

CALVIN ON MAN'S PRE-MOSAIC WORSHIP OF THE TRIUNE GOD – by Dr. N. Lee

Judaists and Muslims claim Moses and the godly before him worshipped a unitarian god. But Calvin-ists, alias consistent believers in the Holy Bible, assert that not just Moses (Exodus 3:2-16 *cf.* John 5:45f) but all prior Patriarchs from Adam to Job too worshipped only God Triune.

Calvin comments on Genesis 1:1-3 that "Moses has...*Elohim*, a noun of the plural number.... Moses afterwards subjoins that *Elohim* had spoken forth God's Word; and that the Spirit of the *Elohim* rested upon the waters.... The Scripture...always recalls us to **the Father**, and His [Son or] Word, and Spirit....

"The power of **the Spirit** was necessary..... The mass... was rendered stable...by the secret efficacy of the Spirit.... The Spirit moved...over the waters...to prevent its speedy dissolution....

"Moses now, for the first time, introduces God in the act of speaking...the Word.... John [1:3] testifies that 'without Him nothing was made' The world had been begun by the same efficacy of the Word by which it was completed.... Since by the Word of God things which were not, suddenly came in being -- we ought...to infer the eternity of His essence.... All things have been created by Him.... He is the Wisdom dwelling in God, without Whom God could never be."

Too, in Genesis 1:26, God Triune – comments Calvin – "is about to undertake something great.... The [judaistic] Jews make themselves altogether ridiculous, in pretending that God held communication with the earth or with angels.... Christians therefore properly contend from this testimony ['Come let Us make man!'], that there exists a plurality of Persons in the Godhead.... I acknowledge indeed that there is something in man ['the image of God'] which refers to the Father and the Son and the Spirit."

Already at Adam's creation, God anticipated even the very manner in which Christ would later breathe His Spirit into His elect Apostles. For even way back then, the Triune God (*viz.* the Father through His Word and Spirit) breathed into man the breath of life and man's own *logos* or reason. Without such, there could have been no comm-uni-cation or comm-uni-on between God and even pre-fall man – and no prefall human worship of the Triune God.

Calvin comments on God's creation work: "Six days were employed in the formation of the World...so that He might engage us in the consideration of His works. He had the same end in view in the appointment of His Own rest. For He set apart a day selected out of the remainder, for this special use....

"God claims for Himself the meditations [on His Word and the Spirit-ual praise and prayers]...of men on the seventh day. This is...the proper business of the whole life in which men should...exercise themselves.... Every seventh day has been selected especially for the purpose..., so that in all ages it might be held sacred....

"The Sabbath was a figure of this rest.... It was commanded to men, from the beginning, so that they might employ themselves in the worship of God. It is right that it should continue to the end of the World....

"We have an equal necessity for the Sabbath with the ancient people, so that on one day we may be...the better prepared to **learn** and to **testify** our faith.... The hallowing of the Sabbath was prior to the [Mosaic] Law... [It] seems to have had its origin from a well-known and received custom.... It is not credible that the observance of the Sabbath was omitted when God revealed the rite of sacrifice to the holy fathers." Cf. Genesis 3:15-21 & 4:2-4 & 8:20-22.

Calvin comments on Genesis 4:3^f's Sabbatarian 'end of the days' Public Worship Service attended by Cain and Abel: "It is interior truth alone which...distinguishes the genuine and rational worship of God from that which is gross and superstitious.... They could not sincerely devote their mind to the worship of God unless that had been assured of His benevolence.... The command respecting sacrifice was given to the fathers from the beginning."

In Genesis 4:26 we are told that in the days of Seth and his son Enos, **publicly**, 'men began to **call** upon the name of the Lord' -- viz. 'Jehovah' the 'God Who saves.' Calvin comments: "This embraces, generally, the whole worship of God.... God prefers...piety and faith to all sacrifices (Psalm 50:14)....

"**Satan** contrives nothing with greater care, than to adulterate with every possible corruption the pure invocation of God.... From the beginning of the World, he has not ceased to move this stone -- so that miserable men might weary themselves in vain in a preposterous 'worship' of God....

"The entire pomp of adoration is worth nothing, unless this chief point of worshipping God aright be maintained.... Moses...commends the piety...which worshipped God in purity and holiness [cf. John 4:24], when religion among other people was polluted [Genesis 4:9-24]....

"Adam and Eve with...other of their children were themselves true worshippers of God [Genesis 4:25-26]. But...so great [thereafter] was then the deluge of impiety in the World, that religion was rapidly hastening to destruction....

"Seth was an upright and faithful servant of God. And after he begat a son like himself..., the face of the Church began distinctly to appear.... That worship of God was set up, which might continue.... Such a restoration of religion has been effected also in our time" -- viz. that of the **Protestant Reformation**.

"The family of Seth cherished the pure and lawful worship of God, from which the rest had fallen.... **All mankind had been formed for the worship of God**.... Sincere religion ought everywhere to have reigned. Yet...the greater part [viz. the Cainites] had prostituted itself...unto depraved superstitions....

"It was therefore base ingratitude in the posterity of Seth, to mingle themselves with the children of Cain [cf. Genesis 6:1-5].... It was an intolerable profanation to pervert and to confound the **Order** appointed by God.... **They profaned the worship of God, and fell away from the faith**." Public praise, prayer and meditation on God's Word all waned!

