

ELDER'S DIGEST



A Quarterly Resource for local Church Elders Vol. 6 No. 4

**Our
work
is a
Progressive
work, and
there must
be room
left for
Methods
to be
improved
upon.**

E.G. White



Elder's Digest

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Issue 26 Vol. 6 Number 4

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Is the Word “Temperance” Out of Date?

Ernest H. J. Steed



If you don't like the message, attack the words and declare them irrelevant, out of date, unimportant and then give them another meaning.

This time worn trick of Satan has been repeatedly used on moral reformers, especially those in the temperance movement. “Why, it is obvious this fellow is full of his own subject.” A sly dig sometimes even of fellow Christians to spark a laugh—subtly undermining the seriousness of the evil caused by intemperance. Thus, temperance, the opposite of intemperance, is targeted as the very object that it is set to overcome.

Well, maybe the word “temperance” is out of date! The facts are, it has never been in date, for intemperance has reigned since Adam and Eve were deceived by Lucifer's denial of God's warning. Adam and Eve were given dominion or control over this world and themselves. Disobedience brought the loss of this control. Temperance, which they had, meaning self control through divine power, was supplanted by intemperance, the loss of moral power.

From cover to cover of the divine revelation, it tells of the results of intemperance and the need and assurance of a return to temperance only through the moral power demonstrated by Messiah Jesus; and that power is now available to all who choose to accept of His life and victory.

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs have been prime objects to enhance the enemy's work of intemperance, weakening the will, blotting out spiritual insight, destroying physical well-being and social relations, thus laying a foundation for moral decay and subjecting the person to continued and increasing deception regarding life, love, and truth as in Jesus Christ.

But is the word itself important? The argument could be made that many key Bible words are out of date or given false meaning in our modern society—“justification,” “sanctification,” “righteousness,” “the

Sabbath,” “the sanctuary,” “atonement and reconciliation,” “the mark of the beast,” to name just a few.

Do we then solve the problem by rewriting the Bible or trying to come up with other words to get the message across? This could be another diversionary trap of Satan.

Maybe the problem lies with us and not the word. It is interesting that the Bible is called the *Word* of God and Jesus the Living Word. Could it be that the Bible words give us the opportunity to explain and teach their true meaning instead of allowing the enemy to take the field with his tactics, thus keeping us from effectively proclaiming and acting out the truth needed for today? It could be the greater the opposition and unclear meaning of a Bible word shows us its value and the need of its understanding and proclamation .

But, significantly we find that “temperance” as a word is well recognized in society through years of education and witness. Surveys have revealed a high percentage recognizing temperance as allied to abstinence, especially when used by Seventh-day Adventists. Others think of it as moderation. And that's not all bad for “true temperance teaches us to abstain entirely from that which is injurious, and to use judiciously only healthful and nutritious articles of food” (*Health Reformer*, April 1877).

So is there good enough reason to neglect or dispense with the word “temperance”?

Temperance is declared by scripture as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). Temperance was a key word and doctrine in Paul's preaching, allied to righteousness and judgment (Acts 24, 25).

God's end time messenger to the church, Ellen G. White, said Seventh-day Adventists were to be the leaders in the temperance movement and not the tail, that we were to have special organizations for young and old serving those within the church and without. In fact, no other church has ever claimed a special heaven-sent messenger on this subject. “I was also to speak on

the subject of temperance as the Lord's appointed messenger" (E. G. White, *Temperance*, p. 259).

Ellen G. White, who was so honored by the Lord, wrote profusely on education, medical missionary work, the family, holiness, health and temperance. She made a clear distinction between all those other topics and temperance by pinpointing and explaining temperance as a *cause*, with life, health and character development a *result*, recognizing "that temperance alone is the foundation of all the graces that come from God, the foundation of all victories to be gained" (*Temperance*, p. 201).

Therefore, temperance was not to be limited or narrowed in its approach, or to be only the counteracting of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, but was to be given as a part of every aspect of the Advent message for "the temperance cause needs to be revived as it has not yet been" (*Temperance*, p. 257). And "from the light given me, every member among us should sign the pledge and be connected with the Temperance Association" (*Temperance*, p. 256).

The above information does not sound like Seventh-day Adventists should in any way listen to the insinuation of the enemy about neglecting words or their meaning. Surely the Lord will be more honored if we recognize the God-given privilege to be a reform-minded, temperance witnessing, temperance living and temperance victorious people, helping others at this

vital hour to come up to God's ideal. If we don't, the time will come when in our failure to be clearly identified as a temperance reform people, the Sunday-honoring people will, in their emphasis on moral reform, call for a Sunday law, and because of our neglect they will "denounce us as the enemies of temperance reform" (*Great Controversy*, p. 587).

"Brethren and sisters, we want you to see the importance of this temperance question, and we want our workers to interest themselves in it and to know that is just as much connected with the Third Angel's Message as the right arm is with the body. We ought to make advancement in this work" (*Temperance*, p. 238).

As if to give the final challenge on this subject E. G. White wrote, "I will inquire why some of our ministerial brethren are so far behind in proclaiming the exalted theme of temperance" (*Temperance*, p. 244).

Dear one, please don't be ashamed of the word or its message. Be faithful to follow God's special message of temperance for real life in Christ Jesus. Make temperance up to date! E

Ernest H. J Steed for over 40 years served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Temperance Director in the South Pacific Division and at the General Conference. He is retired and currently lives in Florida, but continues to lecture and hold office in temperance organizations worldwide.



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Our Attitude Toward Bible Study

Ellen G. White

To Sense Our Limitations

“God will not impart to men divine light, while they are content to remain in darkness. In order to receive God’s help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency; he must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors, and to conform to right principles, that the victory can be gained. Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline; and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 248.

To Seek God in Prayer

“Search the Scriptures for yourselves. . . . Know for yourselves what is truth. Do not take any man’s words, any man’s prejudices, any man’s arguments, any man’s theories. This has been done by ministers to the injury of their experience, and it has left them novices when they should be wise in the Scriptures and in the power of God. Take your Bibles, humble yourselves, and weep and fast and pray before the Lord, as did Nathaniel, seeking to know the truth.”—*Manuscript* 8a, 1888.

“Whenever the study of the Scriptures is entered upon without a prayerful, humble, teachable spirit, the plainest and simplest as well as the most difficult passages will be wrested from their true meaning.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 521.

“He who studies the truth, who prayerfully opens the eyes of his understanding to see and his heart to receive the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, will be in harmony with the messenger and the message God sends. All the opposition, all the prejudice, all the suggestions of the enemy, will never make the truth less precious or less true. . . . Brethren, God has most precious light for His people. I call it not new

light; but O, it is strangely new to many.”—*Manuscript* 8a, 1888.

“Many, many will be lost because they have not studied their Bibles upon their knees, with earnest prayer to God that the entrance of the word of God might give light to their understanding. All selfish ambition should be laid aside, and you should plead with God for His Spirit to descend upon you as it came upon the disciples who were assembled together upon the day of Pentecost.” *Week of Prayer Readings*, Dec. 15, 1888.

To Be Humble in Heart

“As we take up the study of God’s word, we should do so with humble hearts. All selfishness, all love of originality, should be laid aside. Long-cherished opinions must not be regarded as infallible. It was the unwillingness of the Jews to give up their long-established traditions that proved their ruin. They were determined not to see any flaw in their own opinions or in their expositions of the Scriptures; but however long men may have entertained certain views, if they are not clearly sustained by the written word, they should be discarded. Those who sincerely desire truth will not be reluctant to lay open their positions for investigation and criticism, and will not be annoyed if their opinions and ideas are crossed. This was the spirit cherished among us forty years ago.”—*Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892.

To Be Obedient to God

It is because so many who handle the word of God in opening the Scriptures to others are not diligent students of the Scriptures or doers of the word themselves, that they make so little advancement in growth of grace and in coming to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. They take largely the interpretation of the Scriptures from others’ lips, but do not put their minds to the tax of searching the evidences for themselves, to know what is truth.”—*Week of Prayer Readings*, December 15, 1888.

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 598.

To Keep the Mind Open for the Truth

“When the search is properly conducted every effort is made to keep a pure understanding and heart. When the mind is kept open and is constantly searching the field of revelation, we shall find rich deposits of truth. Old truths will be revealed in new aspects, and truths will appear which have been overlooked in the search.”—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 75*, 1897.

“There should be a closer and more diligent study of the Revelation, and a more earnest presentation of the truths it contains,—truths that concern all who are living in these last days. Into the very designs and principles of the church of God these truths are to enter. If we take up the study of this book in a receptive frame of mind, with hearts susceptible of divine impressions, the truths revealed will have a sanctifying influence upon us.”—*Signs of the Times*, January 28, 1903.

To Follow God, Not Men

“The great plan of human redemption is as yet but faintly understood, because men do not place themselves in the divine channel of light. There is too much following of men, and limiting the light by men’s opinions and traditions. The wonderful truth of God is to be sought out by every mind, and the results of many minds are to be brought together from many sources as God’s hereditary trust, and the divine power will work in such a way that true harmony will exist.”—*Review and Herald*, October 25, 1894.

To Study Diligently

“In this time we have opportunities and advantages that it was not easy to obtain in generations past. We have increased light, and this has come through the work of those faithful sentinels who made God their dependence, and received power from Him to let light shine in clear, bright rays to the world. In our day we

have increased light to improve, as in times past men and women of noble worth improved the light that God gave them. They toiled long to learn the lessons given them in the school of Christ, and they did not toil in vain. Their persevering efforts were rewarded.”—*Ibid.*, March 10, 1903.

“You want every ray of light which God may impart through any of His agencies. Seat yourselves as children at the feet of Jesus, to learn the truth as it is in Him. You should fear to pass judgment upon any new light upon the Bible, until upon your knees, with humble hearts, you have searched its pages and sought wisdom of God, to know what is truth. I hope you do not take it for granted that there is no more light or truth to be given to us; for I know this is not true. There are before us broad fields of truth yet to be explored, and every portion of these fields is to be ploughed and dug over with painstaking effort to find the truth,—glorious, precious truth, which exalts Jesus, but humbles us to the place of learners.”—*Letter 43*, 1888.

