"There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas."

— The Desire of Ages, p.487.
SERENDIPITY

Several months ago I heard the word serendipity and its meaning for the first time. It was coined by Horace Walpole after his tale of “The Three Princes of Serendip.” Evidently these princes had the ability to accidentally make fortunate discoveries in their travels. Thus we get the concept of having delightful experiences and discovering blessings that come without looking or asking for them.

This was my experience on a recent trip through the Southern European Division. I constantly discovered people, experiences, and scenes that brought unsought-for blessings and joy to my soul. The routine program of conducting workers’ meetings and fulfilling speaking engagements over a six-week period was greatly enhanced by this experience of serendipity.

Men Make the Movement

Perhaps my most fortunate discovery was Giuseppe Cupertino, Ministerial Association secretary for the Southern European Division. You would never suspect that he is approaching retirement age. His endless supply of energy kept our heavy program moving swiftly and efficiently. We had never met officially before, but it took only a few hours to knit us together in a bond stronger than blood. His knowledge of history, geography, religion, and politics made our trip far superior to a Cook’s tour.

Emotional experiences such as praying together in Paul’s Mamertine Prison cell, or in the Church of the Cave in the Waldensian Valley, rivet to the soul memories that one would never want to forget. Pointed illustrations and proverbs were appropriately brought forth. Once after receiving a compliment he exclaimed, “Compliments are like perfume. They are to be smelled but not swallowed!” Such a man inspires confidence in God and His movement.

Communion Embraces

The warmth and enthusiasm of our Italian workers melt the heart. The art of greeting one another with a holy kiss has not been forgotten in Italy. I wish it could be restored round the world. Our meetings in Italy climaxed with a communion service. The foot-washing experience followed by a holy kiss on both cheeks was a sweet simple testimony of the Christian love cradled in their hearts. I could not understand their language. I didn’t have to. Truth came through loud and clear in a service such as this.

Spiritual Democracy

A secluded spot near Paris was the location for the meeting held for the French workers. Sheltered from man-made noise and confusion, our souls were opened to the inspection of God’s Holy Spirit. Speaking, praying, discussing, and singing together brought us a refreshing revival.

One unique feature which I am confident will produce results was the brain-storm sessions. Small discussion groups made numerous suggestions as to what could be done to win more souls. A secretary from each group reported to the entire body. The suggestions made were the finest I have ever heard. Permitting these men to express themselves freely did much to make them realize that they were an integral part of the French working force. Frankness combined with Christian kindness and courtesy was the rule. Disagreement without disloyalty, conviction without caviling, was
the order of the day. To me this was con-
crete evidence of Christian maturity.

Sweet Fellowship

The beauty of Austria and Switzerland
was surpassed only by the beauty of the
Christian fellowship of workers and laity.
The eagerness exhibited by these workers
to grasp any new ideas or suggestions that
would help them in their evangelistic pro-
gram was gratifying. Each field faces its
peculiar difficulties, but dedicated men
constantly struggle to achieve a foothold
in enemy territory. It was encouraging to
talk with these men and to get their indi-
vidual reports on what they were doing to
win souls.

Saragossa—Catholic Mecca

Barcelona, Saragossa, and Madrid were
three centers visited on our trip through
Spain. Religious liberty is gradually coming
to this country that formerly oppressed
anyone outside the bounds of Roman
Catholicism. Perhaps the ever-increasing
flood of tourists has helped to mitigate op-
pressive religious actions.

For instance, the government has pre-
pared an attractive brochure for tourists
visiting the city of Saragossa. This large,
beautiful metropolis is the Mecca of Ca-
tholicism in Spain, yet for the first time in
the history of our work our two churches
are listed in the brochure. This is remark-
able when you consider that we do not
legally exist, that individuals are admitted
through church doors only after being rec-
ognized by a deacon gazing through a peep-
hole, and that identifying signs are totally
eliminated from any Protestant church
building. This seemingly small act was a
source of enthusiastic jubilation among the
workers.

Reverence Unlimited

Four to five hundred members and
friends crammed the church auditorium
in Saragossa on a Wednesday evening.
Long before the 9:00 P.M. deadline when
the meeting was to begin, scores filed in
silently and took their places. I watched
them enter and quietly walk to their seats.
Reverently each one bowed his head in si-
lent prayer. There was no talking, no confusion—only total reverence. Never have I witnessed such respect and decorum on the part of any church group. To preach to them was not only a privilege but a most rewarding experience. One sensed that every word one said was meaningful. A study of the Scriptures was no commonplace function. They were thankful for every minute they were permitted to worship God in this auditorium. Perhaps we would feel the same way if we had to maintain allegiance to the Adventist Church under the same circumstances as these folk. To have a translator standing beside me who had been in prison thirty-eight times for his faith was spiritually stimulating. They know what it means to “rejoice and be exceeding glad” when persecuted for the Master’s sake. A liberal dose of a similar experience wouldn’t hurt any of us.

Some may doubt the relationship of this earthquake to the fulfillment of Revelation 6:12, referring to a specific sign of Christ’s second coming and stating “there was a great earthquake,” yet those who went through this experience and lived to talk about it were gripped with the awful thought that the end of the world had come. One ship’s captain described the scene in vivid terms to the owners of his vessel. With reference to the fears of the people he said, “The Fear, the Sorrow, the Cries and Lamentations of the poor Inhabitants are inexpressible; every one begging Pardon, and embracing each other; crying, forgive me Friend, Brother, Sister! Oh! what will become of us! neither Water or Land will protect us, and the Third Element, Fire, seems now to threaten our total Destruction!”—SDA Bible Students’ Source Book, p. 357.

A visit to Lisbon today reveals very little of this awful incident, now more than two hundred years old. The most famous monument to this sign of the times is the Carmo Convent Ruins (see cover picture). The present floor is a carpet of grass and shrubbery. Its only roof is the sky. Strange, yet not so strange, that the ruins of a religious structure have been selected by man to remain as a memorial to this appalling event.

To stand within the abandoned walls of this edifice is a solemn experience—solemn, not because it is a church but rather because one senses the nearness of the soon coming of Christ. This most famous of all
earthquakes should be known not for its horrible destruction, but rather for its fulfillment of prophecy. There need be no reticence on the part of any Adventist minister to use the Lisbon earthquake as a definite fulfillment of God’s Word and a prominent sign of the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

No Schools

The work in Portugal is steadily marching forward, along with the work in the rest of the Southern European Division. We met in the commodious Lisbon church, which was considered far too large when it was built, but has now proved to be too small! Our educational program ground to a halt several years ago when the government closed our schools on some flimsy pretext. In spite of this, special classes are being conducted for consecrated young men and women who desire to become gospel workers. These students met with us during the entire workers’ meetings.

Altar Calls and Testimonies

In each country we climaxed the workers’ meetings with an altar call. The response was unanimous, not because of emulation but rather of personal conviction.
As we stood together, hand clasping hand, fervent testimonies and prayers were uttered. The depth of sincerity could be measured not only by tear-filled voices but by the silent workings of God's Spirit on every heart. All were in earnest as we sought to come in closer contact with our Maker.

My visit to the Southern European Division placed an additional burden on my own heart which causes me to pray more intelligently for my fellow ministers in this area. Best of all, additional joys will forever be mine as I look back on the precious association with those of like faith. Since this trip "serendipity" has become a very real part of my vocabulary!

J. R. SPANGLER

Visiting Our Workers in the Southern European Division

G. CUPERTINO
Ministerial and Public Relations Secretary, Southern European Division

THE Adventist Church is a world movement. This is why the General Conference sends some of its staff into all countries, their purpose being to develop the different branches of the work and to give of their experience to local leading brethren, so that they might get a larger vision of methods for applying and proclaiming the gospel of Christ to the greatest number of people possible.

The visit to Europe of J. R. Spangler, associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association, was unavoidably limited to Italy, France, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal. His presence was greatly appreciated among our workers in all these fields and he had the opportunity to learn something of our division territory and of those who, as God’s ministers, serve the Advent cause in this area.

Some Impressions on Fields That Have Been Visited

Getting out of the plane in Rome, Italy, Pastor Spangler continued his trip by train to Florence, where the first workers’ meeting for the Italian Union was to be held.

Florence, besides its reputation as a city of art, cherishes the memory of one of the bravest witnesses of the rights of truth—Savonarola. In spite of bitter opposition, the fervent Dominican prior proclaimed, in the very bosom of the Catholic Church at the end of the fifteenth century, the power of the Scriptures. In the convent where he spent several years of his life, one can see today the Bible that belonged to him and the standard with the motto “We preach Christ!” which he carried through the streets of Florence. Before leaving the city Brother Spangler and I bowed in silence and emotion in the prison cell where this man of God spent his last night on earth before he was hung and burnt on the Piazza della Signoria.

Back in Rome to take the plane for Paris, we visited the prison where Paul spent his last days on earth and where he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy. In the dark and damp dungeon are written these words: “Thou who passest, listen in silence to the terrible or glorious echoes of twenty-five centuries of history.” And it is truly a glorious echo, challenging the passing of time. Paul says: “The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known” (2 Tim. 4:17). If we desire today to make known the gospel fully, we must abide in Christ and count on Him. Therefore we asked the Lord to grant us His help and His presence.

We met with the workers of the Franco-Belgian Union at Biévres, France, not far
Spanish workers find increasing religious liberty.

from Paris, yet away from the agitation and the noise of the capital. In meditation and peace we drew near to our divine Master as we considered together, under His blessing, the obstacles the preacher meets today and also the encouraging possibilities that can be ours as we present ourselves for God's service. One of the most interesting and beneficial aspects of this convention was the group study of evangelistic problems and practical suggestions for more rapid progress of the work.

Our next stop was with our brethren in Austria. They planned the meetings to be held amid the calm and beauty of nature. Near Villach, Carinthia, at an intersection of the Austrian, Italian, and Yugoslavian borders, these workers devoted four days to the study of the Word, the evangelization of their country, and the sanctification of the church at a time when modern life, with its numerous attractions and unexpected changes, makes spiritual work particularly difficult. But these very attractions may offer the vigilant minister of the Lord possibilities for progress heretofore unknown. These discussions led the participants to implore Heaven to give them the grace to represent their Master more worthily and to live in closer communion with Him.

Our third stop was Switzerland. On our way from Austria to Berne we made a little detour through the Waldensian valleys of the Piedmont. Pastor Spangler preached on the Sabbath in the small church of Torre Pellice, then visited the house where Ellen G. White stayed for several weeks in 1885. He also went to the Waldensian Museum and to the Ghieisa d'la Tana—a grotto where, in the Middle Ages, the Waldensians met to worship God in secret. Following Paul in Rome and Savonarola in Florence, the Christians of the Piedmont gave an immortal testimony of loyalty to the Word of God.

In Switzerland also our workers met in the quiet of an outside site. Two conventions took place at Oertlimatt, on the shores of the Lake of Thun. The first was for the workers of the German Swiss Conference; the second, for the French-speaking Conference. Everywhere in our division in such circumstances, we had to face the problem of translation. However, Brother Spangler adjusted himself to the situation with his usual good humor. We had the pleasure of having with us for a few hours the president of our work in Southern Europe, M. Fridlin, as well as the educational and temperance secretary, P. Steiner. The former, by a stirring message, stimulated us to plan more powerful evangelistic activities. The latter emphasized the value of the Five-Day Plan, a means of gaining liberty from the slavery of tobacco. Plans are under way to get this social activity started in all our countries.

From Geneva we flew to Spain where, because of particular conditions, three conventions were to be held in three different places. We stopped one day in Barcelona.
The three churches we have there have the largest number of Adventists that can be found in one city in the Iberian Peninsula. At the end of our very loaded program and before our departure for Saragossa, we were invited to admire a caravel that was anchored in the port. It was the exact reproduction of the *Santa Maria* of Christopher Columbus. This sight reminded us of a man who, having as his motto, "I am looking for a new world," was able to inspire his mariners with the courage and the faith that enabled them to reach their goal in spite of severe setbacks. What a wonderful example of intuitive vision, of endurance and consecration to a cause is given us by this outstanding navigator!

In Saragossa for two days our workers tried to study the evangelistic methods that are most efficient in a country as Catholic as Spain. Upon arrival in the city in the evening, traffic was nearly blocked by the tremendous procession organized in honor of the Virgin of Pilar. Masses of people came to kiss devotedly the venerated column, an admirable gesture of sincerity, but revealing to us the need of these souls for a more thorough knowledge of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Our last convention in Spain took place in Madrid. Some twenty participants, some of whom came from neighboring towns, were benefited by the teaching and comfort of the Word of God, of which Elder Spangler was the exponent. In Madrid, as well as in Saragossa, the whole church had the privilege of attending one of these meetings.

Our itinerary ended in Portugal. The Lisbon chapel served as meeting place for all our workers throughout the union. Lisbon is a famous name in the Adventist vocabulary. It reminds us of the earthquake in 1755, connected in Bible prophecy to signs of the end of a wicked world to which a better world must succeed. Visiting the ruins of the ancient church of Carmes, the remains of this famous earthquake, Brother Spangler and I were thinking that even stones are able to testify of the truthfulness of prophecy. The series of workers' meetings organized in Southern Europe closed with a happy note—the Portuguese Union had reached the highest baptismal goal ever in its history.

*More Than Ever Convinced of the Authenticity of the Advent Message!*

In conclusion, some thoughts on the nature of the teaching given by our guest to the workers invited to the different conventions.

*Portuguese workers forge ahead in spite of schools being closed.*
Not only was Elder Spangler able to gain the good will of all by his winning personality and his conversation, but he succeeded also, in his Bible studies, to present to us a substantial synthesis of the truth for our time. "The Advent message," he emphasized, "is not a modern ideology which is added to those which have preceded it. It is really the revelation of God for our generation. The contents of this proclamation is condensed in the threafold message of Revelation 14, which is nothing less than the everlasting gospel of justification by faith. Against this gospel, come from God, there is the opposition of Satan, whose history can easily be traced back through the centuries and whose last manifestation will take the special form of a sign: 'The mark of the beast.'"

