Psalm to the Sabbath, is sufficiently obvious.... We need to be disentangled from all cares, if we would seriously apply ourselves to the praises of God.... The right observance of the Sabbath does not consist in idleness..., but in the celebration of the Divine name....

"He adverts to the grounds which we have for praising God..., in remembrance of His 'goodness' and 'faithfulness' which should inflame our hearts to such exercise. If we had any proper sense and experience of them!...

"The Psalmist...speaks of our announcing God's goodness in the 'morning' -- and His faithfulness 'at night'.... He means, that beginning to praise the Lord from earliest dawn -- we should continue His praises to the latest hour of the night....

"Christ has appeared, and the Church has reached full age.... The Psalmist repeats the truth that the Sabbath was not prescribed as a day of idleness, but a season when we should collect our whole energies -- for meditation upon the works of God....

"Those are best qualified for celebrating the praises of God, who recognize and feel His fatherly goodness and can undertake this service with willing and joyful minds. His language implies that the goodness and faithfulness of God...are apparent in His works....

"What produces joy in our hearts, is the exhibition which God gives of Himself as a Father. And of His deep and watchful anxiety for our welfare....

"The cause of our brutish indifference, is our inability to savour or relish the end designed in the works of God! As the universe proclaims throughout that God is faithful and good, it behoves us to be diligently observant of these tokens -- and to be excited by a holy joy to the celebration of His praise!" So, then -- it's good to thank the Lord on the Sabbath, morning and evening! You too!

Psalm 92:7

The wicked, seemingly flourishing, shall be destroyed for ever!

*'When the wicked spring up like grass..., it is so that they shall be destroyed for ever!... But You, Lord, are most high for evermore.... Lo, Your enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered!'* Psalm 92:7-9.

Calvin comments: "He points out and exposes...the folly of imagining that the wicked obtain a triumph over God when He does not...immediately bring them under restraint.... He grants that they spring up and flourish. But adds immediately...that they flourish, like the grass, only for a moment -- their prosperity being brief and evanescent....

"It would be ridiculous to envy the happiness of men who are doomed to be speedily destroyed -- that today...flourish, and tomorrow...are cut down and wither (Psalm 129:6).... The herbs to which the wicked are compared, are such as grow on the roofs of houses -- which want depth of soil, and die of themselves from lack of nourishment.... The prosperity of the wicked draws after it the speedier destruction -- like the grass, when it is full grown, is ready for the scythe.

"There is an antithesis drawn too, between the shortness of their continuance and the everlasting destruction which awaits them. For they are not said to be cut down, so that they may flourish again like withered plants (which) will recover their vigour -- but to be condemned to eternal perdition.

"Where he says of God that He sits 'exalted for evermore' -- some understand him to mean that God holds the power and office of governing the world and that we may be certain nothing can happen by chance, when such a righteous Governor and Judge administers the affairs of the world.... It seems to me that the Psalmist compares the stability of God's throne with the fluctuating and changeable character of this world.... We must not judge of Him by what we see in the world where there is nothing of a fixed and enduring nature. God looks down undisturbed from the altitude of Heaven upon all the changes of this earthly scene which neither affect nor have any relation to Him....

This the Psalmist brings forward with another view, than simply to teach us to distinguish God from His creature and put due honour upon His majesty. He would have us learn in our contemplations upon the wonderful and mysterious providence of God, to lift our conceptions about ourselves and this world....

"The Psalmist...would remind us that He does not work according to our ideas, but in a manner corresponding to His Own Eternal Being.... We are taught here to lift our eyes unto that eternal and unchangeable throne on which God sits, and in wisdom defers the execution of His judgments....

"The Psalmist concludes it to be impossible that God should not overthrow His enemies.... The Psalmist...declares the destruction of God's enemies to be as certain as if it had already taken place.... His enemies cannot long continue to triumph.... The Lord...can no more fail to punish them, than deny Himself!" Thus the wicked shall be destroyed for ever! And you?

*'The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree! He shall grow, like a cedar in Lebanon!... They shall flourish in the courts of our God! They shall still bring forth fruit in old age!'* Psalm 92:12-14.

The righteous are here compared to palm-trees and cedars of Lebanon. The palm-tree frequently rises to more than a hundred feet; grows strongly for about one hundred years; and every year produces four hundredweight of dates. The Lebanon cedar is prodigiously enormous; lives for more than a thousand years; and its wood is so durable it is reputed to be incorruptible.

The date-palm when mature bears even as many as six hundred pounds of fruit. Side by side with the palm, is the cedar -- the prince of trees. It is gracefully lofty; intense in its vegetative strength; and also perpetual in the verdure of its foliage and the perfume it exhales.

Calvin comments: "Nothing is more difficult than for the saints of God to entertain expectations of being raised up and delivered, when they have been reduced almost to the state of the dead... Though the righteous may appear for a time to be withered or to have been cut down, they will again spring up with renewed vigour and flourish...like the stateliest trees upon Lebanon...."

"He who was a hundred years old, should be a child. Meaning, that though old age naturally tends to death, and (that) one who had lived a hundred years is upon the very borders of it -- yet in the Kingdom of Christ a man would be reckoned as being merely in his childhood and starting in life, who entered upon a new century! This could only be verified in the sense that, after death, we have another existence -- in Heaven!"

