



REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY

...To Keep It Holy

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THE CANADIAN

Lord's Day

ASSOCIATION

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But 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, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11)

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OUR BASIS

- Belief in the triune God whose grace is manifested in the love and righteousness of God the Father, the redeeming work of God the Son, and the quickening power of God the Holy Ghost.
- Belief in the essential Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Incarnation and Virgin Birth, the truthfulness of all His words, His all sufficient atoning vicarious death upon Calvary for sin, His bodily Resurrection, Ascension, and Coming Again.
- Belief in the whole Bible consisting of the 39 Books of the Old Testament and the 27 Books of the New Testament as the inspired Word of God, and therefore true and Divinely authoritative and as God's sufficient revelation in all matters of doctrine and practice.
- Belief that all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God: and in the necessity of the New Birth by the Holy Spirit in those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Belief in the Divine Authority and perpetual obligation of the Christian Sabbath or Lord's Day and conviction of the necessity that all effectual assertion, observance and defence of the Lord's Day rest, must be on this basis.
- Belief that in asserting the obligation of the Lord's Day the Gospel of the grace of God through Jesus Christ should be proclaimed.

Note: All unsigned articles are written by the editor.



A BLESSED TESTIMONY

Behold, there in the dark night, near the brook Cedron, is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus – as Paul called God’s Son for all God’s children. Behold Him and hearken to His words.

Jesus lifted up His holy eyes to heaven and prayed unto His Father. He called upon God, making ready for the last and most bitter portion of His suffering and dying. He requested His Father to glorify Him, that the Son would also glorify the Father. The Surety would give eternal life unto those whom the Father gave unto Him.

Christ testified, “I have glorified Thee on the earth.’ My doctrine, My life, My wondrous signs were all for this holy and high purpose, namely, to honour the Father and in Him the Triune God.” Lo, when the Saviour was about to enter Gethsemane to sweat great drops as it were of blood in agony so deep, when He was about to stand on Gabbatha to be condemned innocently and scourged cruelly, when He was about to hang as a curse upon Golgotha’s cross to be mocked and to die, then He said to His Father, “I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.”

It is true, the largest portion of His earthly life lay behind Him. He had spoken most of His words. Before the fall of another night, He would have bowed His head and given up the ghost. Before the commencement of the last Old Testament Sabbath, He would rest in the grave according to the body and be in His Father’s presence according to His soul. Yet, even now He could and did say, “I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.” He would surely finish, He would soon finish, and looking unto His Father in heaven He could say, “I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.”

What was that work given unto Christ by His Father? It was the mighty work of atonement and reconciliation by shedding His precious blood – the great and marvelous work of redeeming poor and lost sinners – that holy and blessed work of satisfying God’s justice, bringing in an everlasting righteousness, adorning all God’s perfections, and magnifying His great and glorious Name. This work of suffering and dying was His delight, His will, and His ready obedience. The Father gave Him

that work, ordained Him for that work, prescribed Him that work, and by His Holy Spirit given without measure qualified Him for that work.

Can any mortal fathom the greatness of that work? The depth? The height? The width? The weight? This work was great beyond compare. But if that work was so utterly beyond compare, and if none is greater than the Author of that work, and if that work of the great and only High Priest was finished, then also the fruit of that work, the reward upon that labour, the benefit flowing from all He came to do must be great, deep, high, wide, and full of glory.

Are there sinners that are bowed down with a burden of transgression, heavy laden and overborne? Are there sighing wretches, humbled low, making confession, and mourning over their folly? Lo, He testified, "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." Therefore He still testifies unto the ends of the earth: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The covenant of works is broken and never has power to save. But He declares, "the eternal covenant of grace and reconciliation I have sealed when I cried out on My cross: 'It is finished!' Poor and needy soul, hopeless and helpless sinner, guilty and

undone creeper, hearken! I have finished the work My Father gave Me to do. I have finished that work perfectly and therefore I will finish perfectly, what I for thee have undertaken. I will finish that work also in your heart by My Holy Spirit."

