

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

Luther started the Protestant Reformation in 1517. However, in the year before his death — the Romish Council of Trent started giving its reply, in 1545.

This resulted in the 1562 *Catechism of Trent*, which is still Rome's official doctrine even today. There, it is wrongly alleged that the weekly sabbath was not "a natural principle" alias a creation ordinance. Instead, the weekly sabbath is averred to have existed only "from the time the people of Israel were liberated from the bondage of Pharaoh."

Furthermore, Rome there even claims that the obligation to keep the weekly sabbath was destined "to cease together with the abrogation of other Jewish[!] rites and ceremonies — namely at the death of Christ." For "it has pleased the Church[!]...that the religious celebration of the sabbath day shall be transferred to the Lord's day" and the "other[!] days."¹

These "other days" are not the Old Testament Feasts instituted for Israel by God in His Word. These "other days" are Romish festivals instituted for Romanists by the Deformed Church only millenia later. As the 1542-1621 Cardinal Archbishop Bellarmine of Capua stated in his own *Catechism* anent the 'Third[!] Commandment': "Remember the festivals, to keep them holy."

Thereby, the Christian Sabbath of Holy Scripture — was ignored. Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2,9; Luke 53:56 to 24:6; John 20:1,19,26; Acts 2:1; 20:6-7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 4:8-11 *cf.* 10:25; Rev. 1:10. Thereby, *the Lord's day* was, and is, degraded to the level of the saints' days — appointed by Mediaeval Romanism. Thereby, Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of God the Father — was, and is, rather is demoted to the standing of mere mortals like "St." Teresa!

This then was, and is, Rome's answer to the Reformation. This was, and is, the reply to the Reformed Church of the Deformed Church — alias that part of the Church that refused to reform (and still refuses to reform) according to God's Word. After the light of Luther at the dawn of the sixteenth century, there followed the darkness of Trent. *Post lucem, tenebrae*. But in the merciful providence of Almighty God, the Lord's day was again destined to be illuminated by the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2-4f). *Post tenebras, Lux!*

¹ H.J.W. Legerton: *The Church of Rome and the Lord's Day*, Lord's Day Observance Society, London, 1957, pp 5-9.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

Doubtless it was the light received by John Calvin of Geneva (1509-64) which gave the death-blow to the Romish festivals — and great impetus to God's Decalogue and to Sunday observance. Even in his famous *Institutes* — first published when Calvin was but 27 years old — he has fully seven(!) long paragraphs on the sabbath.² A brief analysis of some of this material — before we go on to other later material authored by Calvin — will now be very helpful.

In his *Institutes*, Calvin grounds the Lord's day in the weekly Sabbath. Against Rome, he insists that the ordinance of the Sabbath was not instituted merely at Sinai and solely for the Hebrews. To the contrary, he insists it was instituted at creation, in the seven days of our earth's formation — and as an ordinance for the entire human race.

Observes Calvin:³ "Should any one expect some secret meaning in the number 'seven' — this being in Scripture the number for perfection — it may have been selected not without cause to denote perpetuity[!]. In accordance with this, Moses concludes his description of the succession of day and night on the same day on which he relates that the Lord rested from His works." Genesis 2:1-3.

Calvin continues: "Another probable reason for the number ['seven'] may be that the Lord intended that the Sabbath never should be completed before the arrival of the last[!] day. We here begin our blessed rest in Him, and daily make new progress in it. But because we must still wage an incessant warfare with the flesh, it shall not be consummated until the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: 'From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord' (Isaiah 66:23); in other words, when God shall be 'all in all' (I Cor. 15:28). It may seem therefore that by the seventh day the Lord delineated to His people the future perfection of His Sabbath in the last day — that by continual meditation of the Sabbath, they might throughout their whole lives[!] aspire to this perfection."

Taking the above even more simply, Calvin next further explains⁴ "that the Lord appointed[!] a certain day[!] on which His people might be trained...to meditate constantly on the spiritual rest; and fixed upon the seventh.... Still, there can be no doubt that, on the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ceremonial part of the commandment was abolished.... Christians, therefore, should have nothing to do with a superstitious observance of days."

Law-hating Antinomians have ignored all of the above - except the last two sentences. Severing those two sentences from the preceding passages, Antinomians have tried to represent Calvin as here teaching that the weekly sabbath was totally abolished at Calvary.