Calvin also adds in his *Institutes* II:10:17 "that the Holy Fathers under the Old Testament were not ignorant that...God...directed their minds to His sanctuary...as the Final Judgment of God.... They doubted not that...a time would at length arrive, when the divine promises would be fulfilled...."

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing' (Psalm 92:12-14)!"

Calvin declares in his *Psychopannychia*: "Brethren, let no man rob you of this faith, though all the gates of Hell should resist!... You have the assurance of God, Who cannot deny His truth! There is not the least obscurity in His language to the Church while still a pilgrim on the Earth...."

"Let us ever call to mind what the Spirit has taught by the mouth of David (Psalm 92:12-14): 'The just shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall be multiplied like the cedar on Lebanon. Those who have been planted in the House of the Lord, will flourish in the courts of our God! They will still bud forth in their old age! They will be fat and flourishing!'" Even till the end of their life!

*'Today, if you will hear His Voice -- do not harden your heart, as in the provocation and in the day of temptation in the wilderness -- when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work! Forty years long, I was grieved with this generation! I said: "This is a people that err in their heart, and they have not known my ways!" Unto whom I swore in my wrath, that they should not enter into My rest!' Psalm 95:8-11.*

Calvin commented: "The Greek version joins it (verse 7) with the verse that follows (verse 8) -- 'today, if you will hear His Voice, do not harden your hearts!' It reads well, in this connection.... The posterity of Abraham were the flock of God.... He had placed His Law in the midst of them....

"The expression 'today' intimates how emphatically the(y)...., in hearing God's Voice, were His people.... He bids them recognize God as their Shepherd, inasmuch as they heard His Voice....

"Harden not your heart!"... The Psalmist, having extolled and commended the kindness of God their Shepherd, takes occasion -- as they were stiffnecked and disobedient -- to remind them of their duty as His flock...to yield a pliable and meek submission....

"He enlarges in several expressions upon the hardness of heart evinced by the people.... By hardness of heart, he no doubt means any kind of contempt shown to the Word of God.... Some fastidiously put it away from them, after they had received it.... Others proudly reject it. While again, there are men who openly vent their rage against it with...spite and blasphemy....

"What an execrable thing contempt of God's Word is!... The man who simply treats the Word of God with neglect and fails to obey it, is said here to have a hard and stony heart.... The man who will not permit himself to be ruled by God's Word, makes that heart which was hard before -- harder still.... Every man who disobeys God therein, hardens himself....

"The Jews were...most liable to be deceived..., ever accustomed as they were to boast of their fathers! The Psalmist, accordingly, would detach them from the(ir) fathers.... The Psalmist, considering that they wandered in error under so much light as they enjoyed, speaks of their stupidity as amounting to madness....

"As they multiplied their provocations, it became the more evident that -- being incorrigible -- they had justly been cut off from God's rest.... The land of Canaan is called God's 'rest' -- in reference to the promise.... God...has revealed His Son ('His Voice' in the wilderness!), and is daily inviting us to come to Him.... The Apostle (Hebrews 4:1-11)...takes occasion to compare the old Sabbath or 'rest' under the Law..., with the newness of spiritual life."

Calvin also said in his *Institutes* II:5:11: "The Psalmist...exhorts the men of his time, 'Do not harden your heart!' (Psalm 95:8).... The rebellion lies in human depravity!" For the wicked shall never enter into the rest of God! Shall you?

Psalm 97:10-11

The Lord preserves His saints who love Him and hate evil!

*'The Lord reigns!... The Heavens declare His righteousness!... Confounded be all they that serve graven images!... You that love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints! He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked! Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart!'* Psalm 97:1-11.

Calvin comments: "Jehovah reigns!... The reign of God is inseparably connected with the salvation, and the best happiness of mankind...."

"The Heavens have declared His righteousness!... The spiritual righteousness of God should be so signally manifested under the reign of Christ, as to fill both Heaven and Earth...."

"Confounded be all those who serve graven images!... The truth of God is effectual when revealed in dispelling and dissipating superstitions.... We need not wonder...that the Psalmist, in predicting the Kingdom of God, triumphs over the ungodly nations!

"The knowledge of the true doctrine is extinguished amongst the Turks, the Jews, and Papists.... They cannot possibly return to a sound mind or repent of their errors, when they are ignorant of the true God.."

To love God, also implies its very opposite -- namely to hate evil. Just as to hate God, implies that one loves evil.

Calvin comments: "We cannot be...acknowledged to be His (God's) servants, unless we depart from sin!... God is in Himself the fountain of righteousness, and He must necessarily hate all iniquity.... We have fellowship with Him, only on the terms of separation from unrighteousness.... God is the Keeper and Protector of His people. If...under the Divine guardianship, we will not...retaliate injury upon those who have wronged us!"

God therefore preserves His saints, and their souls. He not only protects them. But He also saves them from the hand of those who are wicked.

Calvin comments: 'Light has been sown for the righteous'... By 'light' is meant joy, or a prosperous outcome.... Though the righteous may almost be banished out of the world..., God will spread abroad their joy -- like seed."

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:10:16: "Nor can those things...said as to the prosperous success of believers, be understood in any other sense than as referring to the manifestation of celestial glory.... 'He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart'.... Psalm 97:10-11."

The Lord preserves His saints who love Him, and hate evil! Do you?

*'I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping, because of Your indignation.... For You have lifted me up, and cast me down.... My days are like a shadow that declines, and I am withered like grass! But You, O Lord, shall endure for ever!... You shall arise, and have mercy on Zion! For the time to favour her...has come!'* Psalm 102:9-13.

