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The Attack of the Economy on the Day of the Lord as Day of Rest¹

By J. Geertsema

A Synodical decision in the Netherlands

One of the decisions of the Synod of Leusden 1999 of our sister Churches in the Netherlands concerns the Day of the Lord as day of rest. The cause was a statement in a sermon by one of the ministers. He stated (proclaimed as divine truth?) that “the choice of the Sunday as day of rest is not based on a divine command but on a human institution.” He received support from his consistory and from a classis decision. However, a regional synod decided in the opposite direction. This decision was in turn appealed at the general synod. This broadest assembly declared that the minister did not “deviate from the doctrine of the Reformed Churches with regard to the Fourth Commandment of the Law of the Lord.” It said further that in the sermon the importance of the worship services was clearly stated. The synodical study committee proposed to use as argument that “from Scripture it cannot be derived as the only conclusion that God commands today [in the New Testament dispensation, J.G.] to observe the Sunday as a day of rest.” This was changed into the observation that within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands there has always been room to think differently about the scriptural foundation for the Sunday as day of rest.” Of course, “room to think differently” is not automatically the same as room to proclaim differently. In our Catechism, LD 38, we speak of “the day of rest.” The data mentioned here come from *Reformanda* (9:36 in an article by Rev. P. van Gurp).

In the background, the pressures of the present economy with its demands play a role. I read in *Gereformeerde Kerkbode Groningen-Friesland-Drenthe* (8 Oct. 1999, in an article by Rev. J.P. van Bruggen) the following paragraph on this point:

The synod wanted to watch out not to say more than is said in Scripture. Good. But the churches are not

waiting for clinical pronouncements. The Sunday is being taken away from us. Working on Sunday is a hot item in many Christian families. And what does the synod say? Our Sunday is not spoken about in the Bible. I now say things as they came across to the people in the pew. The pronouncement fits nicely in a theological discourse, but people expect leadership from the synod. Then such a pronouncement is deadly. The Sabbath commandment and our celebration of the rest of Christ are linked together via a long historic process. We know that too. At stake in the churches is that our Sunday is taken away from us,

Is Sunday observance as a day of rest a divine institution and command or a human institution?

while the synod is biting its lip. They would have liked to say more, but could not.

I spoke once with a Christian from Korea about the observance of the Sunday as day of rest. About twenty years ago most Christians there kept the Sunday as day of rest; however, today this is no longer so. Today the economy rules. And the Sunday is no longer a day of rest for many Christians. In North America this is not a dead issue either. For that reason it is good to discuss this matter. We shall pay some attention therefore to the question whether Sunday observance as day of rest is a divine institution and command or a human institution. That is the key issue. The topic asks for a more extensive treatment. This cannot be given here. In this article, only a number of remarks can be made. First we will go to the Old Testament and draw some conclusions. In a following issue, we shall listen to the New Testament and what happened in the early church.

Sinai

At Sinai, the LORD confirmed his covenant with his people Israel and regulated its life. God bound Himself to the people and He required them to believe in Him, the LORD, as their God. Up to that time, the LORD had revealed Himself as the Maker of heaven and earth as well as the faithful God of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and, in this way, as their God. He also had shown Himself to be Israel’s mighty Redeemer, their faithful, true, reliable, caring and providing God. In the Ten Commandments, the LORD worked out in ten basic “laws” or teachings what such a life of faith in Him means.

It means: Cling to Him alone as the true and only God, and your God (1st); do so according to his revealed will (2nd); in order that in this way you may honour his Name (3rd). After this comes the Fourth Commandment about the Day of Rest. We leave this for a moment and follow first the line in the other commandments. The children are to honour their parents with and through whom they belong to the covenant of the LORD. The parents are to bring them up in the fear of the LORD, in order that they, too, will trust and serve the LORD only according to his revealed will to his honour (5th). Israel’s God, the LORD, is the creator, the God of life; He gives and protects life. As his children, the Israelites are to protect and build life; therefore, they should not destroy life and break it down in any way (6th). God is faithful to his covenant people; God has made man male and female; He gave Eve to Adam and hereby instituted marriage; therefore, those married should be faithful to each other in their covenant, as children of the Lord (7th). Since Israel’s God is the Creator and Owner of everything, and since He has promised as their God to provide for them in all their needs, the Israelites should trust in this promise, provide for and help the poor, and not steal (8th). And since the LORD is totally trustworthy

and his words are reliable, so his children should be trustworthy and reliable to each other (9th). In other words, God's children were called to live in such a way that with their entire life, and in their relation with others, they would honour the LORD. And they would honour Him by showing in their way of life a picture of the LORD.

Within this framework the Fourth Commandment has its place. Israel has to "remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." Implied in the holiness of this day of rest is the holy convocation. This is evident from Leviticus 23 (cf. Num 28-29). Here the LORD calls his people to proclaim the appointed feasts of the LORD as holy convocations. In the first place, the Sabbath Day feast is "a solemn rest, a holy convocation" (Lev 23:3). In other words, the Sabbath Day is a feast day of the LORD. Its rest is characterized as a "solemn rest," not a worldly rest.

What's inside?

In the lead article, Professor Geertsema addresses the topic of the day of rest. This is the first of a two-part article.

The Rev. P. Aasman of Grand Valley supplies us with another meditation.

We are a singing people. Primarily, we are a *psalm*-singing people. We love the Psalms of David. God has given them to us for us to praise Him by. We treasure our English translation of the Genevan Psalter. Does this now mean that we may not sing hymns in the worship services? In recent issues of *Clarion* some brothers have written to this effect. Rev. R. Aasman of Edmonton, one of the co-editors of this magazine, tackles the topic. Here you will find the first of three articles on the matter.

The Rev. P. G. Feenstra of Owen Sound writes about the character of a true and living faith in his new column, "Living by the Doctrines of Scripture."

Under "Reader's Forum," we publish an interchange between the Rev. B. R. Hofford and Dr. J. De Jong.

Finally, we also begin publishing a short series on the topic of Authority that originally was a speech for a Women's League Day.

Some variety this time. We hope you will enjoy and be edified by our offering.

GvP

The rest on this day is determined by the worship of the LORD. He takes the Sabbath Day with its solemn rest and makes it a sign, even "a covenant", a solid promise that He will sanctify the people (Exod 31:12-17). These strong words ("sign" and "covenant") occur in the context of sacraments. With these words, the LORD made the Sabbath Day, so to speak, into a sign and seal with the promise of the covenant, "between Him and the people throughout their generations" that He will sanctify them.