“Very many teachers are content with a supposition in regard to the truth. They have crude ideas, and are content with a surface work in searching for truth, taking for granted that they have all that is essential. They take the sayings of others for truth, being too indolent to put themselves to diligent, earnest labor, represented in the word as digging for hidden treasure. But man’s inventions are not only unreliable, they are dangerous; for they place man where God should be. They place the sayings of men where a “Thus saith the Lord” should be. The world’s Redeemer alone possesses the key to unlock the treasure-house of the Old Testament.”—*Review and Herald*, July 12, 1898.

To Sense the Seriousness of the Times

“Let not the solemn scenes, that prophecy has revealed are soon to take place, be left untouched. If our people were awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed by John, such a reformation would be made in our churches that many more would believe our message. We are God’s messengers, and we have no time to lose, for He calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account. Advance new principles, and crowd in clear-cut truth. It will be as a sword cutting both ways. But do not be too ready to take a controversial attitude. There will be times when we must stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Present the truth as it is in Jesus. Let Daniel speak, let

Revelation speak, and tell what is truth. But whatever phase of the subject is presented, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope, "the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."—*Pacific Union Recorder*, January 14, 1904.

To Seek the Aid of the Holy Spirit

"It is not enough to have an intellectual knowledge of the truth. This alone cannot give the light and understanding essential to salvation. There must be an entrance of the word into the heart. It must be set home by the power of the Holy Spirit. The will must be brought into harmony with its requirements. Not only the intellect but the heart and conscience must concur

in the acceptance of the truth."—*Review and Herald*, September 25, 1883.

"We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know 'what saith the Lord.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 390. **E**

Ellen G. White, the Lord's messenger for the Remnant Church and one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

CHILDREN



Children in the Church

W. M. Abbott

Before Jesus entrusted the feeding of the lambs to Peter, He asked him, "Lovest thou Me?" It was not until He had received a satisfactory answer that He bid him, "Feed my lambs." Every leader and teacher must be a genuine image of a true Christian.

The choosing of leaders and teachers is a heavy responsibility for the church. An Adventist church is one which realizes a child can be taught all the fundamental principles of Christianity by the time he reaches his teens. A child can also be removed from all Christian surroundings, and those principles which were firmly instilled into his life by a genuine Christian leader or teacher will keep him true and faithful to God. "The eyes of our brethren and sisters should be anointed with the heavenly eyesalve, that they may discern the necessities of this time. The lambs of the flock must be fed, and the Lord of heaven is looking on to see who is doing the work He desires to have done for the chil-

dren and youth. The church is asleep and does not realize the magnitude of this matter"—*Testimonies to the Church*, Vol 6, pp. 196, 197.

Every child attending our church must be taught four fundamental principles: (1) the fear of God; (2) the folly of sin and idolatry; (3) the love of truth and justice; and (4) how to worship the living God.

By selecting leaders and teachers who can fill the minds of our children to the fullest with these four principles the church will care for the lambs of the flock. The Holy Spirit can then call to remembrance those spiritual lessons taught by such a devoted, godly leader or teacher that in later years it will continue to be possible for God to speak to the heart and be heard. **E**

W. M. Abbott was secretary of the Sabbath School Department in the Alabama-Mississippi Conference when this article was written.

Slices of Life

Henry Feyerabend

Nearness To God—Catherine of Siena

Catherine of Siena one time spent three days in a solitary retreat, praying for a greater fullness and joy of the divine presence of God.

Instead of this, it seemed as though legions of wicked spirits assailed her with blasphemous thoughts and evil suggestions. At length, a great light appeared to descend from above. The devils fled and the Lord Jesus came to converse with her. Catherine asked him, "Lord, where were you when my heart was so tormented?"

"I was in your heart," he replied.

"Oh, Lord," she cried, "You are everlasting truth and I humbly bow before your word, but how can I believe you were in my heart when it was filled with such detestable thoughts?"

"Did these thoughts give you pain or pleasure?" he asked.

"An exceeding pain and sadness," replied Catherine.

"You were in woe and sadness because I was in the midst of your heart. It was my presence which rendered those thoughts insupportable to you. When the period I had determined for the duration of the combat had elapsed, I sent forth the beams of my light and the shadows of hell were dispelled because they cannot resist the light."

Love of God

A young girl once ran away from home to get married. Her father was very angry and said he would never forgive her. She was sorry to have grieved her father and wrote him long letters begging for his forgiveness; however, he took no notice. By and by, the daughter had a little son. When the boy was old enough to run about alone, she said to herself, "I will write no more letters to my father, but I will send my little son. He shall be a living letter. My father will know what I want to say to him when he sees his little grandson. He will know that I still love him and want his forgiveness."

So she took the little boy to his grandfather's house and sent him in alone to speak to her father. She bade him to put his arms around his grandfather's neck and

kiss him. When the little fellow did this, the old man's heart melted. He sent at once for the mother and forgave her.

Living God

A famous actor was once the guest of honor at a social gathering where he received many requests to recite favorite excerpts from various literary works. An old preacher who happened to be there asked the actor to recite the twenty-third Psalm. The actor agreed on the condition that the preacher would also recite it. The actor's recitation was beautifully intoned with great dramatic emphasis for which he received lengthy applause. The preacher's voice was rough and broken from many years of preaching, and his diction was anything but polished. But when he finished there was not a dry eye in the room.

When someone asked the actor what made the difference, he replied "I know the psalm, but he knows the Shepherd."

Grace of God

J. Wilbur Chapman often told of the testimony given by a certain man in one of his meetings: "I got off at the Pennsylvania depot as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, 'Hey, mister, can you give me a dime?' As soon as I saw his face I was shocked to see that it was my own father. I said, 'Father, Father, do you know me?'"

Throwing his arms around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, "Oh my son, at last I've found you! I've found you. You want a dime? Everything I have is yours." Think of it. I was a tramp.

I stood begging my own father for ten cents, when for eighteen years he had been looking to give me all that he had." What a wonderful illustration of the way God longs to treat us, if we will only let Him.

Goodness of God

We had a terrible fire in the hills south of Los Gatos. Several thousand acres burned, including 42 houses or

cabins. I saw the plume of smoke begin to rise on July 7, directly opposite my house in the Almaden Valley. I could tell that it was a big one. By the next night the smoke was much worse and you could see the red of the flames. News reports said it was out of control. Fire Department people were assessing the Montevideo tract of homes across from our church buildings to plan evacuation strategy. Jim Valenta had plans to remove records and books from the church offices if the fire came down the canyon.

Joyce and I had to leave for Anaheim the next morning to fulfill a speaking engagement at a convention, plus a TV interview and radio interview. I was concerned about the fire. We phoned home twice to check on the situation and watched the TV news. The fire fighters were heroic. To look today at all of those blackened hills and see houses still standing and undamaged amid the embers is amazing. It is hard to believe that they could save them in the inferno. Many

who fought the flames were volunteers from all walks of life. To them and the expert professional fire fighters, we owe a debt of gratitude.

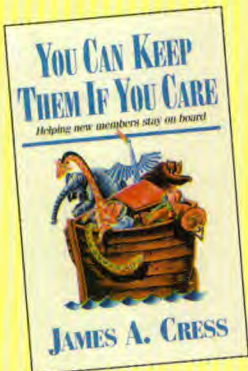
But there is something else. Many were praying. Not only were those whose houses were endangered praying the prayer of desperation, many who ordinarily pray were praying the prayer of faith. My wife and I prayed each day also.

The weather report called for extreme heat on July 10. No clouds were in sight. The fire situation was at its worst. Suddenly a little weather system appeared. It came out of nowhere, and it moved in over the fire and began to rain. That doesn't happen during the summer in California. It didn't rain much, just enough to give the advantage to the fire fighters.

Many answers to prayer are like that. They could be coincidental. But when we ask and the answer comes in such a form, shouldn't we give credit everywhere it is due? E

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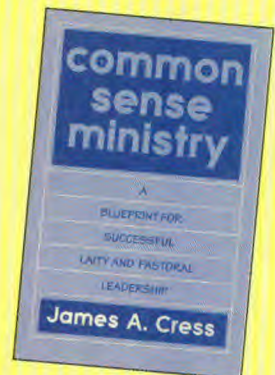
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Why God Permits His Children to Suffer

Francis D. Nichol

No question more frequently comes to us than this: *Why does God permit suffering to darken my life, or the life of one of my loved ones?*

Following is a composite of the many replies made. We know that God is working out all things for our best good. But do the Scriptures offer any specific light on the varied reasons why God permits suffering, and just how He employs these afflictions for our best good? Without attempting any exhaustive or dogmatic statements on this difficult problem, let me set forth some of the reasons why God afflicts us.

Because of Sin

Perhaps God has brought these troubles upon you because of your sins. Repeatedly do the Scriptures reveal that God brought punishment upon His children in the form of great afflictions, to turn them away from some sinful course into which they had fallen. He did this with individuals, and also with the whole people of Israel collectively. So often has God employed this means that we cannot safely disregard this possibility when troubles come upon us. The time of affliction is a time for searching the soul; it is a time for us to pray, as did David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23, 24).

Because of Temptation

Perhaps God has brought affliction upon you to save you from temptation. Your life may be upright before God, and you may be walking in His fear; but there may be some temptation lurking close by that has a peculiar attraction for you. Perhaps God has raised up the barrier of affliction to protect you from this particular temptation to which your nature is susceptible. There comes immediately to mind in this connection the confession of Paul:

"Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

It may be the temptation to pride, as was the case with Paul, or some other temptation, it matters not which, that God desires to save us from, and thus brings upon us some affliction.

The Small Boy and the Truck—I recall an incident that came under my own personal observation. I was seated in a car parked near the entrance to a home and just off the edge of a much-traveled highway. Looking out through the rear window, I saw riding on his tricycle the small boy of the home. He was coming through the gate and descending the gentle slope that would quickly bring him onto the paved highway. At that same moment a large truck swung around the curve at high speed. It was evident that only a moment would be required for the boy to cover the distance from the gate out onto the highway and into the path of this death-dealing machine. There was no time to act. It seemed that a tragedy was almost instantly to be enacted before my eyes. But when the little fellow, in the exhilaration of his ride, was within a foot of the highway, the front wheel caught in loose sand and threw him to earth. I don't believe he even heard the roar of the truck as it passed close by him; his mind seemed altogether occupied with the tragedy of falling into the sand, with the resultant scratches that had come to

him. Doubtless to his childish mind a very great tragedy had occurred, and everything was against him. He did not know that his fall had saved him from death.