Calvin comments: "Lying prostrate on the ground, they licked as it were the Earth -- 'and so, did eat ashes'... The same sentiment is expressed in the last part of the verse, 'I have mingled my drink with weeping'.... He declares that his mourning, was without intermission....

"The last clause...(is): 'You have lifted me up, and cast me down!'.... The sentence may denote a violent method of casting down.... When we consider that the image of God which distinguished Adam was the brightness of the celestial glory, and when on the contrary we now see the ignominy and degradation to which God has subjected us in token of His wrath -- this contrast cannot surely fail of making us feel more deeply the wretchedness of our condition....

"My days are like the shadow which declines' when the sun...begins to slope down toward the west.... What he (the holy writer) attributes to the afflicted Church, seems indeed to be equally applicable to all men.... As soon as we advance towards old age, we speedily fall into decay....

"By the term 'days' is to be understood the whole course of...life.... The captivity was to the godly, as the setting of the sun -- because they quickly failed....

"In the end of the verse, the similitude of 'withered grass'...is repeated, to intimate that their life...was involved in many sorrows which dried up in them the very sap of life.... To live in that condition, would have been worse than a hundred deaths -- had they not been sustained by the hope of future deliverance!...

"But You, O Jehovah, shall dwell (or endure) for ever!'... When the Prophet...sets before himself the eternity of God..., what benefit will accrue to us from the fact that...our frail and perishing condition does not permit us to continue unmoved for a single moment?... Our life is a mere illusion!

"But the inspired writer, calling to remembrance...(that) God has declared that He would make the Church the object of His special care..., has no hesitation in representing all the godly...as partakers of this celestial glory in which God dwells.... We are like withered grass; we are decaying every moment; we are not far from death; yes, we are rather as it were already dwelling in the grave. But since You, O God, have made a covenant with us...that You will always dwell in the midst of us..., we must be of good courage!...

"Whenever we are besieged with death..., we should reason thus.... God continues unchangeably the same.... Nothing can hinder Him from aiding us!" Do you so believe?

*'The Lord beheld the Earth..., to loosen those that were appointed to death.... He weakened my strength.... He shortened my days.... From of old, You have laid the foundation of the Earth and the Heavens.... They shall perish!... All of them shall get old!... But You are the same, and Your years shall have no end! The children of Your servants shall continue!'* Psalm 102:19-28.

Calvin comments: "'Jehovah has looked down from the Heavens!'... The Prophet contemplates the deliverance.... The people...long before...were dragged into captivity.... At the same time, deliverance had been promised them -- and the time specified to be, after the lapse of seventy years....

'(Jehovah looked down) to hear the groaning of the prisoner'... The godly, he calls...'prisoners'... Yes, he affirms a little after, 'that they were devoted to death' -- to give them to understand that their life and safety would altogether have been hopeless, had they not been delivered from death by the extraordinary power of God....

"The inspired bard...does not lay hold on merely a part of the subject, but carries forward the grace of God even to its consummation.... The manifestation of Christ was the goal of the race which God's ancient people were running.... As if they had said: 'Lord, You have promised us life not for a few days or for a month or for a few years -- but until You should renew the whole world and gather all nations together under the dominion of Your Anointed One!'....

"The comparison between His eternal existence and the brief duration of human life, is introduced.... Yet, when He sees that men pass away as it were in a moment and speedily vanish, it moves Him to compassion.... The brief span of human life...falls away so swiftly! How many generations of men have passed away since the creation, while the Heavens still continue?... And yet, neither the long period during which the Heavens have existed...will exempt them from perishing!... To whatever quarter we turn our eyes, we will see everywhere nothing but ground for despair -- till we come to God!...

"True believers, as they are regenerated by the incorruptible seed, shall continue to live after death.... Let us not hesitate, although we may be environed with innumerable deaths, to cast the anchor of our faith in Heaven -- so that the stability of our welfare may rest in God!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:10:15: "'The Heavens...shall perish.... They shall be changed. But You are the same, and Your years shall have no end. The children of Your servants shall continue!'...(Psalm 102:25-28). If, notwithstanding the destruction of the Heavens..., the godly cease not to be established before God..., their salvation is connected with His eternity!"

Finally, Calvin says in his *Psychopannychia*: "Let us...listen to a Prophet!... 'He has shortened my days'.... The Heavens...too are verging on destruction.... 'But You are, and Your years shall not end! The sons of Your servants shall...be established before You!' (Psalm 102:24-28)." The Lord changes not, and His years have no end! Therefore, His children too shall live for ever! And you?



*'Bless the Lord..., Who redeems Your life from destruction!... Your youth is renewed like the eagle's!... The Lord...knows our frame..., that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass. Like a flower of the field, so he flourishes.... The wind passes over it, and it is gone! But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear Him!'* Psalm 103 1-17.

Calvin comments that "the Lord 'redeems your life from the grave'.... Previous to God's curing our maladies..., we are dead and adjudged to the grave!... That the mercy of God delivers us from death and destruction, ought therefore to lead us to prize it the more highly. The resurrection of the soul from the grave is the first step of spiritual life....