The rest on this day is determined by the worship of the LORD.

Through the Sabbath Day with its holy convocation, God promised – as a covenant – that He Himself would make his people live that holy life according to the (ten) rules of faith that would reflect and honour Him. Through the Sabbath Day, Israel would live with and for God as his holy people.

Back to the beginning

However, the Fourth Commandment does not only fit within the Ten Com-

mandments as providing the means (day of rest and worship) for reaching the goal: a holy, God-honouring life of the people. With observing the seventh day of the week as a blessed and holy day of rest, the Israelites would follow a pattern of life, of work and rest, which the LORD Himself followed at creation (Gen 2:1-3). When God gave the Fourth Commandment at Sinai, He gave as motivation and ground this pattern that He instituted when He rested from his work of creation. Gen 2:2-3 reads (in a literal translation with the original word order): "And God finished [completed] on the seventh day his work that He had made; and He ceased [rested] on the seventh day from all his work that He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy; for on it He ceased [rested] from all his work that God created by making." Clearly, Israel, as the people of God, were commanded to live according to the pattern of God in creation – like God, so his people.

Freedom from slavery

The motivation for this commandment in Deuteronomy 5:15 makes clearer yet that we have here to do with a gift of God's goodness and grace:



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LORD'S DAY 38 OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

Q. What does God require in the fourth commandment?

A. First,
that the ministry of the gospel and the schools
be maintained
and that, especially on the day of rest,
I diligently attend the church of God
to hear God's Word,
to use the sacraments,
to call publicly upon the LORD,
and to give Christian offerings for the poor.

Second,
that all the days of my life
I rest from my evil works,
let the LORD work in me through His Holy Spirit,
and so begin in this life
the eternal Sabbath.

"Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm." God's redeemed people was to live in freedom, no longer in slavery. Freedom meant work and rest, that is building and enjoying their God-given life. It also meant to share this enjoyable life in freedom with their family, their servants, and even their animals. They were to rest with the Israelite according to God's pattern.

The Sabbath made for man

It is important to see that the motivation for the Fourth Commandment in Exodus 20 rests in God's creation work in six days and his resting on the seventh as this is described in Genesis 2:1-3. God himself goes back to his work of creation. He connects creation and redemption. Redemption restores creation as made by God. For Genesis 2:1-3 shows that the Sabbath Day was not instituted at Sinai but at creation. That God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, and that this was revealed, means that this blessing and making holy was not for God's own sake but for the sake of man, male and female, in their generations. Man, as God's child, needed this blessed and holy day, set apart for special service of the LORD. God did not need this for himself. It was God's gift to man, also in paradise.

This is confirmed by God's Son, through whom God made all things, including the Sabbath Day. Our Lord says in Mark 2:27, "The Sabbath Day was made for the sake of man(kind), and not man(kind) for the sake of the

Sabbath Day." Our Lord knew. For all things, including the Sabbath Day, were made through Him (John 1:3). The Lord Jesus also did not say: "The Sabbath Commandment was made for the sake of man(kind)." Therefore, He is not re-

**The purpose of the Sabbath
in the Old Testament is
very much the ongoing
sanctification of
God's people.**

ferring to what happened at Sinai, when God gave the Fourth Commandment but to the institution (making) of the Sabbath Day, just as is done in the Fourth Commandment itself. The Lord went more often back to creation (cf Mark 10:6, and see Paul in 1 Tim 2:13). Therefore, the Fourth Covenant Word (and rule of faith) was given in the form of a commandment, just as the other nine Covenant Words; but the validity of the contents of all the Ten Commandments goes back to creation.

The Sabbath day attacked and defended

When we consider all this, and see the importance of this gift of God for his people and their sanctification, it does not amaze us that the Sabbath day also receives a place in the promised new covenant that comes with the Messiah (Isa 56:2,4,6; 66:23). We should compare these verses with, e.g., Isaiah 58:13 and Jeremiah 17:19-27. There we see that it was the economy, the business, or simply: the money, that

formed the attack on the Day of the Lord and, therewith, on the sanctification of the people in the days of the prophets. The same is seen in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 20:12 and 20 Israel is reminded how God gave the Sabbath Day as a sign that He would sanctify them. In the verses 13, 16, 21 and 24 God's complaint is repeated: they have rejected his law and, specifically, ". . . they desecrated my Sabbaths." At the same time, when Ezekiel speaks of the future restoration, we read that the Sabbath Day is kept again (Ezek 44:24; 45:17). We can also understand that keeping the Sabbath Day holy for the LORD is part of what Israel promises at the renewal of the covenant under Nehemiah and Ezra (Neh 10:31: "When the neighbouring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day." With this solemn promise given to God by the people, Nehemiah's anger is not strange when he sees how some Israelites work and do business on the Sabbath Day and he stops this profaning of the day that is holy for God. As before the exile, again after the return, the economy, the money, was more important than the service of the LORD and being holy for Him.

It is clear then that six days of work and one day of rest is a pattern given to man(kind) at creation. Through Christ Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27) a change was brought about in the order: first the day of rest and worship, then the six days of working in the daily occupation. (More about this will come in a future article.) It is also clear that the purpose of the Sabbath in the Old Testament is very much the ongoing sanctification of God's people. To say it with the words of the Catechism: the purpose is that God's children more and more will rest from their evil works through God's Word and so begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.

We shall have to consider very seriously whether abandoning this resting from daily work on "the day of the Lord," "the day of rest" (HC, LD 38), and continuing to work, to do business, will not also today hinder, and in the end destroy, the sanctification of our life through the Spirit and Word of our Lord and Saviour.

It counts also here: hold fast what you have.

When the union movement made itself strong and imposed itself on the

workers as the saviour for the labourers, the members of our churches resisted this compulsory union membership. They held on to the confession that Christ Jesus is the only true Saviour for all of life, also for labour and labour relations (Eph 6:5-9 and Col 3:22-4:1). We may be faced with another struggle: To hold on to the Day of the Lord as the day of rest and worship for Him, that is, for the ongoing sanctification of His churches. He bought them for his Father and for himself and He set them on their way to the coming final rest, to the wedding feast of Him and his Bride.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. **C**

TREASURES, NEW AND OLD

MATTHEW 13:52

By P. Aasman

A Millennium: Not too Short. Not too Long.