Many times have I thought of this incident, and of how it possibly illustrates the place that afflictions may fill in our lives. We may be traveling along, unconscious of the danger that confronts us, moving thoughtlessly out onto the busy highway of life. But God sees what we cannot see, some thundering temptation that is ready to meet us and crush us if we are allowed to go on in the direction we are going, and so He takes the solid ground from under us for a little while. Our step suddenly becomes uncertain, and we are brought down into trouble or affliction.

Suffer Rather Than Sin—But in the midst of suffering there is a great truth that we may well contemplate, and that is, there is something worse than suffering—there is sin; and it is better that we suffer than that we sin. It is better that we endure the bruises that come from God's upsetting our plans betimes, than the destruction that would come from continuing in a path that would lead us into sin.

Or perhaps the temptation may not be of so dark a hue, but rather the more subtle temptation to become content with this present world. It is then that God often brings the affliction of poverty. I recall the words of one religious writer who thus commented on some of his own experiences during his years of preaching:

"I once preached in a section where life had formerly been a hard taskmaster. Clearings had to be made in the primeval forests, swamps had to be drained, and the good people could barely make a living. Then the malarial fever epidemic came. Hundreds of these brave, hardy people lost their lives. The churches were crowded. They remained crowded for many years afterward.

"Today that section is a beautiful stretch of country, with concrete highways and flourishing towns, but there is a decline in spirituality, an increase in ritual and formalism. The rising generation seems apathetic.

"The phenomenon is quite ordinary. What I have just described happened in scores of sections of the

country. In the first struggles of pioneering, in the storm and stress period, people felt the need of supernatural support, and the church was the logical place to go. Today we are surrounded with luxuries of every kind. We feel more or less independent of God and man.

"God might have brought the Israelites from Egypt into Canaan by a direct route that would have taken but a few days. Instead He led them through a waste and howling wilderness, where dangers beset them on all sides. At the end of their wanderings Moses explained that God had brought them through such a tortuous route that they might learn 'that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.'"

To Develop Rare Qualities

Perhaps God has permitted affliction to come upon you to develop some rare quality of soul. We can never hope to understand in this present life the mysterious way in which character is developed, how the experiences of life build within us qualities that mark us as distinct from all other persons. Nor can we hope to understand how it is that oftentimes deep afflictions have served to develop in men and women the rarest of Christian qualities.

But the experience of every one of us will testify to the fact. God may see within us some latent quality that needs only the right opportunity in order to be brought to a full and rich development; and God may see what we generally cannot see, that perhaps only through a period of affliction will opportunity be provided for the growth of that trait of character.

There is one quality of soul that all of us must develop if we are to be ready for heaven, and that is strong and unswerving faith in God. But how would most of us ever develop this necessary virtue if we were not put to the test at times, if our path were not mountainous on occasion, or if we were never called upon to enter the valley of dark shadows? If everything were always clear before us; if there was nothing to perplex or try us; if our finances and families were always safe and secure, pray tell what real opportunity would there be for developing an implicit faith that God is guiding us

*The experiences of life
build within us qualities
that mark us as distinct
from all other persons.*

and that He will fulfill for us all His promises?

For example, how could a man with a secure bank account ever prove in his own experience God's promise to provide him with daily food? He may believe this promise theoretically, but the blessedness of knowing from actual experience the reality of this promise is reserved to the man whose resources have been swept away and who has none but God upon whom to call. We read that God has "chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith." There may be a closer connection between these two facts than is directly set forth in the statement. It may be that the very lack of material resources of the poor places them in the position where they are led to put God to the test, with the result that faith is made strong. How can we ever hope to know in a personal way the truth of the many promises of God, that He will never leave nor forsake us in the hour of darkness and sorrow, unless, having been brought to such an hour and having called upon God for the fulfillment of His promise, we have received the assurance in our souls that God is with us? It was out of the hard experiences of life, when danger and death constantly threatened him and he had none but God

to rely upon, that David could write: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Ps. 23:4).

To Provide a Testimony to the World

Perhaps God brought affliction upon you to provide a testimony to unbelievers. It is not remarkable that we should love God in prosperity. What the world needs is proof that we love Him in adversity.

Here, of course, comes to mind immediately the case of Job. The experience of this man of the land of Uz has come down through the centuries, and provided direct light on this most perplexing of questions, Why do troubles come upon the righteous? It was not because Job had fallen into some sin; it was not because God had to save him from some temptation to which he was peculiarly susceptible. The record declares that he was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. God desired to provide through him a testimony to angels and to men, that love and obe-

dience to God are displayed by His children, not because of the favors they receive from Heaven, but because they sincerely desire to live in harmony with God's will. What a mighty testimony it must have been to those who heard Job declare of the Lord, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"! That represents the pinnacle of faith. Only adversity could ever have presented an opportunity for Job to display such faith.

Early Christian history tells us of pagans who were converted as they witnessed the manner in which martyrs serenely went to their death, with songs of praise and faith in God on their lips. The manner in which they related themselves to the darkest of afflictions—persecution and death—was the strongest kind of testimony that could be borne before a hardened heathen world.

Declared Paul: "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have

fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places" (Phil. 1:12,13).

Christ's disciples, in common with the Jewish notions of the time, believed that afflictions were

always an evidence of God's disfavor; and so when there came before them the man blind from his youth, they asked Christ: "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Christ returned the emphatic answer: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9:2, 3.) Evidently in the wisdom of God this man had been permitted to suffer with this affliction from birth, in order that a mighty testimony might be offered to all Israel of the divine miracle-working power of Christ.

Because God Loves You

Perhaps, if no other explanation seems quite to satisfy, we may settle upon this: That God has brought affliction upon you because He loves you. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). We are exhorted not to rebel or repine under such afflictions, but to "endure chastening."

*It is not remarkable that we should love
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It is in the light of these thoughts that we are enabled better to understand why God oftentimes fails to answer our prayers in the way that we request. Until the chastening has accomplished what God designs it to accomplish, should we desire that the affliction be taken from us? A realization that the Lord permits troubles to come upon us for the perfecting of our characters and for the saving of us from dangers, should give us a spirit of resignation under the chastening of the Lord.

In the midst of adversity and affliction we must make certain that we give no room in our heart for a certain subtle temptation, the temptation to envy the wicked, who seem to be flourishing like green bay trees, and who, despite their godlessness, seem to be free from many troubles that beset us. The reason why they grow so luxuriously is because the soil of this earth and its sin-laden atmosphere provide the very environment suited to them. Children of God flourish better in an entirely different atmosphere, that of the new earth, where they shall grow up like calves of the stall.

Christ spoke of certain ones who were not true children of God, who were living for present fame and glory and the esteem of men, and declared, "They have their reward" (Matt. 6:2). And what a trivial reward it is! The child of God lives and works on a program that is also to bring a reward, not now, but in the hereafter. Our Father, who sees in secret, who knows the intent of our hearts, who has brought upon us afflictions to perfect our characters, will of a surety in the great day reward us openly, and give us the eternal inheritance promised to the children of God.

In the midst of the darkest affliction it is for us to remember that these trials will not last forever, that there is to be an end to them; and to remember, too, that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). Paul was willing to endure all the afflictions that came to him, because, he declared, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). When we thus "reckon," we have taken the greatest step toward not only enduring patiently, but actually glorying in tribulations. **E**

Francis D. Nichol was the editor of The Review and Herald when he wrote this article.

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Know Your Song!

Ben Glanzer

Our first and most important goal in singing a song in public, whether it be a solo, duet, trio, quartet, or choir number, is to get the message across in such a way that the listeners will be impressed primarily with the message of the song. The critical listener may automatically notice the technique of the singer, and he cannot help being conscious of the individual or individuals singing, but the message of the song should be paramount in his mind. This is doubly true in religious singing.

With this ideal in mind, what could be more important than the question of memorizing the message of our songs? Paul Breisach, one of America's symphony conductors who came from Europe, said: "You must be the song as you sing it." These conductors must have the best in the vocal soloists who work with them, so his observation is worth serious consideration. But how can we actually be a song or live a song if it has not become part of us?

The first step in making a song part of us is to have the message so definitely and deeply engraved in our minds that it seems as if we were singing our own message to the audience. Here, I believe, is where altogether too many singers fall down in their public work. Little or no effort is made to memorize songs, and yet those who have tried it frequently agree that it is surprising how simply a song can be memorized, and how much more of a joy singing becomes as an accomplishment if the message of a song is committed to memory.

Naturally some find it harder to memorize than do others. The mere fact that we have made perhaps one or two attempts and have been caught in public forgetting the words, does not mean that we should give up and decide that we are not capable of memorizing. We need to try again and again until we have convinced ourselves that it can be done; and if we persist, we will eventually be surprised how quickly and easily we can do it and how naturally the message of a song becomes a part of us. Almost anything in life becomes simple once we learn how. Often matters we consider exceedingly difficult become extremely simple

when we actually get down to business and outline a system, or break the problem down into various parts and look at them separately.

Let us consider some simple methods whereby we might memorize a song. We might do it the old way by simply committing it to memory by rote, going over it again and again until by sheer force of repetition we have memorized the number. Such a method of memorizing, though it actually works if we stay at it long enough, does not bring the best results. We can memorize a song and do it so mechanically that even though its words may be in our memory, its message still is not a part of us, because we have not taken time to analyze it, to study and weigh it.

To know your song, you must know more than just the words. Words are only things, but given time and thought, words convey a message. Not until this message becomes so indelibly impressed on your mind that the words are only a secondary and necessary vehicle to convey the thought do you really know your song. How feeble, then, must be our efforts when altogether too frequently we do not even know the words, and we have to stand before the people with our eyes glued on the page. This is singing from a book. Let us learn to sing from the heart!

One of the first men with whom I seriously studied singing some years ago in London, Ontario, Canada, was Keith MacDonald. As a young man he had sung in some of the choruses of the Metropolitan Opera Association in New York. He told me that when they were assigned the task of learning a new opera, they would often spend as much as two weeks studying the lyrics alone. After they had committed the words to memory completely and studied the background and history of the opera, becoming as well acquainted with it as possible, they would then begin to study the music. Perhaps in this the world is setting an excellent example for those of us who are interested in sacred music.