"The Psalmist...adds...God was...infusing into him new vigour, so that his strength continued unimpaired. Even as the Prophet Isaiah (65:20), in discoursing on the restoration of the Church, says that a man of a hundred years old shall be like a child.... His strength was, as it were, continually renewed.... The eagle...continues fresh and vigorous, even to extreme old age.... As eagles always retain their vigour and even in their old age are still youthful, so the godly are sustained by a secret influence derived from God, by which they continue in the possession of unimpaired strength....

"They have been brought out of the grave, and have experienced God to be bountiful to them.... When our outward man decays, we are renewed to a better life.... He sustains us by His Spirit, under the weakness and languishing of our mortal frames."

The Lord 'knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.... Man's days are like grass.... The wind passes over it, and it is gone!' Comments Calvin: "All the excellency of man withers away like a fading flower, at the first blast of the wind.... David grants that he flourishes like the grass.... Yet...our life is only a show or phantom that passes away.

"The subject here...is...the brevity of life.... David...declares us to be dust and clay.... Although the soul, after it has departed from...the body, remains alive -- yet its doing so does not arise from any inherent power of its own. Were God to withdraw His grace, the soul would be nothing more than a puff or blast, even as the body is dust!...

"'But the goodness of Jehovah (is from everlasting to everlasting)!' The Psalmist leaves nothing to men to rely on, but the mercy of God.... Although they have no intrinsic excellence which does not vanish into smoke, yet God is an inexhaustible fountain of life to supply their wants.... As the Divine goodness is everlasting, the weakness and frailty of the faithful does not prevent them from boasting of eternal salvation to the close of life, and even in death itself!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:10:15: "He who confesses...there is nothing...stable on the Earth..., undoubtedly contemplates a happiness reserved for him elsewhere!... After speaking of human life as...fleeting..., he adds: 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him!' (Psalm 103:17)." God, Who knows that we are dust, is everlasting -- to us!

*'Unto the upright, there arises light in the darkness!... The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance!... His righteousness endures for ever!... The wicked shall see it, and be grieved! He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away!... The wicked, shall perish!' Psalm 112:4-10.*

Calvin comments: "When the whole world is overwhelmed with troubles, God's grace shines upon the faithful.... The ungodly...are...blind.... They are plunged into the darkness of death.... The godly...are never overwhelmed with darkness.... Light arises to them, in darkness!...

"His righteousness endures for ever!"... It is a uniform course of liberality which is here praised by the Prophet.... The righteous manage their affairs with discretion.... Refer it to the fruit of righteousness!...

"The Prophet shows how God by His benefits preserves the glory of that righteousness which is due to their liberality, and does not disappoint them of their reward.... He exalts...their power or their prosperous condition....

"The wicked shall see it (and be grieved! He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away!... The wicked, shall perish)!..."

"The wicked...shall yet be made to feel...that the righteous...do not vainly devote themselves to the cultivation of charity and mercy. Let them (the wicked) harden themselves as they choose!... The honour which God confers upon His children, shall be exhibited to them (the wicked). The sight of which shall make them gnash with their teeth, and shall excite an envy that shall consume them!..."

"The wicked shall be disappointed. (The wicked shall perish)!"... The Prophet tells them that God will snatch from them what they imagined was already in their possession -- so that they shall always depart destitute and famishing!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:10:16: "Nor can those things...said as to the prosperous success of believers, be understood in any other sense than as referring to the manifestation of celestial glory.... 'Light is sown for the righteous.... His righteousness endures for ever! His horn shall be exalted with honour! The desire of the wicked shall perish!... The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance!' (Psalm 112:4,6,9,10)."

Calvin further says in his *Psychopannychia*: "'The just will be in eternal remembrance' (Psalm 112:6). They have not...fallen from the hand of the Lord, nor escaped His remembrance.... 'The sinner will see and be angry! He will gnash with his teeth and pine away! The desire of the sinner, will perish! (Psalm 112:10)."

God and His children endure for ever! The wicked shall melt away! What will occur to you?

Psalm 115:17-18

The dead don't; but we will praise the Lord for evermore!

*'The dead do not praise the Lord, neither any that go down into silence! But we will bless the Lord -- from this time further, and for evermore!'* Psalm 115:17-18.

Calvin comments: "The faithful...mock at the madness of all who are addicted to the worship of idols.... They (the faithful) magnify their own happiness, in that they have been adopted by God....

"O God! The (ungodly) dead shall not praise you!...'... The Prophet goes on to beseech God to show Himself propitious towards His Church -- were there no other object to be gained, than the preventing mankind from being utterly cut off.... 'Lord, if You should allow us to perish -- what would be the result, but that Your name would become extinct and would be entombed with us?'

"From His appearing to deprive the dead of all sensibility, a question occurs. Do souls, after they have departed from their corporeal prison, still survive?

"It is certain that they are then more vigorous and active! And therefore it must inevitably follow, that God is praised also by the dead....

"Moreover, in appointing mankind their abode upon Earth..., He leaves them a life -- such as they enjoy in common with the brutal tribes. For the Earth was not given exclusively to men.

"(The Earth was not given exclusively to men) -- but also to oxen, swine, dogs, lions and bears. And, what is more, to every sort of reptile and insect. For there is not a fly nor a creeping thing, however mean, which the Earth does not supply with an abode."

The present text of Scripture is not to be understood as implying the Ancient Hebrews had no idea of a future state of human existence beyond death and the grave. Such an interpretation would be at variance with many passages of the Old Testament -- such as Psalms 16:10 & 49:15 & 73:24 and Proverbs 14:32 and Ecclesiastes 8:11-13 & 11:9 & 12:14; and Hebrews 11 and Luke 20:37 too.

