

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY

...To Keep It *Holy*

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THE CANADIAN

Lord's Day

ASSOCIATION

“FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRESERVING THE SANCTITY OF THE LORD’S DAY.”

“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.

THE SABBATH, A DELIGHT

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD."

Isaiah 58:13-14a

From Israel's earliest days, God had given her a sign that would distinguish her from every other nation on earth. We read in Exodus 31:16-17, *"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever."* As Israel faced the Babylonian captivity, there was a reminder to remember their covenant wedding band of the Sabbath rest. The Babylonians knew nothing of a Sabbath Day. Yet, here the Lord was coming to Israel, even in the face of certain judgment, saying, "If thou wilt keep my Sabbath, I will bless thee."

When Israel entered captivity, they discovered that *pleasure* was the chief end of the Babylonians. Since Israel would become their slaves, they would be tempted to join in the sin of their captors. History tells us that upon returning to the Promised Land, many Jews were very secular.

If this was true for Israel in their captivity, is it not also true for us in our captivity? You say, "Us in captivity? We are not enslaved! I do what I want. I work as I wish. I choose when to rise and sleep. I'm not in captivity" Oh? Have you looked at our society lately? How increasingly worldly it has become? Have you not noticed our rights and freedoms being taken away? How we are being

encouraged to openly sin and to forget the God of the Bible? No, Babylon has not descended on Canada and taken us as slaves, but the spirit of Babylon has crept into our homes, work, classrooms, courts, and even our churches. It has happened slowly, by degrees. Yes, we are in a modern captivity. It has always been the case, that if the devil cannot destroy the Church by bloodshed, he will do it by compromise: one truth here, one conviction there. And a generation later, the church is hardly recognizable as the church.

A Careful Walk

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath".

It is believed that this portion is referring to the Old Testament command of a sabbath day's journey which was only two thousand cubits beyond the home (Numbers 35:5). Why did the Lord command this? First we must realize that the city or town was the place of worship, be it in the Temple or a local synagogue. It was believed that to go beyond a reasonable distance from the city would bring a person to a place where things could be done out of the sight of others.

When we are alone, we are tempted to take liberty on the Lord's Day. One Puritan said, "A Christian is nothing more than who he is alone on

his knees.” Could not the same be said for the Sabbath, that we are nothing more before God than who we are alone on the sabbath? “*Not turning our foot,*” means we are trying, with the Lord's help, to keep the Sabbath as the queen of days. Listening to the preaching, reading the Word, and corporate prayer are all so very important. This passage means making the most, not of the morning only, or the afternoon only, but the whole day. The world, like a modern Babylon, says, “Oh no, that is too strict, too serious.” When we begin to listen to the world or our own sinful hearts, we turn our foot from the Sabbath.

Not Doing our Own Pleasure

The second clause of verse 13 says, “*from doing thy pleasure on my holy day.*” Verse 13 ends with a similar clause, “*nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.*” Why should we not do our own pleasure on the Sabbath? Is it simply so that we will conform to the law and be obedient to the command? No, not just that. The Lord has a good reason that we should not do our own pleasure.

The Lord's Day is the chief means whereby we are converted and fed from the Word. So the more we think about doing our own pleasure, the more we will be tempted to let go of the eternal matters, and embrace the temporal. That happens even by doing good things, like recreation. There is lawful, moral recreation for other days of the week, yet on the Lord's day it steals from the means of grace. This is the primary reason why we are not to do our own pleasure: it distracts us from pressing into the blessed means of grace. Yes, even

lawful things for other days of the week can become sin when they rob the soul of the means of grace.