Organized Memorization

Let us consider another method whereby we might

memorize songs. This may at first seem like a more involved task, but once you try it, you will find it is actually the better way and consequently the easier way. Once you have mastered this simple method, you will really consume less time memorizing a song than by the old method of learning by rote. We will consider Elisha A. Hoffman's words in that lovely appeal song, "Is Your All on the Altar?"

"You have longed for sweet peace,
 And for faith to increase,
 And have earnestly, fervently prayed;
 But you cannot have rest,
 Or be perfectly blest
 Until all on the altar is laid.

"Who can tell all the love
 He will send from above,
 And how happy our hearts will be made,
 Of the fellowship sweet
 We shall share at His feet,
 When our all on the altar is laid?"

We will not consider the chorus, for most folks find it a simple matter to memorize the chorus—just a little evidence that some things can be memorized easily.

But now let us take a good look at the first stanza. First of all let us try to catch the thought the author had in mind. It is a person-to-person conversation, a preacher talking to a sinner, or a Christian talking to one who has fallen by the way or who is losing faith. You will notice that the entire verse is an appeal to the heart, picturing what goes on in the heart of many a struggling sinner: the longing for "sweet peace" and for "faith to increase"; the praying "earnestly, fervently" in this direction; and the declaration that a person "cannot have rest," peace of mind, nor "be perfectly blessed" "until all on the altar is laid."

In just two sentences we have put the thought of the entire verse into our own words, or translated it into our own thoughts. Once we see the picture of the verse clearly and re-create the atmosphere of it, then it is a simple matter to go back over the actual words and fix in mind such phrases as "longed for sweet peace," "faith to increase," "earnestly, fervently prayed," "cannot have rest," "perfectly blest." If we go over these a few times and try to get the ideas in mind in proper

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sequence, we will find that in a few moments we have not only the actual words of the verse, but the thought as well as the message definitely fixed in mind.

Now let us look at the other stanza. There immediately is an entire change of scene. The author here tries to hold out a beautiful picture of hope and the happy experience that the Christian enjoys after he has laid his all upon the altar of sacrifice. The entire endeavor of this stanza is to picture to the listener the thought that the results of placing our all upon the altar will be far above anything that we can either imagine or expect. And so the message is "Who can tell all the love" that will be sent "from above," and who can imagine "how happy our hearts will be made"? Then there is

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Hospitality Evangelism

George E. Knowles

Charles and Martha Morgan and their three children decided to develop a soul-winning project around their gift of hospitality. Martha loved to cook, and the family enjoyed entertaining company in their home.

At least once a month Martha would provide for company when preparing Sabbath dinner. Their 250-member city church frequently had visitors. When there were no non-Adventist visitors, the Morgans would invite a family in the church with whom they were not well acquainted. This by-product of the plan alone proved to be a tremendous blessing to the Morgans, as well as to their guests.

In many cases the Morgans' hospitality was responsible for a visitor returning to their church. This was true of Ron and Celia Thomas, who hadn't attended church since their marriage. Ron had an Adventist background, so when Celia expressed a desire to go to church, Ron agreed, provided it would be an Adventist church. The Morgans spotted the visitors and invited them home to dinner. This gesture of friendliness brought the young couple back the next Sabbath and the next, until they grew to be part of the church family. This newly established relationship was made official in a beautiful service of baptism, with Charles and Martha Morgan standing as the Thomases' spiritual guardians.

Ron and Celia Thomas were by no means the only fruitage of the Morgans' hospitality evangelism. In the city where they lived was a technical college at which a small number of Adventist students from other parts of the state were enrolled. The Morgans opened their home on Sabbath afternoons to these out-of-town students. They encouraged the Adventist young people to bring their non-Adventist friends for refreshments and social activities on Saturday nights. These contacts often led to Sabbath dinner invitations, coupled with attendance at Sabbath school and church. Each year there would be two or three baptisms resulting from the Morgans' hospitality evangelism.

The gift of hospitality can be cultivated in many

Adventist homes. It is a form of soul winning in which every member of the family can participate. One couple I know has been very successful in winning neighbors through hospitality. Even when their children were small, one of them was called upon to offer the blessing when non-Adventist guests were present at the table.

"Thank you for these new friends in our home. Thank you for the food we have, and may hungry people everywhere have food also, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen." Such would be the child's prayer. Hearts were touched, and more than one credited the children's prayers as the influence that awakened their interest.

Natural and appropriate subjects for conversation when guests are in your home include family, occupation, and religion. And often there will be opportunity to share your testimony of God's goodness and grace.

Hattie Johnson was a widow. For some time after the death of her husband she dreaded going to church to sit alone. Then she developed her own hospitality project. Hattie would go to church early, sit near the back, and watch for a lady visitor sitting all alone. Then she would move forward, sit beside the visitor, and offer a friendly smile and a warm handshake. After the service, in the foyer or outside the church nonverbal communication would give way to verbal. Often Hattie would invite her new acquaintance home for lunch. Beautiful friendships developed, and Hattie's ministry eased her loneliness and that of many others as well. Not only that; more than one person says, "I'm a member of the family of God today because of Hattie's hospitality."

And then there is the physician and his wife who reserve one evening each week for a fellowship dinner in their home. They invite patients, neighbors, Five-Day Plan contacts, et cetera. Dinner is followed by an informal, unstructured Bible discussion on whatever themes are of most interest to the majority present. Several baptisms result each year.

Perhaps you will want to consider some form of hospitality evangelism as a possible project for you or your family.

Tactics for the Timid

Matilda Maxwell was a quiet, unassuming Adventist housewife and mother whose small children required her to stay close to home. The Maxwells lived in a neighborhood where there were many young couples with children about the age of their own. Sewing was one of Matilda's talents. She made virtually all her children's clothes. As the children proudly told their playmates that their mother made their clothes, Matilda became the object of admiration on the part of many of the other mothers who did not possess sewing skill.

Matilda offered to share her sewing know-how, and several of the women and older girls in the community accepted the offer. Friendships developed around the sewing machine. Questions about a tune Matilda might be humming, or some objects she was preparing for her primary class at Sabbath school, made it easy for her to invite mothers to bring their little ones to Sabbath school, "just for a visit." That first visit was usually the kind that made them want to come back for more.

Matilda's willingness to share won the confidence of her neighbors, many of whom turned to her with problems and perplexities in areas other than sewing.

If you asked Matilda Maxwell if she had ever given a Bible study she would probably say no. And perhaps she had not given a formal study, although her Bible answers to neighbors' questions have served the same purpose. In spite of her natural timidity she found she could pray with her neighbors about their problems once they became acquainted. In her first two years of sewing-machine evangelism Matilda was responsible for three baptisms.


Audio-Visuals

Joe Lindell invested in a video projector. So pleased was he with his purchase that he took it to work with him to show the boys. Joe was a square-shouldered, muscular man who worked in a warehouse. During a lunch break he proudly displayed his new machine, which looked like a portable television set and combined the features of a projector and cassette recorder.

"I've got some videos about the Bible," Joe explained. "Some of them explain the prophecies of Revelation and have a lot to do with what's happening in the world right now. If any of you would like to have me bring the machine over so you and your wife and

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family can see these pictures, just let me know."

In no time Joe's enthusiastic offer resulted in his being booked up five nights a week for Bible studies—though he did not call them that initially. He just talked about showing films featuring the prophecies. Several of the families were so pleased they invited neighbors in to share the treat. One family asked if they could invite their pastor. The Protestant pastor was so pleased with what he saw that he invited the Adventist warehouse man to take over the Sunday evening meetings in his church for twenty weeks. The result? Baptisms, including that of the non-Adventist pastor and his wife. Joe's machine gave the information, but Joe was willing to give of his time with a warm and friendly spirit.

Admittedly, every soul-winning attempt does not result in a baptism. Even Jesus Himself did not succeed in winning all the people He contacted. So we must

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Try It and See

Fordyce W. Detamore

You are an elder and your program is packed, but may I ask you a question: How much of time do you spend visiting members? I say that because unless you *insist* on giving certain amounts of your time for visitation, you will seldom have sufficient time to “seek and save the lost.”

“My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.” Ezekiel 34:6.

“None did search or seek after them.” What would we do without that beautiful pathos-filled story of the lost sheep? What if that heart-burdened shepherd had summoned the excuses behind which we so often hide?

Reasons for Visitation

Let us check ourselves and consider various types of visits which we need to be making. Perhaps the order itself in which we list various kinds of visits may not be important, but let us notice the various ways in which God can use His shepherds to seek out His sheep.

One can visit the sick in the spirit of “Well, I had better go to see him and get this visit checked off my list today or his wife will really be after me,” but there must be a specific aim in every visit. *That aim may be simply to comfort.* And how much such visits are needed! There are so many lonely, empty, even fearing hearts that deserve our tender attention. Put yourself in the place of the suffering one and your visit will be a balm of Gilead to heal a troubled soul.

Again the aim of the sick-call may be to “seek and save the lost.” Wonderful! Almost always peoples’ hearts are softer when they are on the sick bed. Should we, then, not capitalize on this open-heart condition and move in to lift and save?

Consider sick calls not an added burden in your schedule, but a definite opportunity to save a soul. You need not sermonize, and you certainly should not rebuke the one fallen when sick. Take it for granted he has been doing some solemn thinking, and gently turn his face to the cross so that he may “look and live.”

If you follow up all your sick calls, considering your

after ministry an opportunity to help an unsundered soul to Calvary, you will be surprised to find how many individuals on sick beds you can ransom from the enemy. Sick people are appreciative; sick people are responsive; sick people often sense their need and come under great conviction. Let us never neglect this potential avenue to soul winning.

Important Areas of the Church

The three most important parts of a church are (1) the *baptistry*, (2) the *pulpit*, and (3) the *lobby*. But why should the lobby be rated so highly?

Because from week to week through that lobby pass visitors who are possible candidates for heaven. God sends them to your church daring to hope the church elder will be there to greet them. Sometimes He is disappointed and angels cringe because the ones they are seeking to save are overlooked as they pass through.