*“With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years,
and a thousand years are like a day.” (2 Peter 3:8)*

Our relationship with time is usually strained. In fact, we often regard time as an enemy. That is not a very nice way to live. But how many people have enough time to do the things they want to? How often do we have enough time to read all the articles of a magazine that we want to read? It's a common complaint: Time is an enemy because it is always too short to do the things we need to, let alone, to do the things we want to.

But that is only half the problem. We often experience the very opposite thing too. While on one hand schedules cruelly expire before the work they require is done, we, on the other hand, also often complain about how slowly time passes, and we become impatient.

If a person is ill, distressed or in crisis, it may happen that someone will try to comfort him by saying, “God meant this for your good. You need to be patient. Wait for God.” But where do we find the strength to wait for God? A good time for God to end our trouble would be right now! But God usually has a different idea. We must wait patiently.

It is one of most common complaints in the book of Psalms. We read more than twenty times people protesting because time is going too slowly for them. The Psalmist cries out again and again, “How long will it go on like this?” And this impatient protest does not just sound from the earth. It is a protest

sounding from heaven itself! The saints call out from under the altar, “How long, sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge their blood?” The saints speak there with utmost reverence, but they are impatient nonetheless.

Both the feeling of frustration because we don't have enough time, and that of impatience because time is going too slowly, are feelings we have because we are creatures of time. But God suffers neither of these. He does not get frustrated because time is running out on him. He scheduled a mere six days to create the entire cosmos, and he completed it like clockwork. Peter says that with God a day is as a thousand years. Imagine that you had a thousand years to do all the things that have been scheduled for today, and a thousand years for what you plan to accomplish tomorrow. It's something like that with God.

On the other hand, God never becomes impatient because time is going too slowly for him. Peter brought this argument forward against those people who said that God will never honour his promise to call an end to the ages and bring about the new world. The covenant community had waited so long that it was unreasonable to wait anymore, they said. Peter replied: But from God's point of view, the promise to return in glory was made only yes-

terday, or the day before, because with God a thousand years is as a day.

People are so excited these days about the expiration of another millennium. It seems like such an immense measure for us human beings. A thousand years for us is like, well, a thousand years – a terribly long time. And a day is so terribly short.

Our first duty as human beings is to have dominion over the earth, and all created things. Time is one of those created things. We need to make time our servant, not our master; an ally not an enemy. But we cannot obtain a relationship to time like God does. God created time so he cannot be subject to its limitations, whereas we will always remain subject to time. We need to schedule our duties in a reasonable fashion and diligently work to accomplish them – be good stewards of our time so that we might serve our Lord effectively. We need also to be patient as we await the things we hope for. And we *will* learn patience when we wait with vibrant faith for the things upon which we set our hopes.

We can make time our servant and ally if we have a vibrant faith, because it makes us more diligent to use our time wisely, and it enables us to patiently wait for the things we believe in. May our faith enable us to obtain a good relationship to time. **C**

The Singing of Psalms and Hymns¹

By R. Aasman

The issue at stake

In recent months there have been articles or letters in *Clarion* dealing with the singing of Psalms and hymns in congregational worship. Dr. J. De Jong wrote about our sister churches in the Netherlands who are investigating the adoption of more hymns. He concluded his article by saying, "We need to see it as our task to incorporate some positive elements of the rich hymnody of the entire Christian tradition, and especially the Reformed tradition, into our own book, so that we are more consciously united with those who preceded us, and more equipped to share our heritage with those around us" (Volume 48, No. 7). Brother Rick Duker responded to this by writing, "Dr. De Jong seems to be of the opinion that it is our task carefully to incorporate more hymns. But what is the scriptural basis for doing this? The church must have clear biblical grounds for singing uninspired (unspiritual) songs in the worship service. It is imperative that we be absolutely certain of God's approval for this practice (Deut 12:8, 32)" (Volume 48, No. 11). More recently, brother Henry Sikkema wrote, "Scripture authorizes the 150 Psalms of the Old Testament, and no other songs are authorized. What then, is Dr. J. De Jong's standard?" He concludes, "We need to question our worship practices. Now, as always, we need divine warrant to add to or subtract from the perfection of Scripture and in song that is the Psalter" (Volume 48, No. 18).

Let me state from the outset that I have deep appreciation for hearing the brothers Duker and Sikkema promote the singing of Psalms in our worship services. We live in a time where so many churches are moving towards liturgical embellishments which often ignore the Psalms. Often Arminian and man-centered hymns are being adopted and sung. It is like a breath of fresh air to hear from two brothers that they love and promote the singing of the Psalms in our churches. A congregation is richly

blessed when it sings the Psalms. Prof. J. Geertsema wrote in an editorial some time ago that the Psalms are still rich and applicable for us today because they proclaim the coming and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Volume 47, No. 24).

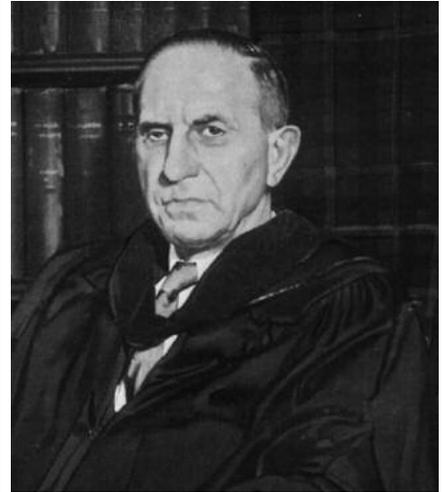
However, is it correct to state that only the 150 Psalms may be sung in congregational worship? Is it wrong to sing hymns? Is Dr. De Jong way off track when he suggests that it would be good to incorporate some more hymns – provided they are good, scriptural hymns? Is it not possible that it is right and even beneficial for the church of Jesus Christ to sing scriptural hymns? The reason for this article is to address these questions.

The Regulative Principle of Worship was born from a reaction against the liturgical excesses of the Roman Catholic Church.