Isaiah goes further. Do not only cease from “*thine own pleasures,*” but also “*thine own words*”. Often, after the Word has been sown by the preacher, the regular beaten path of life does not allow the seed to take root. There it sits. Soon, the birds of the air come along and snatch it away (Matthew 8). This is a picture of one who has heard the Word of God, and as soon as he leaves the sanctuary, his mind turns to the regular trodden paths of the work week. Conversation turns worldly, so that by the time he reaches home, he can scarcely remember the sermon. It is like a bird has come and snatched away the seed from his heart. This is what happens so very often. So we must ask this question, “What are our words on the Sabbath?” If we were to record our conversations, print them out, and sit down and read them, what percentage would be our own words?

Conclusion

Tell me, dear reader, in this Babylonian world in which we live, is the Lord reminding us in this passage of something most precious? That we are to live in the world, and yet also above it? If the Church is the boat, and the ocean is the world, as we look at ourselves in light of this verse, how much water is in our boat? How much of the world is in our lives? If we want the blessings of the Sabbath, let us strive, not in our own strength, but in the Lord's, to keep this day holy, and call it a delight. ❖

Rev. J. Lewis, Lacombe, Alberta

Ebenezer

The Lord, our salvation and light,
The guide of our strength and our days,
Has brought us together to-night,
A new Ebenezer to raise:
The year we have now passed through,
His goodness with blessings has crown'd,
Each morning his mercies were new;
Then let our thanksgivings abound.

His Gospel, throughout the long year,
From Sabbath to Sabbath he gave;
How oft has he met with us here,
And shown himself mighty to save?
His candlestick has been remov'd
From churches once privileg'd thus;
But though we unworthy have prov'd,
It still is continu'd to us.

For so many mercies receiv'd,
Alas! what returns have we made?
His Spirit we often have griev'd,
And evil for good have repaid,
How well it becomes us to cry,
"Oh! who is a God like to thee?
Who passest iniquities by,
And plungest them deep in the sea!"

To Jesus, who sits on the throne,
Our best hallelujahs we bring;
To thee it is owing alone
That we are permitted to sing:
Assist us, we pray, to lament
The sins of the year that is past
And grant that the next may be spent
Far more to thy praise than the last.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

THE SABBATH'S VAST BREADTH

Q. What does God require in the fourth commandment?

A. ...Secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by his Holy Spirit in me: and thus begin in this life the eternal sabbath.

- Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 103.



Rev. G. H. Kersten

What do we do?

What is our conduct in relation to this commandment? Do we and our children diligently frequent the church of God? Are there any preparations to hear the Word? Or do we retire as late as possible on Saturday night?

Do we allow our thoughts to wander on Sunday, instead of being occupied with the Word of God? Sometimes I have seen certain boys and girls rise and leave the church. You can deceive your parents, boys and girls, but not God. When you are in church, do you give your attention to the truth? I try to present the Word to you as plainly as possible, avoiding difficult matters, so that you may understand more readily. Have I then no right to expect that you will give me your attention?

What use do you make of the Word after the service? All of us will soon have a whole evening before us. Do you ever read the writings of our forefathers? You must ask and answer for yourself this question, "Have I kept this day holy to the Lord?"

No longer do we have a strict Jewish Sabbath, but we do have the command of God to devote one day to the Lord. Let us then discuss the

sermon when we come home. Let the Word of God be in our heart again. The warnings in that Word still come to all men. There are many who occupy themselves with all sorts of heresies, but we still have the pure Word of God. Will it not be to our eternal condemnation if it has not been a means to our salvation? We not only come together in God's house, but shall also stand together before God's judgment seat. I would not be free from the blood of my hearers if I did not tell you these things.

Our Whole Life

The fourth commandment is concerned not only with a certain day in the week, but the force of the command affects the whole of our lives. We are not to serve the world six days and be pious one day. Such a life is a disgrace. All the days of my life I am to cease from my evil deeds. Grace makes us break with sin and God's Word admonishes us with sharp seriousness to cease from iniquities. Forsake the foolish and live.

How is God's Word to bear fruit, when our daily lives are steeped in the world and sin? The seed that is sown

is snatched away or choked. Our sinful lives resist the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Of course, neither our sin nor our enmity or anything else can hinder God, but we are responsible for our deeds. The Lord Jesus could do no mighty works in Capernaum because of their unbelief. The Holy Spirit cannot live and work where sin reigns.