As a token, a sure and blessed token, you may rest each first day of the week. You may have Sabbath, you may have rest from earthly labours and spiritual rest for your soul, and you may enjoy the foretastes of the eternal Sabbath to come. Because you are so weak, My dear people, and so often snared by unbelief, so often toiling under burdens, so often wearied by enemies, I will give you that token continually. I will encourage you and strengthen you. Every first day of the week testifies what I testified unto My Father: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Rev. A. H. Verhoef
St. Catharines,
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“WHEN PEACE LIKE A RIVER”

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

What was I doing in a country with a warm climate and more than 7000 islands? This country is filled with so much superstition and false religion.

Evidence of church gathering

The Lord, we may believe, is gathering His church also in the Philippines. It was touching to hear an older lady tell me how the Lord became precious to her soul in her youth through reading the Scriptures. She shared how her mother was dismayed that her daughter was not praying to Mary anymore. She was persecuted, but she could not deny the Lord Jesus anymore. It was also moving to hear a young pastor tell of his dramatic conversion from a life of violence and gangs to the Lord. While he was carrying on in a wicked existence, a teenage girl at school warned him that because of his sinful life he was in danger of hell fire. But he would not heed his danger till he was brought very close to death. Then in the middle of the night he went to knock on the door of a Christian pastor asking for the way of salvation.

Sovereign Lord

As the Lord is gathering a people in the Philippines, He is convicting them of His sovereignty in two things particularly.

First, His sovereignty in grace.

The small Protestant witness in the Philippines is largely Arminian. However, there is a growing hunger for the doctrines of grace, or what are also known as the five points of Calvinism. These doctrines humble man to the lowest and exalt God to the highest, since they teach that salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end. This is humbling to man indeed. But this is also the sinner's only hope and gives reason for a sinner to cast himself lost and undone upon the sovereign grace of God.

Second, His sovereignty over His day. A number of years ago, a pastor in the Philippines spotted our “To Keep It Holy” magazine at a seminary. The Lord gave him a



burden for the Lord's Day in his country. Together with other pastors who shared the same burden, the Philippines Lord's Day Association (PLDA) was formed.

Is the Sabbath kept there?

In one of the villages that I visited, the pastor told me that the day is for the most part kept outwardly. The majority of (Romish) people attend church in the morning. But after the service, people return to their homes and stay in their homes. Although they live immediately beside the beach and the Pacific Ocean, the people of the village will not go to the beach on the Sabbath. This village seemed to be the exception rather than the rule. In the rest of the Philippines, life goes on as usual, just like in our land. Thus, we have reason to humble ourselves before God (Dan. 9:5).

Lord's Day Conferences

A Lord's Day conference was held in two places. The main conference was on Thursday and began at 7:30 in the morning and continued till 4:00 in the afternoon. About 60 people were present. At

the other conference in a small cramped space in a mall, about 20 people were present. It is clear there are many challenges. Members in some Protestant churches are accustomed to going to the market on the Lord's Day. Often, they are poor and feel they need to sell things at the market which is held on the Lord's Day. However, the Lord writes over this day: "Mine." When we twist it for our own ends, we are robbers of God. I tried to impress upon them what the prophet said: "them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30). Some attendees understood this. One man stood up and said that if his boss asked him to work on the Lord's Day, he would tell his boss: "I resign." He believed that the Lord would not forsake him, but would care for him and his family, and also in due time give him other work.

It was touching to hear his answer, and to hear a quiet young woman leave the conference whistling the tune of the hymn "When peace like a river...." Actually, that sums up the truth of the people who know the Lord who gives true rest to the soul. Their way may be fraught with evil, but He showeth favour to His people. May the Lord give that in the Philippines and many other places, and not pass us by.



“NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN”

THE SYNOD OF DORDRECHT AND THE SABBATH

On Thursday, May 16, 1619, the Synod of Dordrecht decided that it would spend the next day dealing with many different issues, such as missions in the East Indies, infant baptism, marriage, the theological schools, the persecuted brethren from other countries, the Formula of Subscription, and the removal of the profanation of the Sabbath Day.

There were two distinct issues that necessitated the decisions of the Synod regarding proper Sabbath observance. The Synod saw the necessity to oppose the threat of the desecration and the dishonoring of the Lord's Day and the necessity to oppose those who were questioning whether the observance of the first day of the week as the day of rest was even required by God for the church in the New Testament.