Regulative Principle of Worship

The belief that only the 150 Psalms may be sung in the churches is not something new. It is rooted in what is known as the Regulative Principle of Worship (RPW). None of the articles mentioned above speak of the RPW, although brother Sikkema did entitle his letter, "Scriptural Law of Worship." However the line of reasoning by both brother Duker and brother Sikkema is the same as the proponents of the RPW. For the sake of clarity and simplicity, we will use this expression. It is described in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, Paragraph 6 as follows:

The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether



John Murray

by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

This may be summarized somewhat, as it frequently is. John Murray writes in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, "that the acceptable way of worshipping God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by his revealed will that He may not be worshipped in any other way than that prescribed in the Holy Scripture, that what is not commanded is forbidden." G.I. Williamson writes in *The Singing of Psalms in the Worship of God*, "What is the proper way to worship God? . . . it is proper to worship God only as He wills, and this means only in ways that He has commanded, instituted or prescribed in his Word . . . what is not commanded is forbidden." This is the Regulative Principle of Worship. Plain and simple it says: any aspect of worship must clearly come from the Scripture or else it is forbidden.

From this, G. I. Williamson concludes that since Scripture does not mandate the use of hymns in worship, it is forbidden that the church of Jesus Christ use them in the worship service. Only Psalms are to be sung.

Not everyone who holds to the Westminster Standards understands the RPW in the same way. For instance, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is known to use hymns in worship. The Free Church of Scotland, on the other hand, allows neither hymns nor musical instruments in worship. Both churches are faithful adherents of the Westminster Confession of Faith and they are admired for their strict confessional stance, but they apply the RPW differently. The Free Church of Scotland has a more rigid application of the RPW.

To understand both the Westminster Confession and the RPW, it is important to look at some historical background. The Westminster Confession was written during the 1640s and its contents were heavily shaped by English Puritanism. The Puritans were quite rigid in their principle of worship: they said all aspects of worship must have biblical warrant. We should have appreciation for what they were doing because this was in reaction to the liturgical excesses of the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church. In the face of relics, Mariology, adoration of saints, indulgences, elaborate ceremonies and rituals, fancy clothing, burning of candles, proliferation of artwork, musical instruments and singing which came at the expense of the pure preaching of the gospel, it was like a breath of fresh air to do away with all these trappings and return to the heart of true worship, namely, hearing the Word of God. The background to the Westminster Confession and the regulative principle of the Puritans was to bring the Bible back into the centre of worship. But in their application of the RPW, the Puritans made some far-reaching conclusions. Since nothing was to be done in the worship service unless it had biblical warrant, there were to be no singing of hymns or use of musical instruments in worship service, no Christmas or Easter services, and many other things as well. It is striking, however, that there is evidence that the Puritans did allow such special days of worship as "Public Solemn Fasting" and "Public Thanksgiving." This does demonstrate a certain inconsistency. In fact, this demonstrates a problem with the RPW: just how far is it to be car-



ried? Some refused to use creeds in worship. Some demanded head coverings for women and the lack of any kind of ornamentation or hair styling whatsoever. Some have wrestled with questions such as: is it correct to sing the Apostles' Creed? May the Heidelberg Catechism be used in the preaching? Is it correct to sing Psalms which are not a literal transliteration of the original Hebrew? Such questions and disputes among those who hold to the RPW show that a rigid application of this principle will always lead to difficulties and often untenable positions.

**The Regulative Principle of
Worship teaches that
whatever is not commanded is
forbidden.**

The Puritans regarded John Calvin as one of their mentors. The Puritans believed that John Calvin was the champion of the RPW. Calvin was not only a reformer of theology but also a reformer of worship. Calvin was disgusted with the excesses and unbiblical practices within Roman Catholic worship. He sought a reformation in worship by holding to the principle that Scripture mandates how God's people are to worship. Worship should not be self-willed but it is willed by God. It is clear from Calvin's commentary on the Book of Psalms that he believed that Psalms should primarily be sung in the worship services. But it would be wrong to conclude that Calvin taught a regulative principle of worship along the lines held by the Puritans and assimilated into the Westminster Confession. It is clear that when it came to doctrine, Calvin would not budge an inch. But when it came to liturgical practices, al-

though he had his definite opinions, he was tolerant of different practices. We see his liturgical tolerance in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I. x. 14:

Shall no ceremonies then (you will ask) be given to the ignorant to help them in their inexperience? I do not say that. For I feel that this kind of help is very useful to them. I only contend that the means used ought to show Christ, not to hide him. Therefore, God has given us a few ceremonies, not at all irksome, to show Christ present. To the Jews more were given as images of Christ absent. He was absent, I say, not in power, but in the means by which He might be made known. Accordingly, to keep that means, it is necessary to keep fewness in number, ease in observation, dignity in representation, which also includes clarity.

While it is clear that Calvin is not speaking here of the matter of singing Psalms and hymns, he shows that he is not a proponent of a rigid principle of worship which says: unless it is prescribed in Scripture, it is forbidden. In fact, Calvin leaned towards a position of exclusive Psalmody, but he himself included the singing of the Song of Simeon, the ten commandments and the Apostles' Creed. Calvin permitted things which are not prescribed in Scripture. It would therefore be unfair to say today that Calvin taught a rigid view of the RPW much like the Puritans did. There is a marked difference. In the next article we will look more closely at whether it is legitimate to use the RPW to deny the singing of hymns in worship. In the third and final article, we will look at the positive evidence in Scripture for the singing of hymns. ■

Authority¹

The Source of Authority

By G. Ph. van Poeta

Authority often despised

“Authority” is often thought of in negative terms. One would ask why. The answer is two-fold. Authority is often despised because of the frequent abuse of authority. Sadly it happens often that one in authority over others abuses his power. We will speak about that in a future instalment.

A second reason authority is often despised is because man has an inherent unwillingness to submit to someone else. Ever since the Fall into sin, every human being has a natural urge to be completely autonomous – a law unto himself. This is not a new development in humanity. You see it already with the first humans, Adam and Eve. God had placed them in the Garden. He had given them a beautiful place to live, work to do, food to eat. They could eat from every tree in the Garden, except for one. There was one tree they were not to eat from. That was God’s law. The man and the woman, however, rejected that law. They rejected God’s authority and ate from that tree.

Ever since, man has continued to reject authority. By nature, man is lawless.

Media comment on authority

It is very interesting to see how the media comments upon the biblical teaching of authority. There was a profound example of interesting media comment the summer of 1998. On June 9, 1998, the Southern Baptist Convention issued a Declaration on Family Life. It reads as follows:

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a life-time. It is God’s unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and his church, and to provide for the man and the woman the framework for

intimate sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means of procreating the human race. The husband and the wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God’s image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to his people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for,



to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly sub-

Ultimate authority belongs to God alone – to God the Creator and Redeemer of life.

mits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in man-

aging the household and nurturing the next generation. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honour and obey their parents.