How to preach efficiently the truth for our time without creating premature opposition—this was the central theme of development to which Brother Spangler devoted some of his time. Other aspects of the evangelical mission of the preacher were considered. At the end of this series of meetings each one of us can no doubt say—using the term of the speaker—he is "humbly proud to be a Seventh-day Adventist."

Following a touching consecration service, which took place during one of the conventions, several experienced workers expressed in different terms one main opinion or thought. "We did not think, when we came here, that we would attend a revival meeting, but this truly has been one!" A worker on sustentation, though by no means without dynamism, stated: "Absolutely unheard of!" This expression, though it may not be exactly academic, shows nevertheless an honest enthusiasm. And we must recognize, when with the eyes of the Spirit we get into the inspired pages of the Bible, that we discover unsuspected realities which help us to understand better the words of Job: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee" (chap. 42:5).

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All One in Christ

Some who have entered these missionary fields have said: "You do not understand the French people; you do not understand the Germans. They have to be met in just such a way."

But I inquire: Does not God understand them? Is it not He who gives His servants a message for the people? He knows just what they need; and if the message comes directly from Him through His servants to the people, it will accomplish the work whereunto it is sent; it will make all one in Christ. Though some are decidedly French, others decidedly German, and others decidedly American, they will be just as decidedly Christlike.—Testimonies, Vol. 9, p. 180. (Taken from an address delivered at the European Union Council, Basel, Switzerland, September 24, 1885.)
Is it success you want? Then—

**Lift Up Your Eyes**

**ROBERT H. PIERSON**

President, Trans-Africa Division

Jesus was standing beside Jacob’s well in Samaria. From His vantage point the Saviour could look out over the fields of waving grain about Him. As the golden sunlight touched the tender green stalks Jesus knew that it was but a few weeks until harvesttime.

Here was an opportunity for the Master to bring home an important lesson to His disciples. Looking upon the groups of people coming to the well for water, Christ discerned another harvest all ready for the reaping.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?" the Saviour asked His followers. "Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

"Lift up your eyes." Jesus was speaking of a spiritual harvest. One looks down and around to see a temporal harvest. The Master desired His followers to look up. "Raise your eyes" (Goodspeed). "Raise your sights!" He might well have said, "Behold the great potential of your ministry!"

Jesus discerned what His disciples failed to see. He saw candidates for the kingdom all about Him. Were there obstacles? Were there problems? Jesus’ vision reached beyond the obstacles, beyond the problems that beset His infant cause. Of course, there were difficulties ahead. The Saviour knew a great deal about prejudice and opposition to His cause of truth. In His day Jesus faced many of the same problems that confront us now. People did not readily accept His gospel. They were preoccupied. They were steeped in nationalism and racialism as they are in our day.

In the face of obstacles and opposition, pride and prejudice, wine and worldliness, Christ’s message to His followers was, "Lift up your eyes! Get a new vision! The field is white for the harvest." The Saviour’s words were a message of challenge and courage. His was a message to challenge His workers’ vision and to test their courage in the face of a difficult task.

What a message for workers in the cause of God today! "Lift up your eyes! Raise your sights! Roll back the horizon of your vision!" Nineteen hundred years later God’s messenger to His church echoed the words of her Lord:

Oh, how I seem to hear the voice day and night, "Go forward; add new territory; . . . give the last message of warning to the world. There is no time to be lost."—*Evangelism*, p. 61.

I must not be far wrong when I say that next to his relationship with God a worker’s value to the cause of present truth is determined by the limit of his vision. The man who thinks a task cannot be done is defeated before he undertakes it. The worker who sees unscalable mountains of difficulty before him will doubtless perish in the valley of mediocrity. He who doubts has already lost the struggle. Conversely, the man of faith and perseverance will fight through the obstacles, turn the tide of defeat, transform the cold water of doubting colleagues into steam and use it to power his vehicle of victory. To see, to believe, is half the battle won.

The church of God needs workers and leaders whose vision is bright and whose courage is strong. There is much in the world today that might well dim the vision and dent the courage of workers who have not yet caught the gleam of mission nor the sense of urgency that must characterize
disciples of Christ in these closing, thrilling days of earth’s history.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish,” Solomon wrote (Prov. 29:18). While it is true the wise man was speaking of the prophetic vision in this scripture, it is equally true that God’s church today needs inspired leaders—men who have caught the vision of a finished work in this generation. Where no such vision challenges them the people must perish short of the kingdom. The remnant church needs leaders with lifted eyes.

“Vision,” according to Webster, is “unusual discernment or foresight.” A leader with vision sees souls in now dark counties. He sees church buildings where now there are only vacant lots. To the worker with vision there are no Alps, no Rockies, no Everests! The impediments into dark counties and unentered lands are breached by valiant unfettered faith. Evangelistic efforts, schools, hospitals, clinics, church buildings, spring up under the magic of the Master’s touch when the man of faith and vision accepts the promises and the challenges of the Omnipotent God.

Of course there are problems! Of course there are obstacles! But men of hallowed vision are not turned from their purpose by hardships and obstacles. In God’s strength they move forward to achievement in spite of impediments that would discourage the less intrepid soul. The messenger of the Lord makes it clear that circumstances must not deter the man of vision and faith. There is a statement from the pen of inspiration that I have kept in the front of my Bible for many years. I needed to read it frequently while attacking the Gibraltar of unbelief in Southern Asia. What a challenge these stirring words are:

Man can shape circumstances, but circumstances should not be allowed to shape the man. We should seize upon circumstances as instruments by which to work. We are to master them, but should not permit them to master us.

Men of power are those who have been opposed, baffled, and thwarted. By calling their energies into action, the obstacles they meet prove to them positive blessings. They gain self-reliance. Conflict and perplexity call for the exercise of trust in God and for that firmness which develops power.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 500.

Vision is a divine discontent. It is a holy thing God plants deep in the heart of man that keeps him from becoming satisfied with achievements of the past. He is impelled, compelled ever to move forward—in Heaven’s strength attempting and accomplishing greater things for God. Vision never allows a man to stop short of his projected goal. Somehow, by going around or over or under the obstacles he fights through to victory.

I once heard W. R. Beach say, “Vision separates the men who do from those who do not.” What a fine definition of vision! “Raise your eyes!” God speaks to every worker in His last-day movement! “Lift up your eyes! Raise your sights!” Only leaders with clear vision and raised sights can see a finished work in a world riven with turmoil and strife. Only leaders with “lifted eyes” can discern the great harvest God desires His church to garner despite the trials and the troubles of the last days!

The leaders in God’s cause, as wise generals, are to lay plans for advance moves all along the line. —Gospel Workers, p. 351.

Only men with lifted eyes can lay such plans.

We are altogether too narrow in our plans. . . . We must get away from our smallness and make larger plans. There must be a wider reaching forth for those who are nigh and those who are afar off. —Evangelism, p. 46.

Only men with vision and courage can break the bonds of petty planning and small achievements and roll back the horizons of the work. One challenging truth should burn its way into the thinking of every one of us as workers in the cause of God—an organization seldom achieves more than its leaders believe it can. Only infrequently does a local church surpass the vision of its pastor. A conference or a

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Christ, the Great Teacher, had an infinite variety of subjects from which to choose, but the one upon which He dwelt most largely was the endowment of the Holy Spirit. What great things He predicted for the church because of this endowment. Yet what subject is less dwelt upon now? What promise is less fulfilled? An occasional discourse is given upon the Holy Spirit, and then the subject is left for after consideration.—Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 156, 157.

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mission field rarely exceeds the measure of faith manifest by its leaders. With one leader the work moves forward. With another the work in the same field stagnates. The determining factor may well be the measure of the leader's consecrated vision!

A church, a conference, a mission field, reflects the spirit of its leader. I have seen situations fraught with dissatisfaction and unrest. An unwise or incapable leader had created divisions and tensions among the working staff. Relationships with other organizations were coldly strained. Church members and workers alike were restless, almost apprehensive. Morale was at a low ebb. Spiritual fitness suffered as the result of tensions. Goals were unreach ed. There was no evidence of dynamic faith or consecrated pride of achievement.

Then I have seen a new leader step in and with God's help transform such a situation almost overnight. The spiritual tide turned. Dissatisfaction disappeared. Division gave way to unity. A spirit of hallowed zeal possessed workers and church members alike. Souls were baptized. Goals were surpassed. Dynamic faith and consecrated pride took over. The work of God moved forward on every front.

What was the difference? It was difference in the spirit and the vision of the leader. So much depends upon the leader—his spirit, his vision!

"The need of the present hour is for men of vision," I read in a Review and Herald editorial. How true! The cause of God needs men who can dream dreams and then make those dreams come true! Gazing out of the window is not always a waste of time. Leaders need to spend some time gazing out of windows. But we must not limit our accomplishments to idle gazing—otherwise we become visionaries rather than men of vision. If souls and churches and clinics and schools and progress do not follow our dreaming, our gazing is vain. We have but wasted our time. And living as we do in earth's last hour you and I have no time to waste!

And while we are lifting our eyes let us be certain that it is our spiritual sights we are adjusting. What is true of achievement is much more true of spiritual experience. "The church will rarely take a higher stand than is taken by her ministers."—Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 227. We cannot lead our people into a latter-rain experience unless we ourselves have felt the mercy drops watering our own souls. If we achieve progress without satisfaction, goals without holiness, our eyes have been lifted in the wrong direction. If our eyes seek the approbation of man rather than the smile of God's approval there is yet a work of grace to be done in our hearts.

God give us vision! Give us lifted eyes, raised sights! So much depends upon workers whose eyes are raised heavenward—above the barren hills of ordinary experience and achievement. What an hour! What a task challenges us! What an awesome day of opportunity and challenge!

From my friend W. A. Higgins I received the following statement by Dr. Frank Laubach, "Heaven trembles lest we may prove too small and too late, lest we be bound by our weak habits when God summons us to great deeds. . . . I'm afraid of some . . . who have neither fire nor vision . . . who begin to see why this might be hard, or unprecedented, or premature if not properly surveyed, or too informal, or too big. The put-on-the-brakes type, the go-slow-type . . . can ruin God's program. O ye of little faith, keep your foot off the brake . . . who ever heard of God holding us back? He is impatient. He weeps over us as He did over Jerusalem. We have nothing to fear; we shall not fall when God is pushing us. I tell you what we need to fear, fear the way we are now, for we aren't good enough, hot enough, daring enough, far-visioned enough, for this splendid hour."

Let us all pause a moment and ask ourselves the question, "How is my vision?"

Present Truth in Meekness

Be careful messengers. Do not be anxious to hear and accept new theories, for often they are such as should never be presented before any congregation. Speak no boastful, self-exalting words. Let the Word of God come forth from lips that are sanctified by the truth. Every minister is to preach the truth as it is in Jesus. He should be assured of that which he affirms, and should handle the Word of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit of God. Walk and work carefully before God, my brethren, that no soul may be led into deception by your example. It had been better for you never to have been born than that you should lead one soul astray.—Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 158, 159.
I would like to introduce my remarks by reading from the Gospel of John, chapter 17, verse 3: “This is eternal life, to know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent—Jesus Christ” (Phillips).* Here we have two great Christian opportunities brought to our attention. First, and most important, the opportunity to know God, the Creator of the universe, and ruler of heaven and earth; and Jesus Christ, His Son. Resulting from this knowledge and acquaintance with God, it is pointed out, we will have eternal life.

I want to talk with you about knowing God. But we shouldn’t pass by quickly the reward that is brought to our attention here—eternal life. None of us are eager to know God only for the reward, but it is stated here emphatically that those who do know God and His Son Jesus Christ will have eternal life. It is hard for us to visualize just what eternal life means. It is life without end, life without cessation—years and years—billions of years. And it isn’t to be eternal life in a land like this, with all of its defects and limitations, but a land where there is no death, no sorrow, no sickness, no sighing—a land of happiness and joy, a land where we will become better acquainted with God every day.

Now there are some difficulties in knowing God. It may not be quite as easy as becoming acquainted with our fellow men. All of us know how to make friends here on earth. However, we don’t see God, and we don’t hear Him, we can’t shake hands with Him. The ordinary ways in which we learn to know men and women are not possible with God. Yet it is most important that we know Him and know Him better than we know any human friend.

Job recognized the difficulty of contacting God. You will remember the long trial he had. During this time God was watching him carefully, but Job didn’t know it. In the twenty-third chapter of Job he says, “Oh that I knew where I might find him! . . . Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him . . . : he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.” Job was having a most unusual trial, and God seemed so far away. Even Jesus Christ, when He was hanging on the cross, said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” There are times in the experience of all of us when God seems to be far away. We wish we could somehow see or touch or hear Him and know He is near to sympathize with us and to hear us. When Job said these words, he knew that God saw him. He continues, “But he knoweth the way that I take.” Even though he could not find God by turning to the right or to the left, by going forward or backward, he realized God knew the way that he was taking. Yes, God does know all about us. He knows us better than any of our friends know us, better than we know ourselves. Jesus said, “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” Throughout eternity Jesus will bear those scars on His
hands—the purchase price of our redemption.

God wants us to become acquainted with Him. Many have done so. Enoch, who lived before the Flood, walked with God. Abraham, after the Flood, was called the "friend of God," and David was "a man after God's own heart." When the angel came to Daniel, he said, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved." How we would like to have that said to us—"greatly beloved"! In the Gospel which John wrote are these words, "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Now we would perhaps say Jesus loved the whole family, but that isn't the way it was. He loved them individually, and the reasons that led Him to love Martha were totally different from those that led Him to love Mary. And He loved Lazarus for still different reasons. He loved each one individually. And He loves you and me, just as He loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

God is no respecter of persons. These individuals had no privileges that you and I lack. We too have the opportunity of walking with God just as surely as did Enoch. God is not partial. He was not partial to Enoch or to Abraham or to any of the others. We can have the same experience that any of them had. We can be the "friend of God." We can be the one "greatly beloved." We can even be the beloved disciple.