Is every visitor to your church greeted each Sabbath morning and made to feel welcome and wanted? That is not all. Do you as elder visit the homes of all the local visitors who come through your church lobby each Sabbath morning? Do it and watch the results. Make a one-month’s test and require yourself to look up every local visitor. You will be amazed at the providential contacts you will make in the gateway of your church. God will see that still more seekers for salvation are directed there if He finds He can trust you to follow such interests through to the harvest.

Your church lobby will prove to be one of your most productive seedbeds of souls. Let nothing keep you from making the most of these contacts which will lead you to unnumbered homes—homes where visits hold the greatest promise. May the lobby of your church become the gateway to heaven.

Missionary Visitation

Missionary visitation can be very productive in soul winning. When you visit your flock, be ever alert to find new contacts and leads for future decisions. A few questions may start you on the trail to a gold mine of prospects for the kingdom: “Are all of your children in

the church?" "Do you have relatives here in town who believe or who have ever been members?" "Have your neighbors ever shown any interest?" "Are there any with whom you have studied whom we might help to a decision?" "Do you know of any who used to be members?" Ask these questions in all of your visits and you will be guided to souls "only waiting to be gathered in."

Are there young people in your congregation who have not yielded their all to Christ? Are there young people who would be lost if probation closed tonight? Each young person is a possible prospect for heaven. Every such one should be sought out and visited alone.

No evangelistic endeavor will render greater results per hour invested than that of seeking and visiting individual juniors and young people. They appreciate being treated like distinct human beings, and they deserve a personal visit. Remember, souls come by ones, not twos. Each one must be sought out and brought to Jesus. In fishing for souls you catch one at a time on your line, seldom by the netful.

Counseling Visitation

Then there are the counsel-seekers. Really, the majority are not searching for the advice they really need—they just want to "unload." Turn such sessions into contacts for the kingdom.

If elders will be as faithful in "tracking down" interest leads as the trapper is his prey, or the salesman is his prospect, he will find a harvest of souls for the kingdom.

Don't wait for the ideal time and place to have a visit. You may accomplish more by walking out across a ploughed field to talk to an interest alone on his tractor than to have by appointment a planned visit in his parlor. He feels you must have cared for him—and another advantage, you are able to talk with him alone.

Your visits will take you to offices and homes, to basements and roof tops. One of the best places to have a personal talk with a roofer is on the roof. There you can isolate him from his wife and children and appeal to him alone to make his surrender.

Along highways and byways you must seek for His "other sheep." They can be found, but they must be sought out.

Would you baptize as many as 100 in a single year? Then make 1,000 visits! And you'll doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing your heaven-sent centurion band with you! Try it and see! E

Fordyce W. Detamore was a pastor and evangelist in North America when he wrote this.

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Duties of the Deacon and Deaconess

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes a deacon or deaconess includes the following duties:

Greeting and Ushering

Especially in smaller congregations, the deacon and deaconess will serve as greeters and ushers for the services held in the church. They will also help the pastor and other event leaders maintain the smooth operation of church meetings.

Upkeep of Church Property

They will take responsibility for the care and upkeep of church property, including the oversight or actual doing of the janitorial work, repairs, grounds maintenance, interior decorating and small renovations.

Security

They will care for the security of those in attendance at church activities, always vigilant for the comfort and safety of all persons. This includes opening the church building(s) before meetings and locking the facility at the conclusion of activities.

Visitation

They will join with the pastor and elders in visiting church members. Some churches assign a particular geographic area or certain number of members for deacons and deaconesses in teams of two or three to visit.

Assisting with the Baptismal Ceremony

The traditional roles for this service are described below.

The males deacons will: Prepare and fill the pool. Assist male candidates. Do the physical labor related to the service.

The deaconesses will: Prepare the robes for all who

are participating. Assist female candidates. Launder and store robes, towels, etc., after the ceremony.

Assisting with the Communion Service

The traditional roles for this service are described below.

The male deacons will: Provide the physical arrangements, such as placing the communion table. Place the towels, basins, and water in the appropriate rooms for use in the Ordinance of Humility. Dispense water and basins for the men during the Ordinance of Humility, giving particular attention to visitors and new members.

The deaconesses will: Prepare the bread and grape juice. Arrange the emblems and covering on the table. Dispense water and basins for the women during the Ordinance of Humility, giving particular attention and assistance to visitors, new members, and the aged. Clean and store the linens and serving pieces used in Communion.

It is appropriate for either deacons or deaconesses who have been ordained to assist in distributing the emblems and uncovering and recovering the table during the service.

Caring for the Congregation

In many churches an unwritten tradition gives the women who serve as deaconesses or deacons the responsibility of organizing hot meals for any church family that experiences a death or other tragedy. This may mean simply taking food to the home or, in some cases, the serving of an entire meal to family and guests after the funeral. Often the planning of wedding and baby showers is also done by this group. This is an important aspect of a caring ministry in the congregation. E

North American Division Personal Ministry Department, 1988.

Duties of the Elder

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes an elder can best be described in the following ways:

Visitation

Nurture develops on a horizontal level in the church, with members offering encouragement and spiritual counsel to one another. In such a caring community, even the pastor is nurtured through the membership of the church. An elder can be a vital element in this kind of caring church. The elder can actively visit members in their homes, encourage others to do so, and assist in the training of prospective members.

Commitment

It is especially important for the local elder to be committed to the outreach of the church. The congregation needs to know that its leaders have a clear vision of the mission of the church. It has been said that church growth is "caught" rather than taught. When an elder enthusiastically models a commitment of his or her time to outreach ministry, others catch the same spirit and commit themselves to the mission of the church. An elder should schedule time for ministering to the unsaved.

Worship Leadership

The involvement and leadership of an elder can make a tremendous difference in the weekly worship celebration service of the church. Quality leadership and participation can transform a dull, lifeless wor-

ship service into meaningful celebration and praise. Skills in worship leadership, such as the reading of scripture; offering public prayers; planning the order of service; and in smaller churches at least, delivering the sermon, should be developed.

A Spiritual Mentor

The spiritual life of an elder should constantly lead members of the church to seek a deeper spiritual experience for themselves. First Timothy 3 describes the Christian life of an elder in these words: ". . . above reproach, the husband of one wife [spouse], temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle . . ." An elder should model, by his or her devotional life, Christian personality, and spiritual interest, a higher ideal for each member to reach. The elder should reflect the fruits of the Spirit in his or her relationship with others: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

Church Administration

An elder should always attempt to make a positive contribution to the organization and progress of the church. While doing this, he or she should not try to dominate or control but rather enable others to participate in decision-making in the church and ministry. An elder often serves in an advisory capacity to various departments, committees, and projects. In doing this, the elder provides unity among the various programs of the church, communicates progress to the church board and encourages a unified mission. **E**

Don't Put Out the Fire!

We have a burning message that is capable of setting the world on fire, but too often we go around with a fire extinguisher in our hands, afraid we might set someone on fire.

—A. J. Scherencel

Behind the Door

E. E. Cleveland

To the man of God the year 2000 is one of unlimited opportunity. As a people we have belted the globe with the three angels' messages. But above and beneath the belt, there are millions of lost souls who know not the gospel. In short, the challenge of 2000 is not coverage but saturation; not exposure, but contact. The gospel commission, "go ye into all the world," envisions the total conquest of the earth inch by difficult inch.

Obviously this will demand more of us personally than we have thus far committed in time, effort, and consecration. This also involves a heavier commitment of the resources of the church, human and material, or the task of "finishing the work" will forever remain an aspiration.

Ours is not an impersonal task that machines or machinery can complete. Behind the doors we face are human beings, each an entity with needs that vary in depth and complexity. Sitting opposite me was an earnest young man. We had just completed a Bible study when he asked, "Do you honestly believe that the Seventh-day Adventists have the solution to all of the world's problems?" My answer: "The Bible has the solution to all of the world's problems. To the extent that Adventists believe and teach the Bible, we have those solutions." And I say to you, Sir, we must believe that. We must believe that our message solves problems!

And what are the people's problems? Idolatry, profanity, Sabbath breaking, disrespect to parents, murder, stealing, adultery, lying, covetousness, and scores of related evils. The message that we preach concerns itself with the spiritual, mental, and physical welfare of man. It is relevant! A young man said to me, "I don't see that Christianity relates itself to this world. It seems to be the religion of the world to come." What a pleasure it was for me to assure him that it is the religion for this world and the world to come. Behind the door in 2000 is a challenge to meet human need unprecedented in the annals of mankind.

Darker the night, brighter the light

The dark night of forbidding circumstance will

serve to accentuate the light we possess. Hindrances will not depress the light bearer. Difficult territory, lack of facilities, and outright persecution are problems that have all been overcome. The exciting experience of Pastor Paul Monk illustrates what must be the spirit of God's workers *now*. He pitched his tent—but a severe storm knocked it down. He moved it to higher ground—but an automobile ran into a water main and flooded his new lot. Again he raised it—another driver hit a telegraph pole and it fell on the tent. Hoodlums tried to burn it, and later to cut it down. But Pastor Monk went on to baptize 17 souls. It seems that success follows him who perseveres.

There is also the darkness of spiritual ignorance to consider. Church people know little of the Bible and what it teaches. The world is grossly ignorant of the will of God. The world is hungry for the Word of God. It is ready to listen to anyone who speaks for God. This readiness is getting to the point of desperation. Proof of that fact is abundant. Humanity's dangerous experimentation with idol gods is but an erratic expression of man's basic desire for satisfaction which God alone can give. His frantic search takes the form of extreme art portrayals as well as intemperate behavior. This is a proud world's way of crying "Help!"

The Saving Message

There is miraculous power in the advent message. Men came to hear the three angels' messages six nights a week for ten weeks—in great, sophisticated, pleasure-loving New York, in the fabled entertainment capital of the world. The Word of God made its way in spite of television, night clubs, movies, and other assorted competition. This fact increased my confidence in the saving message. It is doing what it is supposed to do, namely, sobering the intemperate, mending minds, saving marriages, giving hope to the disconsolate, peace to the dying, and light to dispel the darkness from sin-riddled lives.