Media comment on this declaration was very interesting. *That* the media had lots to say about this statement was not unexpected. What was surprising was what the media focused on. The declaration began with a very narrow definition of marriage. It said that marriage is the union of one man to one woman for a life-time. Part of the liberal media agenda is gay rights. With the push for legalized gay marriages, it is surprising that the media did not latch on to that point.

Furthermore, the declaration says that the marriage between a man and woman is for a life-time. It excludes divorce. Again, how surprising that the media had nothing to say on this point.

When the Declaration on Family Life spoke about children, it said that children are a blessing from God “from the moment of conception.” Largely, the media rejects that. The message promoted in our culture is that a woman can terminate life in her womb if she wants. And yet the media did not zero in on that part of the statement.

Neither did they comment on the declaration’s call to parents to provide “loving discipline” to their children. The child rights advocates hate the word “discipline.” Yet the media let that pass.

It let all of this pass. It let pass the opportunity to lambaste Christians for their views on marriage and divorce, abortion, and child-rearing – typical hot-button items. Instead it fixated itself on one sentence: *A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband*

Isn't that interesting? Of all the places the media could hook into this statement, they focused on this aspect. Why? Because of the hatred of authority. Because of the inherent human tendency to reject the idea that there are levels, structures, of authority in life – in society, in families.

The source of authority: God

When we speak about authority, then we need to ask about the source of authority. What or who is the source?

It is, of course, God. Ultimate authority belongs to God alone – to God the Creator and Redeemer of life. God is the absolute and final authority with respect to all things: Nature, history, faith and morals.

After the LORD God had shown his sovereignty over nature and history by bringing his people Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground and had drowned Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and all his soldiers in the midst of the Red Sea, then Moses and the Israelites sang a song which praised God as the One who has authority over people's lives and over all of creation. They ended the song (Exod 15) with the triumphant words: "The LORD will reign for ever and ever."

Many of the Psalms describe God as the great, ultimate, and final authority over all things. Psalm 93 says: "The LORD reigns, He is robed in majesty; . . . and is armed with strength. . . . Your statutes stand firm . . . for endless days, O LORD."

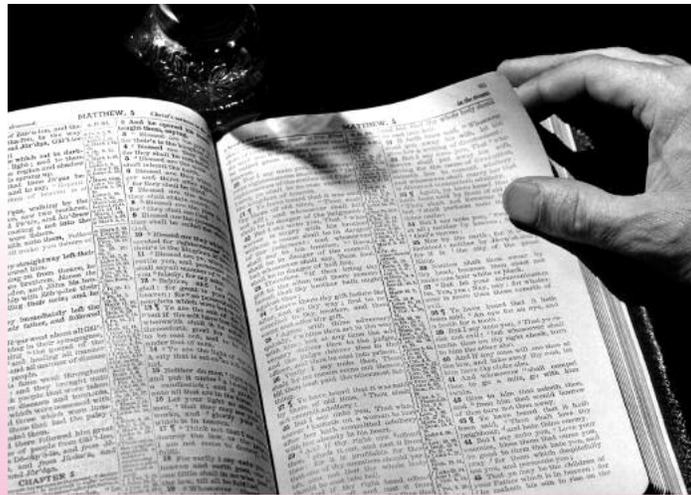
The Lord Jesus told us not to fear those who can kill the body and after that can do no more. Rather, said He, we ought to fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw a person into hell. And then He was talking about God the Father.

One of the apostolic letters of the New Testament, the letter of Jude, ends with these words: ". . . to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!"

We can also think of the book of Revelation which shows so powerfully the authority God has over all the peoples of the earth, over all of nature, and over all of history.

Authority given to Christ

God the Father has given authority to his Son – to God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus Christ Himself said in Matthew 28:18: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."



What kind of authority did the Lord Jesus Christ receive? He tells us, in the gospels.

The gospels tell us that He had authority on earth to forgive sins (Mark 2:10). He had the authority to drive out demons (Mark 3:15). He taught as one who had authority, and not as the teachers of the law of his time. The people recognized that. When He spoke, they listened (Matthew 7:29). God the

Word of God. In 2 Timothy 3:16 & 17, the Apostle Paul wrote: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

God breathed the Scriptures out. God speaks to us today by way of the Holy Scriptures. We need to listen to them. Woe unto him who would ignore what the Scriptures say. The Bible has total authority over us, over every aspect of life, both doctrine and conduct.

It is the Bible that teaches us how to live. It teaches us what God's will is and how to live a life pleasing to Him. We need to read the Bible, every day at home, to study it, in order to know what the Lord requires of us. It is the Bible that teaches the gospel which tells us about what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for sinners. It speaks about how He died to set people free from their sins.

The Lord has given the task of proclaiming the gospel and teaching the Word to the church. All people need to seek out the church of Jesus Christ to sit under faithful and authoritative preaching to hear the good news of salvation and to be taught how to live in obedience to God's Word and in thankfulness for his goodness and grace.

– To be continued in the next issue where the topic of the various agents of authority (the family, the church, and the state) will be discussed.

The Bible has total authority over us, over every aspect of life, both doctrine and conduct.

Father gave his Son authority to judge (John 5:27). John 17:2 teaches that the Father gave Jesus Christ the authority to give eternal life to all those the Father had given Him.

God the Son has authority by virtue of being God. Because He, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is true and eternal God, He has authority over all things. But He was given authority in a special way – authority to forgive sins, to heal, to teach, to judge and to give eternal life.

The authority of God's Word

How does this authority – the authority of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ – reach us today? Through the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ and of God the Father, speaks to us today through the Word, the Bible. The Scriptures, as the very Word of God, has authority over us.

The authority of Scripture lies in the fact that it is inspired, the infallible

¹This article, and the three that will follow it in succeeding issues of *Clarion*, were originally presented as a speech at the October 1998 Ontario Women's League Day in Ancaster, Ontario. Much of the spoken style remains.

The character of a true and living faith

By P.G. Feenstra

To live by the doctrines of Scripture requires a true and living faith. Such faith accepts the teachings of Scripture as the yardstick governing and controlling all our actions. At the same time true faith is a firm confidence that the teachings of the Bible affect us very personally. The Lord grants us the forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation spoken of in Scripture (cf. Lord's Day 7).