Each time we read the Bible through we read the story of Jesus Christ four times. Perhaps it is four times more important than anything else in the Bible, but in all parts of the Bible we read of God. When we read the Word it leads us into fellowship with God, and we think His very thoughts after Him. Many people have become acquainted with an author through reading his books, and we can become acquainted with God by reading His Word. There we learn of Christ's sacrifice for us, of the redemption He has given us, of the home that He is preparing for us, and the promise that He will come again and take us to that home.

Just as the Lord talks to us through His Word, so we can talk to God—a two-way conversation. We can talk to Him through prayer. We have a wonderful opportunity in talking to God. We can do it at any time. We don't have to make an appointment with Him first. We can come into His presence immediately—at a moment's notice. There are no waits when we talk to God. Instantly He is connected with us, and He hears every word and gives attention to it. He knows our hearts and thoughts and is interested in hearing our prayers. When we really pour out our hearts to God and tell Him all of our perplexities, our problems, our worries; when we spend time praising Him for His goodness and for the benefits we have received through Him, we can spend hours in prayer and not worry about the time it takes. God wants us to converse with Him—not just say a prayer to Him. There is a great deal of difference between saying a prayer and actually praying. God wants us to talk to Him. We are friends of His, and you know how friends are when they come together—how they chat and tell what has happened since they last saw one another. The Lord wants us to tell Him everything that is on our minds. He wants to hear from us.

I was interested in reading a letter written by Fenelon, the Archbishop of Cambrai, written in the seventeenth century. He was a Catholic and a man of God. I want to read just a few words that he wrote to a friend, Vidome D'Aimens. He said, "Tell God all that is in your heart, as one unloads one's heart to a dear friend. Tell Him your troubles that He may comfort you; tell Him your joys that He may sober them; tell Him your longings that He may purify them; tell Him your dislikes that He may help you to conquer them. Talk to Him of your temptations that He may shield you from them. Show Him all the wounds of your heart that He may heal them. Lay bare to Him your indifference to good, your depraved taste for evil, your instability. If you thus pour out to Him all your weakness, your needs and trouble, there will be no lack of what to say. You will never exhaust the subject, it is continually being renewed. People who have no secrets from each other never lack subjects for conversation. They do not weigh their words because there is nothing to be kept back. Neither do they seek for something to say. They talk together out of the abundance of their hearts, without consideration, just what they think. Blessed are they who attain to such familiar unreserved intercourse with God." I believe when we have that unreserved intercourse
with God where we tell Him everything that is on our hearts, then we are acquainted with God through prayer. I have talked with Him, I have felt His presence. He has answered my prayers. You too have had the experience, and you know that you are better acquainted with God for such experiences.

We also become acquainted with the Lord as we carry on our labor for Him. Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Then notice the next sentence, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.” There is evidently a connection between bearing Christ’s yoke and learning of Him. We learn of the Lord by laboring for Him. Everyone should ask, “What can I do to work for the Master?”

Attending meetings also brings us near to God. Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). Now when you want to become acquainted with a person you want to be where they are. We know where God is. He is where His people meet together. We know Jesus is here at this moment because we are met together. We are becoming acquainted with Him because He is here and we can talk to Him.

Acquaintance with God fills the longing of the human heart. Every person in this world, whether or not he knows it, longs for a knowledge of God. David expressed it this way, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God” (Ps. 42:1, 2). When we know God, it satisfies the longing of our hearts. Jesus desires to make our acquaintance. He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him” (Rev. 3:20). We do not have to prepare our heart for Him. Just open it and say, “Lord enter.” He will come into that heart, clean it up, and make it a Christian heart. He longs to come into the heart of every person and make true Christians of them.

The greatest need of our lives is to deepen our acquaintance with Jesus Christ. The greatest need of this world is to know Jesus. I don’t know of any group of people who are better equipped to go out and bring the world to Jesus than those who are right here. We know Him. He is a Friend of ours. Every person we meet should be introduced to our Friend so they too may know Him.

I shall close with this text found in Hosea, chapter 6, verse 3. Hosea is speaking about knowing the Lord. “Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth” (R.S.V.). This means that we should do something about it. We should use our energy, our time, and our talent to know the Lord better—to increase our acquaintance with Him and to become true friends of God. Let us press on to know the Lord.

THE BIBLE contains four amazing mysteries that are fundamental to the Christian religion. These basic subjects extend through the Scriptures. A recognition of these pillars of the Christian faith will reveal to the student a knowledge of the grand central themes of the Bible. He will be able to view the Word as a whole and to see the relation of its parts.

The Christian religion is composed of a combination of mysticism and dogma. It is the mysteries of our religion that inspire reverence and keep people true to their faith. Mysticism, because it is a mystery, must be accepted by faith. Finite human beings cannot fully understand these subjects, but if they are accepted they will support the doctrines in such a way that they will not be a burden.

These four mysteries, because they are fundamental, serve to make the Bible story more connected and reasonable. Such primary pillars of truth can be compared with the warp of a piece of cloth, which runs lengthwise throughout the bolt. It is the warp that gives strength to material. The basic colors are found in the warp. Durability is a characteristic of the warp. Contrasted with the warp is the woof, or crosswise threads, which the weaver uses to give luster, brilliance, and support to the finished product. The latter are the doctrines of religion.

The Master Weaver has used important, though secondary subjects, to lend support to the four central themes of the Scriptures. However, putting first things first, it is vital for the seeker of truth to recognize primary Bible subjects, and then the important supporting doctrines. There is a danger in stressing secondary and lesser doctrines first, for basic truth might then be overlooked.

God.—Very early in the Scriptures the first basic subject is introduced. It is found in Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God." Readily it is seen that God is a fundamental subject extending from the beginning to the end of the Bible. As finite beings we cannot fully comprehend the greatness and glory of God. Profound mysteries surround this subject, which we are obliged to accept by faith. No Christian will doubt the existence of God, for the heavens declare His glory. Only the fool has said, "There is no God." The Holy Scriptures proclaim that God has existed from eternity, and will exist into eternity. He is the Supporter of the universe and of all the life therein. It is further proposed that the Godhead consists of three distinct Beings, one in purpose. Deity comprises no secondary beings. All are original, self-existent, uncreated, uncreated. Of this Triad, Christ was the Son of God in purpose from the "foundation of the world." He came to earth, in fact, as the sinless, spotless Son of God, taking up the work of the first Adam where he began (not where he failed).

He is called the second Adam, for He took the first Adam's place. Nearly two thousand years ago a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven from the throne of God, saying, "Lo, I come." "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me. . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me).
to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:5-7). “In these words is announced the fulfillment of the purpose that had been hidden from eternal ages. Christ [the Second Person of the Godhead] was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, ‘A body hast Thou prepared Me.’ Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity,—the invisible glory in the visible human form.”—The Desire of Ages, p. 23.

In correctly interpreting the Bible story, it is important to see that Christ was the only human being equal to the Law. He lived a perfect, sinless life as our substitute and surety, and so could be the Saviour of mankind.

Creation.—The second great mystery is also introduced in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” This simple statement lays the very foundation for the Bible story, for here is where the Bible begins. Creation is indeed a mystery, as are God and the other basic principles of the Christian faith. Who can fully comprehend the mystery of Creation? Man cannot create in the manner depicted in the Scriptures. Neither can he understand the God of Creation. So we tend to limit God because we do not see how He could possibly have done it. This is the reason man has doubted this fundamental Christian belief, and substituted as truth a doctrine of men.

Creation has been under fire for centuries, yet it is the only logical explanation for the world and its contents that has borne the test of time. If doubted, every belief in God and the Bible would be done away with. Should God not be the Creator of the universe, He is not God. Disbelief in one part of the Scriptures tends to cause disbelief in another. Soon one does not know what to believe, and confidence is lost in God’s Holy Word.

The inspired writers of the Scriptures were agreed upon Creation. In Genesis the record states, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” This theme was followed by Luke as he recorded the genealogy of Christ in unmistakable terms (Luke 3:23-38). “The son of Mathusala, . . . the son of Enoch, . . . the son of Seth, . . . the son of Adam, which was the son of God.” This passage leaves no room for speculation as to what he felt about the origin of mankind. If Adam was the earthly father of Christ, it is also logical to believe that he was the father of the human race. Reference to the creation of man as recorded in Genesis forms part of a quotation by Christ found in Mark 10:6: “From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.” Paul, who more than any other one man has had a tremendous impact upon the thinking and philosophy of the early Christian church, also brings out the fact that the human race originated with one man, namely Adam (Rom. 1:20, 25; 5:12, 19; 1 Cor. 15:45). Additional evidence among apostolic writers is found in James 3:9 and Jude 14. Approximately twenty of the fifty Biblical references to Creation appear in the New Testament. We must conclude that these writers were in harmony with Luke. Not one of them maintained that humanity arose from a long line of germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds.

(To be continued)

THE DARKEST The darkest day was the day Christ died. It was a dark day for God the Father. He witnessed every moment of His Son’s passion. The divine pulse quickened at the pain inflicted on the Innocent One. There was no joy in heaven while Christ suffered on earth.

It was a dark day for the angels. He who had been their beloved Commander was now prey for evil men and angels. They beheld in full grief every act committed against His person. They trembled with emotion at His suffering and marveled that He called them not to His aid.

It was a dark day for the devil. All during the life of Christ the devil had tempted Him to sin, but to no avail. Satan’s only hope of success lay in this one prospect. When Christ died without trespassing, the devil’s doom was sealed.

It was a dark day for the apostles. Their dreams were of Christ as an earthly ruler, setting up an earthly kingdom. They would, of course, be His co-rulers. They saw in His death the failure of their grand ambitions. Crestfallen, they forsook Him and fled.

Howbeit, this day that was our darkest is indeed our brightest. It was the day the “price” was paid and sin’s dominion broken. It was a day of redemption and of the emancipation of the human race. It is paradoxical but true that in the “shedding of blood” lies remission. His tragedy is our triumph. Thus, this darkest day is our brightest, for on it Christ died for our sins!

E. E. C.

THE MINISTRY
Finishing God’s Work

W. E. MURRAY

Vice-President, General Conference

When Jesus was on the earth He endeavored to reveal to mankind the fact that He was the divine Son of God. The people had a hard time believing it; He faced much doubting and encountered many barriers. On one occasion He said, “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake” (John 14:11). The things that He did, the way He did them, when He did them, where He did them—all testified to His divinity and to His love and mercy. In Psalm 111:2 we find these words: “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.” He has made His wonderful works to be remembered. O that we would work in a way that would be great and that we could say, “This is an example of how to work!” God’s workmen would do well to understand His ways and His purposes, for it is through us that His work to a great degree is to be accomplished.

If we read the last few chapters of The Great Controversy we will find described in great detail how God’s work is to be finished. We can learn how this is to be done by studying things that have happened in the past. The experiences of human beings as recorded in the Bible are examples of the way God has worked in the past and how He may work in the future.

Now when we speak about finishing the work of God in the earth there is one example that has been a great inspiration to my soul. It is the example of Zerubbabel as he endeavored to finish the building of the Temple after the Captivity.

You will remember the circumstances that surrounded this experience. Several people had made attempts to rebuild Jerusalem. The foundation had been laid, the walls had been put up, and a good work had been done, but the work had not been finished. Beginning is important, keeping the work going is important, but it is more important to finish the task. That is our great challenge today—to finish the work God has given us to do. There were plenty of obstacles in those days. The Samaritans came up and hindered the people. They influenced them into thinking it wasn’t time to finish the Lord’s work; it was time to fix up their own places so they could live in them. In other words, they said, “Our house first, Thy house second.” But that was not the way God wanted them to work. So He told Haggai the prophet to tell the people, “Consider your ways.” Then we read: “The Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel . . . and the spirit of Joshua . . . and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord” (Haggai 1:14). God used the remnant to finish the work of the Temple.

We claim to be the remnant church, God’s remnant people. In the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation, we are told Satan went to make war with the remnant. God works with innumerable hosts in the invisible world, but in the visible world He uses only a few. When He wanted to make the Jewish nation He called one man, Abram, and said, “Look at the stars. I am going to use you to make a great nation.” Think of the wanderings of that
man and his people; building an altar here and an altar there, apparently a people without a purpose, but God was using them to do a great work. Thus it was in Zerubbabel's time. A large number of people had been left behind in Babylon. They were not disturbed about rebuilding the Temple. But God stirred up a few among them, and sent them off on a mission to build the city and the Temple once again. Zerubbabel was the head of the group and they finally finished the work. Let us take courage, brethren—the work of God will be finished by a remnant.

When God wanted the Temple rebuilt He said: "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel . . . ; and be strong O Joshua, . . . and be strong all ye people." How wonderful it is that we can draw our strength from God. When He says, "Be strong," I believe He means that we can be strong if we obey Him and follow His plan. When God commands He enables. We are told: "As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings."—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 333.

God's work needs you, my brethren, but you need a thousand times more to be in God's work. To everyone who becomes a partaker of His grace, the Lord appoints a work for others. Much can be accomplished when all work together. God help us today as leaders to carry the message to our people that all are to have a part in the finishing of the work.

The work of the Seventh-day Adventist movement is to evangelize. When the Lord Jesus sent out His disciples to do this work, He said to them, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Men have lived among dangers, men have suffered endless sacrifices, but they were sustained by the promise, "I am with you." Today we should have a new awareness of the value of that wonderful statement, "I am with you."

God's work is going to be finished in the midst of opposition. There was opposition in the time of Zerubbabel, and there will be even greater opposition in our day.

People may scoff and ridicule. That is what they did when the faithful were trying to build the Temple, but God brought them through and they finished it. God help us to be true in times of persecution and stress. Those who are true to God will be menaced, denounced, proscribed. Their only hope will be in the mercy of God. Their only defense will be prayer. As we face the possibility of persecution, as we face even the possibility of division in our own families, in our church, may the God who was with Zerubbabel be with us as we finish His work.

When this is done and Jesus comes, history will be an open book, the mysteries of the past will be made clear. So let us put our all into the finishing of the work of God and so hasten the greatest of all events—the coming of Jesus Christ.