At and after the punishment of the Great Flood, God reconfirmed true Public Worship at weekly sabbath observances (cf. Genesis 7:4-10 & 8:6-12 & 8:20-22). Here Calvin comments:

"This passage [8:20f] teaches us that sacrifices were instituted from the beginning [1:28 to 2:7 *cf.* 4:3f]. For this end -- that men should habituate themselves by such exercises [praisingly] to celebrate the goodness of God and to give Him thanks....

"The holy fathers formerly professed their piety towards God by sacrifices.... Noah had rested upon the Word of God.... He undertook nothing without divine authority.... The sacrifice was acceptable to God.....

"All religious services which are not perfumed with the odour of faith, are of an ill-savour before God... The World is again completely restored.....

"So great was the confusion and disorder which had overspread the Earth, that there was a necessity for some renovation..... The Lord here declares it to be His pleasure that all things should recover their vigour and be restored to their function." Genesis 9:1-7 *cf.* 1:28.

At Genesis 12:7-8 & 13:3 & 26:25, Calvin comments that the altar-building Abraham's household and its fellow-believers were involved in "Public Worship.... It is certain that the saints, wherever they lived, worshipped.... Religion ought to maintain a testimony before men. Isaac...professes himself a worshipper of the true and only God. And by this method separates himself from the polluted rites of Heathens...not for himself alone but for his whole household [Genesis 18:18f *cf.* 26:1-5 & 25:24f].... Isaac celebrated the name of God, and gave testimony of his own faith.

"The visible worship of God had also another use -- name that men...may stimulate and exercise themselves in the fear of God.... Isaac did not rashly trifle in worshipping God, but adhered to the rule of faith -- so that he might undertake nothing without the Word of God."

Despite Laban's profession of faith in the one true God (*cf.* Romanism), Calvin condemns his idols. The Reformer comments²³⁴² that Laban himself "calls them his gods. It appears hence how great is the propensity of the human mind to idolatry..... Namely, that men seek out for themselves visible representations of God....

"The common filth of superstition inundated this place -- [even] while the Patriarch Shem was still living and speaking! And though there is no doubt that he endeavoured with all his power to bring back his descendants to a right mind -- we see what was his success....

"Holy Jacob had not been silent...but had endeavoured by counsel and admonition to correct these gross vices -- but in vain.... Superstition, in its violent course, prevailed....

"Not even Rachel could be healed of this contagion..... She had often heard her husband speaking of the true and genuine worship of God. Yet she is so addicted to the corruptions which she had imbibed from her childhood -- that she is ready to infect the land chosen by God with them." 'Protestants' like Jacob should therefore best not marry 'Romanists' like Rachel!

Also Job lived during the patriarchal period, and he too practised God-pleasing Public Worship. The Bible says he 'feared God' (Job 1:1f), and Calvin in sermons thereon says this described "the religion that was in him.... If we will frame our life aright, we must first have an eye unto God, and then to our neighbours....

"Under this 'fearing of God' ...is comprehended all religion. That is, to wit, all the service and honour which the creatures owe unto their God.... His children behaved themselves.... He himself also on his part governed them in the fear of God....

"God has ordained sacrificings even from the beginning of the World.... The sacrifices of Abel were preferred before the sacrifices of Cain -- by reason of faith.... Noah after the Flood took of the clean beasts, to sacrifice thereby.... We see he had instruction from Heaven [Genesis 4:3f & 7:8f & 8:20f]."

During that patriarchal age, it was the same also as regards Job. Explains Calvin: "The angels appeared before God -- as it were, on a solemn high day [Job 1:6f cf. 2:1]." That was during the simultaneous testing-time of the sabbatarianly-worshipping Job [cf. 1:4-5 & 2:13].

Calvin remarks (at Job 38:4-7): "Certain it is (as the Scripture shows in many other places) that the angels are ever in front of God.... God shows that, as soon as the stars were made. There was a set song or melody to glorify Him [cf. Psalms 103:19-22 & 104:4-33].... Surely such melody [of God's angels] ought of right to waken us, and to set us up to sing the Lord's praises and to glorify Him!....

"Behold, even the angels of Heaven are provoked so to do!... It behooves us to apply this text to our instruction, to the end we may fare the better by it.... The angels of Heaven did, as it were, leap for joy -- when they saw the excellent course and wonderful order of the Heaven, by God's appointment." Let man, the unique image of God, then joyously co-exult!

For, continues Calvin: "The chief service which God requires of men, is to be praised.... Our Lord...is contented that men should exalt Him and glorify Him...and that we should be moved to praise Him.... Let us mark that the angels are termed 'God's children' -- to the end we should be the more persuaded to run to the triumph that is spoken of here, and join with them in triumphing out God's praise!"

Today, one really tires of hearing about the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" (implying unitarian Judaism is the faithful older brother of its naively-trinitarian little buddy Christianity) -- and that unitarian Islam is the recovery and completion of earlier revelation corrupted by both Judaism and Christianity. For the truth is, Judaism (like Islam) is an apostate perversion of the Older Testament of which Biblical Christianity alone is the sole continuation.

The fact is, Trinitarian Patriarchal Public Worship was the root of the tree of which Christian Public Worship is the fruit. Later Judaism and Islam are but broken-off branches -- apostate, yet re-engraftable if and when penitent! First John 2:22-23 and Romans 11:11-32.

Make haste, O day in God's Own plan -- when Heathen, Jew, Muhammadan shall come to Jesus, Son of man, and Son of God ere time began!
O Holy Spirit, You still plan to give our Father - every clan!

-- Melita (*U.S. Navy Hymn*) 88.88.88 (words: F.N. Lee)

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