Calvin goes on: "The Prophet says that the Earth was given to mankind, so that they might employ themselves in God's service until they be put in possession of everlasting felicity.... The Prophet concludes that the whole course of nature would be subverted, unless God saved His Church!"

Calvin also says in his *Psychopannychia*: "When will the resurrection be?... The just...have not...fallen from the hand of the Lord, nor escaped His remembrance!... 'The dead will not praise You, O Lord, nor all who descend into the lower parts. But we who live, bless the Lord from this time. Yes, even for ever!' (Psalm 115:18)."

The ungodly dead don't. But we will praise the Lord for evermore! And you?

*'I will call upon Him as long as I live!... The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of the grave got hold of me!... Return to your rest, o my soul!... You have delivered my soul from death!... I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living!'* Psalm 116:2-9.

Calvin comments: "'During my days I will call upon Him' is uniformly understood...to mean I who have been so successful in addressing God will pursue the same course all my life long.... Because He has bowed His ear to me when I called upon him in the time of my adversity.... With the design of magnifying God's glory according to its desert, he (David) says that there was no way of his escaping from death.... He declares that he was 'bound by the cords of death'....

"Return, O my soul, to your rest!"... By the term 'rest'...is (meant)...a calm and composed state of mind.... David confesses himself...sorely agitated...when the terrors of death encompass....

"David declares that...he would, for the future, be at rest.... What is the import of this 'returning to rest'? I answer..., the children of God...cannot totally and finally fall away!... They are supplied with grounds for joy and gladness....

"The term *gaamal*...in Hebrew...signifies to confer a favour, as well as to give a recompense.... He says that 'his soul was delivered from death.' This, then..., is the recompense.... That God, in delivering him from death, had wiped away the tears....

"We would rather have said, 'He has delivered my feet from falling and my eyes from tears' -- and then 'He has delivered my soul from death'.... (But) God has not only rescued me from present death, but also treated me with farther kindness.... The grace of God is enhanced, in that He restored to life one who had almost been dead.

"I will walk in the presence of Jehovah (in the land of the living!)'... David expects to enjoy his safety continually.... Nothing is more desirable, than that God should be upon the watch for us, so that our life may be surrounded by His protecting care.... God, being the Preserver of his life, David declares that he shall live.

"In adding 'in the land of the living' -- he mean to point out to us the course...we are expected to pursue.... Almost every moment of time, fresh destructions press upon us -- if He overlooks us!"

Calvin also said in his *Institutes* III:2:17: "After having been tossed among tumultuous waves, it is not without reason he (David) exhorts his soul to return to her quiet rest (Psalm 116:7).... Faith sustains the believer's heart.... David, when he seemed to be overwhelmed, ceased not -- by urging himself forward to ascend to God!... He who...has recourse to faith, is already in a great measure victorious!"

I was brought low. But the Lord delivered me from death! And you?

Psalm 116:10-15

Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints!

*'I believed!... I was greatly afflicted... What shall I render unto the Lord, for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation!... Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints!'* Psalm 116:10-15.

John Calvin tersely comments: "I have believed!"... His wonderful deliverance may appear...conspicuous.... 'I believe...that He Who...once raised Christ from the dead, will also extend Christ's life to us!'

"What shall I render unto Jehovah for all His benefits towards me?..." He was laid under such obligations not by one series of benefits only, but by a variety of innumerable benefits!...

"(I will take) the cup of salvation!..." God deals so kindly and mercifully with us.... They are unworthy of the enjoyment...of the light of the sun and the air by which we breathe and live, who would rob the Author of them of the small return which so legitimately belongs to Him!...

"Precious in the eyes of Jehovah is the death of His meek ones!" He goes on now to...God's providential care for the godly..., their lives being precious in His sight....

"In these times, when innocent blood is shed and the wicked contemners of God furiously exalt themselves..., let us hold fast...that the death of the faithful...is so valuable in God's sight that even after their death He stretches out His hand towards them.... He holds in abhorrence the cruelty of those who unjustly persecute the good!"

Calvin also said in his *Institutes* III:20:28 & II:10:14,28 & III:5:3: "David lays down a general rule for all believers in these words -- 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation!...' Psalm 116:12-13.... 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints!' (Psalm 116:15)....

"If death were the goal and ultimate limit, no distinction could be observed between the righteous and the wicked. The true distinction, is the different lot which awaits them after death!...

"Looking to Heaven..., the period during which the Lord afflicted His saints was but a moment; and...the mercies with which He gather them, are everlasting.... 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints!...' The death of many saints, is precious in the sight of the Lord! (Psalm 116:15)."

Calvin further remarked in his *Psychopannychia*: "The Law which the Spirit of God gives to all the pious is: 'I believed!...' Psalm 116:10."

Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints! How will God view your death?

*"I shall not die, but keep on living -- and declare the Lord's works!... The Lord has...not given me over to death!... Open to me the gates of righteousness!... You have heard me, and...become my salvation! The Stone...the builders refused, has become the Headstone!... This is the day...the Lord has made!... We will rejoice!... Send now prosperity!" Psalm 118:17-25.*

Calvin comments: "It was the design of the Spirit...to describe the eternal and spiritual Kingdom of God's Son.... David speaks like one emerging from the sepulchre! The very same person who says 'I shall not die!' -- acknowledges that he was rescued from death.... He declares that 'he would not die' -- because he regained life, all hope of which he had entirely abandoned.