**THE RAT** There is a business aspect to the Christian faith. It has ever been so. The Lord's Supper had to be arranged. Disciples were appointed to see to every detail. Procedure was established for extracting the money from the mouth of a fish for the payment of the Temple tax. The great gathering on the hillside, where thousands were fed with a minimum of supply, was accompanied with meticulous organizational detail. Subsequently the business aspects of the work of the church were committed to Spirit-filled men who were consecrated to this purpose.

There is a form of fanaticism that would depreciate, if not separate, the Martha-like aspects of church work, labeling it as being not the better part. This is not true of the King's business. Attention to detail and financial responsibility are spiritual operations when connected with the church of God. It is a necessary part of the Lord's program.

Equally fallacious is the increasingly popular theory that business and administrative work supercedes the preaching of the Word in importance and responsibility. The whole question is academic, for one cannot proceed without the other. To surrender to the aforementioned concept is to invite a ministerial rat race—in search of the elusive answer to the question "Who shall be the greatest?" The glorification of church office has stymied many a religious movement toward revival. And it has robbed the pulpits of our cities of some of the most effective preaching talent. Is it really advancement to leave the public desk as a fruitful soul winner for another line of responsibility that precludes this? This misplaced emphasis can cause history to repeat itself. Then let the emphasis be placed again where it should be. On service, not being served, on work, not supervision, and on risking all, and not playing it safe, and the idealism that once fired young hearts to do and die will be rekindled—and our pulpits will no longer know the poverty of numbers. And we will usher in again that long-departed day when a man will choose to remain on the front line and fight rather than accept "greater responsibility."

E. E. C.

The Ministry
Communion in the Worship Hour

A. A. LEISKE
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The proper approach to worship has concerned faithful men ever since the first crime was committed by Cain, whose mistaken idea of worship led him to murder his brother Abel. In the days of Micah the prophet, the proprieties of worship were again brought into focus when he said, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Then comes the classic answer—"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; ... do justly, ... love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6: 6-8).

Today in our earnestness for the finishing of the work of God upon earth we might be able to paraphrase the questions of Micah by substituting certain promotional objectives, as for example, in place of "thousands of rams," would it be more meaningful if we said thousands of subscriptions for the Signs or These Times? And in place of "ten thousands of rivers of oil" say ten thousand Silver Vanguards for Ingathering? It is good to have goals and objectives so long as such goals do not destroy humility and get in the way of worship.

The consciousness that the believers’ worship is acceptable to God brings great peace and calmness to the heart of every Christian. But it is so easy to unconsciously accept a custom or follow a tradition in some ritualistic round of religious service and fail to discern that God is not present, however laudable the method of worship may appear to men.

If the Lord of heaven were to enter into our church sanctuary some Sabbath morning we might well be shocked, especially if He were to say to the waiting congregation: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55: 8, 9). We all recognize that even after we have done our best we come far short of the standards of God. This should cause us to give more study to our approach to God in Sabbath services that our worship might really be acceptable to Him.

The messenger of the Lord counsels us to "weed out of our conversation everything that is harsh and severe."—Testimonies to Ministers, p. 225. This is good counsel not only for us individually in our everyday life but also for the church as a whole regarding our worship hour. And we as a people would profit greatly if we would accept this counsel as a standard of conduct in the regular Sabbath services and especially during the Communion and the ordinance of humility.

I have found through experience that there is sometimes an unconscious feeling of awkwardness among our believers regarding our communion services. This, I believe, could be removed and changed so that this sacred worship hour might be the most inspirational of all our services, and be more acceptable to the Holy Spirit as well as to believers and even unbelievers.
I have also noticed that there is some uneasiness in having this sacred service conducted during the eleven o'clock hour, especially where we have large congregations. Instead of seeking to solve the problems and remove the awkwardness of this sacred service, it is shifted to a remote and more secluded hour when only believers are present.

The same inspired counsel quoted above declares that “the prevailing monotony of the religious round of service in our churches needs to be disturbed. . . . The Holy Spirit’s power will move upon hearts when this dead, lifeless monotony is broken up, and many will begin to work in earnest who never before thought of being anything but idle spectators.”—Ibid., p. 204.

Is there anything the church could do today to change the “monotony” of the Communion Sabbath? How might we turn mere spectators into participants and create in them the desire to become earnest workers in the cause of God? In answering these questions let us think of that first Lord’s Supper when the Master served His disciples. This, you remember, was only a few hours before His trial and crucifixion. First He prepared those who were to partake by washing their feet, a beautiful symbol of cleansing their hearts. Then He gathered them around Him as He talked about the divine provision for our victory over sin.

Would it help if our elders, deacons, and deaconesses were to conduct the first service of preparation between Sabbath school and church? To prevent undue haste in this service of preparation it might be wise to plan an extra ten minutes between Sabbath school and the worship hour. It would not be difficult to have the church members separate immediately following Sabbath school; then when the whole congregation meets for the service of worship, instead of the pulpit being in the center of the rostrum the Lord’s table could be there. The elders and pastor could take their places immediately around the communion table, and worship could be led from the table of the Lord. As the pastor expounds the Word from his place at the head of the table he could more easily lead the congregation to enter into the spirit of real family fellowship, as did the Master and His disciples. And this could be done in the ancient way as was the Sabbath worship in Nazareth when the Scripture says, “And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4: 20, 21).

It was customary for the rabbi to be seated as a teacher when giving forth his message. If the communion worship hour were made a real type of the final great supper of the Lamb it would have far-reaching effects upon the congregation. It is always inspiring when the pastor draws lessons from the Word of God that focus the attention upon the great marriage supper of the Lamb, when immortal saints from all the ages will meet around a table miles and miles in length and be served by Him whose victory on the cross makes possible our victory over sin. We conquer through the blood of the Lamb. This should be emphasized at every communion service.

Our congregations need to experience a new Pentecost, and we believe it will help if such a simple plan as this is carried out. It could well have been that the apostolic church was seated around the communion table when the Holy Spirit fell, for we read in Acts 2:2: “Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.”

This suggestion is not an attempt to be different, but a sincere desire to encourage true fellowship and also break up the “monotony of the religious round of service in our churches,” as we are admonished by the messenger of the Lord.

No service is richer in spiritual possibilities than the communion service, especially if the choir were to sing quietly that beautiful hymn “Break Thou the Bread of Life” while the deacons distribute the bread to the congregation. And again the consecrated choir might echo the feelings of all hearts as they sing “My Jesus, I Love Thee” as the congregation receives the wine representing the spilt blood of Christ for the sins of the world.

When the entire membership joins anew in worship through the communion service they cannot help radiating the love of God

(Continued on page 32)
The Seventh-day Adventist position on the use of intoxicating beverages has ever been consistent and Biblical. The church has always taken the unequivocal stand that alcoholic drinks are debilitating to body and mind, and hence are not to be used by the child of God, for “if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:17). Not only does the use of such beverages defile body and mind but the result of their continued use makes a person unfit to enter the kingdom of heaven (chapter 6:10). Alcohol is formed by the process of fermentation. Fermentation signifies death, death is the result of sin, hence fermentation is a type of sin.

There is an obvious disagreement on the part of various students of the Bible as to the use of beverages termed “wine” in the Scriptures. Numerous Biblical scholars, both past and present, however, are in harmony with the belief that the word “wine” as used in the Bible has reference to fermented liquor. In some instances this seems almost to be taken for granted, thus implying a falsehood. Other sources are more emphatic that the wines used in Bible days were, in general, fermented. Dr. William Smith, in his Dictionary of the Bible, is a case in point. He writes:

*If the above quotation be even generally true, there would be an evident contradiction on the part of Bible writers as to just what is signified by the word “wine,” a fermented or an unfermented product. Admittedly, in a hot climate, without the benefit of refrigeration, the pure juice of the grape had to be taken soon after it was produced in order to avoid fermentation, but even this assumption cannot be taken to mean that every instance of the usage of the word “wine” in the Bible has reference to fermented wine.*

That the Bible writers make a distinction between the wines of the Bible is obvious. In the Old Testament the Aaronic priests were forbidden to drink wine or strong drink while ministering about the tabernacle (Lev. 10:9). Those under the Nazarite vow were likewise prohibited from taking fermented wine (Num. 6:2, 3). These prohibitions cannot possibly have reference to “the pure blood of the grape,” in which there was “a blessing” (Deut. 32:14; Isa. 65:8).

The New Testament record is likewise consistent. Christ’s first miracle at the marriage feast was to produce “good wine” in an emergency. This was the pure juice of
the grape. Note this inspired statement: It was Christ who directed that John the Baptist should drink neither wine nor strong drink. It was He who enjoined similar abstinence upon the wife of Manoah. And He pronounced a curse upon the man who should put the bottle to his neighbor’s lips. Christ did not contradict His own teaching. The unfermented wine which He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. Its effect was to bring the taste into harmony with a healthful appetite.—The Desire of Ages, p. 149.

The Saviour’s final act with His disciples was the institution of the Lord’s Supper to take the place of the Passover supper. That the wine used on this occasion was unfermented is established by the fact that during the Passover season leaven and all other things fermented were not to be found in any Hebrew home (Ex. 12:15). It is unthinkable that the wine used to represent His blood (1 Cor. 11:25) would bear the taint of ferment and its cause, which is death. Jesus said to the disciples, “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:29). The wine used at the Lord’s Supper was called the “fruit of the vine.” Ferment is a type of sin, and since in Him was no sin, the wine that represents His blood must be without ferment.

The Old Testament records that “mingled” wine was used at festivals (Prov. 9:2, 5) and occasions of excess (Isa. 5:22). Such a mixture of wines evidently had a delirious effect (Prov. 23:29, 30). It is significant to note that “wine mingled with myrrh” was offered to Jesus at His crucifixion to deaden the pain (Mark 15:23), but He refused it because of its stupefying effect upon the brain. The Saviour of man needed the powers of His whole being to triumph over the adversary in those last crucial hours, and thus He refused that which would have helped ease His pain.

It should be noted in passing that in Bible times the vine was not cultivated wholly for the purpose of producing wine, but for other products as well. Dr. Eli Smith, who spent years in the Holy Land, writes, “Wine is not the most important, but rather the least so, of all the objects for which the vine is cultivated.” I believe it is significant that nearly every one of the Hebrew words that stand for the product of the vine, are each rendered simply as “wine.” The marginal reading of Hosea 3:1 reveals to the lay reader that the word “wine” has also the meaning of “grapes.”

A careful examination of the use of the word “wine” in its original setting of the Hebrew and Greek will clearly reveal the fact that two kinds of wine are used in the Scriptures—one intoxicating and the other unintoxicating.

The Hebrew is a very compact language and yet it is rich in synonyms. For example, there are thirteen words in Hebrew for the English word “man.” It has more than sixty different words for the word “take.” There are eleven words that are translated “wine” in our Bibles, but a translation that makes one English word stand for a dozen Hebrew words, must certainly destroy many shades of meaning. The eleven words we translate “wine” evidently do not all refer to wine as we understand it, intoxicating or unintoxicating, but also to other products of the vine. It isn’t necessary, therefore, to examine all eleven Hebrew words translated “wine,” for the testimony of the Hebrew Bible rests largely upon three main words and their uses.

1. Old Testament

1. Tīrōsh. The examination of the references used where this word occurs leaves little doubt that the wine referred to is of the harmless, unintoxicating variety. The word was used thirty-eight times and is always associated with that which is good. Tīrōsh was given to sustain man (Gen. 27:37); it gladdens the heart (Ps. 104:15); it produces gladness and prosperity (Prov. 3:10); it is equated with the good fruit of the earth (Hosea 2:22). (See also Joel 2:19, Micah 6:15, and Zechariah 9:17.)

2. Shekar. The word “wine” as translated from Shekar is always a drink that beyond question is intoxicating, and its general rendering in our English Bibles as “strong drink” is quite appropriate. There is not one instance where this word is sanctioned by Divinity. Notice its usage: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging” (Prov. 20:1); it brings sorrow and contention (Prov. 23:29, 30); priests and prophets have erred through strong drink (Isa. 28:7); woe to them that follow strong drink (Isa. 5:11).

3. Yayin. The texts in which this word is found reveal that it is merely a generic word having reference to wine in general. It is used both with favor and disfavor in
the Scriptures, the context alone revealing whether intoxicating or unintoxicating wine is intended. This word occurs 140 times in the Old Testament. Notice how that both types of wine are signified by the word yayin: Noah “drank of the wine, and was drunken” (Gen. 9:21); “How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine” (1 Sam. 1:14); “Had taken of them bread and wine” (Neh. 5:15); “Buy wine and milk . . . without price” (Isa. 55:1, used figuratively).

Hosea 4:11 provides a good example of the usage of two of the above Hebrew words: “Whoredom and wine [yayin] and new wine [tirosh] take away the heart.” Notice that yayin, the generic word for wine, and tirosh, the word for unintoxicating wine, are here associated with whoredom and are said to “take away the heart.” This is an indictment against the exploitation of appetite and points to the state of degradation in which all things minister to sensuality and the carnal nature. This could well be said in reference to overindulgence of good food and drink as well as intoxicants.

II. New Testament

There are three Greek words that are translated “wine” in the New Testament. The word used mostly is oinos; however, there are two other words that are used once each which have reference to intoxicating wine; they are sikera and gleukos, used in the following texts: “[John the Baptist] shall drink neither wine [oinos] nor strong drink [sikera]” (Luke 1:15); “Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine [gleukos]” (Acts 2:13).

The Septuagint uses the Greek oinos to translate both yayin and tirosh—the former referring to wine in general, the latter to unintoxicating wine. On the basis of this, careful scholarship should attend the interpretation of those texts where oinos is used, taking cognizance of the context in which the word is found. This alone determines whether oinos should be rendered as an intoxicating beverage or not. Notice the usage of oinos in the following texts: Luke 7:39—“For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.” Luke 10:34—“And [the good Samaritan] went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.” John 4:46—“So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine.” The word oinos is used in each of the above texts, but obviously different kinds of wine are being set forth.