Therefore the Heidelberg Catechism says the fourth commandment requires that I cease from my evil works and yield myself to the Lord, to work by His Holy Spirit in me. By living in sin we resist the Holy Spirit. The Sabbath therefore dominates the whole of our lives and every day.

The Beginning of Heaven

The true Sabbath rest is indeed a beginning of life in heaven: “and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.” A legalist does not understand this; he thinks only of external things. For God’s people there is more in the Sabbath than can be seen externally. The Sabbath is a gift of grace. It flows from the rest which God enjoys. This rest is not the rest which followed after creation, since that rest was lost in Paradise. It is the rest which flows from the perfect sacrifice of Christ. Therefore the Sabbath of rest is of grace. Because God found satisfaction for the requirements of His perfections in that sacrifice, therefore a rest remains to the people of God.

How sad, because of sin, we are given up to eternal unrest; but those who are not strangers of grace learn something of the rest of faith in Christ, and of the liberating power which lies in His mediatorial work. Keeping the Sabbath then is resting by faith in communion with Christ in God.

Urgent Exhortations

Do you know something of this? You must if it is to be well with you. I entreat you, man or woman, give heed to the spiritual part of this commandment! Ask yourselves what you know of this rest that God’s people enjoy by faith.

Seek and press forward, uncomfited and tempest tossed souls; press forward to win Christ. Rest is to be found only in Him. Make use of Him who dwells at the right hand of His Father to be cleansed from indwelling corruption, so that sin does not rob your soul of its rest. We know in all distresses, in suffering, in affliction, in grief and in sorrow, there remains a rest to the people of God. That is the Sabbath. That rest will one day be perfect. Then there will be no sin to cause sorrow, no enemy to distress, and no grief to toss us about. An eternal Sabbath awaits those who fear the Lord.

Come, people of God, lift up your weary heads. If the rest of faith which we may enter here is so great, what will that perfect rest be? The time of tribulation is short. Time hastens on. Soon we shall be with the Lord always to praise Him perfectly and eternally.

God grant that we may keep the Sabbath, by dying to sin and experiencing the ministrations of God’s Spirit in such a way that our lives may be the beginning of the eternal Sabbath that awaits the church of God. Shiloh merited that rest for the church so that she may rest eternally with Him. ❖

The Heidelberg Catechism in
52 Sermons, vol. 2

NEWS FROM ABROAD

A CLDA VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

Somehow some years ago some CLDA literature found its way to some men in the Philippines. As a result, a letter from the Philippines made its way to the CLDA council to inform it that several men were inspired by the CLDA to begin a Philippines Lord's Day Association (PLDA). More correspondence with Rev. Ebenezer Nombre of the PLDA followed. As a result, in September 2009, I was privileged to visit him and his colleagues in the Philippines. As the bus that carried Rev. Nombre and myself maneuvered a city street crowded with honking Jeepneys, bicycles, motorbikes, and trikes, I had to reflect on the providence of God. How wondrous are His ways in bringing people together to serve in His cause!

I first spent a couple days in Nombre's little town on the Pacific Ocean, where he is pastor of a small Reformed congregation. This church describes itself as "a new church with an ancient faith. We are congregational in church structure and Reformed in doctrine....our services are approximately an hour and a half, and most of the time is spent listening to the preaching." Most of its members were once Roman Catholic as are the vast majority of Filipinos. Despite the dominance of Catholicism in the Philippines, Nombre is able to teach hundreds of children about the Bible in the local public schools. He also has Bible studies and Westminster Shorter Catechism studies in the homes of those who are not members.

On the Saturday there was a PLDA conference in Nombre's chapel. Two area pastors spoke in the morning on the doctrines of grace and the practical keeping of the Lord's day. I gave two addresses in the afternoon on the Lord's day as a divine gift and as a delight. Some pastors came from up to twelve hours away. Local pastors of varied backgrounds were also present, as were members of his congregation.