² *Inst.* II:8:28-33.

³ *Inst.* II:8:30.

⁴ *Inst.* II:8:31.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

However, law-hating Antinomians have here forgotten that Calvin loved God's Law! For the Genevan loved the non-superstitious way the Old Testament Hebrews saints had observed the weekly Sabbath. He hated only the superstitious ways in which the later Pharisees had endeavoured to keep it — after perverting it.

Accordingly, Antinomians have here overlooked Calvin's clear teaching that the *sabbaticality* of the Fourth Commandment — its 'every-seven-days-ness' as well as its 'restfulness' — is moral and unabolishable. They have confused this with Calvin's correct caveat that the 'Saturdayness' of Old Testament practice was not moral but ceremonial, and was indeed abolished at Calvary. In one word — they have wrongly concluded that at Calvary the entirety of the Fourth Commandment was abolished — together with the then-fulfilled 'shadows' of the various laws of Moses.

But even the 27-year-old Calvin protests against such a misinterpretation. For he next immediately proceeds⁵ to describe cases which "ought not to be classed with ancient shadows, but are adapted to every age." He insists that even after the Calvary fulfilment of the Old Testament Sabbath, and the abrogation of the Sabbath as held by the Jews on Saturdays, "there is still room among us [Christians] first to assemble on stated[!] days for the hearing of the Word" and "to give our servants and labourers relaxation from labour. It cannot be doubted that the Lord provided for both in the Commandment of the Sabbath" — "the Apostles[!] having retained[!] the Sabbath"[!] for the "poor of the Christian community."⁶ I Cor. 16:1-2 cf. Heb. 4:9-11 & 10:25 & 13:15-20f.

Calvin elaborates on this. He does so, by quoting from "Deuteronomy in the following terms: 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant — [so] that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou' (Deut. 5:14). Likewise in Exodus (23:12) — 'that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed'.... Who can deny — that both are equally[!] applicable to us[!] as to the Jews?"

Well, the Antinomians both ancient and modern "can deny" — and do so deny it! Yet not Calvin — no, not even when still in his twenties. Indeed, on behalf of all consistent Christians everywhere, he himself then asks about religious assemblies on stated days — and about the need of relaxation from daily labour then. Questions Calvin: "Who can deny that both are equally[!] applicable to us[!] as to the Jews?"

⁵ *Inst.* II:8:32.

⁶ Thus P. Fairbairn: *The Typology of Scripture*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, n.d., p 452.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

Calvin then further explains: "Religious meetings are enjoined us by the Word of God. Their necessity, experience itself sufficiently demonstrates. But unless these meetings are stated, and have fixed[!] days allotted to them — how can they be held? We must, as the Apostle expresses it, do all things decently and in order. I Cor. 14:40 [cf. 16:1-2]. So impossible, however, would it be to preserve decency and order without this politic arrangement — that the dissolution of it would instantly lead to the disturbance and ruin of the Church."

Calvin next asserts that "the reason for which the Lord appointed a Sabbath to the Jews is equally applicable to us" - namely Bible-believing Christians. Consequently, "no man can assert that it is a matter with which we have nothing to do. Our most provident and indulgent Parent has been pleased to provide for our[!] wants no less than for the wants of the Jews.... Why should we not adopt the rule which the will of God has obviously[!] imposed upon us?"

The Genius of Geneva next attacks the Antinomians. He declares⁷ that "some restless spirits are now making an outcry about [and against] the observance of the Lord's day. They complain that Christian people are [being] trained in Judaism — because some observance of days is retained. My reply is that those days are observed[!] by us[!] without Judaism — because in this matter we differ widely from the Jews. We do not celebrate it with most minute formality..., but we adopt it as a necessary[!] remedy for preserving order."

Correctly, concedes Calvin, "Paul informs...the Romans that it is superstitious to make one day differ from another (Rom. 14:5). But who, except those restless men [the Antinomians], does not see what the observance is — to which the Apostle refers? Those persons had no regard to that politic and ecclesiastical arrangement.... They dreamed that, by their [mere] cessation from labour, they were cultivating the mysteries....

"It was, I say, against this preposterous observance of days that the Apostle inveighs — and not against that legitimate selection which is subservient to the peace of Christian society. For, in the churches established by him, this was the use for which the Sabbath was retained. He tells the Corinthians to set the first day [of every week] apart — for collecting contributions.... I Cor. 16:2." My emphases throughout — F.N. Lee.