If Synod said nothing about these things, the principles of proper Sabbath observance for the New Testament church would have been undermined and the floodgates of worldliness would have been opened wide and engulfed the church in complete Sabbath desecration.

We receive a little glimpse into the seriousness of this problem in the Reformed churches from a letter that was adopted a year later, in 1620, by the regional synod of the churches in Zeeland, a southern province of the



Netherlands. This regional Synod addressed a letter to the Dutch government with the request that the government assist in the maintenance of proper Sabbath observance as much as it was able. From this letter to the authorities we learn about the main problems afflicting the Reformed churches, especially in the province of Zeeland, which the general Synod of Dordrecht had addressed a year earlier. The important part of the letter regarding the problems about Sabbath observance reads:

In the third article of the third chapter of our minutes, this Synod petitioned Your Honors that it may please them to pass laws against the desecration of the Day of Rest and of Roman feast days in this nation. In the first place the Fourth commandment is publicly disobeyed; (being nevertheless of the same value as all other commandments), against which transgression the Lord has threatened in His Holy Word to punish not only persons, but in general whole nations. This is the Day of the Lord which came in place of the Sabbath of the Jews, and was ordained by the apostles. Augustine writing about this, states that if the unhappy Jews kept their Sabbath with so great

devotion, how much more must Christians keep this day to the Lord alone.

We know from Church History what Constantine the Great decreed, and how zealous he was to keep the Day of the Lord sacred in all his empire. The Church before him kept the Lord's Day well, but the Emperor ordained that pagans and sectarians should also keep from doing ordinary labours, and spend the day in public and solemn rest, so the religious services of the Christians would not be hindered by public works and other irregularities. The same Emperor eliminated pagan feast days, although in many instances their place was taken by Romish feast days. Synod judges that it would be edifying to take the remains of the latter away from Reformed nations. For many spend these days in reveling and frivolities, which at times lead to gross sins. It is also no secret that the godly among us, and foreigners visiting this nation from other Reformed countries are offended by the way the Sabbath is desecrated, and other filth and smut remaining from popery is seen.

There are, besides the license given in these lands to desecrate the Sabbath, many, who work for employers, hindered from hearing, or reading God's Word to exercise godliness to which they are heartily inclined. The fourth commandment also clearly dictates the powers that be, to

persuade civil servants to hallow the Sabbath. Moreover there are some who noticeably defy the Day of Rest in that they make an open



show of their travels, hard work and other vain dealings on the Lord's Day. It is our hope that The Honorable Lords will seriously ponder this, and in their pious wisdom and zeal find ways and means, to truncate the above mentioned faults.¹

The letter of the Synod of Zeeland (1620) illustrates that the problems about Sabbath observance were serious and widespread problems. This helps us to understand that for the peace and prosperity of the churches the Synod of Dordrecht was compelled a year earlier to defend the principles and practices of proper Sabbath observance.

After the regular recess for the midday meal, the Synod of Dordrecht reconvened on Friday afternoon, May 17, in its 164th session. After several hours of deliberations, the Synod adopted the following six formulations "concerning the removal of the dishonouring of the Sabbath."

The formulations are as follows:

1. There is both a ceremonial and moral element in the fourth commandment of the divine law.
2. The ceremonial [element] is the rest of the seventh day after creation, and the strict observance of the same day was especially enjoined upon the Jewish people.
3. The moral [element] is that a certain and definite day be set aside for worship, and for the purpose that as much rest as is necessary for worship and for pious reflection upon it [be provided].
4. The Jewish Sabbath having been abolished, Christians must solemnly keep Sunday [in the original Dutch it is “the day of the Lord,” RJS] holy.
5. This day has always been observed from the time of the apostles in the ancient Catholic Church.
6. This day must be so set aside for worship that on it people may rest from all ordinary labors (excluding those that love and present necessity demand) together with all such recreations that hinder worship.²

What do these decisions demand of us, who seek to walk in the good traditions of our Reformed forefathers? First, it demands of us that we fight earnestly the current spiritual pressures against proper Sabbath observance. Some of the problems against which the Synod of Dordrecht and the Synod of Zeeland wrote are the same problems that churches face today. Are we, then, guarding diligently proper Sabbath observance and

faithful attendance of the means of grace on the Lord’s Day from the potential intrusions and the hindrances of vacation, entertainment, leisure, and even business pursuits?