Some select certain passages in which the word “wine” is used, not knowing the usages in the original languages, thus distorting the true meaning to suit their own purposes. It is inconceivable, for instance, that Paul would counsel the early church deacons (1 Tim. 5:23) or aged women (Titus 2:3) to use shekar in the one instance and to shun it in the other, for Paul knew that intoxicating wines were forthrightly condemned in the Old Testament, the Bible of his day.

The study of the wines of the Bible reveals the fact that for every good thing that God has made, Satan has made a counterfeit. Nowhere in the Scriptures can it be proved that God has put His endorsement on the use of intoxicating wine. He has given man the pure juice of the grape for his enjoyment and benefit. He provided it as a symbol of the spilt blood of Jesus Christ for our sins, and greatest of all, we have the Saviour’s promise: “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:29).

“Those men who are not called of God are generally the very ones that are the most confident that they are so called and that their labors are very important. They go into the field and do not generally exert a good influence; yet in some places they have a measure of success, and this leads them and others to think that they are surely called of God. It is not a positive evidence that men are called of God because they have some success; for angels of God are now moving upon the hearts of His honest children to enlighten their understanding as to the present truth, that they may lay hold upon it and live. And even if self-sent men put themselves where God does not put them and others to think that they are so called and that their labors are very important. They go into the field and do not generally exert a good influence; yet in some places they have a measure of success, and this leads them and others to think that they are surely called of God. The souls who receive the truth from them receive it to be brought into trial and bondage, as they afterward find that these men were not standing in the counsel of God. Even if wicked men talk the truth, some may receive it; but it does not bring those who talked it into any more favor with God. Wicked men are wicked men still, and according to the deception they practiced upon those who were beloved of God, and according to the confusion brought into the church, so will be their punishment. Their sins will not remain covered, but will be exposed in the day of God’s fierce anger.”—Early Writings, pp. 98, 99.
“China! China! I cannot get away from the burden!” It was the voice of an old man, Abram La Rue, former gold miner, seaman, shepherd, and colporteur. His simple, unswerving faith led him at an advanced age to light the torch of truth by the China Sea in Hong Kong. He arrived in 1888, a lone fisherman for souls; but his self-supporting ministry as our first missionary to the Far East has made his experience an inspiration to those faced with the gigantic challenge of evangelizing China with a population approaching one fourth of humanity.

Abram La Rue boarded ships bound for the ends of the earth and scattered literature among men whose hearts were often as troubled as the seas upon which they spent their lives. Amid the darkness of heathenism he labored to hasten the return of the Lord whom he followed in a life of sacrificial service. His five years of solitary labor were eloquently brought before the assembled General Conference in 1893. A giant of faith was pleading his cause.

Stephen N. Haskell, Bible scholar, "father of the tract and missionary society," pioneer, and promoter of missions extraordinary, was speaking: "Let me speak in behalf of China... How many missionaries have we in China? We have one old man about eighty years old, Brother La Rue... Do you not think God is opening the way for work in China?"—General Conference Bulletin, Feb. 20, 1893, pp. 294-296.

The question must be asked again today as we face doors that are locked to missionary evangelism in China. But today's witness for truth in Hong Kong is not one old pioneer in a tropical helmet boarding visiting boats from his sampan in the harbor. Now in the little colony there are more than 2,500 students in Adventist schools with an enthusiasm and evangelistic energy of unlimited potential. South China Union College at scenic Clearwater Bay is developing into the Chinese training center of Asia. In the pattern of the pioneer missionary to the Orient and of Christ the master fisherman, the department of religion of the college has sponsored an adventure in evangelism, Operation Sea-Light.

It has been found that youth evangelism should include: (1) A plan which fits into the student life, giving proper consideration to class and school obligations; (2) a program with activities which challenge the faith and imagination of Missionary Volunteers; (3) a location appropriate for young workers of limited experience, where the gospel "fishing" is quite easy. Operation Sea-Light, with weekend and afternoon evangelistic adventure in villages near the college campus and aboard boats in the Hong Kong bays, has provided students with outstanding opportunities to witness for Christ.

To begin the program missionary doctors were invited to accompany students and teachers on friendly medical missionary calls to neighboring villages. The regular clinics generously provided by the doctors during their free time were followed up with literature visitation and branch Sabbath school work. As the students developed in the work they were given training in child evangelism and assisted in preparing for and the taking of evening meet-
ings in places where the interest was good.

The challenge of isolated coastal communities and Hong Kong's 150,000 boat dwellers made the need for a boat for evangelism a subject of prayer which God answered in a most interesting way. On the other side of the Pacific, Dr. Arthur Nelson took time from his medical practice to attend the funeral of a Catholic patient who was a victim of cancer. The widow of the patient, impressed by her Adventist doctor's sympathy, offered him the nearly completed cabin cruiser her husband had built. The doctor replied that he did not feel in a position to purchase a boat. "I don't want to sell you the boat; I want to give it to you!" the lady explained. The doctor answered that he could not personally accept the gift, but mentioned that his missionary son in Hong Kong was in need of a boat and he would be willing to accept it on his behalf, sell it, and forward the funds for a mission boat if she wished. Pleased with the suggestion, the widow agreed and Operation Sea-Light soon had its first boat. Today the student evangelism "fleet" in Hong Kong includes: a sturdy Diesel-powered 27-foot Chinese junk, Sea-Light I, which regularly carries students to branch Sabbath schools and church services they are conducting; Sea-Light II, a 15-foot outboard powered sailing sampan for short trips and visitation work; and the flagship, a unique 37 by 17-foot floating chapel-clinic and sea-evangelism center, the Roberts Sea-Light, named for donors—friends of the college—the Gilbert Roberts family. The chapel boat anchored in a busy fishing-village bay will seat 75 (but has had as many as 300 aboard during student evangelism programs) and has two doctors' offices where as many as 75 to 100 patients are seen during the free Sunday clinics held by missionary doctors Heald, Young, and Bruske, of the Adventist sanitarium. Boat children enjoy gathering on the spacious top deck for stories, songs, and pictures presented by the students as parents listen to other youth evangelists in the chapel below. Picture programs on the deck have transformed waters near the Sea-Light into a boat "drive-in theater."

The college was privileged to have visiting evangelist H. M. S. Richards address the large audience which came for the dedication service of the chapel-clinic boat on the beach near the campus. As he spoke from a rock pulpit on the shore, students were inspired and challenged by the familiar "Voice": "Christianity itself began by the sea. Jesus Christ was the first great preacher by the sea. It is very appropriate that sea evangelism should be carried on here in Hong Kong."

Now jointly supported by the college, the mission, and the Adventist sanitarium, Operation Sea-Light is an adventure in fellowship and team evangelism fulfilling again the ancient prophecy: "By the way of the sea... the people which sat in darkness saw great light" (Matt. 4:15, 16).

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Dr. A. Nelson at the stern of Sea-Light I. It carries students to branch Sabbath schools and church services which they conduct.

February, 1965
Faith and the Golden Calf

GARY B. PATTERSON
Pastor, Oregon Conference

Faith is one of the most important and vital experiences into which the Christian may enter, but it is also one of the most misunderstood and misapplied tenets of Christian doctrine.

The general opinion exists in the minds of many that faith and the power to work miracles are the same thing. Many believe that only those who have such power are true possessors of faith. Miracles surely have played an important part in the establishment of faith, but they are not faith.

The results of a great miracle are the same today as they were in the days of Christ. Almost everyone is forced to believe when the strong evidence of the supernatural as seen in a miracle is presented. Only one who will not see can reject such a manifestation of the power of God.

Belief and faith are not the same thing. Many fail to understand that there is a vital distinction. There are those who believe in God who do not have faith in Him. There are even those who, in spite of their own desire not to believe in God, believe anyway. An example of this kind of belief is recorded in the scripture, “the devils also believe” (James 2:19). But this belief is not coupled with faith.

What Is Your Faith?

Another common error is often put in the form of a question. One may ask you, “What is your faith?” This is like asking, “What is your hand?” or any other part of you. Your faith is a living, integral part of your total being. It is one factor contributing to the stature of the whole man. Without faith, man is lacking a part of himself every bit as much as if he were lacking a hand or a leg. Your faith is not your denomination any more than your hand is a part of your house. Your hand is used in the service of your house and your faith is used in the service of your God.

Faith Healing

Another error in the understanding of the work of faith has come through the work of so-called faith healers. Though some may claim, and have impressive evidence of, actual healings, the Scripture makes it clear that this is not the proper use of faith. It was never designed to be used as a tool or as a weapon with which man may force God. It was not made to be a lever that man could place in the heavenly courts to move heavenly powers to his own ends. Such usage of faith is not Biblical and it violates the very nature of God and His omniscience.

Many may be heard to say, “I just didn’t have enough faith.” This may be true, for all can see the need of more faith, but the reason behind this statement is often wrong. Those who make it usually have passed through an experience in which they were praying for some specific thing that they felt was of utmost importance and their request was not granted in the manner they wished. This experience brings many to the place where they doubt God because they cannot understand why He deals with them in this way. When that which was believed and expected is thwarted they have nothing left. True faith in God, however, when put to the test will still cling to God and in Him seek the answer.

There are many examples of faith given in the Scriptures, both of true faith and that which springs from belief in God’s power only. The classic example of belief without faith is the story of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.
The ten plagues, which finally convinced even Pharaoh of the power of God, were truly miraculous. God was working for Israel and they all believed in Him. They left Egypt under the direction of the cloud and the fire and all were confident that God would work for them.

Just out of Egypt trouble began to arise. Pharaoh had second thoughts as to what the release of the Israelites would mean to the economic conditions in his land. He realized that none of his people knew how to do the work that Israel had been doing for them for more than 400 years, and most surely the nation would experience financial as well as industrial ruin. The only course of action that could save his nation was to recapture his escaping slaves. This he set out to do, and when Israel saw they were trapped between the sea and Pharaoh's approaching armies they forgot all the belief they had in God and the miracles He had done for them. They even forgot the cloud and the fire that were with them. They doubted God.

Even in this condition God saw fit to deliver them out of the hand of Egypt, and He opened the sea before them so that they crossed between its walls on dry ground.

Three short days from the Red Sea experience we find the camp of Israel lacking water. Seeing a desert oasis they rush forward only to find that the water is bitter and undrinkable. The memory of the deliverance less than a week before vanishes. Their belief disappears under the seeming affliction. The bitter disappointment of the unquenched thirst of the multitude gave name to the place, and it was called Marah. Again everyone doubted God and they cried to Moses to give them water. Under the direction of God, Moses cut down a tree and cast it into the bitter water and it became sweet and drinkable. Then everyone believed God.

From Marah we follow Israel to the base of Mount Sinai. Here the supply of food is beginning to run low and again God is doubted. But He performs another miracle and sends bread down from heaven. Under the power of this marvelous gift everyone again believes.

One of the marvels of the Old Testament is its record of the long-suffering of God to these people who doubted Him under every trial or test.

After a time God came down on the mountain to talk with His people and to make a covenant with them. Great manifestations of power were seen on the mountaintop. Thunder and lightning and smoke that put fear into the hearts of the people.

After the covenant was made God called Moses up into the mountain and he was gone for some time, as Deuteronomy 9:9 indicates. After five weeks had elapsed the people became worried. They knew not where Moses was nor what had happened to him. This fear brought up the same reaction as before—doubt of God. This led them to do a most foolish and rash thing.

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Ex. 32:1).

They wanted a new god. The God who had brought them out of Egypt was such a strange and mighty One. His ways were not understandable to the people of Israel. He did what He wanted to do instead of what the people wanted Him to do. They believed in His power, they recognized His superiority over any other power or god, but they could not understand Him. They did not have faith, and a lack of faith is idolatry, for it is an indication that the faith has been put in something else.

Israel wanted to be the creators of God rather than the creatures of His creation. They wanted a god they could control, one they could take where they wanted it to go, one who would not go away on the mountain and do strange things, one who would serve them rather than one they should serve. Thus they decided to have a god of gold, not because of their faith in gold but because of a lack of faith in the true God.

The Scriptures give many examples of idolatry by lack of faith. Though all do not show their idolatry in the form of worshiping a golden calf, it is still the same problem that the calf worshipers had—a lack of faith.

The allegory of the rich man and Lazarus, though often misapplied, is an excellent story for illustrating lack of faith on the part of mankind. The rich man requested Lazarus to go to his five brothers and warn them of their impending doom if
they did not change their ways. But the answer was that even a supernatural event such as a resurrection from the dead would not convince them (Luke 16:30). No doubt they would have been impressed for a time and even have believed, but the benumbing influence of time and the intoxication of human reasoning would eventually convince them that there was really nothing to faith in God.

As Jesus hung upon the cross the faithless leaders of Israel stood before Him in mockery. One said to Him, “Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” But would they have believed and had faith in Him if He had come down? All the proof needed had already been given in superabundance and they did not believe.

Man today is guilty of the same evil in which the Israelites indulged. If some act of God such as Creation, the Flood, or any other supernatural event is beyond the comprehension of man he considers it a fable and some other theory is devised even more fantastic than the one being destroyed. Natural man limits his acceptance to a narrow scope of things, including only what he can see, only what he can touch, what he can understand.

Spiritual man, on the other hand, accepts the two important tenets of faith—all things are possible in God, and God’s will is correct in all things. If these two points could be understood properly one would possess true faith.

Look at faith under the test in the Scriptures. Don’t look at the great miracles for this test—the woman touching the garment, the centurion and his healed servant, nor the healing of the man born blind. Too many have looked here only and have been led astray in their concept of faith by thinking this is the way faith always is to be used. Look past all these to Hebrews 11:36-39. Here lies the secret of true faith, the experience of faith under test. These are the ones who “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; . . . they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.” These had faith that stood the test!

For a closer look at faith in the test consider the experience of the three young men on trial before Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 3:16-18 tells of the understanding these young men had of the two tenets of faith. First, God can deliver us from your hand, O king, and second, if He does not, it makes no difference; we still will not worship your idols. This is a statement of faith in the face of death itself, faith so strong the ruler of the world could not shake it.