Calvin's next two sentences are crucial — but are frequently misquoted out of context. Consequently, we now present those sentences, and ourselves emphasize their key words — before then going on to state the Antinomian perversions thereof, and before thereafter ourselves refuting those perversions.

⁷ *Inst.* II:8:33.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

Calvin next declares: "If superstition is dreaded, there was more danger in keeping the Jewish Sabbath — than [in keeping] the Lord's day, as Christians now do. It being expedient to overthrow superstition, the Jewish holyday was abolished.... As a thing necessary to retain decency, order and peace in the Church [of the Lord Jesus Christ] — another day was appointed for that purpose."

In the last two sentences, much use has been made by Antinomians of Calvin's careful statement that "the Jewish holy-day was abolished." However, little use have they made of his equally careful statement two lines later that "another day was appointed for that purpose." Calvin does not here claim that the weekly Sabbath as such was abolished. He only claims that "the Jewish Sabbath" (on Saturdays) alias "the Jewish holyday was abolished."

Moreover, Calvin is here clearly referring — to the "keeping" of the Lord's day, as Christians now do." Indeed, in the place of the abolished Jewish Saturday, Calvin here clearly states it is "necessary to retain" for "order and peace in the Church" precisely "another day" — viz. Sunday — which "was appointed for that purpose" (of 'sabbathness').

"It was not," Calvin then further explains,⁸ "without a reason that the early Christians substituted what we call the Lord's day for the Sabbath. The resurrection of our Lord being the end and accomplishment of that true rest which the ancient Sabbath typified, this day by which types were abolished serves to warn Christians" etc. Matt. 24:20; 28:1; Mark 16:1,9; Luke 23:56 to 24:6; 24:26-33f; John 20:1-19; 20:26; Acts 2:1; 20:6-11; 21:4; 21:27; 28:14; I Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 4:8-11; 10:25; Rev. 1:10; 14:13f.

Calvin then repudiates "the false prophets who in later times instilled Jewish ideas into the people, alleging that nothing was abrogated but what was ceremonial in the commandment. This they term, in their language, the taxation of the seventh day." Now those "false prophets" alleged that within those "Jewish ideas" of the Pharisaical perversion of the Sabbath — "the moral part remains — viz. the observance of one day in seven. But this is nothing else than to insult the Jews by changing the day, and yet mentally attributing to it the same sanctity -- thus retaining the same typical distinction of days as had place among the Jews" (in contradistinction to the godly Old Testament Hebrews).

Especially from the above words, Antinomians attempt to argue that Calvin abolished all distinction between Sunday and the other days of the week. In context, however, it is clear Calvin merely means that Sunday is not to be kept in the way which legalistic Judaists kept Saturday — especially between the time of Malachi and that of the Pharisees.

⁸ *Inst.* II:8:34.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

For Calvin does not here say Christians should not keep Sunday the way the Ancient Patriarchs kept (or should have kept) their Sabbath — before the giving of the Decalogue to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Gen. 2:1-3; 8:6-12; Job 1:5; 2:13; Ex. 5:4f; 7:25; 16:28f. Nor does Calvin here say Sunday should not be kept the way godly Hebrews kept (or should have kept) the Sabbath from the time of Moses until the time of Malachi. Ex. 20:8-11; Neh. 13:15-22; Isa. 56:4-7; 58:13-14; Jer. 17:19-27; Mic. 8:5. Calvin here instead condemns the way Pharisaical Jews had been keeping the Sabbath after the time of Malachi. Matt. 12:1-8; Luke 13:10-17; John 7:19-23; *etc.*

This is why Calvin now concludes his paragraph: "We must be careful...to observe[!] the general[!] doctrine. *Viz.* in order that religion may neither be lost nor languish among us, we must[!] diligently attend on our religious assemblies, and duly avail ourselves of those external[!] aids which tend to promote the worship of God." Acts 20:6-7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 4:8-11; 10:25; Rev. 1:10.

When Calvin was 37, he wrote his 1546 *Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. There, in I Cor. 16:1-2, Paul gave instruction "concerning the collection" for poor believers in Jerusalem. Such collections Paul "had already prescribed to the churches of Galatia." Now, however — comments Calvin⁹ — Paul enjoined also the Corinthians that they too "should have their alms ready in time. He therefore tells them...to contribute...on the Sabbath — in other words, on the day in which they met together for worship...."