Second, the decisions of the Synod of Dordrecht demand of us that we defend the principle that the first day of the week must be set aside as the day of rest for the New Testament church, and oppose the false idea that observance of the Sabbath on the first day of the week is a man-made custom or simply a matter of Christian liberty.

Finally, this heritage demands that we promote by instruction and example in our homes the proper honor for the Lord’s Day as the day for worship in God’s house and for meditation upon the heavenly and spiritual things of the kingdom of Christ.

May God keep us faithful to the old paths in which our Reformed forefathers have led the way, in order that we may be preserved in faithfulness to our Lord on the day to be set aside for worship to our covenant God.

Rev. Richard Smit
Former pastor in Lacombe, AB;
current missionary in the Philippines

¹ Abraham VandeVelde, *The Wonders of the Most High*, 106-108.

² P. Biesterveld and H.H. Kuyper, *Ecclesiastical Manual Including the Decision of the Netherlands Synods*, 218.

LORD'S DAY PRACTICE: SINGING

God has sanctified and blessed the Lord's Day for his worship. One important means is song. As we are called to sing in church and in our homes, let us be instructed by one of our forefathers.

Singing Defined

Singing is a religious exercise by which, with the appropriate modulation of the voice, we worship, thank, and praise God.

It is a *religious exercise*, for we make use of the skill and sweetness of our voice to move others to have dealings with God. God has given man a voice to make his thoughts known to others. He has given man the ability to modulate his voice to either a high or a low pitch, or to speak slowly or rapidly, thereby enabling him to render his voice sweet and pleasant. It is also God's will that we shall use our voice in prayer, thanksgiving, and our speaking to Him: "Let me hear thy voice" (Song 2:14). Since the modulation of our voices at a suitable rhythm is capable of unlocking our hearts and stirring our emotions, God thus also wills that we shall lift up our hearts to Him in singing: "... singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col 3:16). However, our voice and the melody in and of themselves are not pleasing to God; rather, it is the motion of the heart relative to the spiritual matters which we express before the Lord in singing which pleases Him. Both the voice and the melody are means to bring us into a spiritual frame and to lift up our hearts heavenward—as well as the hearts of those who hear us.

Singing Practiced from the Beginning of Time

Creatures have engaged in singing from the very beginning of creation. The angels, having been created upon the first day and being a witness to creation the following five days, glorified God

concerning this in singing: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). Job, who is considered to have lived during Abraham's time, makes mention of singing in his book: "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night" (Job 35:10). After the children of Israel had left Egypt and had gone through the sea on dry ground, they praised the Lord in song: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord" (Exod 15:1). David was the sweet psalmist (2 Sam 23:1). To sing unto the Lord with instruments, and to lift up voice and heart to God, was his daily work. In His goodness the Lord has given us David's psalms in His Word.

Scripture Enjoins Us to Sing

David did not merely sing by himself, but continually exhorts everyone to sing. For that purpose he also submitted his psalms to be sung in the temple by the appointed chief singers. After David's time we also find psalms among the prophets, along with many exhortations to sing. We find such exhortations also among those prophecies which declare that in the days of the New Testament men would praise the Lord with singing. "Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things" (Isa 12:5); "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine" (Isa 27:2); "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth" (Ps 96:1). Not only are we exhorted in the Old Testament to sing, but this is true for the New Testament as well. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph 5:19); "...teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col 3:16);

“Is any merry? Let him sing psalms” (James 5:13); “I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor 14:15); “And they sung a new song” (Rev 5:9).