"We whose life is hid with Christ in God, ought to meditate upon this song!... Colossians 3:3.... We who were surrounded with death, have risen to newness of life.... His chastisements, so far from being deadly, serve the purpose of a medicine which....renders us healthy and vigorous!...

"The Stone Which the builders rejected, has become the Head!...' This is the day which Jehovah made!' He...speaks of that (day of Christ's resurrection), as a happy and pleasant day on which He was at last established King.... David., by way of eminence, calls that 'the day of God' -- which, after a long period of darkness, had dawned for the weal of the Church....

"David was a type of Christ.... When David was constituted king -- the foundation of that everlasting Kingdom which was eventually manifested in the advent of Christ, was then laid.... The eternal Kingdom given to Christ by God His Father, in consequence of which He obtained all power both in Heaven and on Earth.... All that is here stated, properly relates to the Person of Christ....

"The Prophet designates those 'master-builders' -- who, so far from wishing the protection of the Church, aim at nothing so much as the demolition of the entire structure.... In our day also, the Pope and his filthy clergy who usurp the title of the priesthood, nevertheless continue....

"By the expression 'has become the Headstone' we are to understand the Real Foundation of the Church!... All that was accomplished in the Person of Christ, extends to the gradual development of His Kingdom -- even until the end of the world.... 'This is the day that God has made' -- reminds us that there will be nothing but the reign of moral darkness, until Christ the Sun of Righteousness illumines us!".

Calvin also said in his *Institutes* III:4:32: "The Lord chastens his servants.... But does not give them over unto death (Psalm 118:18)!"

Calvin further said in his *Psychopannychia*: "They (the Anabaptists) act erroneously, in concluding...that saints after death desist from the praises of God!... To be in Paradise and live with God...is only to enjoy God; to feel His good will; and rest in Him.... 'They shall not die, but live; and show forth the works of the Lord!'.... Psalm 118:17." So, I shall not stay dead; but keep on living!

*'If it had not been the Lord Who was on our side when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quickly...; then the water had overwhelmed us!... Blessed be the Lord, Who has not given us as a prey to their teeth! Our soul has escaped!... Our help is in the name of the Lord!'*  
Psalm 124:2-8.

Calvin comments: "It is indeed true that the heathen nations often waged war against the people of God, armed with such power as to come rushing upon them with the impetuosity of a deluge... David...represents...the uncertain and changeable condition of the Church..., to teach the faithful...it has been preserved by the wonderful grace of God....

"David...affirms that the deliverance and the salvation of the people, proceeded from nothing else than God's succour.... The Lord had been at hand, to afford aid to His servants -- and had taken their part.... They could not by help from any other quarter...have escaped from danger....

"When he says...'They had swallowed us up alive' -- he not only expresses barbarous cruelty, but also disproportion of strength.... How violent was the onset of the enemy!... These cruel beasts had no need of swords for slaughter. But, without a battle or an effort of strength, could easily devour that unwarlike and defenceless flock....

"The waters had then overwhelmed us!.... Comparing the dreadful impetuosity of the enemies...to an inundation which swallows up whatever it meets with, in its overflowing course..., he names 'the waters'; next, 'the torrent'; thirdly, 'the proud' or 'impetuous waters.' He says 'over us' and 'over our soul' -- as if...he intended to strike terror into the people.... This impassioned language ought to have all...the faithful...the better feel from what a profound gulf they had been rescued by the hand of God.... He...acknowledges himself to have been lost, before he was delivered....

"Blessed be Jehovah, (Who has not given us as a prey to their teeth)!... They were delivered not otherwise, than if some one had plucked the prey from the teeth of a wild and cruel beast.... They were on all sides entrapped and entangled in the snares of their enemies.... The people of God -- feeble, without counsel, and destitute of aid -- had not only to deal with bloodthirsty and furious beasts, but were also ensnared by...stratagems; so that, being greatly inferior to their enemies as well in policy as in open force, they were besieged by many deaths....

"Our help is in the name of Jehovah!" David here extends to the state of the Church in all ages, that which the faithful had already experienced.... He not only gives thanks to God for one benefit, but affirms that the Church cannot continue safe -- except insofar as she is protected by the hand of God. His object is to animate the children of God with the assured hope, that their life is in perfect safety under the divine guardianship."

If the Lord hadn't sided with us, we would all have been drowned!

*'Many a time have they afflicted me, from my youth! Yet, they have not prevailed against me!... The Lord is righteous; He has cut asunder the cords of the wicked! Let them all be confounded and turned back, that hate Zion! Let them be like the grass upon the housetops, which withers before it grows up!... They which go by, say: "The blessing of the Lord be upon you! We bless you, in the name of the Lord!"'* Psalm 129:2-8.

Calvin comments: "When God's faithful ones are with difficulty drawing their breath..., it is a seasonable time for them to reflect on the manner in which He has exercised His people from the beginning and from age to age.... History certainly bears ample testimony that the people of God had to deal with not a few enemies.... They were assaulted by almost the whole world.... They were molested not only by external foes, but also by...such as professed to belong to the Church!"