The attendees expressed appreciation for the truths about the Lord's day. In



the question and answer period, the questions asked included: Is the Sabbath 24 hours? What do we say to those who minimize preaching in worship services? What are we to do with our children on the Lord's day?

On the Lord's day, I was enabled to minister God's word twice in the same chapel through a translator." Since English is an official language of the Philippines, I could speak in English at the conferences. The PLDA was also able to distribute English tracts published by the CLDA. However, since children and others who were weaker in English were present in the Lord's day services, I preached with a translator, and Rev. Nombre led the rest of the service. It was moving to join in singing the Scottish metric psalms and in hearing our familiar English Bible as well as to preach to this small congregation in a simple, Oceanside village so far away. The Word of God is not bound to the places we know.

The following Tuesday a smaller conference was held in the much larger city of Bacolod. There Rev. Ebenezer Nombre's brother and father are pastors. I could again give two addresses about the Lord's day. Just across the dirt street from the chapel in Bacolod, members of the congregation had a food stand where they earned money by serving passersby. The attendees could enjoy their excellent cooking. Throughout my stay, the people showed great hospitality, even though most have very little.

In the countryside, many houses are simple constructions of wood and bamboo nestled among coconut trees and surrounded by rice paddies. The small congregations are not able to support their pastors. In Ebenezer's congregation those who receive more rice from their fields share it with those who have less. The lack of funds also prevents pastors from purchasing the books which they would very much appreciate having. For example, none of the pastors I asked had a copy of Matthew Henry's commentary, which you could expect to be a standard resource for pastors.

Yet, when I asked Nombre's brother how the Filipino churches can be helped by others, he did not ask for money. He said two great areas of need





are instruction about the Lord's Day and about the doctrines of grace. Catholicism has made the Lord's Day different from weekdays, only in that it is a day for attending morning mass and perhaps not going to work. For the rest, the day may be spent as people please. Many Protestant churches have a similar view of the Lord's day.

The PLDA seeks to instruct especially these latter churches about the true nature of the Lord's Day and be a witness in society of the importance and value of sanctifying the Lord's Day. Since this sanctifying cannot be divorced from the whole message of God's Word, which includes both law and gospel, the PLDA also seeks to be a means to spread the whole counsel of God as well.

The PLDA is still in the formative stage of developing regional contacts, establishing an organizational structure, and exploring avenues to teach about the Lord's Day. They see much work to be done, but their means are limited. For more information about the PLDA, please contact me (see inside cover). If you are inclined to support the work done by the PLDA, please designate your donation to CLDA as being "For the Philippines." Let us pray the Lord may bless our colleagues in the Philippines. ❖

Rev. D. Kranendonk



Mark your calendars!

The **24th Annual General Meeting** of the Canadian Lord's Day Association is scheduled for **March 5, 2010 at 8:00** in the

Ebenezer Free Reformed Church (253 Weirs Lane, Dundas, ON).

Rev. E. Adams, a former CLDA Council member, is to give an address.

Refreshments are to follow. Young and old are encouraged to attend.

MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

An Interview with the Outgoing Chairman



Due to other responsibilities, Mr. John Heikoop felt unable to continue functioning as chairman of the CLDA council. The council is grateful for his chairmanship of over a decade, his willingness to continue as council member, and Rev. L. J. Bilkes' willingness to be chairman. What follows is an interview in which Heikoop provides insight into the CLDA's work and the Christian Sabbath's importance for us all.

When and how did you get involved with the CLDA?

Soon after I began teaching in Norwich in 1989, my "Uncle James" Fraser of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland congregation in Toronto phoned me to ask if I would join the council. He was treasurer of the CLDA at that time. Realizing the importance of the cause, I accepted.

How has the CLDA developed since you have been on the council?