The General Lack of Singing Lamented

It amazes me that the godly in the Netherlands have so little desire to sing, and also engage in this very infrequently. It is true that singing little is consistent with the lackadaisicalness of our nation (compared to other nations). Nevertheless, worldly people sing quite a bit, but they sing vain songs which stir up the heart toward vanity and immorality. The godly are, however, generally silent in these parts. The one says, “I am too busy”; the other, “I have no voice”; the third, “I do not know any of the melodies”; the fourth, “I do not dare for fear the neighbors would hear me and deem me to be a hypocrite.” All of this is, however, not truly the problem, but it is a lack of desire. If the heart were more spiritual and joyous, we would more readily praise the Lord with joyful song and thereby stir up ourselves and others. I am here not only speaking of singing in church. Even there many do not sing; and for some the very best they can do is read the psalm silently.

Exhortation to Sing

It is thus needful that I stir up everyone to sing.

First, you must know that singing is not a neutral matter in which you may or may not engage. Rather, it is God’s command. As we have shown you before, God requires this from you and desires to be served by you in this manner. Consider these and similar quotes and impress them upon your heart as being mandatory. Begin to engage in this duty with an obedient heart; break open your mouth and your closed heart will open as well.

Secondly, God has created this ability in the very nature of man. This is to be observed in children of three or four years old. Take note of how they walk

around the house while singing at the same time. Observe how even in nature the birds in their own way already praise their Creator early

in the morning by way of singing. Will the birds and small children rebuke you, and would you, who have the greatest reason in the world to sing joyously, be dumb and silent?

Thirdly, it is the work of angels, for they glorify the Lord in song (cf. Job 38:7; Luke 2:13-14; Rev 5:11-12), and it is the work of the church upon earth and in heaven: “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev 5:9; Rev 14:3; Rev 15:3). If you have no desire to sing, then what will you do in church and in heaven? Furthermore, if you are desirous to magnify the Lord with an eternal hallelujah, you should presently begin upon earth.

Fourthly, God is particularly pleased when His children praise Him in song. There where the Lord is sweetly praised in song, there He will come with His blessings. “But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Ps 22:3). It is noteworthy to consider what transpired at the dedication of the temple. “It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one ... that then the house was filled with a cloud ... so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God” (2 Chron. 5:13-14). When Jehoshaphat, together with his army, lifted up their voices in joyous exclamation and song (2 Chron. 20:22), the Lord defeated their enemies. When Paul and Silas sang praises unto God in the middle of the night, the doors of the prison were opened and the bands of all the prisoners were loosened (Acts 16:25-26). Therefore, if you are desirous to please the Lord, and delight in having the Lord visit your soul and desire to

experience His help, then accustom yourself to singing.

Fifthly, singing will move a heart which frequently remains unmoved during prayer. It can be that while singing the tears will drip upon the book. Have you not frequently experienced this? Have not you been stirred up by hearing the singing of others? Others will therefore also be stirred up by your singing. The Papists in France knew this, and therefore they strictly forbade the singing of psalms and meted out cruel punishment for this—even prior to massacring the church. Therefore, no longer be silent, but lift up your voices—in spite of the devil and all the enemies of God—to the honor and glory of your God, as this has done you too much

good already (and still does) than that you would refrain from thanking the Lord with songs of praise. You must furthermore do so in order that you might stir up others to serve the Lord with gladness. It will then become manifest to all natural men that godliness is a joyous rather than a grievous life, and they will become desirous for this as well. And if you sing, sing with understanding, with a fervent desire, conscious of the presence of the Lord (and thus reverently), with a modest demeanor, and with both inner and external attentiveness, so that it may all be becoming before the Lord and to the edification of others who surround us.

Wilhelmus a Brakel, *Christian's Reasonable Service*, vol. 4, ch. 79

A STORE CLOSED OUT OF RESPECT

Most stores belonging to major chains are open on Sundays. Even if local owners would prefer to take the Sunday off and remain closed, they are pressured to open. In at least one town, the chain stores have resisted that pressure: Foodland, Shoppers Drug Mart, and Home Hardware. Recently, Bob Maclean, owner of the Foodland grocery store, reported to the media that “he wanted to respect the wishes of many in the community to remain closed on Sundays.” This desire led him to keep the store open longer on Saturdays to give more opportunity to shop, which he notes has proved to be successful.