'They have afflicted me from my youth.' Comments Calvin: "The term 'youth' here...refers...to the time when God...wearied Abraham and the Patriarchs...almost their whole life.... The lot of their descendants, was still worse.... Troubles and even defeats arose, which threatened the people of God with total destruction.... The Church would have been consumed a thousand times, had not God...preserved her, raising her as it were from the dead....

"All who hate Zion shall be confounded.... They shall be like the grass of the house-tops, which is withered (even) before it comes forth'.... The Prophet has...respect to the time to come.... It is certainly...very appropriate...to understand him as deriving...instruction...for...the end....

"The grass which grows upon the house-tops, is not...more valuable than the blade of corn which in the low ground is trampled under foot.... It is...unprofitable.... It quickly withers away.... Without the hand or labour of man, the grass on the house-tops is dried up.... The grass on the house-tops...wITHERS and perishes at its first springing up, because it has no root under it nor earth to supply it with sap or moisture for its nourishment.

"Whenever then the splendour or greatness of our enemies strikes us with fear, let us bring to our recollection this comparison!... The grass which grows upon the house-tops...is yet without root, and consequently of brief duration. So these enemies, the nearer they approach the sun by the height of their pride -- shall the sooner be consumed by the burning heat.... Although the wicked mount high..., yet they continue mere grass -- not bringing forth any good fruit, nor reaching a state of ripeness.... They serve to be hated or despised by all....

"Whenever there is a hopeful respect of a good harvest, we ought to beseech God Whose...province it is to impart fertility to the Earth that He would give full effect to His blessing.... Provided we not only dwell in the Church of the Lord, but also labour to have a place among the number of her genuine citizens -- we will be able fearlessly to despise all the might of our enemies.... Although they may flourish...for a time, yet they are but barren grass on which the curse of Heaven rests!" For, though much afflicted by the ungodly -- true believers are never prevailed against!



Psalm 133:3

Brothers united unto everlasting life are like refreshing dew

*'Behold! How good...it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like...the dew...that descends upon the mountains.... For there, the Lord commands the blessing -- even life for evermore!' Psalm 133:1-3.*

Calvin comments: "David in this Psalm renders thanks to God, for the peace and harmony which had succeeded a long and melancholy state of confusion and division in the kingdom.... There was ample ground to praise the goodness of God in the highest terms, for uniting in one a people which had been so deplorably divided...."

"(There have been) interpreters who have considered that David merely passes a general commendation upon brotherly union.... (Yet) we who were naturally brethren..., how well it is that we should cultivate a spirit of brotherly concord!..."

"The Holy Ghost is to be viewed as commending in this passage that mutual harmony which should subsist amongst all God's children.... As we are one in God the Father and in Christ, the union must be ratified amongst us by reciprocal harmony and fraternal love.... Any concord...which may prevail amongst men, is insipid -- if not pervaded by a sweet savour of God's worship...."

"The 'dew' distilling upon Mount Zion and Hermon, denotes that a holy unity has not only a sweet savour before God -- but is productive of good effects, as the dew moistens the earth and supplies it with sap and freshness.... David suggests that the life of man would be sapless, unprofitable, and wretched -- unless sustained by brotherly harmony.... Mountains depend principally for fertility, upon the dews.... David adds...that God commands his blessing where...He is pleased with concord amongst men, by showering down blessings upon them!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:11:2: "The righteous shall inherit the Earth.... The wicked shall be driven out of it.... Jerusalem will abound in all kinds of riches. And Zion overflow with every species of abundance...."

"All these things obviously apply not to the land of our pilgrimage nor to the earthly Jerusalem, but to the true country. The heavenly city of believers, in which the Lord has commanded blessing and life for evermore (Psalm 133:3)!"

Calvin further declares in his *Psychopannychia*: "Those are said to live, and to be about to live, whom the Lord visits in kindness. For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, and life even for evermore!.... Psalm 133:3."

Brothers united unto everlasting life, are like refreshing dew! Are you?

*'In the day when I cried out, You did answer me!... All the kings of the Earth shall praise You, O Lord -- when they hear the words of Your Mouth!... Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me!... Your right hand shall save me!... Your mercy, O Lord, endures for ever! Do not forsake the work of Your Own hands!' Psalm 138:3-8.*

Calvin comments: "God...commonly...stirs us up to prayer by the influence of His Spirit. And this -- to illustrate His goodness the more, by our finding that He crowns our prayers with success.... Our prayers more nearly disclose His goodness to us!... 'Let all kings of the Earth praise You!' He declares that the goodness he had experienced, would extensively be known and the report of it spread over all the world....

"' Though I walk in the midst of trouble, (You will revive me)!' Here David declares the sense in which he looked, that God would act the part of his preserver -- by giving him life from the dead!... This is faith's true office -- to see life in the midst of death, and to trust the mercy of God. Not as that which will procure us universal exemption from evil, but as that which will quicken us in the midst of death.... It is God's method to exercise His children with a continual conflict. So that, having one foot as it were in the grave, they may flee...to hide themselves under His wings where they may abide in peace....

"'Jehovah will recompense...me!'... It is added as a reason 'that Jehovah's mercy is everlasting' -- and 'that He will not forsake the work of His hands'.... 'Jehovah will perform for me' -- that is, will continue to show that He cares for my safety and will fully perfect what He has begun.... Having once been delivered by an act of divine mercy -- he concludes that what had been done would be perfect.... God's nature is unchangeable, and He cannot divest Himself of that goodness which belongs to Him. There can be no doubt that the way to maintain good hope in danger, is to fix our eyes upon the divine goodness on which our deliverance rests.... He promises to interest Himself on our behalf.