Faith is more than objectively accepting the facts of the Bible. People can appear to have a real and living faith by saying all the right things but still be missing the ingredients of true faith. In the eleventh chapter of his letter, the author of the letter to the Hebrews gives us some of the characteristics of a true and living faith. He introduces the subject of true faith in this way: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). At first glance, a sentence like this may seem somewhat obscure. The rest of the chapter, however, explains and amplifies what is meant.

Faith does not question but seeks to please

First of all, those who have faith "try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph 5:10). Abel and Enoch are mentioned by the author of Hebrews as men of faith who lived to the praise of God's glory. Before Enoch was taken up to heaven "he was attested as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him." Faith responds in obedience without challenging or questioning the Lord's purpose. Noah is cited as an example. He was told by God to build an ark because the Lord had said that He would send a flood upon the world to punish the wickedness of man. Noah did not fully understand what God had in mind. Yet he did not protest or question how all the animals would fit into the ark. His faith

was visible in that he did what the Lord asked: "By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith" (11:7). Having faith in God we accept the will of the Lord for our lives and respond in obedience to what He tells us.

Faith is total acceptance

Secondly, true faith accepts as true all that God has revealed in his Holy Word. As a result of this we may have to make decisions to do things we would rather not do, for example, to break close ties with family and

Faith is more than objectively accepting the facts of the Bible.

friends. Abraham had to leave behind his homeland and his family "and he went out not knowing where he was to go" (Heb 11:8). Abraham had to go to a foreign land where he often lived in fear of what others might do to him and his wife. He did not have a permanent dwelling but lived in tents. Yet in faith he obeyed the Lord. Abraham believed the Lord would do what He promised. He did not doubt the Lord's Word even though, humanly speaking, it was impossible to believe what the Lord was telling him. He had to wait patiently for many years before the Lord fulfilled what He had promised.

Faith rejects the lifestyle of the world

Third, true faith rejects the lifestyle and the culture of a godless society. Listen to what the author of Hebrews writes in verses 24-26, "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be

called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward." Those who have a true and living faith make choices. They do not blindly follow the trends, fads and values of a godless society. Instead they develop the culture of the church and a lifestyle that reflects how they have everything in Christ.

Faith obeys God rather than man

The fourth characteristic of true and living faith is to obey God rather than any other person. You will not bow in submission to any individual, no matter how powerful or influential he may be, if he demands of you actions that are in conflict with the Lord's Word. Hebrews 11 gives the example of Moses's parents. They were not afraid of the king's edict (11:23). In that same faith we today must obey God rather than man and not bow to the pressures of people.

Faith does not exclude suffering

Fifth, a true and living faith includes a willingness to suffer for Christ's sake. What we believe with our hearts is confessed with our mouths. Think of the many who gave their lives because they refused to deny the name of their Saviour. Again we turn to the letter of Hebrews: "Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword" (11:35-37). True faith could mean having to give your very life for Christ's sake. Faith is accepting whatever the Lord reveals and acting accordingly in any and every given circumstance.

Faith is personal

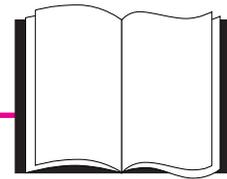
Sixth, true faith is having the confidence that the promises of the gospel are not only for others but for me as well. Hebrews 11:9 tells us that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob shared in the same promises. This is the beauty of our faith. I, as a covenant child, share in the same promises that are given to the church of all ages and places. I can have the confidence that what all others have I may have too. God is my God, my Mediator; I am his covenant child. The Lord sur-

rounds me with his love and care just as He did for his saints in the past. Accepting the message of the gospel, I believe that I am engraved in the palms of the Lord's hands together with all his children. What He gives to others does not make me jealous because the Lord gives me everything I need too. That is what gives me confidence.

If left to ourselves our confidence in the promises of the Lord would languish and fade away. The Holy Spirit must work a true and living faith in our

hearts by repeatedly directing us to the gospel so that we continue to rely on God. He must open our closed hearts to instill new qualities into our will. When the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts, a tremendous power takes hold of our lives. We receive strength and courage for each day. We are helped through every situation, in moments of doubt, in the trials of life and even at the hour of death. We have hope eternal as we treasure the blessings and joy of a true and living faith. C

READER'S FORUM



A Few Conspicuous Problems

I was disappointed in Prof. De Jong's report on the 1999 General Assembly of the OPC particularly as it related to myself. I will not attempt to engage in a detailed discussion of all the issues involved but will confine myself to a few conspicuous problems.

Prof. De Jong reports that the Presbytery was willing to discuss the issues of the supervision of the Lord's table, but not on the terms specified by Rev. Hofford. The impression left here is that I am the stubborn party keeping obstacles in the path of reconciliation. However, Synod Fergus said the following about this matter: "What Presbytery fails to understand is that Rev. Hofford is seeking a full hearing on his concerns about the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The fact Rev. Hofford has not been properly heard on the underlying issues keeps him from retracting the charge of 'false shepherds (Acts Art. 136, D, p. 166)." Synod does not portray me as placing unnecessary obstacles in the path of reconciliation.

It is remarkable that Prof. De Jong, although not wanting to discuss the decision extensively, comes to a decided position on the issue: "there should be no need to hold to the label of 'false shepherds.' And he asserts, "There is every reason for Rev. Hofford to retract that statement." Without a thorough discussion of all the relevant materials and issues, how can Prof. De Jong so quickly and categorically declare that I

am wrong and the Presbytery correct? Even Synod Fergus, which had access to all the documents, did not draw such a far-reaching conclusion. It would appear that in his eagerness to keep talks moving with the OPC, Prof. De Jong has overstated himself. We may be satisfied with the decision of Synod Fergus in this matter. As Synod itself says, "it is evident that the door is open for Presbytery to discuss the 'underlying issues' with Rev. Hofford which as a result should lead to the withdrawal of the charge of 'false shepherds (Acts, Art. 136, IV, E)." I will personally testify that the door is indeed open, and has been open for years. Unhappily, the Presbytery has not been willing to enter.