The owners of businesses closed on Sundays need to know that people are willing to drive the extra mile to shop at their stores. We should remember that once stores decide to open for business on Sunday it is much more difficult to reverse that decision, than to encourage them to stay closed in the first place. Customers who make it a special priority to support these businesses need to look for opportunities to show appreciation to the store owners, and to

let them know it makes a difference. They may even want to send a note of appreciation to the owner.

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Foodland extends Saturday hours

Sabrina Burrell
Norwich Gazette

Shoppers in Norwich will have an extra three hours a week to buy their groceries now that Norwich Foodland is open until 9 p.m. on Saturdays.

Bob McLean, owner and operator of the grocery store for the last 10 years, said the decision to extend hours was a matter of convenience for shoppers.

“We wanted to give people a chance to get what they need (on Saturday),” he said. “Because we’re closed the next day.”

He added that he knew their main competition was larger stores, like the Wal-Mart in Woodstock, that are open seven days a week or later at night. Since he wanted to respect the wishes of many in the community to remain closed on Sundays, the choice to stay open later on Saturday was evident.

“So far, the first three weeks (that we have been open later on Saturdays) has shown positive results,” McLean said.

The rest of Foodland’s schedule will remain the same.

WILL SUNDAYS BE DAYS OF REST IN ISRAEL?

In Israel there is a saying: "Israel keeps Shabbat, Shabbat keeps the Jewish people." Though for the secular Jews, the Shabbat or Sabbath is a day off to enjoy themselves, the Orthodox Jews have very strict rules about Sabbath observance. Some even refuse to use electricity, modern technology, or means of transportation. The State of Israel's Sabbath laws are a confusing mixture of regulations, but in general, retail stores and offices are to be closed on the Sabbath.

Recently, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appointed the head of the National Economic Council to chair a committee to consider making Sunday a day of rest and also making Friday a half-day of work. This committee is to consider the repercussions of such a decision. Some claim that majority of the Israeli people would support this move.

At least one government minister, Silvan Shalom, believes that Israel's economy will benefit from this shift, since many other countries also slow down on the Sunday, making Sunday an inefficient day for international businesses. Shalom said: "Those who wish to join the world must adopt this 'long weekend' model of Saturday-Sunday as done by many countries across the world, such as India, China, Japan and Muslim countries such as Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia and more." In response, others have said the shift will be costly for the government which will have to pay overtime to health care workers. Sadly the arguments are thus

pragmatic and not at all related to the Sunday as the Lord's Day of rest.

That is evident in what is envisioned by "a day of rest." Banks and the stock exchange would be closed, as well as many businesses, but stores would likely be open. Sports would take place on Sundays, which would also lessen "the desecration of the Shabbat." As one wrote, "I love Shabbat, and therefore I love the proposal to make Sunday a day off in Israel for shopping, errands, trips, cultural events and other activities.... Should this idea be realized, Sunday may take in all the franticness and leave Israeli citizens with a green, leisurely Shabbat.... This will grant us natural separation between the day of rest and a dynamic Sunday that shall await us immediately after Shabbat."

The interesting point about this argument is that a day of rest on Sunday is seen as protecting the sanctity of the Sabbath and reducing temptation to let our own activities crowd into the Sabbath. What we can learn is that we should use our Saturdays for our own work, shopping, and activities that we may not be able to do during the week – so that we can rightly sanctify the Lord's Day as a day that belongs to the Lord.

Sources:

Attila Somfalvi, "Gov't to consider adding Sunday as day of rest," 5 July 2011, www.ynetnews.com.

Kobi Oz, "Op-ed: Making Sunday Israel's official day off will be good for our economy and soul," 10 January 2012, www.ynetnews.com.

THE CAPTAIN OF A WHALER

Many years ago a young man was made captain of a whaling ship that sailed out on the Pacific Ocean. About ten days before he was scheduled to sail, the first ship having been committed to his charge, it so happened that he attended a church service at a certain place. There he heard preaching which he could not forget and which left deep impressions on his heart. A very remarkable change took place in the heart of this young man, who had hitherto been so indifferent and light-hearted. His friends did not recognize him anymore. Before he never gave a command without swearing, but now his curses were changed into prayers and cries.