"David concludes with the best reason, from the eternity of the divine goodness, that the salvation granted him would be of no limited and merely evanescent character.... It is impossible God should leave His work...in an imperfect or unfinished state.... Nothing of this kind can happen with God.... We have no occasion to apprehend that our hopes will be disappointed in their course towards fulfilment.... God will never take from us, or allow to pass out of our hands!... 'He Who has begun the good work, will perform it till the Day of Christ Jesus!' (Philippians 1:6).... Since God had wrought the beginning of our salvation in us, He will carry it forward to its termination!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* III:2:7: "I will praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth!' (Psalm 138).... Christ is the only pledge of love.... We shall...have a full definition of faith, if we say...it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds and sealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit!"  
Though I walk through the midst of trouble, God will revive me!

*'O God..., the Strength of my salvation, You have covered my head in the day of battle!... As for the head of those that compass me about -- let the mischief of their own lips cover them! Let burning coals fall on them! Let them be cast into the fire, into deep pits -- so that they do not rise up again!... I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted!... Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name! The upright shall dwell in Your presence!' Psalm 140:7-13.*

Calvin comments: "Some read the words in the future tense -- 'You will cover my head in the day of battle.' But it is evident David speaks of protection formerly experienced from the hand of God... He comes forth...as a soldier, well tried in previous engagements... David is to be considered as censuring the security of his enemies....

"As for the head (of those that compass me about -- let the mischief of their own lips cover them)!... There follows an imprecation upon the whole company of his enemies.... 'May coals fall upon them' -- alluding to the awful fate of Sodom and Gomorrha!

"We find this...set forth by the Spirit of God, as an example of divine vengeance to terrify the wicked.... God testified by this example of everlasting significance, that He would be the Judge of all the ungodly....

"You will cast them down by fire' or 'with fire' -- as God sent it forth against Sodom and Gomorrha. He prays they may be sunk into 'deep pits' -- when they may never rise!... David cuts off the reprobate from the hope of pardon, as knowing them to be beyond recovery....

"I have know that God (will maintain the cause of the afflicted)!... David here seals or corroborates his prayers, by turning his thoughts and discourse to the providential judgements of God....

"God cannot but deliver the afflicted.... He says in express words that He will be 'the Judge of the poor and the afflicted.' In this way, does he (David) encourage both others and himself under continued troubles -- till the time proper for deliverance arrives....

"He infers...that the righteous would give thanks to God, and be safe under His help.... The godly..., David expresses..., would speedily be restored.... We must endeavour...to rise to a confident persuasion that however low they may be brought, the Lord's people will be restored to prosperity!"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:10:16: "Nor can those things...said as to the prosperous success of believers, be understood in any other sense than as referring to the manifestation of celestial glory.... 'Surely, the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; the upright shall dwell in Your presence!' (Psalm 140:13)."

God maintains the afflicted and the upright in His presence! And you?

*'I cried out to the Lord with my voice!... I showed before Him, my trouble! When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path!... I looked...and beheld, but there was no man that wanted to know me!... I cried out to You, O Lord! I said: "You are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living!"... I am brought very low!... Deliver me from my persecutors!... Bring forth my soul..., so that I may praise Your name! The righteous shall surround me! For You shall deal bountifully with me!' Psalm 142:1-7.*

Calvin comments: "When Saul came into the cave where David lay concealed, this saint of God might...have been...thrown into consternation.... David retained his composure....

"I cried (out) to Jehovah!"... David ...was not paralyzed with fear.... He was not actuated by despair to take away his life -- but composedly addressed himself to the exercise of prayer.... David had good grounds for...how he commended himself to God.... The repetition he makes use of, indicates his having prayed with earnestness....

"He tells us...in the next verse, that he disburdened his cares to God.... He...made known his griefs with unsuspecting confidence, to the Lord....

"The words teach us, when we have tried every remedy and know not what to do -- to rest satisfied with the conviction that God is acquainted with our afflictions and condescends to care for us. As Abraham said: 'The Lord will provide!' (Genesis 22:8)....

"On looking to the right hand..., (there was no man that wanted to know me)!"... No human aid or comfort was to be expected.... Destruction seemed inevitable.... It was God's purpose that he (David) should be abandoned of all assistance from man, so that his deliverance from destruction should...appear more extraordinary....

"I cried (out) to You, O Jehovah!"... David complains...of his extremity.... He speaks of deliverance as plainly being needed, since he was now held a prisoner. By 'prison'..., he alludes to the cave where he was lodged....

"(Bring forth my soul [from this cave, so that I may praise Your name -- and so that]) the righteous shall compass {or surround} me!"... The righteous would not only congratulate him, but place a crown upon his head in token of victory.... They will assemble to congratulate me, and will stand round me on every side, like a crown'.... The words literally read, 'they will crown...me!'"

Calvin also says in his *Institutes* II:11:2 & III:20:26: "David rises from temporal blessings to the last and highest of all.... 'I cried out to You, O Lord! I said: "You are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living!"' (Psalm 142:5).... 'The righteous shall (surround or) compass me about! For You shall deal bountifully with me!' (Psalm 142:7)." Indeed, the Lord is my refuge, in the land of the living! Is that also your experience?