Perhaps it should be pointed out that this whole matter of the label is only one small part of the much larger picture of the secession of Tri-County Church from the OPC. With the passing of time and with the spotlight focused on the label, it is easy to overlook the rather profound significance of that secession. Indeed, it had such an affect on one classis which received a report about the matter that they felt constrained to vindicate me and to call the OPC to repentance! As is pointed out below, the entrance of Tri-County Church, with me as minister, into the federation was certainly a major catalyst in bringing the question of open communion to the fore in our discussions with the OPC. Rather than casting all of this in a negative light as Prof.

De Jong does, we should share in the positive outlook portrayed by Synod Fergus in its decisions regarding the OPC.

Prof. De Jong gives the impression that the whole question of our relationship with the OPC is being held up by my failure to retract the statement about the Presbytery. He says that I should retract this statement so that the air can be cleared for a more detailed discussion of the outstanding issues. We should not confuse matters. It is one thing for me and the presbytery to discuss our differences. It is quite another for the OPC to face the decisions of Synod Fergus regarding the fencing of the Lord's Table. I find it most remarkable that the OPC has apparently failed to do this. Their silence about these momentous decisions is indeed deafening when one considers Synod's concluding statement: "The chairman notes that this is a historic moment in the life of the Canadian Reformed Churches as a decision has been made which will hopefully serve the Orthodox Presbyterian Church well and will bring this matter to rest in the churches. He notes with gratitude the fact that this difficult decision could be made unanimously. (Acts, Art. 130, p. 159)." If the OPC were willing to address this decision of Synod, they would de facto be addressing the underlying issues which spawned my statement.

In light of the above explanation, I find it disturbing that Prof. De Jong

insinuates that by my not retracting the statement I am violating a promise to accept all our decisions regarding the OPC and to not work publicly against them. Retracting my statement was never made a condition for reception into the federation. I have never worked against our decisions but rather have openly sought true unity with the OPC, although not at the expense of the truth. I find myself wholeheartedly in support of the decisions of Synod Fergus regarding the OPC. However, Prof. De Jong makes it appear that this alleged offence is a new matter which arose after I was received into the federation. My statement about the Presbytery, though not taken over by our churches, was well known by the classes which dealt with my situation and received me.

I find it even more distressing to read the following: "Given the current status of Rev. Hofford in our church (a dismissed minister) these developments are all rather disappointing." What is this supposed to mean? What does my status in the federation have to do with the matter? This seems to suggest that dismissed ministers are not to be held in the same esteem as other ministers. It should be clear, however, that one dismissed under Art. 11 has no taint of discipline and maintains his status as a minister in good standing, eligible for call in our federation. Without some further explanation, Prof. De Jong's statement has not served to uphold my honor and good reputation, and I believe an apology is in order.

It is unfortunate that Prof. De Jong who rightly criticizes the decision of the OPC in this matter nevertheless finds himself caught up in the diversion which it presents. The chief obstacle to unity between our churches and the OPC is not my alleged offense; rather, it is the different positions which we as churches hold on fencing the Lord's table and confessional membership (cf. Acts, Art. 130, VI, F). Indeed, if the OPC could accept the statements of Synod Fergus regarding these matters, then the relatively minor issue of the alleged offence would be well on the way toward resolution.

Prof. De Jong concludes with the hope that we make the most of the opportunities given to us for seeking unity with the OPC. I believe Synod Fergus has done that with integrity. Unfortunately the OPC has not responded in kind. We can only pray and hope that this will change in the future.

Rev. B. Hofford, Sumas, WA

REPLY TO REV. HOFFORD

by J. De Jong

Given the fact that I expressed my view quite openly concerning the current status of the dispute between the Mid-Atlantic Presbytery and Rev. Hofford, I am not at all surprised that he has forwarded to us a substantial reply. While I gladly respond to what he sees as some "conspicuous problems." I repeat that I have no intention of entering into the issues in dispute per se. I only touched on this matter as it related to the decision of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) on the relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. With this proviso, allow me a few points of response:

1. I see in this response very much concerning the person of Rev. Hofford and his own particular case, along with all of the attending assertions that he is the just party in his case. But I see little in the way of references to Scripture. When there has been a dispute and what are perceived as offending labels cloud the issue, what course of action is required of us by Scripture? Does it not point to the way of forbearance and forgiveness? Does it not teach us to give the other party the benefit of the doubt? The apostle calls us to forbearance and brotherly love!
2. Having observed the absence of any scriptural references in the vein I allude to above, it does not surprise me to read: "Without a thorough discussion of all the relevant material and issues, how can Prof. De Jong so quickly and categorically declare that I am wrong and the Presbytery correct?" But – if I may be permitted to ask this – how can Rev. Hofford so quickly and so categorically come to this statement? For if I review what I wrote, I must say that I cannot find anywhere the declaration to which he refers. In fact, it was my stated intention, (as Rev. Hofford himself acknowledges) not to discuss the issues of the case. My only aim here is to ask: what route does Scripture require in such a case?
3. In his remarks Rev. Hofford attempts to contrast my views with the position taken by Synod Fergus 1998. But that is all a question of how one reads and interprets what he reads. In the very same consideration to which Rev. Hofford refers, Synod

Fergus also says: "Synod urges the Presbytery and the Rev. Hofford to heed the scriptural demand that brothers be reconciled. This will take place when the brothers can listen and talk with one another, speaking the truth in love." Then, at this point, references to Scripture are added which are precisely the references that I find so conspicuously absent in Rev. Hofford's submission to *Clarion*.

Let me then categorically ask Rev. Hofford: do you think that Synod Fergus meant that the initiative lies now solely with the presbytery and not with you? Does the position of Synod Fergus 1998 (that *brothers* (!) be reconciled!) imply that the Presbytery must take the first step before the "labels" are to be removed? If that is how one reads synod decisions, what hope is there of any progress here?