"Paul's meaning is...that one person should contribute on one Sabbath, another on another Sabbath; or even every one of them on every Sabbath, if they so wished. For he is thinking, in the first place, in terms of convenience; and secondly, that the gathering for worship, where believers rejoice in the communion of saints, could be an additional incentive to them.... The Lord's day was chosen in preference to all the others, because the resurrection of our Lord put an end to the shadows.... Therefore that day is a reminder to us of our Christian freedom."

When Calvin was 41, he wrote his 1550 *Commentary on Isaiah*. There he comments¹⁰ on Isa. 56:4-7 that "the sincere worshippers of God...keep the Sabbaths" and "have a place in the Church...which is not confined as formerly within those narrow limits of Judea, but is extended through the whole world." With the words "'whosoever shall keep My Sabbath'...is included the whole worship of God."

⁹ *Comm. I Cor.* 16:2.

¹⁰ *Comm. Isa.* 56:4-7.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

As to when and where God's Sabbath was to be kept, Calvin next comments that Isaiah "testifies that the grace of God shall be diffused throughout the whole world.... All men, to whatsoever nation or place they belong, are freely admitted...into the house of God.... It extends to every part of the whole world. For all nations have been called to the worship of God.... Christ calls the temple 'the house of prayer' — with reference to that time when the Gospel had not yet been published.... When 'the vail of the temple was rent' (Matt. 27:51)...., God began to be everywhere called upon by 'all peoples.'"

Moreover, Calvin comments¹¹ on Isa. 58:13-14 that "nothing can be more pleasing or acceptable to God than the observation of the Sabbath and sincere worship.... Men do wrong if, laying aside the Commandments of God, they esteem highly those things which are of no value.... God so highly recommends in the whole Scripture the observation of the Sabbath...because Christ died and rose again, so that we have a continual sabbath.... The Lord takes the highest delight in the true observation of the Sabbath.... If we framed our life in obedience to God, we should be His delight and...He would be our delight.... He brings them back to the true observation of the Sabbath, and shews that it will be well with them if they shall worship God in a right manner."

Also in 1550, when Calvin was still only 41, his biographer and successor Theodore Beza wrote his famous work *The Life of John Calvin*. There, Beza records¹² that Calvin determined "that there should be no other feast-days except one in seven, which we call the Lord's day."

When 44, Calvin wrote his 1553 *Commentary on John's Gospel*. There he comments¹³ that "the resurrection of Christ is the chief article of our faith" etc. On Easter Sunday, notes Calvin, as described in John 20:1, "Mary came on the first day of the Sabbaths.... Every Sabbath-day was dedicated to rest...."

"Now it was the first day of the Sabbaths...because it was the beginning of the week." Similarly, two years later (when 46), in his 1555 *Harmony of the Gospels* Calvin comments¹⁴ on the same event. There, he maintains that "the meaning is the same as in Matthew [28:1], 'In the evening which began to dawn towards the first day of the Sabbaths'; and in Luke (24:1), 'On the first day of the Sabbaths.'"

¹¹ *Comm. Isa.* 58:13-14.

¹² T. Beza: *The Life of John Calvin* (in *Calvin's Tracts and Treatises*, ed. Torrance, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958, I p xciii).

¹³ *Comm. John* 20:1.

¹⁴ *Harm. Gosp.* III on Mark 16:1.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

When Calvin was 45, he published his 1554 *Commentary on Genesis*. There, he remarks¹⁵ on Gen. 2:1-3 that God: "first rested; then blessed this rest, that in all[!] ages it might be sacred among men." For "God consecrated every[!] seventh day to rest[!]." Indeed, "inasmuch as it [the Sabbath] was commanded to men from the beginning[!], that they might employ themselves in the worship of God — it is right that it should continue to the end[!] of the world." Calvin then concludes: "Moreover, it is to be noted that this institution has been given not to a single century or people, but to the entire[!] human race."

When still 45, Calvin further published the Second Part of his 1554 *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. In Acts 20:7, while discussing the Christian Church Meeting at Troas on the first day of the week, Calvin comments¹⁶ that this was 'on one day of the Sabbaths.' Then he adds that Paul "means either the first day of the week...or one particular Sabbath.... According to custom, that day was most suitable for holding a meeting.... It would be too flat to take this to mean any day at all. For what is the point of mentioning the Sabbath, except to note the suitableness and the choice of the time?