The classic example of faith comes from the book of Job. His immortal words are, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). This is true faith in action, true faith in the test, true faith triumphant, when one can rely upon his God even in the face of death and disaster and tragedy.

There is a modern-day experience which parallels the experience of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. The people said Moses had delayed upon that mount. Today mankind is fulfilling a prophecy spoken by Christ nearly 2,000 years ago. Speaking in a parable, He said many people in our day would say, “My lord delayeth his coming” (Matt. 24:48). It is no different in this day than it was in ages past. A lack of faith is still idolatry and this belief of a delayed coming of the Lord has caused man to make idols of such things as securities and pleasures of the world.

Israel was punished for her idolatry. Moses burned the golden calf and put it in the water supply of the camp “and made the children of Israel drink of it” (Ex. 32:20). It was not a pleasant experience. No one likes metallic tasting water, but it was a mild punishment in comparison to the punishment for idolators who must “drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation” (Rev. 14:10). No mixture of mercy will be there at that time, and it will be much more unpleasant than Israel’s punishment.

The reward for those who have faith, however, is markedly different. It is very pleasant. Christ, speaking again in a parable, says, “Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”
The Minister’s Soul-winning Opportunity

H. W. LOWE

Chairman, Research Committee, General Conference

If the empire builder Cecil Rhodes could couple the immensity of the task of colonizing South Africa with the shortness of time, then certainly every alert Adventist preacher should think in two terse phrases as he couples the immense task of evangelism with the imminent Second Advent: “So much to do! So little time!”

Intensity of human effort is not the secret in finishing God’s work, however immense and urgent it may be. The oft-used phrase “Let’s rise up and finish the work” is theologically wrong, since “he will finish the work” (Rom. 9:28). “By my Spirit” is God’s way, not the way of human might.

Having straightened out our theology to that extent, let us not evade the fact that God finishes His work by His Holy Spirit in surrendered men. Paul forever settled this when he gave all the glory for the converted life to the Lord Jesus Christ: “The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,” and “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20, R.S.V.).

Everything in the earthly life of Jesus was done in relation to the salvation of man. Jesus was the ever-alert soul winner. Everywhere He saw souls to be saved. The Christian minister whose life is hidden with Christ in God is both indefatigable in labor and alert in finding souls ready for the kingdom. Yet none of us is too alert nor too perceptive in soul winning.

By well-directed, persevering effort there might be many, very many, more souls brought to a knowledge of the truth.—Testimonies to Ministers, p. 149.

Souls Waiting for Baptism

The church departments are fruitful fields for soul winning, and since the Sabbath school embraces everyone from birth to the end of life, none is a more fruitful field for the minister seeking to get every member of the flock baptized and every member stabilized and built solidly into the truths of the Advent message. Here are souls waiting to be “found” in Christ, and the man who cannot see them surely needs a new anointing of the Holy Spirit.

If “through the grace of Christ, God’s ministers are made messengers of light and blessing” (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 278) to the waiting souls on the outside of the church, much more should they be thus empowered to bring salvation to those who are attending the church through the Sabbath school but are not yet baptized into its membership.

Children can be won for Christ long before they are considered mature enough to be baptized. Dedicated and capable teachers, observant and friendly ministers, lay men and women who are encouraged to befriend the younger members of the flock, and, above all, parents who are understanding and watchful—all contribute something to the conversion of boys and girls. Their subsequent baptism then is almost a foregone conclusion.

When the youth have passed the junior age without baptism, a minister needs to be doubly alert and prayerfully wise. To go beyond the age of fifteen or sixteen without baptism brings our boys and girls into a danger area. After this the readiness of the youth for baptism diminishes, and normally
each passing year multiplies the difficulty of decision. The soul-winning objective for teachers and ministers is to get every young person baptized while the impressionable years are on them. Ministers contribute greatly to the value of their work by carefully watching the psychological time for unbaptized young people to go forward in public confession of Christ.

There will always be some who pass into the youth group unbaptized for certain reasons. They are not easy to work for, and it takes longer to win them at this age than in their earlier years. The wise minister keeps especially near to this group. The youth who enter adulthood unbaptized are in danger. If they enter marriage and are not church members the danger is greater still. But the dedicated minister watches over and assiduously cultivates such people, ever seeking their assent to baptism and responsible church membership.

Watching for Unbaptized Adults

In every church there are some unbaptized adults. For reasons that do not concern us here, men and women worship with us but are unbaptized. A minister works on the assumption that regular attendance should lead logically to full membership. Such cases may have peculiar backgrounds, and an extended association for the cultivation of confidence may be necessary. But there is a potential baptism or rebaptism in each of these cases.

Visitors to our Sabbath schools are a fruitful soul-winning field for ministers, who should endeavor to have all visitors together in a class which he should teach. It is logical to expect baptisms from such classes.

It is obvious that the Sabbath school is a missionary field for every minister. "The Sabbath school, if rightly conducted, is one of God's great instrumentalities to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth," says the servant of the Lord in Councils on Sabbath School Work, page 115, and the minister is involved in this statement because, though others may figure in the routine conduct of the school, he eventually will study the doctrines with the new people and baptize them.

Using the Sabbath school as a contributing agency to the soul-winning program of the church is surely the mark of a keen, alert, dedicated minister.

Are You Selling for Christ?

Are people really not buying, or are you not selling? There's a big difference, and it shows up in other salesmen's order books, according to the National Sales Development Institute.

To demonstrate to his six salesmen that it pays to ask for the order, Carl Kissiah, president of a heating appliance firm in Charlotte, North Carolina, gave each man $20 and sent them out to shop local stores for items priced at five dollars or less. He told them to buy everything a clerk made a genuine effort to sell until the money was gone.

"After talking with more than 50 clerks in a couple of dozen stores," says Kissiah, "my men spent only $11.41 of their $120. This was an instructive experiment. It proves the point we wanted to make with our own salesmen. That is, you've simply got to ask for the order."

As a minister have you failed personally to ask an interested person if he would be willing to be baptized on a specific date?

"A minister may enjoy sermonizing," said Ellen G. White, "for it is the pleasant part of the work and is comparatively easy; but no minister should be measured by his ability as a speaker. The harder part comes after he leaves the desk, in watering the seed sown. The interest awakened should be followed up by personal labor,—visiting, holding Bible readings, teaching how to search the Scriptures, praying with families and interested ones, seeking to deepen the impression made upon hearts and consciences."—Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 255.

If peoples' lives are in accord with our principles, do not procrastinate; ask them point blank if they will make their decision now, not tomorrow, for Christ and His last message. You may be surprised to find how many will accept. But it's up to you to ask them. I know. I had to be asked!

DONALD W. MCKAY
Layman, New York

Communion in the Worship Hour

(Continued from page 22)
to their neighbors, their fellow men, and to one another. "Then will the church have power to move the world."—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 340. Should we not be seeking for this power in ways out of the usual? If this challenge is accepted in the spirit of humility I am confident it will bring great blessing to the church. This service has been instituted to bring spiritual strength to God's people and to lead us into a consecration which will prepare us for the final crisis of this world's history.
What Subjects Shall We Advertise?

DANIEL R. GUILD
Ministerial Association Secretary, Southeast Asia Union

In evangelistic meetings we spend hundreds and even thousands of dollars in advertising. Are we getting our money's worth? Are the needs and interests of people in 1965 essentially the same as those of a generation ago? Do the titles used by such stalwarts as C. T. Ever-son, J. L. Shuler, and H. M. S. Richards in past decades still draw people today? Could we appeal to more people by revising our advertising? Which subject should be used to advertise the opening meeting? Which topics are the most effective for Sunday night meetings during the series?

Many factors naturally enter into the effectiveness of evangelistic advertising. Interest in a particular subject varies with each community. The format of the ad or handbill, the handling of the by-lines, the illustrations, even the type of ink and paper used, all play a part in determining the reader's interest in the advertising piece. If it gives the impression that the meeting is the biggest thing that ever has come to town, the handbill, even without naming a particular topic, will attract some to the lecture out of sheer curiosity.

Preparing a Poll Sheet

Some time ago we prepared a poll sheet in an attempt to discover what type of subject would have the most universal appeal in evangelistic advertising. A printed form was used with the words "Poll of Public Opinion" at the top of the form. Under these words the sheet read, "This poll is being taken to determine the extent of interest the general public has in the following topics. Your cooperation will be appre-
quested reserved tickets for the opening meeting. This corresponded favorably to the Voice of Prophecy and Faith for Today mailing-list response. The response from the local Bible school was about double, or a 4-per-cent response.

The results on the poll were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
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**GROUP I**

- 5 Did a good God make a bad devil?
- 33 Why does a God of love allow war and suffering?
- 62 How Jesus may be real in your life. The secret of happiness.

100

**GROUP II**

- 57 Peace of mind and release from nervous tension may be yours!
- 12 The Bible predicts the coming crash of Communism.
- 31 Bible proof that the atomic bomb will not destroy the world.

100

**GROUP III**

- 29 Will the coming of Jesus to earth be in our day?
- 42 Is heaven a real place? Where is it? When do we go there?
- 28 How near are we to Armageddon? The war that will end war!

100

Order of Popularity of Subjects

- 26 How Jesus may be real in your life. The secret of happiness.
- 21 Peace of mind and release from nervous tension.
- 12 Is heaven a real place? Where is it? When do we go there?
- 10 Why does a God of love allow war and suffering?
- 10 Will the coming of Jesus to earth be in our day?
- 10 How near are we to Armageddon? The war that will end war!
- 8 Bible proof that the atomic bomb will not destroy the world.
- 3 The Bible predicts the coming crash of Communism.
- 0 Did a good God make a bad devil?

A Second Poll

The results of the first poll made it clear that another poll would need to be taken in order accurately to interpret public interest. It was obvious from the first poll that the title “Did a good God make a bad devil?” was not good and should be dropped from the poll sheet. It was also clear to those who took the poll that the subject “How Jesus may be real in your life. The secret of happiness” was really two subjects in one and that this probably accounted for its popularity. The value of the title “Why does a God of love allow war and suffering?” was difficult to interpret because it was pitted against this dual topic. Doctrinal and practical titles were so intermingled in the poll that their relative value could not be determined.

A new questionnaire, which we shall call Poll B, was prepared and completed by 150 people in a nearby community. In Poll B the title “Did a good God make a bad devil?” was dropped from the poll, and the subject “How Jesus may be real in your life. The secret of happiness” was listed as two topics. Thus there were still nine titles on the sheet. These nine titles were so arranged that in Group I all three subjects were purely practical in nature; in Group II, political; and in Group III, doctrinal.

The Results of Poll B

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
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**GROUP I (Practical)**

- 28 The secret of happiness.
- 44 Peace of mind and release from nervous tension may be yours!
- 28 How Jesus may be real in your life.

100

**GROUP II (Political)**

- 28 The Bible predicts the coming crash of Communism.
- 24 How near are we to Armageddon? The war that will end war!
- 48 Bible proof that the atomic bomb will not destroy the world.

100

**GROUP III (Doctrinal)**

- 26 Will the coming of Jesus to earth be in our day?
- 28 Is heaven a real place? Where is it? When do we go there?
- 24 How near are we to Armageddon? The war that will end war!
- 46 Why does a God of love allow war and suffering?

100

Order of Popularity of Subjects

- 20 Why does a God of love allow war and suffering?
- 18 Peace of mind and release from nervous tension may be yours!
- 15 How Jesus may be real in your life.
- 12 The secret of happiness.
- 12 Is heaven a real place? Where is it? When do we go there?
Comparison of the Two Polls

Probably the most practical interpretations that can be made from the two polls will be found by a comparative study of the results of the top choice on each poll. The first poll has been designated Poll A and the second Poll B.

Comparative Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of Popularity of Subjects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poll A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace of mind and release from nervous tension may be yours!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why does a God of love allow war and suffering?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Jesus may be real in your life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The secret of happiness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is heaven a real place? Where is it? When do we go there?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible proof that the atomic bomb will not destroy the world</td>
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<tr>
<td>How near are we to Armageddon? The war that will end war</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will the coming of Jesus to earth be in our day?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible predicts the coming crash of Communism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did a good God make a bad devil? (Not in Poll A.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation between the two polls is very close. The percentages that indicate the top choice are remarkably alike for most titles in both Poll A and Poll B. One noticeable exception of similarity is for the title “Why does a God of love allow war and suffering?” which was pitted against the dual practical subject in Poll A, thereby accounting for the percentage difference. It seems safe to conclude that the position of the ten subjects listed in the chart immediately preceding this paragraph closely indicates the order of their popularity.

Another interesting comparison that can be made is the relative popularity of the three classes of subjects that are listed in Poll A and Poll B.

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Poll A</td>
<td>Poll B</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>21</td>
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In each of the two polls the practical subjects were the most interesting to nearly half of those polled. The doctrinal and political subjects combined seemed to be more interesting to a little more than half of those who were polled. The close similarity of percentage popularity of subject classes is remarkable because of the fact that the group categories were arranged differently in the two polls.

Conclusions

It is evident from these polls that people are as interested in the practical subjects as they are in the doctrinal and political subjects combined. This fact is markedly indicated in the last comparison. It also is clear that doctrinal subjects are still popular with the people. Political subjects such as world conditions reach a certain class of people, but do not seem to be their chief interest.

The conclusion seems warranted that we should take advantage of advertising subjects on world conditions and subjects on doctrine, in order to reach those who are interested in such topics. But doctrinal and political titles should be undergirded with by-lines revealing the practical nature of the subject advertised, thereby doubling our advertising effectiveness. As an example, the topic “Armageddon, Coming World War as Prophesied in Scripture” may appear very cold to the average reader. The efficiency of our advertising results should increase, however, when this topic is boldly supported by such by-lines as “For your peace of mind, for the inner confidence and assurance you need to face the future, you must hear this striking presentation on the war that will end all wars and usher in lasting peace.”