The CLDA was established in 1986 to address the issue of Sunday Shopping from a biblical perspective. It sought to fill a void. In the early 1900s, the Lord's Day Alliance gave a powerful scriptural witness. However, when it was renamed "People for Sunday Association" in 1982 it began using more pragmatic, secular, and family oriented arguments for keeping stores closed. The CLDA sought to be a clear and scriptural voice in the discussions about Sunday shopping at especially a municipal and provincial level after the Lord's Day Act was struck down in 1985. Our secretary was very active in writing letters to politicians and stores. We were also involved in

distributing tracts about the Lord's Day. Our focus was on Canadian society in general.

Since then, we have broadened our focus as different doors have opened. For example, a door opened for us to distribute many Daily Dairies in the prisons. That also led to requests for a Bible correspondence course, which we have recently provided inmates. Contacts with the Philippines have developed. Our magazine has expanded to teach people within the churches about the importance of the Lord's Day. We have also received increasing financial support from churches and individuals, for which we are thankful.

What has not changed is the stated purpose of preserving the sanctity of the Lord's Day. That is still our aim.

What memories relating to the CLDA stand out in your mind?

When I think back of highlights, I think of the annual membership meetings. A scattered remnant of old and young gather together. Some drive long distances, but they are there because they desire to hear about the Lord's Day.

The cause of the Lord's Day binds people together from different churches. When there is a very good speech, you wish you were there with multitudes, but you are encouraged with the faithful members who attend.

Some of the important decisions that have been made over the years also stand out in my mind. One of them the decision to print 2000 diaries of our own rather than continue purchasing them from the Lord's Day Observance Society of Britain. The previous year we had had orders for 500 copies, but it was not cost effective to print any less than 2000. With our small budget it was a big step to spend the \$2.10 per copy. But the council felt if this was an open door, the Lord would provide funds as well. We never dared imagine we would be printing 60,000 copies for inmates coast to coast in 2009. This is the Lord's doing. Another important event was becoming a recognized charity in Canada. That took some time, but allows us to issue receipts to supporters and receive donations from churches.

There have also been individual encouragements. For example when the Norwich auxiliary presented the town council with a petition to keep the local liquor store closed, it listened. When they approached the local grocery store owner to keep his store closed on the Lord's Day, he agreed. These are small but meaningful encouragements amid the discouragements we have also had.

Is there more or less need for a CLDA today than when it was founded?

When the CLDA began, we had a civic duty to speak out against Sunday shopping. God's law hasn't changed. We still have that duty. The economy is

increasingly becoming a 24 hour a day, seven day a week economy. The religious decline has continued. We increasingly see the Sabbath worship being replaced by Sunday sports and entertainment which undermines religion and the moral fabric of society. That means the message about the Lord's Day is needed more than ever.

We live in a society that is becoming more and more ignorant of the fourth commandment. That is increasingly affecting the churches as well. That is why today the CLDA is also more focused on the relevance and importance of keeping the Lord's Day in our own circles. Lately I have been thinking that one thing that robs of Sabbath rest today, which was not an issue decades ago, is technology. Cell phones, text messaging, computer games, internet, entertainment devices, and portable electronics in children's rooms all intrude on the rest of the day.

What opportunities do you see for the CLDA in the future?

In the past we have seen the Lord open doors which we did not even consider previously.

Past providential leadings should encourage us to say, who can tell what the Lord will do in the future? We still have opportunities to spread God's word in the prisons and to distribute the magazine to thousands of homes. We hope to become more active in writing letters again.

When we recognize that the Lord is always faithful to His own and

jealous of His honor, we may know that His purposes will be fulfilled and His kingdom will come. It may not be unfolding according to our ideas, but if there is to be a revival of true religion in our land, the message of the Lord's Day will be much more valued once again. There is no hope in us. It must all be from the Lord.

Why is the sanctity of the Lord's Day so important?