"It is also very likely that Paul waited for the Sabbath, so that it would be easier for him to gather all the disciples into one place on the day before his departure.... I come to the conclusion that a solemn day, that was going to be more convenient for all, was appointed among them for celebrating the Holy Supper of the Lord" — namely on a Christian Sabbath (alias at a Lord's day meeting on the first day of the week). Emphases mine — F.N. Lee.

When 46, Calvin set out his mature views on the Christian Sabbath at some length — in his 1555 *Sermons on Deuteronomy* (5:12-15). Here, the Antinomians are strangely silent about Calvin! For here he declares:¹⁷ "Let us not think that the things which Moses speaks of the Sabbath day, are needless for us (Ps. 19:8-10 & Matt. 5:18).... The Apostle, in the fourth to the Hebrews [Heb. 4:8b-11 *cf.* 10:25], applies the things that were spoken of the Sabbath days to the instructions of the Christians and of the new Church....

"We must refrain from our own business, which might hinder us from minding God's works.... If we spend the Lord's day in making good cheer, and in playing and gaming — is that a good honouring of God? Nay, is it not a mockery; yea, and a very unhallowing of His name? ... The shopwindows are shut in on the Lord's day, and men travel not as they do on the other days.... Let us see if those which name themselves Christians, discharge themselves as they ought to do....

¹⁵ *Comm. Gen.* 2:1-3.

¹⁶ *Comm. Acts* 20:7.

¹⁷ J. Calvin: *Serm. Deut.*, Banner of Truth, University Press, Oxford, 1987, pp 202-205.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

"A great number think to have the Lord's day most free to follow their own business, and reserve that day for the same purpose as though there were none other day for them to appoint upon of, all the week long.... It seems to them, that they have nothing else to do, but to think upon their business and to cast up their accounts concerning this and that matter.... They make that an occasion of withdrawing themselves further off from God.... But the world sees how all things are unhallowed, insomuch that most folk have no regard at all of their using of that day which was ordained to withdraw us from all earthly cares and affairs, that we might give ourselves wholly unto God....

"Because we be occupied too much about our own affairs on the other days, therefore we be not so much given to serve God in them as upon the day which is assigned wholly thereunto. The Lord's day, then, must serve us for a tower to mount up into, to view God's works afar off, as a time wherein we have nothing to let [alias hinder] us, or to keep us occupied, but that we may employ all our wits to consider the benefits and gracious gifts that He has bestowed upon is.... But if the Lord's day be spent not only in games and pastimes full of vanity but also in things quite contrary to God, so as men think they have not kept holy the Lord's day...; if the holy order which God ordained to bring us to Him be broken after that fashion — is it any wonder, though men play the beasts all the week after?"

Calvin then concludes: "In respect of men's rawness, and by reason of their slothfulness, it is necessary to have one special day dedicated wholly thereunto. It is true that we be not bound to the seventh day. Neither do we indeed keep the same day that was appointed to the Jews. For that was Saturday. But to the intent to shew the liberty of Christians, the day was changed — because Jesus Christ in His resurrection did set us free.... That was the cause why the day was shifted.

"But yet must we observe the same order of having some day in the week...that is left to the free choice of Christians.... Let us retain still the outward order, so far as is meet for us — that is, to wit, of forbearing our own affairs and worldly businesses — that we may intend wholly to the minding of God's works, and occupy ourselves in the consideration of the good things that He has done for us."

Elsewhere too, Calvin further notes¹⁸ that "they who profess Christianity have always understood that the obligation by which the Jews were bound to observe the Sabbath-day — was temporary.... I grant it indeed...as the mark of a spiritual substance the use of which is still in force — of denying ourselves; of renouncing all our own thoughts and affections; and of bidding ourselves farewell to...all of our own employments¹⁹ so that God may reign in us; then of employing ourselves in the worship of God, learning from His Word in which is to be found our salvation, and of meeting together for making public profession of our faith." Emphases mine — F.N. Lee.

¹⁸ J. Calvin: *Opera Omnia*, Amsterdam ed., VIII p 486 (cited in Fairbairn's *Typology* pp 454f).