With what expectation we may approach the needy public with the message of God's saving grace! Divine optimism should pervade the ranks of the Advent

clergy. The triumphs of the cross should be our inspiration. The science of winning souls our preoccupation. We stake our claim by faith on every human soul. And all that we have is at the disposal of the cause. We believe nothing that we need to apologize for. There are educated people who are concerned over the breakdown in human affairs. They want answers; you have them; make them available. *Evangelize!*

The Open Door

Doors are now open that will soon be closed. The signs are too clear to deny that that day is not far hence. The rapid resurgency of papal influence, the increase in ecumenical ties between Protestant bodies, and the increasing influence of Spiritualism reveal the approach of restrictions on a scale heretofore unknown in this land.

Now is the time to press the advantage we now enjoy by spreading the gospel everywhere and by all means. Now is the time to secure radio time and preach the message on the air. Now is the time to rent tents, halls, theatres, and to use auditoriums, homes, and even the market places as launching pads for the good news. Now is the time to give the gospel the widest possible exposure. The place is here; the time is now.

No Time to Pass the Buck

In the past (not too distant) we have blamed everything from hard territory to bad weather for our baptismal poverty. In all honesty there are such things as hard territory and bad weather. But, at various times in our history, the cause of Christ has triumphed over both. May heaven deliver us from the sin of expecting equal numerical returns of all men regardless of circumstances. Pastors who are bearing responsibilities over and above that of their fellow workers are running campaigns. And some fields are more fruitful than others. All evangelists do not share equally the evangelistic gift. But may we also be delivered from the crime of expecting little and getting less! These are clearly not times for paucity of vision. Our times are gigantic, titanic, atomic! Our faith, anemic? God forbid!

The experts are legion who know what will and will not work. "The age of tents is past," one sage remarks. Before the sound of his voice dies out in the air, another evangelist baptizes hundreds in an old-fashioned tent campaign. "We must discover a new evangelistic method," another says. While he yet

speaketh, someone succeeds with a procedure a hundred years old. "I can't afford visual aids," is an additional lament. A pastor baptized 47 souls with only a Bible. "I am inadequately financed," still another wails. One pastor baptized over four hundred people with only \$500 invested by the conference. Yes, Israel's "wailing wall" is crowded with preachers wasting positive energy on negative pronouncements. We literally paralyze ourselves with our doubts and fears.

Sure Cure

The cure for fear is action. The swimmer who does not plunge into the water will never lose the fear of it. Action breeds the chain reaction. Positive, constructive action is the mother of achievement. A consistent, persistent, devotional life lends sanctity to our toil. The purposeful person with a vision knows no frustration. He simply moves ahead and uses his problems as stepping stones. The next campaign is better because of the experiences gained in this one.

There is also a cure for our sparse soul yield behind the door of 2000. We simply need to lift our sights. Faith sets a high goal for itself, while humility acknowledges God as the source of all worthwhile achievement.

Is there fear of derision should one fall short of the announced goal? Then, for whom are we working? A good effort that falls short of its goal is better than a good effort without a goal. Human beings who aim at nothing, usually hit it. Few pastors are so favored as the young evangelist who was sent to a South Carolina town against his wishes. Expecting little, he pitched his tent. On the opening night he decided to pay a routine visit to his own opening. Imagine his surprise upon his arrival when he found a full tent. On his knees behind the platform he apologized to God and began the effort. He baptized 74 people in that South Carolina meeting. But his experience is an exception. Big meetings are the offspring of big vision. It is the will of God that we aspire. Gigantic goals grow souls through prayer and hard work.

Then let us set great goals for ourselves under God in 2001—goals without reference to past achievements, for the past must not be the prison house of our future. Nor may we be bound in our thinking to what others more fruitful than ourselves have done, for this makes man the measure of our faith in God's capacity to save.

continued on page 29

The Pastoral Prayer

Orley M. Berg

The local elder is often asked to offer the pastoral prayer for the worship service. This is a solemn responsibility, and one that many an elder would much rather shy away from. Nevertheless it will continue to be expected of you as one of the spiritual leaders of the church. Here are some suggestions that may guide you in making this prayer what God would want it to be.

Prepare Yourself

In this prayer you speak to God for the congregation. You seek to express their joys, their needs, their soul hunger. To adequately enter into this experience your own heart must first be touched. So as you consider the awesome needs of the congregation, and how you can rightly represent them before the Lord, pray most earnestly that God will refill your own heart with His love and Spirit. Remember, the spirit and nature of the prayer can have much to do with the measure of blessing bestowed on the rest of the service. Pray that God will use you as an instrument during the precious moments of prayer to draw the hearts of all into His presence and prepare them for the message to follow.

Prepare the Prayer

It is not necessary to write out the prayer, although to do this occasionally can be very helpful. Even then, however, it should not be read. The point is that the prayer should be carefully thought through.

As a general guide to the prayer pattern, it would be well to keep clearly in mind the following five essentials: (1) adoration; (2) thanksgiving; (3) confession; (4) intercession; and (5) dedication.

Adoration, Thanksgiving, and Confession

First, we approach God in the spirit of praise. We adore Him. We love Him. Not just because of what He has done for us, but because He is God—the Creator and Redeemer—the One in whom we live and move and have our being. Second, we thank Him for the blessings we have received from Him, for the privilege of worship, song, and prayer. We are grateful for the plan

of salvation, for the forgiveness of sins, for the hope of the gospel. Third, we confess our sinfulness, our proneness to forget Jesus, our ill tempers, our words, our disregard for the needs of others, our selfishness and pride. We claim both forgiveness for sins of the past, and power to be overcomers in the future. Our great burden is to be more like Christ.

Intercession and Dedication

Fourth, our prayer leads to intercession or petition, taking into account the varied needs of our congregation. We pray for the church, the pastor and his family, the church officers, each family, the young, and the elderly. We pray for the community, for leaders in governments. We should have a special burden for revival and reformation, pleading for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and for God's direction and blessing on every soul-winning endeavor. The praying one will pray especially that rich spiritual blessings will result from the message of the morning. Finally, the prayer should conclude with a statement of commitment or dedication. Lord, we thank Thee again for the privilege of worship. We surrender our hearts to Thee anew. Make us conscious of Thy presence as we continue to wait upon Thee. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen."

As we think over these five foundation stones of prayer, you can readily see how logically a rightly balanced prayer can be developed around them. The prayer will not always reflect each in the order here suggested. By all means avoid a stereotyped outline that can become a rut. But have these principles firmly fastened in the mind. So often our prayers are almost entirely petition. How often the elements of praise and gratitude are omitted. This should not be, and, with this suggestive outline in mind, it will not be.

Avoid Wordiness

Special study should be made to make the prayer meaningful and to the point, avoiding wearisome repetition. On one occasion as we got up from our knees after one of the elders had offered an exceptionally lengthy repetitious prayer, another elder at my side

whispered, "Wasn't that a dilly?" Perhaps his remarks were out of place considering the occasion, but on the other hand, the prayer was all of that and more. Unfortunately, often prayers ascend to heaven that weary even the angels. About three minutes is generally thought to be an appropriate length.

Pray in the Spirit

Some prayers are as formal and dry as the mid-summer weather report. If our prayers are to be effective, we must first have a sense of real need, then the need must be expressed in earnestness and sincerity. There must be passion in our praying. I do not mean sentimentalism, but intensiveness, earnestness, and spiritual enthusiasm. There must be warmth and life—a holy passion for personal righteousness and for the triumph of God's cause.

"We," Not "Them"

Identify yourself with the needs of the congregation. This is very important. Study carefully the prayer of Daniel in Daniel 9:4-19. Notice how he prays, "We have sinned," "Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets," "We have rebelled." Daniel, a righteous man against whom even his enemies could find no fault, looked upon himself as a needy sinner, along with his captive people.

When praying for the congregation, remember you are one of them. It is "we" not "them." Otherwise it gives the impression of self-righteousness, you interceding for the less fortunate "sinning" congregation (see also Ezra 9:5-15).

Simplicity and Sincerity

Keep in mind that in the prayer you are talking to God as to a friend. Talk simply and sincerely. Don't try to "put on." Don't be unnatural. If your heart is right, and if you have a real concern for the church, its people, and its mission, the prayer will be effectual, and pastor and people will be blessed.

My prayer: Dear Lord, it's a solemn responsibility to speak in behalf of the congregation in the worship service. Teach me how to better perform this task. Enlighten my heart to my own needs and to those of Thy people. Grant that my prayers may be much more than mere formal recitations, or needless repetitions of hackneyed phrases. May the words be meaningful and relevant, bathed in the spirit of gratitude and praise. May they be words that will lift hearts into heavenly places, words that will bring hope and encouragement, blessing and power. In Jesus' name. Amen. **E**

Orley M. Berg was associate editor of Ministry magazine when he wrote this article.

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Explanation of Difficult Passages of the Bible

Mark 9:43,44

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

In this verse the word “hell” is translated from the Greek word “Gehenna” which is another name for the Valley of Hinnom just outside the walls of Jerusalem. There the refuse and bodies of animals were cast into an ever smoldering fire to be consumed. What might escape the flames was constantly being destroyed by maggots which fed on the dead bodies. Gehenna symbolized a place of total destruction.

Jesus taught in this verse that the fires of hell could not be quenched or put out by anyone. Isaiah said, “They shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame” (Isa. 47:14). Yet he hastened to say in the same verse, “There shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.” So the unquenchable fire will go out after it has consumed the wicked as stubble. Jerusalem burned with unquenchable fire (Jer. 17:27), but it was totally destroyed (2 Chron. 36:19-21).

The flames and worms of Gehenna represented the annihilation of sin and sinners. Earlier apostasy and idol worship in the Valley of Hinnom (Jer. 32:35), and God’s judgments on Israel as a consequence, marked it as a symbol of judgment and punishment. God warned that it would become the “valley of slaughter” where the “carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heavens” (Jer. 7:31-34). With the fires of Gehenna burning before their eyes, Jesus could not have spoken a more graphic word to the Pharisees to describe the final, total destruction of sinners.

Those who cite this text to support their doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul are thrown into a dilemma. Why? Because the fire and worms are working not upon disembodied souls, but *bodies!* According to Jesus, those cast into the lake of fire will go in bodily form, and this text confirms that truth. The verses before and after this text speak of the hands, feet and bodies

of those who suffer the Gehenna fire. In Matthew 5:30 Christ said, “the whole body” would be cast into hell.