If religious observance is not kept up, ignorance will replace it. We can see what fruit the laxity of Lord's observance has had in the decreasing religious knowledge, increasing ignorance, collapse of moral integrity, and all kinds of other problems. Scripture speaks of God's blessing being on the nation that keeps His law and His curse on those who have known His way and forsaken it.

The Lord's Day also plays an important role for the family. The Lord's Day is important for the family and the family should be together on the Lord's Day and busy with the means of grace. Some years ago a Scottish minister gave an address at our annual meeting on the Sabbath as the keystone of the law. He drew from an article in an old Princeton Seminary journal. He said the fourth commandment stands between the first and second tables of the law. On the Lord's Day God's law and gospel go forth to convict and bless and lead into His way. In churches where the Lord's Day is watering down, there is so little instruction about religious things because so many other things crowd out the one thing needful.

These are just a few reasons why the

Lord's Day is so important.

What would you say to young families about the Lord's Day?

It is so important to use diligently the opportunity for instruction because our children grow up so quickly. I don't think we realize how quickly those years pass by. We are to redeem the time we have. God said of Abraham that He knew he would instruct his children. We cannot convert our children, but Proverbs says, "Train up a child in way that he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." God is pleased to use the instruction of parents.

Try to show your children right from a young age that the Lord's Day is a special day. Let them realize that our dinner table conversations, the books we read, and the things we play with are different on the Lord's Day. There is so much instruction to give our children from the Bible, church history, and biographies. We should stock our shelves with good religious materials. Give them good books to read or read them aloud to your younger children. Another thing is doctrinal instruction. We might tend to leave catechism instruction to other teachers, but in previous generations parents were urged to carry out that responsibility as well. The Lord's Day is a precious opportunity to use the means of grace with the prayer the Lord would bless them in His undeserved grace.





YOUTH COMPASS FROM THE PAST

A Scottish Service in Canadian Forests

In 1822, Rev. George Buchanan of Scotland accepted the call to labour as the first pastor of Beckwith, near present day Ottawa, Ontario. With his wife and ten children, he left a bustling Scottish village. After a long journey, he found himself in a "village" made up of a log tavern and three shanties on a half cleared patch of land. Years later, his daughter wrote the following recollections of their first Lord's day there.

No Bells but Blackflies

Clear and bright and beautiful, meet "emblem of eternal rest," was our first Sabbath in Beckwith. Word had been sent to every family that service would be held in the forenoon. From far and near a large audience gathered to hear the first sermon ever preached in the township. Men, women and children trudged many miles to be present. Debarred for months and years from public worship, they would not neglect the precious opportunity. It needed no cathedral-chime or loud-tongued bell to summon them to the sacred spot.

They may have been homely in garb and appearance, for hard toil and scanty fare are not aids to fine looks, but they were sincere worshippers. None slept, or yawned, or seemed tired, although sitting on logs with neither backs for support nor cushions for ease. No watches were pulled out to "time the speaker" and note if he got through in twenty minutes. The era of lopped-off prayers, curtailed sermon and one hour service had not been introduced.

Black flies and mosquitos swarmed in myriads seeking to devour the multitude. Notwithstanding these drawbacks it was a solemn memorable



occasion, tenderly remembered and spoken of long after.

A Stump for a Pulpit

Of course, the service was in the open air. A church, or place adapted to the purpose, had not been erected in Beckwith. A huge tree was cut down, the stump of which, sawed off straight, accommodated the big Bible and sufficed for a pulpit. On the trunk, drawn to one side, sat mother and her ten children. Other trees, stripped of their branches and hauled in front of the stump, seated the congregation. At the appointed hour father arose, spoke a few words of greeting and gave out a familiar psalm. Can we doubt that

the praises of Beckwith's first congregation ascended high above the trees, even to the throne of the Omnipotent?

Standing with bowed heads, the attitude of deepest reverence, the people heard a fervent prayer. Another psalm and an exposition of the chapter of scripture followed. The sermon, unfolding the plan of salvation so clearly "that he may run who readeth it," entreated those out of Christ to "make their calling and election sure."