¹⁹ *operibus nostris universis valedicendi*.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

Again, in his *Fifth French Discourse* (on the Sabbath) to the people of Geneva on the Ten Commandments, Calvin insists:²⁰ "The Sabbath should be for us a tower whereon we should mount aloft to contemplate afar the works of God, when we are not occupied nor hindered by anything besides, [so] that on Monday and the other days of the week we shall abide in the grateful remembrance of our God.... It is for us to dedicate ourselves wholly to God, renouncing ourselves, our feelings, and all our affections; and then, since we have this external ordinance, to act as becomes us — that is, to lay aside our earthly affairs and occupations, so that we may be entirely free²¹ to meditate the works of God.... And when we shall have employed the Sabbath in praising and magnifying the name of God and meditating His works, we must — through the rest of the week — show how we have profited thereby." Emphases mine — F.N. Lee.

One year before his death in 1564, the 54-year-old Calvin clearly states²² regarding Exodus 20:8-11, in his *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, that "we have an equal necessity for the Sabbath with the ancient people — so that on one day we may be free and thus the better prepared to learn and to testify our faith.... The hallowing of the Sabbath was prior to the Law.... Undoubtedly, what Moses has before narrated [in Ex. 16:4-29f] — that they were forbidden to gather the manna on the seventh day — seems to have had its origin from a well-known and received custom." Emphases mine — F.N. Lee.

Indeed, Calvin immediately adds that "it is not credible that the observance of the Sabbath was omitted — when God revealed the rite of sacrifice to the holy fathers [Gen. 4:3f & 8:10-21f]. But what in the depravity of human nature was altogether extinct among heathen nations and almost obsolete with the race of Abraham, God renewed in His Law." Ex. 5:1-5; 7:25; 8:25f; 9:10f; 20:8-24f.

Finally, in the very year of his death, the 55-year-old Calvin went to his Everlasting Sabbath in heaven — very shortly after writing about the weekly Sabbath in his 1564 *Commentary on Ezekiel*. There (20:12), God had said of the Israelites: 'I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord Who sanctifies them.'

On this verse and those which follow it, Calvin comments:²³ "God here commends His Sabbaths.... By the Sabbath..., the Israelites might acknowledge themselves separated by God — so as to experience Him for their Father in all things.... The Sabbath...displayed God's gratuitous adoption.... It was, then, the greatest ingratitude to break the Sabbath.... The Sabbath was the symbol of sanctification....

²⁰ Cited in Fairbairn's *op. cit.* pp 455f.

²¹ *vaquions du tout.*

²² *Harm. Pent.*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, n.d., III pp 437-40.

²³ *Comm. Ezek.*, 20:12-20.

CALVIN ON THE WEEKLY CHRISTIAN SABBATH

"From the institution of the Sabbath..., God is said to have rested from His work on the seventh day. Gen. 2:2; Exod. 20:11 & 31:17; Deut. 5:14. Now there is no doubt that He wished to bring the faithful to imitate His example.... The grace of regeneration was promised to the ancient people, when God consecrated the seventh day; and the Apostle also shows this in the Epistle to the Hebrews [4:8-11], where he treats of the true and lawful use of the Sabbath....

"The Sabbath was a sacrament, since it was a visible figure of an invisible grace.... There is a mutual agreement in the sacraments, by which God binds us to Himself, and we mutually pledge our faith.... Hence, also their foolishness is refuted who [like the Antinomians!] think the sacraments nothing but marks of outward separation.... God requires faith on the part of His people; and He promises in return what He witnesses and prefigures, by an outward sign....

"His Sabbaths should be sanctified.... Hence we see that sacraments are never destitute of the virtue of the Spirit — unless when men render themselves unworthy of the grace offered them.... The sacraments are effective, through faith!" Emphases mine — F.N. Lee.

Ever since becoming a Bible-believing Protestant, Calvin had observed the weekly Christian Sabbath on the Lord's day — every Sunday. And now, soon after having written the above words anent Ezekiel 20:12-20 — "I gave them My Sabbaths...that they might know that I am the Lord Who sanctifies them"; and "hallow My Sabbaths!" — the Sabbath-hallowing Calvin died, and entered into the saints' everlasting rest. Rev. 1:10 *cf.* 14:13.

Dear reader, when you die — will you too gain that rest?

— (Rev. Prof. Dr.) Francis Nigel Lee