In Isaiah 66:24 the same Gehenna picture of hell is presented with unquenchable flames and destroying worms. But in this case the word “carcasses” is used, revealing the fact that the fire consumes dead bodies, not disembodied souls. Speaking of the enemies of the Lord, Isaiah says, “The worm shall eat them like wool” (Isa. 51 :8)—a picture of being put out of existence.

Luke 16:22, 23

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

Either this story about the rich man and Lazarus was literally true or it is a parable. Here are four reasons why it could not possibly be literal:

1. *The beggar died and was taken by the angels to Abraham’s bosom.* No one believes that Abraham’s literal bosom is the abode of the righteous dead. It is a figurative or parabolic expression. Incidentally, the angels will gather the saints, but according to Matthew 24:31, it takes place at the coming of Jesus, not at His death.

2. *Heaven and hell were separated by a gulf, and yet could converse with each other.* There are probably few individuals in the world who believe that this will be literally true of the saved and the lost (Luke 16:26).

3. *The rich man was in hell with a body. He had eyes, tongue, etc.* (Luke 16:24). How did his body get into hell fire instead of into the grave? I know of no one who teaches that the bodies of the wicked go into hell as soon as they die. This story could not be literal.

4. *The request of Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and come through the flames to cool the rich man’s tongue is obviously not literal.* How much moisture would be left and how much relief would it give? The whole story is unrealistic and parabolic.

In the parable the rich man undoubtedly repre-

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sented the Jews because only a Jew would pray to "Father Abraham." The beggar symbolized the Gentiles who were counted unworthy to receive the truth. In Matthew 15:27 the Canaanite woman acknowledged that her people were beggars at the table of the Jews.

Christ probably used the name Lazarus in the par-

able because later he would actually raise Lazarus from the dead. And the climactic point of the entire parable is found in verse 31, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." They didn't believe even when one named Lazarus was raised before them. **E**

Timidity and Presumption

G. Cupertino

When he travels through cities and villages humming with activity, and sees the people absorbed by the pursuit of illusions and pleasures, the worker for God cannot help thinking of the heavy task that rests upon him: to warn these people, and do so as quickly as possible.

Then a host of feelings and ideas presses in upon his mind. His thought is influenced by what he sees, and he needs no less than help from above in order to free himself from certain fatal tendencies, among which are timidity and presumption.

These are two extremes. Timidity, which goes as far as fear, takes possession of the worker when he considers too long the human side of things and too little the divine side. That assault of timidity threatens us all, and it should be rejected energetically by a spirit of confidence in God. Otherwise it means defeat. It was because they had looked with their own eyes instead of with the eyes

of God that the ten spies returned with the sad report: "The people . . . are stronger than we" (Num. 13:31).

We all risk the same danger. Before the power of men, their gold, their number, their organization, and their influence, we risk being submerged, losing from view the positive, that is, the divine side of our mission—that which impelled Joshua and Caleb, animated by "another spirit" (Num. 14:24), to cry out, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30).

In the New Testament, Paul gives us the same lesson. He points out that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise" (1 Cor. 1:27). That has often been repeated during the course of history: the simple rod of Moses rises up against Pharaoh; in order to bring down the walls of Jericho, the strange and silent march of an unarmed people, accompanied by the ark, suffices; and to confront the Amalekite army

of 135,000 with only 300 men—armed with pitchers and lamps.

Other examples confirm that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). Thus we see that by the sling of a young shepherd the giant Goliath is brought down with one blow; that by a small number of youth in exile the honor of God is vindicated at the court of Babylon; and that one young man, dressed simply in a garment of camel's hair, proclaims the message of repentance on the eve of Jesus' ministry. Yes, "God hath chosen . . . base things of the world, and things which are despised, . . . yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. 1:27, 28). When young workers, with-

out even possessing academic laurels, accept the call of God, profits by all opportunities to educate and instruct themselves, and by prayer and study become students of the Bible, they can advance with the firm assurance

that they will carry off the victory. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7).

The Danger of Self-Sufficiency

The other danger that lies in wait for us is presumption, or self-sufficiency. When we permit this tendency to control our life, we are surely on the road of defeat. At the time of the conquest of Ai someone said to Joshua, "Let not all the people go up; . . . for they [the inhabitants] are but few" (Joshua 7:3). Let us emphasize, in passing, that this happened immediately after the great victory of Jericho. Thus it is easy, after a successful campaign, to forget that it is God who has given us the victory.

It is also easy to fall into an optimism that is no more than blindness. Yes, we must expel fear and make progress by faith. But we should also take into consideration reality, measure all the greatness of our mission,

We must expel fear and make progress by faith. But we should also take into consideration reality, measure all the greatness of our mission.

and humbly feel our smallness and the disproportion that exists between the work and the worker. That will not lead us into discouragement, but rather into a more intimate communion with the Source of all strength—God.

These conditions fulfilled, there will no longer be any limits to the great things that God can accomplish by means of men and women with their eyes open and their hearts firm. To timidity let us then oppose the steadfast faith of the believers; to presumption, humility of heart. Nothing less than that is necessary for balanced action. Instead of falling into the fire of enthusiasm today and sinking into the abyss of discouragement tomorrow, let us advance prudently but victoriously, without fear and without presumption. Then our progress will be sure, like “the path of the just. . . as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18). **E**

G. Cupertino lives in Rome, Italy.

Behind the Door

continued from page 23

Let us seek a faith to match these times. What times these are!

Times of the giant computer—

The machine brain—

Impersonal times—the faceless fact feeder—

The robots reign.

Times for big decisions of little men.

The day of the rich, bored bum—

‘The man of sin.’

Times of God these be—

’Tho dark—yet bright.

Times for giants in faith—

To send the light. **E**

E. E. Cleveland was associate secretary of the Ministerial Association when he wrote this article. He presently lives in Huntsville, Alabama.

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Know Your Song!

continued from page 15

the thought of “fellowship sweet” to be shared “at His feet, when our all on the altar is laid.”

Notice that here in just these few paragraphs we have quickly and simply analyzed the individual thoughts of these two stanzas of poetry, reduced them to prose, and put them into our own language. As a result we have a complete picture of what the author had in mind, and we have an entirely different concept of the song from what we would have had if we had merely memorized it mechanically. Looking back quickly now at the foregoing stanzas, you will notice that by underlining certain key words as a simple mechanical aid, you can memorize stanzas easily.

Let us notice just one benefit that will accrue to the singer who has thus memorized his song, and which will show up distinctly when he sings this in public. If the singer has clearly in mind the two different thoughts in these two stanzas, when he comes to the second stanza he will automatically brighten up and sing it in a more cheerful and hopeful manner, as if he were trying to bring the good news of this stanza to his listeners. This will be almost automatic if the singer is in any way alert, and of course the entire song will be sung with more confidence.

Once the message of a song is clearly fixed in your mind through memorizing the words and analyzing the subject and the arrangement of the thoughts, you will be surprised to find yourself doing much more shading and interpreting than you have ever done before. Now you have made it your message. You are not merely repeating something some author wrote.

As another aid it might be well to add the rhyming words at the end of each line to the key words. Then again there are times when we can almost use the rhyming words alone as the key words, the mind automatically filling in the entire line.

I hope some of these suggestions will prove valuable. I believe they will. Adapt them, and evolve a method of your own. I am always looking for new and better ways, and I believe you are too. That's the reason I wrote this article! **E**

Ben Glanzer was Associate Secretary of the Ministerial Association at General Conference when he wrote this

Hospitality Evangelism

continued from page 17

learn the lesson of perseverance. We must also strive to develop the ability to discern genuine interest. There are some valuable things we can learn about receptivity and indicators of interest.

This reading may trigger some, perhaps all, of these responses:

- ◆ You will think about a personal or family soul-winning project.
- ◆ You will catch an inspiration of what that project might be—something in harmony with your gifts and talents.
- ◆ You will experience feelings of inadequacy.
- ◆ You will feel the need to draw closer to the Lord.

Sometimes the inspiration gained from reading a book or attending a lay congress or seminar heightens a burden to see every one of your fellow church members working for souls. What can one individual do in such a situation? Perhaps the answer is found in this inspired statement: “When churches are revived, it is because some individual seeks earnestly for the blessing of God. He hungers and thirsts after God, and asks in faith, and receives accordingly. He goes to work in earnest, feeling his great dependence upon the Lord, and souls are aroused to seek for a like blessing, and a season of refreshing falls on the hearts of men. The extensive work will not be neglected. The larger plans will be laid at the right time; but personal, individual effort and interest for your friends and neighbors, will accomplish much more than can be estimated”—*Christian Service*, p. 121.

Let us take a closer look at what we've just read: One person who earnestly seeks for the blessing of God can bring revival to a church. He must act in faith. He must go to work for God, not waiting for others to join him. He must feel his great dependence upon the Lord.

The result: other souls will be aroused to seek for a like experience. Larger plans will be laid involving more of the members when they are ready to participate. All this will begin when one soul who hungers and thirsts to see a church moving makes personal, individual efforts for friends and neighbors. Remember: Revival can begin with one sincere person. **E**

George E. Knowles writes from Chula Vista, California.