While at sea, for several weeks they waited in vain for the appearance of a whale. Finally, two hours before sunset, on a Sunday evening, the long awaited call rang out, "There is one!" At once everything was in motion on deck. The men were getting ready to let the boats down into the sea and enter them. At first the excitement of his men worked infectiously upon the captain, but the temptation soon passed. The words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," sounded powerfully in his soul; and with a loud voice he commanded that not a boat should be let down into the sea that day.

We can imagine the anger and the resistance of his men. The captain had a hard time trying to convince them, but he did not budge an inch and his brave attitude quieted the rebellion somewhat. When he promised that he alone would assume all responsibility for the damage they would suffer, they soon became restful again.

"But will the owner of our ship be pleased with this loss?" asked the first mate, mockingly. He was the officer next in rank below the captain, and he thought he would show a little of his authority now. "I and all the other men want a signed statement from you that you are acting on your authority and that we have all protested against your action."

In a friendly way the captain replied that such a statement would not be legal if it would be drawn up on Sunday, but he would do so the following day. He did not say this without sorrow, because he felt that his actions could have harmful consequences for him. What ship owner would accept him as captain?

The first mate began to feel some compassion towards the captain and said, "See here, Captain, I have a wife and five children to take care of, and when Providence brings a whale in sight on Sunday, I believe that we must catch him. At least that is my viewpoint."

In the meantime, Morgan the captain let himself drop on a bench. Completely lost in his thoughts, he was not even aware that his partner was with him. He was continually repeating the words to himself, “thy will be done!” His view was directed to the setting sun in the west, when suddenly he was aroused from his musing by the first mate, who exclaimed, “Captain! Look how fast the barometer is going down!”

It was very fortunate that none of the men had left the ship, and fortunate for the ship that the crew was complete, because within half an hour every hand was astir and busy. It was the beginning of a struggle with a fierce hurricane which lasted for three days. The Lord heard the many prayers and protected them all wonderfully, but when the storm was over they found that they were hundreds of miles from the place where the storm first struck them. For all the fears and terrors they endured, however, they were again richly rewarded. This was God’s merciful hand, and the captain bowed low to give thanks and honor to the Keeper of Israel. Although the place where the mighty hand of God had directed them during the storm was hitherto one of the poorest locations for fishing, it now became one of the richest ones. The captain must of thought about the words of the Lord Jesus, “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.” When the Lord comes, He often comes unperceived and unexpectedly,

that He may receive all honor and glory. He says in His blessed Word, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”

When the sea was calm, the men found themselves in the midst of a shoal of whales and soon had captured two of them. They caught so many that after ten months they could already return to Sidney, while at other times it took a considerably longer period before the ship was loaded. The owner was so surprised when he heard about this wonderful deliverance and blessing that he left it entirely up to the captain whether or not to set out boats on the Sabbath. By the grace of God, Morgan held fast to his principal, and for a number of years no whaler brought in such a rich cargo as he did.

*God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He sets His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*



PRISON UPDATE

Here are some encouraging remarks from prisons across Canada:

- *“Over the years you have made a great contribution to the lives of people in jail.”*
- *“We pass on the gratefulness of many inmates for the generosity on the part of your association.”*
- *“I am writing to acknowledge receipt of the daily diaries. I find from year to year the inmates really enjoy these books. There are a lot of inmates who never come to chapel, and yet I see them read the Daily Diaries.”*
- *“Thank you for the valuable study you have provided me with. The work you do through the C.L.D.A does make a difference. I wish you continued success in providing this service. Keep up the great work! May God bless you and yours.”*

Since the last “To Keep it Holy” magazine, we have been asked to send 1,132 Bible Correspondence Courses to prisons. This is a remarkable increase in demand for courses. The CLDA is also working on a second, follow-up Bible course.

Last year, 65,000 of the 2012 Daily Diaries were printed. That was 5,000 more than the previous year. These continue to be shipped primarily to prisons and correctional centers, and Salvation Army centres across Canada.

The Lord knows what those who sit in prisons need: the Truth. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). We commend this ongoing work to your prayerful and financial support. People maybe bound, but the “word of God is not bound” (2 Tim. 2:9).