After a short intermission, to eat their simple lunch and drink at the nearest well, the worshippers gathered again for Gaelic services. Aged men and women shed tears of joy to hear the gospel once more in the language of their native glen.

Late in the afternoon all returned home, much refreshed in spirit, to spend the evening in godly conversation, studying the Bible and catechizing the young. Worldly topics and worldly cares were laid aside on Sundays, which was truly regarded as the Lord's Day. Visiting was unheard of, nor was the fourth commandment pronounced out-of-date. In their estimation, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy" imposed a moral obligation and meant precisely what it said. Would that this righteous opinion prevailed everywhere!

Then and Now

Nowadays many sneer at the strict observance of the Sabbath in former times. They deride Puritan narrowness, boast of their own broad views, and affect pity for "bigots tied down to the bible and catechism" under rigid notions that make Sunday a horror. What are the facts? We were taught to think Sunday the best day of the seven. Far from proving wearisome, it was always restful and edifying.

Everything was prepared on

Saturday, that the least work possible should be done on the Sabbath. Instead of lying in bed later than on week days we arose an hour earlier, to learn a chapter in the bible before breakfast. Sickness alone prevented us from attending both forenoon and afternoon services. Wolves, bad roads and long distances rendered evening service impracticable. A flake or two of snow, a drop of rain, a black cloud, a speck of dust, a little extra heat or a touch of cold would not keep us from church. Fair-weather Christianity, sure to shrink in the wash, had no place in the Beckwith brand of piety. We got our bibles in the evening to compare passages, repeat what we had committed and answer questions father would ask. Usually a half-hour's singing preceded family worship, which fitly closed the hallowed day. These delightful exercises full of sweetness and profit, it is a pleasure to recall.

Hallowed Sabbaths laid the foundation of many a sterling character, equipped thoroughly for usefulness here and felicity hereafter. How much they miss who vainly seek in Sunday newspapers, Sunday amusements and trashy literature the solid satisfaction of a well-spent Sabbath!

Condensed from J. Buchanan-Campbell,
The Pioneer Pastor (Toronto, 1900).

ALBERTA MEETING

The Alberta Auxiliary Annual Meeting

is to be held, D.V., at 8:00 pm on

Friday, January 22, 2010 at the

Calvin Christian School, Monarch

with Rev. P. Bazen to speak.

Daily Diary Update

Another year has passed. For tens of thousands of inmates in Canada who had a Daily Diary from the Canadian Lord's Day Association, each of this past year's 365 days had a Scripture text to read. Eternity will reveal what effect His Word had in the prisons of our land. The CLDA has printed 60,000 copies for 2010. Well over 50,000 of these have already been distributed to chaplains and others throughout Canada for distribution to inmates.

Here are a few notes written by chaplains who ordered Diaries.

"Thank you for providing the Daily Diary and Bible to me to pass on to the inmates are no cost to them! I do not have a budget to draw on. Chaplain"
- Mapleridge, British Columbia

"[The former chaplain] always said how much the guys like these diaries. They are all gone and I still have requests that is why I upped the order."
- Drumheller, Alberta

"Your Daily Diaries are in great demand at our Correctional Center and we really appreciate having them, thanks for your goodness and concern. God Bless you"
- Edmonton, Alberta

"Would you please mail me a 2010 Daily diary, as I have been receiving these for the past five years or so and would be at a total loss without. God Bless!"
- An inmate, Cambridge, Ontario

"...We are excited about your new correspondence course as well! We wanted to ask if you would be able to send us about 50 more copies of the 2009 Daily Diary because the women here loved them so much we ran out early and we are still getting requests! Thank you for your consideration and for your dedication to spreading God's Word!"
- Kitchener, Ontario

What a beautiful opportunity we have to spread God's Word! We commend this ongoing work to your ongoing financial support and especially prayers for the Lord to bless His Word. People may be bound, "but the word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2:9).