It is my firm conviction that doctrinal and political subjects draw the people because they reveal questions concerning which they have been eager to know the answers. Most of the Protestant churches today preach on happiness, peace of mind, and other subjects of a practical nature.
These things are extremely important, but do they constitute God’s distinctive message for twentieth-century man? Our message is such that it answers the great questions about life, about God, and about the future, which men are longing to know. It takes the combination of both the practical and the political, or the practical and the doctrinal, to get a man out of his easy chair, away from his television set, into his car or onto the streetcar on a crisp cool night, and into a meeting hall.

When this person comes to the service, the message must be presented in such a way that it meets some definite need in his life. This poll reveals that men are longing for a practical message that will bring peace of mind. If our aim is only to impart information on some doctrinal theme, then our hearers will leave disappointed. When the doctrines are related to life, a need is met and men are drawn closer to Jesus and enter into a life of joy and peace.

In the past we have sometimes made grave errors in presenting the theory of truth without presenting Jesus in the truth and making the truth practical to life. The messenger of the Lord has told us:

> “The prophecy of the Saviour of the world, the seed sown may spring up and bear fruit to the glory of God. . . . Had Christ and His redeeming love been exalted in connection with the theory of truth, it might have balanced them on His side.”—Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 393, 394. (Italics supplied.)

There must be a leading along, Christ must be woven into everything that is argumentative as the warp and the woof of the garment. Christ, Christ, Christ is to be in it everywhere, and my heart feels the need of Christ, as I have, seems to me, never felt it more sensibly.—Evangelism, p. 300. (Italics supplied.)

The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and in connection with them the words, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—Gospel Workers, p. 148.

The poll shows a heavy demand for messages that are practical to daily living in a confused and frustrating world. The answer to this demand is not to divorce doctrine from practical godliness. In the above quotations the Lord’s messenger emphasizes the need of making the theory of truth practical by exalting Christ in connection with the theory of truth—not that we should stop preaching the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, but that we make these great subjects practical to life.

To advertise and preach subjects of practical godliness for several nights or for several weeks at the beginning of a campaign will not answer man’s present need. One can hear such preaching in almost any church on Sunday morning, so why should he make the effort to come out on Sunday night? As Seventh-day Adventists we have a powerful message to preach to the world, but it is not to be presented as a dry theory. It is to be given in all of its converting power. Its very heart and fiber should be practical in nature and calculated to give joy, release from nervous tension, and bring peace to troubled hearts and minds. From the very first night of the series every message should be founded in the great doctrines of Scripture, and we should also awaken within the hearts of our hearers a new love for Jesus and make Him real in practical, everyday living.

The results of this poll persuade me that as evangelists we should advertise, preach, and reach hearts with these great doctrinal themes, but that we should never forget that real religion is not in presenting dry theory but in relating that theory to life. To present the truth as a mere system of theology strips it of its power to reach hearts because it is separated from Christ, who is the power and center of the message.

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**Conversions Not Precise and Methodical**

Those men who calculate just how religious exercises should be conducted, and are very precise and methodical in diffusing the light and grace that they seem to have, simply do not have much of the Holy Spirit. . . . Though we cannot see the Spirit of God, we know that men who have been dead in trespasses and sins, become convicted and converted under its operations. The thoughtless and wayward become serious. The hardened repent of their sins, and the faithless believe. The gambler, the drunkard, the licentious, become steady, sober, and pure. The rebellious and obstinate become meek and Christlike. When we see these changes in the character, we may be assured that the converting power of God has transformed the entire man. We saw not the Holy Spirit, but we saw the evidence of its work on the changed character of those who were hardened and obdurate sinners. As the wind moves in its force upon the lofty trees and brings them down, so the Holy Spirit can work upon human hearts, and no finite man can circumscribe the work of God.—Evangelism, p. 288.

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The Ministry
The Shepherd and His Flock

J. O. WILSON
Retired Minister, Louisiana

David, the shepherd-king of Israel, thought of God as the great Shepherd of His people. “The Lord is my shepherd,” he sang; “I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1). And this shepherd-minded, shepherd-natured king of Israel was referred to as a type of the coming Messiah, the real Shepherd of His people (Eze. 34:23).

When Christ came to earth and lived among men, He was pleased to refer to Himself as the Shepherd of His people: “I am the good shepherd,” He said (John 10:11). And when He saw the people without proper leadership He had compassion upon them and thought of them as “sheep having no shepherd” (Matt. 9:36).

Paul refers to the Messiah as “that great shepherd of the sheep” (Heb. 13:20), and Peter calls Him the “chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:4). This suggests that those associated with the Messiah in the care of His people might be looked upon as assistant shepherds or undershepherds. God’s people are repeatedly referred to as a “flock,” and the responsible leaders of God’s people as shepherds—assistants to the Chief Shepherd. Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock” (Acts 20:28); and Peter, giving instruction to church elders, exhorts: “Feed the flock of God” (1 Peter 5:2).

It is therefore well established that those appointed as leaders among the people of God are to consider themselves not as police or governors or judges or dictators, but as gentle shepherds; as Peter says, “Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:3).

And not only pastors and leaders but to some extent every member of the flock is an assistant to the Shepherd. For Paul says that the strong should encourage and help the weak (Rom. 14:1; 15:1). And no one is so weak but that there is someone weaker whom he could and should help. Do we have the tender heart of the true Shepherd?

The Purpose of the Church

The Lord directed His messenger, Ellen G. White, to write these words: “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men.”—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 9. Those whom the Lord would save, He leads into His church. “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

The door of the sheepfold should therefore be open to all who are seeking salvation. And since the Good Shepherd is also the “door,” we may be assured that it is His will that all who flee to Him for safety should be received into the sheepfold (the church). He who stands at the door of every man’s heart and knocks for entrance will surely open the door of the sheepfold to everyone who opens the heart-door to Him. And all assistants to the Good Shepherd should be careful that in their zeal to guard the door against those unworthy of entrance, they do not deny entrance to those whom the Lord is calling to Himself.

It is the work of shepherds to guard their flocks and keep their enemies from entering in to destroy them. Paul exhorted the elders, as shepherds, to “Take heed... to
all the flock. . . . For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:28, 29).

It is also the work of shepherds to see that the sheep are in the fold. To carelessly leave some of the sheep on the outside while guarding against wolves entering the fold, would be as serious an error as to fail to guard against the wolves. The shepherd must care for all phases of his work. He must tenderly gather in the sheep, all of them, as well as sternly refuse entrance to the wolves.

_The True Shepherd Heart_

And this is where the heart of the true shepherd is most likely to be tested. It is sometimes easier to fight the wolf than to tenderly and patiently lead the sheep. Sheep may sometimes give trouble. The shepherd might then be tempted to say, “Then out you go to the wolves, if you cannot behave in here.” He might rashly conclude that the troublemaker is a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” anyway, and should be speedily expelled. But this will never be the attitude of the true shepherd. Not every troublesome occupant of the fold is necessarily a wolf in sheep’s clothing, to be summarily sent out. The shepherd should not consider tranquillity in the fold more important than the salvation of every possible occupant of the fold. His chief concern will not be to get rid of the troublemaker, but to patiently teach and train him.

_Appeal for Gentleness_

Now, it must be apparent and obvious to all, that among the shepherds of God’s flock the chief danger is not in being too gentle and too patient but in being too ready to eliminate those who disturb the peace of the fold. Pastors and leaders of God’s people have sometimes erred in this direction, and our world leaders at the time of the 1954 General Conference session made a most earnest appeal to our denominational workers throughout the world to reform in their methods of dealing with God’s people. It was pointed out that great damage has been done and great loss sustained through the harshness and lack of loving sympathy on the part of those appointed to be shepherds of God’s people.

Members of the flock have also shared in this grievous error and have been entirely too ready to criticize and censure, and to vote the dismissal of weak and wandering fellow members.

The earnest appeal to the Lord’s shepherds and to His people to give up their harsh methods and to cultivate the gentleness of the True Shepherd was most impressively summarized in the book _Shepherd Evangelist_, by Pastor R. A. Anderson. Every worker in the denomination and every member, if possible, ought to read the wonderful counsel contained in this volume. From the chapter “Reclaiming the Wanderers” we quote the following:

“In the New Testament there is scarcely a suggestion about turning people out of the church, but all the emphasis is on keeping them in; or, if some have strayed away, for regaining them and restoring the lost ones to the fold. If, however, because of flagrant, persistent, and defiant apostasy fellowship has to be withdrawn, the church should undertake that awful work with deep humility and much prayer.”

As pastors we do well to study that paragraph carefully. It says that for the church to have to disfellowship a member is an “awful work,” and that when the church has to do such an awful thing it should do so “with deep humility and much prayer.” Notice also that it says that to disfellowship a member is necessary only when there has been “flagrant, persistent, and defiant apostasy.” We quote again:

“The church is the body of Christ. It is the object of His supreme regard. For it He laid down His life. And every individual member is precious to Him. Even the one who to us may appear naturally unattractive is part of His body. And our attitude to such a one is the index of our attitude toward the Lord Himself.

“Viewed in the light of Calvary, the most unlovely of us are worth more than worlds. We do well to remember this when as pastors we are called to deal with our brethren. There will come times when the church should take action concerning some who have made shipwreck of faith. Names may even have to be removed from the church records. But when such occasions arise (and they should be few and far between), the church should humble herself in prayer before God. To dismiss a member from church fellowship should be a most solemn and heart-rending experience. Nothing else in human relationships can
WEBSTER defines soporific as “causing or tending to cause sleep.” The word is a compound word coming from the Latin sopor, meaning “a heavy sleep,” plus the Latin word facere, meaning “to make.” In other words, soporific means to make for a heavy sleep.

Sermons can be sleep inducing. For evidence, watch to see if there are sleeping saints here and there while you are preaching. Don’t ignore them; worse still, don’t excuse yourself, saying, “They may have eaten too much for dinner or supper,” or “They are old and cannot stay awake during church service.” Let every sleeping saint you see be to you like an awakening drug, a mind alkaloid, a nerve-tingling stimulant. It just may be that they didn’t eat too much. It just may be that they are hungry and you aren’t giving them enough spiritual food. Who knows? It may be they aren’t so old. But perhaps your sermon is, and you’ve preached it too many times! And they’ve heard it before.

It is good to check up on yourself as one retired preacher did. This sustentee was still reasonably active in the churches. He was one who couldn’t sleep at night and so he would prepare his sermons while he was in bed during the wee hours while the lights were out. He found that as he prepared his material he went to sleep! He reasoned that if his sermons put him to sleep he could understand why they put other people to sleep. Self-analysis can be good.

If sermon preparation fails to thrill you, literally thrill you, with new thoughts about God and the truth taking shape in your mind, then your sermon will put people to sleep too. If your sermon preparation wakes you up, braces you for the battle, puts a new, holy glint in your eye, you may be sure that it will be stimulating to your congregation as well. Remember that the God who said, “He giveth his beloved sleep,” meant the saints in their beds at night, not the saints in the pews on the Sabbath day.

In the light of these thoughts dismissing members from church fellowship should occur very rarely. Such awful experiences should be “few and far between.” To be disfellowshiped is “far worse than death.” And only when a member has cut himself off from the Spirit of God is he to be removed from the church records. Continuing, the same author adds:

“Do we sense our responsibility as church leaders? Are our members and church officers fully aware of the responsibility they assume when wanting to remove one from the church roll? . . . Some may have been hurried into church membership in order to build up records in a system of competitive evangelism. If that has been true, then it is tragic. But now that they are in, what is the church’s responsibility toward them? . . .
"Once they have entered into covenant relationship with their Redeemer, it is the church's responsibility to help them maintain that experience. Having been baptized, they are now members of the family of God. They are newborn babes and need the nurture and care of the older members of the family. Having risen from the waters of baptism, they should now 'walk in newness of life.' True, some will be weaker than others. This is to be expected. Some infants learn to walk faster than others. And when little ones begin to walk we are not surprised if they are a bit unsteady. If they should fall, all the able members of the family fly to their aid.

"It requires no spiritual grace to criticize a weaker brother. Human nature is ever ready to blame and dispute. But we cannot deal with church members on the mere human level. They, like ourselves, have been made the children of God; they are 'partakers of the divine nature.' (2 Peter 1:4.) And as pastors we should manifest a real concern for them. If there are weak ones, then let us surround them with strength, sympathy, and brotherly love, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. That is real Christianity.

"Our losses in membership should cause alarm. And many of these could be saved to the kingdom if our attitudes as shepherds were only different or if our concern for them were only greater."

But a pastor gets a burden to get rid of troublemakers, or to 'clean up the records.' He recommends the removing of certain names, and the church votes their removal. And often when such an action is taken "there is no weeping, no special supplication, no fasting, no searching of heart on the part of the church officers to see, if, perchance, the cause lay with them."

The last sentence challenges serious thought. Could it be that when a member is delinquent, obstinate, backslidden, the cause of his condition may be found in the pastor or church officers? Certainly this is cause for heart searching with weeping and fasting. If pastors and church officers did more of such heart-searching work, there would be far fewer backsliders and far fewer dismissals from membership. What a challenge this is to shepherds!

"How different is the Lord's method!" Pastor Anderson continues, "When our cases were in the balance, He threw Himself into the breach. He saved a world by the sacrifice of Himself. And what a challenge comes to us in the example of Moses! He was so united to his people that when the Lord said He would destroy them, Moses dared to go into the presence of God and plead that the Lord remove even his own name from the book of life if He could not save those whom He had led from Egypt (Ex. 32:30-32). His flock was more to him than life—more, it seems, than even eternal life. Is yours, dear fellow shepherd?..."

"We need an evangelism that does more than bring people in. We need evangelism that holds them in. Of what use is it to bring new people in the front door of the church while we permit our own members to slip out the back door? And they do not always slip out; sometimes they are driven.

"A few years ago a certain brother was appointed to shepherd a church in a rural area. Coming to this new charge, he very quickly made known his program. He was going to 'clean up' the church. Insignificant irregularities were made the occasion for church investigation and discipline. It was not long before that little church of forty-five members was whittled down to fifteen! His battle cry as he went forth to war against the weaknesses of the church sounded very orthodox, but his methods were as merciless as they were Christless. 'It is better to have six real Christians,' he said, 'than a church full of half Christians.' Such talk is cheap and foolish. How it must delight the devil! Of course we want real Christians in our churches. But real fellowship is not built up by a dictatorship. Only the Spirit of Christ can purify the church of Christ."