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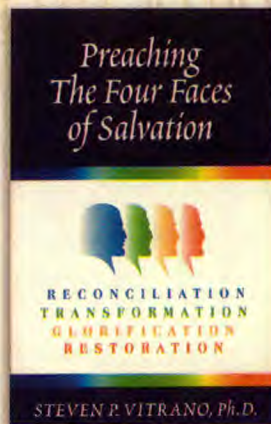
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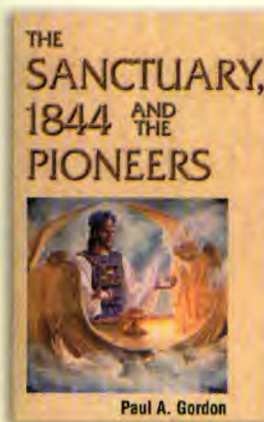
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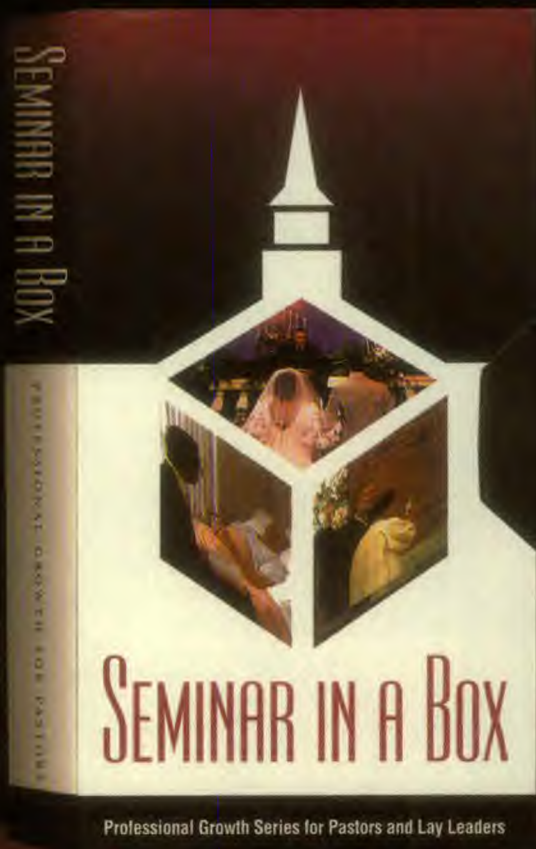
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"I will praise thee,
O Lord, with my
whole heart"

GODLY FEAR

"In thy fear will I worship thee" (Psalm 5:7).

"When thou goest to God . . . take thy heart aside, and say, 'O my soul, I am now addressing myself to the greatest work that ever a creature was employed about. I am going into the awful [full of awe] presence of God, about business of everlasting moment'" (Salter).

PRIVILEGE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Psalm 95:6).

"If a saint's single voice in prayer be so sweet to God's ear, much more . . . His saints' prayers in consort together" (Gurnall).

"In public worship . . . strong and imperishable

links are being created which will bind us together through eternity" (R. W. Dale).

"Our meetings for worship should be sacred, precious occasions" (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, p. 607).

"Our meetings should be made intensely interesting. They should be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven. Let there be no long, dry speeches and formal prayers merely for the sake of occupying the time. All should be ready to act their part with promptness, and when their duty is done, the meeting should be closed. Thus the interest will be kept up to the last. This is offering to God acceptable worship. His service should be made interesting and attractive and not be allowed to degenerate into a dry form" (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, p. 609).

"And now the wants are told that brought / Thy children to Thy knee; / Here lingering still, we ask for naught, / But simply worship Thee" (Canon Bright).

INTELLIGENCE IN WORSHIP

"Sing ye praises with understanding" (Psalm 47:7).

"The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding" (1 John 5:20).

"If Christians would take home the teachings of Christ in regard to watching and praying, they would become more intelligent in their worship of God" (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 2, p. 582).

"Worship is an act of the understanding applying itself to the knowledge of the excellence of God and actual thoughts of His majesty. . . It is also an act of

the will, whereby the soul adores and reverences His majesty, is ravished with His amiableness, embraces His goodness, enters itself into an intimate communion with . . . all his affections upon Him; we must worship God understandingly; it is not else a reasonable service" (Charnock).

WHOLEHEARTED PARTICIPATION

"I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart" (Psalm 9:1).

"We should not dare to give God a piece of our heart, when we apprehend Him present with the whole" (Charnock).

"Seek Him here with all thy soul; thrust not Christ into the stable and the manger, as if thou hadst better guests for the chaffiest rooms" (Baxter).

"Similar is the presumption of neglecting to participate in divine worship when present in God's house. Negative sins are sometimes most intensely sinful. Heedless sins are sometimes most fearfully fatal" (Phelps).

"To be spiritual in worship is to have our soul gathered and bound up wholly in themselves, and offered to God" (Charnock).

"O thou Great Chief, light as a candle in my heart, that I may see what is therein and sweep the rubbish from Thy dwelling place" (African child's prayer).

THOUGHTS CENTERED ON GOD

"Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

"A remembrance of God's omnipresence will quell distractions in worship. . .

An eye taken up with the presence of one object is not at leisure to be filled with another. . . Oppose to every intruding thought the idea of the Divine Omnipresence, and put it to silence by the awe of His majesty" (Charnock).

"It is impossible to have clear conceptions of eternal things unless the mind is trained to dwell upon elevated themes" (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 2, p. 141).

"A listless and wandering mind—roving like fool's eyes—in the temple of worship, is a most insolent indignity to the King of kings" (Phelps).

WHAT TO PRAY FOR

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder. . . at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God" (Phillip Brooks).

PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF GOD

"Practice the presence of God. . . Let us think often that our only business in this life is to please God, and that all besides is but folly and vanity. . . Let us think of Him perpetually. Let us put all our trust in Him. . . We cannot have too much in so good and faithful a Friend, who will never fail us" (Brother Lawrence). ^{ED}



BE YOURSELF

If you traveled the entire world, visiting different countries and cultures, and meeting thousands of people, you would never find someone just like you. It doesn't end there. From the beginning of civilization until today, there has never been and never will be someone exactly just like you.

Genetics confirm that if you had 300 billion brothers and sisters, even then, none of them would be like you. None of them would have the same thoughts, preferences and particularities. What a wonderful creature you are! This shows that God appreciates variety. He planned infinite variations in all His creation, and you are singular. When you look at yourself in the mirror, you can say: "I'm unique, there is and there will never be another person like me."

This doesn't mean that you need to become egocentric. On the contrary, your singularity brings a great responsibility. In reality, you should say: "Because I'm different, I have a mission to carry out in this world. If I don't do it, something will be incomplete."

A TV commercial illustrates this truth very well. Someone asks four children what they want to be when they grow up. One of them says, "I want to be a fireman." The other says, "I want to be a doctor." The third one says, "I want to be a soccer player." But the fourth child simply answers, "I want to be myself."

Every pastor and elder should reflect upon the truth inserted in the last child's answer as they perform their ministerial duties.

As they visit, preach, and counsel, they should demonstrate their singularity—thus revealing their originality. Hence, do not worry about imitating anyone; simply be the way you are.

The words of the song "**There is no one like you**" written by Brazilian composer Flavio Santos, reflect well God's love for us as unique and special people.

*"Have you ever seen a raindrop rolling down a window?
Know then, that no two raindrops are ever alike.*

*There is no one like you, no one like you.
God loves you the way you are.
To God, you are very special,
God loves you the way you are.*

*Look at the world around you.
God knows your name, He knows who you are.
He made each one different from the others
And for God, it is as if there were only you."*

Finally, take hold of the wonderful truth of Psalm 139:14. "I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works! Thou knowest me right well."

Jonas Arrais

General Conference Associate Ministerial Secretary

THE BIG LIE



A falsehood can run around the world before truth can even get its shoes on. Some people perpetuate prevarication just for the joy of saying something sensational. Others strategically plan to deceive. Untruth need not even be new as long as it is scandalous and misleads gullible people who will mindlessly repeat the error.

Rumors, half-truths, and calculated lies are often used by those who wish to attack the church. Such tactics, however, are not new. Satan, the father of lies, has used deception from the very beginning of his challenge to God's kingdom. Notice the sequence of events immediately following Jesus' resurrection as recorded in Matthew 28:11-15 (NLT).

Verse 11. "Some of the men who had been guarding the tomb went to the leading priests and told them what had happened." These guards knew the facts. They were clearly aware of what had happened and of the truthfulness of Jesus' resurrection. There was no mistaking their first testimony—they accurately told the priests what had happened.

Verse 12. "A meeting of all the religious leaders was called, and they decided to bribe the soldiers." These facts, however, did not fit the story that the priests wanted to disseminate. Realizing that

their prestige, reputations, and economic prosperity were at stake, they proposed a cover-up, hatched a plan to bribe the soldiers, and concocted a tale they wanted the soldiers to repeat.

Verse 13. "They told the soldiers, 'You must say, Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.'" How preposterous! The soldiers were being asked to declare themselves military incompetents. Falling asleep on guard duty was a capital offense, and now these men were being asked to incriminate themselves by admitting to such misconduct. The very expressions on their faces must have spoken the soldiers' unwillingness to cooperate.

Verse 14. "If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you, and everything will be all right." But assurances were given. The bribe was increased. The priests had already shown their power over the weak governor, Pilate. Now they led the military to believe that any trouble could be smoothed over with the politicians and that they would protect those who did their bidding.

Verse 15. "So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today." This perfidy's most tragic result is that years

later when writing this gospel account, Matthew could report that the story was still being repeated as if it were fact, despite many eyewitness accounts of Jesus' resurrection.

In recent months some old lies have resurfaced. One of the most ludicrous is that Adventist leaders conspired to commission a special medallion which was presented to the pope in attempt to unify Protestant Adventists and Roman Catholics into one organization. Despite the reality that such a meeting never occurred, variations of this story have been repeated for more than 30 years.

Like many falsehoods, this story has a grain of factual information. In this case, a medallion—actually a commemorative coin—does exist. In fact, I keep one in the drawer where I store my socks. Back in the early 1970s, a coin minting company marketed a series of extra-large coins which featured various denominations—Baptists, Catholics, Presbyterian, Adventists, Lutherans, Methodists, etc. These commemorative coins, produced for collectors and sold as a commercial venture, were designed from information which the producers solicited from the various denominations. The "Adventist coin" depicts the fourth commandment highlighted on the tables of the Decalogue; on the reverse, it features

the return of Jesus (i.e., Seventh-day Adventists). Naturally, the mint hoped to attract customers to buy the entire series, and a parishioner purchased one and presented it to me as a gift.

On a subsequent occasion, the attendees at an interfaith meeting each received one of these commemorative coins as a souvenir of the occasion and as an

accurate depiction of the major Adventist teachings. Whether one of these coins ended up in the possession of the pope is irrelevant since it was not commissioned for him as has been purported. But if he did receive one, I hope he has studied it carefully, for great truth is presented in the clarity of its artwork.

The question more germane to the issue

is: Why are we so fascinated by rumors and eager to believe the worst about any situation? Perhaps we need to spend less time with gossip and more time with God's Word. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and it will set you free!" ^{ED}

James A. Cress, General Conference Ministerial Association Secretary

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