4. Rev. Hofford takes the trouble in his submission to become eloquent about a classis which vindicated him, referring even to the "rather profound significance" of his "secession", but he is conspicuously silent about the other ecclesiastical assemblies (classis and regional synod) that have gone on record asserting that the label "could or should be withdrawn." Here again I am faced with a recurring question: how does one read?
5. At the same time, I can fully understand that the assemblies themselves were (and are) reluctant to categorically demand such a retraction from Rev. Hofford, or even to state that he should give it. For the assemblies do not express personal or pastoral opinions but must administer justice in appeals. And from a judicial point of view, I can fully respect those decisions, for the assemblies thereby indicate that they really do not want to get involved in what is essentially a dispute between Rev. Hofford and the Mid-Atlantic Presbytery. But where our assemblies hesitate (from a judicial perspective) to express an opinion, a commentator in the press, I believe, is certainly free to do so.
6. And how am I led to such an opinion? If I review Scripture as to the way in which the label "false shepherd" is used, then it always refers *not* to brothers (the term used by Synod Fergus 1998) but to those who deliberately lead the congregation



CHURCH NEWS

Email address changes:

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to

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CALLED by the church at Smithers, BC

Rev. J. VanWoudenberg

of Kerwood, ON

ACCEPTED the call to the Free Reformed Church at
Launceston, Australia

Cand. Dr. B.A. Zuiddam

away from the truth of God. In Galatians 2:4, the false brothers are those who secretly enter the congregation in order to deliberately lead it into the way of bondage. In John 10:12, the false shepherd is the hireling who cares nothing for the sheep, and allows them to be scattered and eaten by wolves. In Ezekiel 34:1-10 the false shepherds are those who have not fed the sheep, but only fed themselves, and left the sheep in their illness, injury and pain. These references could easily be multiplied. But they are sufficient I think, for one to conclude: in the particular case in which Rev. Hofford is involved, the label cannot be said to fit the circumstances, and at the very least exceeds the limits applicable to a dispute of this nature, thereby unnecessarily escalating the conflict. Or, to state the matter more strongly: the label adds elements to the picture which can only trouble the water and prevent an adequate resolution of the outstanding issues.

7. Rev. Hofford is even more distressed that I refer to him as a dismissed minister, and introduce this as a factor accentuating the disappointment I (and others) feel with regard to the situation in which we now find ourselves as churches. He asks: What does my status in the federation have to do with the matter? Quite simply this: Since Rev. Hofford is now not a minister actively serving a congregation in the churches, the "offence" which the OPC General Assembly has stumbled on is, from our own point of view, a more marginal entity in terms of our federation. Did I intend to cast a slur on Rev. Hofford by this remark? Did I intend to damage his honour or reputation? Not at all! I simply meant to say that what has been scaled up to a matter of major weight in regard to the relationship with our churches by the OPC is from own point of view, a matter which at present does not even concern one of our active ministers serving in one of our churches. Who cannot but be disappointed with this?

Thus far my remarks on the perceived "conspicuous problems" as seen by Rev. Hofford. I hope they may serve to clear them up in such a way that his "disappointment" with my report will, if not be fully removed, then at least substantially diminished. 

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Please mail, e-mail or fax letters for publication to the editorial address. They should be 300 words or less. Those published may be edited for style or length. Please include address and phone number.

Superstition to Exaltation

In the October 1, 1999 issue of *Clarion*, Rev. Paul Aasman raised a very important issue in his meditation on God's Personal Name." As he explained, God's name is to be remembered forever by His people (Ex 3:15). Elsewhere in Scripture we read that God is against those who cause His people to forget His name (Jer 23:25-27). Rev. P. Aasman then goes on to say that in modern Bible versions God's personal name remains buried and does not make "a single appearance in the sacred text." Does it then not follow that modern Bible versions are instrumental in causing God's

people to forget His name? If we are to treasure and use God's name then should our Bible not teach the name to us? It should be mentioned here that one modern version, the NKJV, does make reference to God's name in passages such as Isaiah 12:2, 26:4, and 38:11 where we read "YAH, the LORD."

Certainly older English Bibles taught God's covenant name. Tyndale's Bible of 1530 used JEHOVAH as an English pronunciation of the Hebrew consonants. The KJV retained JEHOVAH in seven specific passages including Ex 6:3, Ps 83:18, Is 12:2 and 26:4. Elsewhere it generally used LORD in keeping with the usage of 'Lord' in the New

Testament. This is significant because this usage clearly identifies the LORD (YAHWEH) with the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-13). The 'Lord of hosts' in the Old Testament is made manifest in the flesh as the 'Lord of glory' in the New. Because of this connection, the Jehovah Witnesses have removed every incidence of LORD in their translation so as to avoid exalting Jesus Christ. It is ironic that what may have begun as a Jewish superstition, God has turned into an exaltation of His Son, the very Messiah that most Jews rejected.

Rick Duker
Edmonton, Alberta 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers

Do you enjoy going to Church? Do you sit still and listen, maybe even take notes of the sermon while the Minister is speaking? Do you understand why you are in Church with your parents, your brothers and sisters, your friends and all the other people who are sitting there with you?

And when you come out of Church, do you often to go a friend's house or does a friend come to your house to play and stay for lunch? It's always good fun when your Mom and Dad let you play with friends between Church, isn't it?

Well, I have not received much mail lately. What has happened to all my little friends? My mailbox is nearly always empty, and I really love getting mail!

Write soon, please.

Love from Aunt Betty

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

4 Kaitlin Hordyk	24 Rhonda Wiersma
8 Yolanda Boeve	27 Jodi Hordyk
12 Kayla Vander Horst	27 Amber Aasman
16 Ainsley VanVeen	30 Natasha Oosterhoff
22 Amanda Vanderhoeven	30 Dorothy Gunnink

NATURAL CALAMITIES

Regardless of where we may live, all of us are subject to natural calamities of one sort or another. Match the person with the calamity he experienced.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. A flood | a. Pharaoh, Exodus 9:28 |
| 2. Drought | b. Elijah, 2 Kings 2:1,11 |
| 3. Tempest (storm) | c. Samuel, 1 Samuel 7:10 |
| 4. Lightnings | d. Ahab, 1 Kings 18:45 |
| 5. Hail | e. Jonathan, 1 Samuel 14:13-15 |
| 6. Earthquake | f. Noah, Genesis 6:17 |
| 7. Whirlwind | g. Jonah, Jonah 1:4 |
| 8. Black clouds and wind | h. Jacob, Genesis 41:57 |
| 9. Thunder | i. Moses, Exodus 19:16 |

What is usually linked with or needed to complete the following?

- Aaron's
- Balaam's
- Naboth's
- Noah's
- Theof Tarshish
- David's
- Mars'
- Theof Solomon
- Theof Babel
- Jacob's



FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Jolene Breukelman*. Do you have lots of fun with your brothers and sister? Thank you also for your little picture. It was a duck very well drawn. Did you draw it by yourself or did you copy it from somewhere? Write again, won't you, Jolene. 