"Our members need more than correction; they need care. Confidence and love on the part of the shepherds will do more than censure and discipline. The flock must be led, not driven."

"Jesus said, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' And love must express itself not by noise and clamor but by quiet acts and attitudes of devotion. It is to be regretted that many, 'instead of imitating Christ in His manner of labor... are severe, critical, and dictatorial. They repulse instead of winning souls. Such will never know how many weak ones their harsh words have wounded and discouraged.'"
"It is sobering indeed to realize that having been called to the holy service of winning men and women to Christ, we may be actually turning them away from the Saviour simply because our spirit repels rather than attracts.

"The Master's method was so different. To Him it was more important to win men than to win arguments. And all types were attracted to the Saviour.

"The beauty of His countenance, the loveliness of His character, above all, the love expressed in look and tone, drew to Him all who were not hardened in unbelief. Had it not been for the sweet, sympathetic spirit that shone out in every look and word, He would not have attracted the large congregations that He did.'"

Of the Messiah, the Chief Shepherd of His people, it was prophesied, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench" (Isa. 42:3). So long as there is a spark of hope, yes, merely a little smoke, in the human heart, the tender shepherd will cherish that individual and try to increase his hope and faith and lead him to salvation. Every assistant to the Chief Shepherd should share that spirit. May God give us all the true shepherd heart.

Health-Food Picnic for Our New Members

ALBERT M. ELLIS
Pastor, Staunton, Virginia

THERE are many people in the world today who would enjoy the original diet if they would only try it. It is for these folks that we have started what is called by some the "back-to-Eden picnic" in conjunction with our evangelistic meetings.

We find that many of the interested people are eager to learn how we eat and how we cook. Therefore, since we lack the facilities to conduct a full-fledged cooking school, we invite our friends to a covered-dish social afternoon in the great outdoors. This provides not only a pleasant time of Christian fellowship but also the opportunity to present to them our health foods at their delectable best.

The entree dishes which we serve at these picnics are prepared by the women of our team and of the church with which our meetings are connected. So that our guests do not feel left out, we invite them to bring a vegetable salad, fruit punch, or a dessert.

Along with the meal we provide several mimeographed sheets with recipes of various dishes, some containing health foods and others using nuts, grains, et cetera. Behind the entree dishes containing a health food product we place a can of the health food used, thus acquainting them by sight and taste with the particular product.

Much, of course, depends on the way in which we prepare and serve our foods. First impressions are often lasting impressions. We therefore take great care in seeing that our dishes are well prepared, warm when served, and attractive to the eye.

We have had good results from our picnics. Our guests have shown a great interest and have been amazed at the great variety of tasty foods available. Where once they wondered how one could get along without flesh foods, they are now trying and enjoying for themselves tasty dishes which are far superior.
“On the Verge of the Kingdom”

F. M. ARROGANTE
President, Negros Mission, Philippines

NEARLY three years ago a community leader by the name of Pedro Calijan, of Bagtic, Tayasan, Oriental Negros (Negros Mission, Philippines), was impressed by a power working within him to lead his people to worship the true God instead of continuing the meaningless, superstitious incantations handed down to them by their ancestors. The impression that he got, which he ascribed to the working of the Holy Spirit, is that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord. His acceptance of the Sabbath truth was strengthened when he acquired a Bible, which confirmed his belief.

A group of nearly 200 people (40 families) joined Pedro Calijan in building a meeting place of cogon, bamboo, and rattan where they assemble every Sabbath to worship Jehovah. Their regular Sabbath meetings aroused the attention of the town officials and the surrounding communities. Inquiries were made for their church identification, to which their only answer was that they were meeting as a group to worship God and that Saturday was their day of worship.

They were to be charged for subversive activities unless they would signify to what religion they belonged. They had been approached and invited by the different religious communions to be fused into their fellowship, but the group refused “unless they, too, would keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath of the Lord according to the Ten Commandments.” The situation was serious. Pedro Calijan and his community looked wistfully to heaven for light and guidance.

Upon learning that there was a church that kept Saturday, the seventh-day, as the Sabbath of the Lord, Mr. Calijan, with some companions, got in touch with our district leader, Pastor A. B. Savilla, in Dumaguete City. They expressed their desire to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A few days later two colporteur evangelists, Arsenio Salazar and Toribio Talidong, struggled through the hazardous twenty-five-kilometer ascent and there found many earnest souls thirsting for evangelical refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Regular evangelistic meetings, house-to-house visitations, and Bible studies were conducted by our Bible worker, Eliseo Doble. More joined the Adventist meetings from Sabbath to Sabbath.

The first baptism of seventy-five precious souls was held on September 12, 1964, in the very place where once superstition and idolatry held strong dominance.

“All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in.”—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 109.

SOME BOOKS I CAN RECOMMEND


Attitudes to the will of God range from fatalism through indifference to open rebellion. Even devout Christians may be deeply confused when struck down by tragedy, or when they look upon a world in agony.

A saintly friend is killed in a car accident while a desperate sinner goes untouched. Why? Why? is the insistent question. There is perhaps no rational answer to that question. Even Job ultimately had to fall back on trust.

But there are helpful ideas that support this faith, and some of them are found in Dr. Weatherhead’s small book. The core of his thought is that there are three aspects to God’s will: His intentional will, His circumstantial will, and His ultimate will. He then presents six ways in which the will of God may be discerned; and this is most important to the seeking Christian. No believer questions that he should be living within the sphere of God’s will for him, but untold numbers would like to know precisely what that will is in given situations. This little book contains some helpful suggestions.

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February, 1965

Prices Slightly Higher in Canada
New Polish Translation of Bible Planned

A new Bible in modern Polish will be published in 1966 to celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of Christianity in Poland. The disclosure was made by a Polish clergyman in an address at the Baptist Church House in London. The four Gospels in modern Polish have been published. This year the whole of the New Testament is to be released in the new translation and then the entire Bible will be published in 1966. He added that Polish Baptists were currently celebrating the 400th anniversary of the first baptisms by Protestant believers in this land.

Ministry to Unchurched Called First Task

The first task of the church is not to reunite various segments of Christendom but to unite men outside the church to Christ, Baptists were told in Washington, D.C. According to Carl F. Henry, editor of Christianity Today, the ecumenical movement is but a side issue. “Until Christ returns in judgment and blessing,” Dr. Henry said, “our job is to evangelize a lost generation.” It is not a paramount concern that churches must present a united front to those not professing Christianity as their faith, he said. “Any impression that unbelief can be overcome more effectively by ecumenical integration (union of churches) than by faithful proclamation of Jesus Christ’s triumph is false.” Dr. Henry made a plea to Christians everywhere to return to the unanimity of doctrine found among the early Christians. “The redemption that is in Christ Jesus could bring incomparable healing to sin-burdened multitudes,” he continued. He charged that the danger with ecumenical or merger programs is that the believers’ union with Christ and other major theological issues are pushed to the background in efforts to attain to physical bigness and union.

Religious Paperback Sales on Increase in England

More religious paperback books are being sold today than for years past, according to T. F. Turner, manager of the Anglican Diocesan Church Bookshop which is celebrating its 150th anniversary in Manchester, England. Mr. Turner said there was no excuse for anyone to lack understanding of religion today. People are thinking far more seriously about the subject and nearly every publisher is producing religious paperbacks. “We are selling five times as many books on religion than we were ten years ago, and the market is widening all the time.” This bookshop is the direct successor of the depository of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which was opened in November, 1814.

Protestant-Catholic “Day of Renewal” Urged to Replace “Reformation Day”

Dr. Howard Schomer, president of Chicago Theological Seminary, urged in an address that the traditional Protestant emphasis on Reformation Day be replaced in future by a joint Protestant-Catholic-Orthodox Day of Renewal. He said, “In the mind of Christ there can be only one Reformation, even as there is only one church.” “The time has finally come,” he continued, “for Protestants to recognize publicly that their 16th Century Reformation was a failure, and for Catholics to recognize publicly that their 16th Century ‘Counter-Reformation’ was an equal failure. The great Protestant Reformers never sought less than the renewal of the whole church universal, but their sincere, courageous, and devoted efforts were unable to accomplish their noble objective. Excommunicated by a Roman papacy that had fallen into sorry days, their life’s labors unexpectedly ended in the organization of Evangelical Churches protesting Roman abuses and separated from the great Catholic Church.” Asserting that Christians today can complete the tasks that were begun in the sixteenth century, the seminary president said: “Catholics and Protestants alike are ready today to confess that as there is but one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, and one Holy Spirit inspiring all faithful people, so there is but one church, apostolic and ecumenical in time and space.”

World’s Largest Lunch Hour Church Service

The Reverend Gordon Powell, minister of St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church in Sydney, Australia, who combines the evangelistic fervor of Billy Graham with the religious psychology of Norman Vincent Peale, conducts a midweek service known throughout the island continent as the world’s largest lunch hour church service. The services were started twelve years ago and today are broadcast regularly over eighteen stations in five of the six Australian states. Films of the services have been shown by many Australian television stations. Attendance at the services varies from 1,000, the church’s seating capacity, to 1,600, when closed-circuit television carries the service to the overflow congregation in a basement auditorium. Although St. Stephen’s is a Presbyterian church the midweek congregation includes people with all kinds
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Church Missionary Secretary
Books and Bible House

February, 1965
of religious background—and many with none. In the 80-voice volunteer choir alone, six denominations are represented. Many of the worshipers are young men and women from the nearby offices. Others are members of parliament, doctors, lawyers, bankers, and businessmen. Mr. Powell started the midweek services in response to a request by a secretary who pointed out that she and some other young people were members of suburban churches but felt the need of spiritual refreshment in the middle of the week. The first service, September 3, 1952, attracted 500 persons. A week later the congregation had doubled.

Anglicans, Methodists Plan "House of Prayer" for Unity

Prominent Anglicans and Methodists are opening a House of Prayer in which women will work for the cause of Christian Unity. They disclosed the project in a public letter which referred to it as "the emergence of yet another sign of the growing together of the Christian churches in this country" (Britain). The letter bore 12 signatures, including that of Kenneth Slack, general secretary of the British Council of Churches. "What we report," they wrote, "may appear a small thing, but we believe that its significance is great. It is the foundation of an Ecumenical Fellowship of Prayer for Christian Unity, having as its center a house at Farncombe, Surrey, (S. England), where a group of women belonging to the Anglican and Methodist traditions intend to live the life of Christian prayer of which the primary intention will be the unity of all Christian people.

Court Ruling Expected to Slow Down Evangelism Among Hindus

The Indian Supreme Court has ruled that converts from Hinduism are not eligible for the special privileges extended to "scheduled castes." Once known as "untouchables," scheduled castes are members of backward communities who are entitled to reserved representation in civil service and in legislatures and several educational and social concessions. The court ruled on a suit filed by a Buddhist convert from scheduled caste whose election from a constituency reserved for "untouchables" was set aside by the election tribunal on the ground that only Hindu members of scheduled castes were entitled to seek religion from the constituency reserved for them. Its decision is considered a setback to Christian evangelism in India which has drawn many converts in the past from scheduled castes. This effect results from the fact that such conversions will be followed by the loss of government aid to converts, and which the church is not able to make good in the same measure from its own resources.
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MAKING SCRIPTURE LIVE

John Stuart Anderson, a young British actor, for the past six years has been successfully giving solo dramatic presentations throughout England, Europe, and America. Although he presents programs based on secular authors, it is his unique Biblical dramas that have created the greatest sensation. Many ask to see a copy of his "script" and are amazed to learn that he has merely brought to life the actual words of the Bible.

Critics have difficulty in describing what he does, but they all agree that his outstandingly musical and flexible voice helps to hold the audience spellbound while he transforms the written Word into something that really lives.

If an actor has succeeded in captivating audiences by merely repeating sections of the Scripture, how much more should those who have been called by God to deliver His truth to the world and who believe it use every talent and ability to deliver God's message effectively.

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HYMNS AND WORSHIP

Few things in a service of worship are more revealing of the leader's knowledge of his responsibilities than the selection of the hymns. Some Christian groups never include singing in their worship services. The Quakers, or the Society of Friends, are a noble example of the effectiveness of worship without singing. Yet, the Scripture reveals that from the earliest times singing has had a vital part in true worship. The way some hymns are sung, however, it might be better if singing were eliminated altogether. When hymns are sung in a slovenly and bungling manner it brings no honor to God nor inspiration to the people.

If three hymns are planned, then the first should be an outburst of praise. Many congregations begin their services with the singing of a doxology, followed by a brief invocation. Even if this custom is followed, the hymns will be in addition to the doxology. It is natural for the opening hymn to be one of praise. This leads to the general prayer or perhaps the Scripture reading.

If a second hymn is used just prior to the sermon—and this is an excellent plan, for if well chosen it conditions the worshipers for the spoken message—then this hymn might be one of consecration, emphasizing some aspect of personal religion.

The closing hymn should have a close relationship to the sermon. In fact, that preacher is wise who having decided on the theme he intends to present makes his first work that of the choice of the closing hymn. The reason for this is obvious, for this last hymn gives the congregation opportunity to make verbal response to the message. The fact that it is done in concert makes it all the more impressive.

If the sermon is an appeal for closer study of the Word of God, it would not be difficult to find a hymn that would reinforce the thoughts presented. Should the message be on missions or on the seriousness of the times in which we live or the need for personal witnessing in our community, such hymns are not difficult to find. The response of the people will be more realistic if occasionally the preacher were to make some reference to the hymn or the hymn writer, such as the story of how or why the hymn was written, or the mention of some particular experience associated with it. This will prepare the congregation to enter into the spirit of it. Paul said: "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

Congregations always sing better when they better understand what they are singing. As leaders of worship we should study the hymnbook, for there are limitless opportunities for leading our congregations into wholehearted praise, prayer, or surrender through the use of well-chosen hymns.

R. A. A.