

home of Mrs. Axthle Guyer. The day was spent mending and packing clothing for Child Welfare of Bedford County.

The Youth Fellowship sponsored a Harvest Home supper Sunday evening, November 22. They presented a program on "Let's Give Thanks." Mrs. Axthle Guyer, the leader of the youth group, served a chicken supper to the class at her home on Sunday evening, December 6. An exchange of gifts was enjoyed.

The Women's Society held their monthly meeting and annual Christmas party with the exchange of gifts at the home of Mrs. Sherman Kagarise on December 9.

The Juniors and Youth Fellowship gave a Christmas program on Sabbath, December 26.

The booklets, "My Spiritual Inventory," have been distributed.

— Correspondent.

ALFRED, N. Y. — The annual Christmas luncheon given by the Evangelical Society for all women of the church and its societies was held on December 9 at the parish house. Seventy women attended the luncheon and program. This included the singing of carols, Scripture, handbells by the Alfred Bellingers, a Christmas meditation, and a solo. Our special Christmas project this year was for the intermediates of our Sabbath School. Fifty dollars was contributed for the purchase of chairs for the intermediates in the Miriam Shaw Room in the church.

Christmas was observed at two Sabbath morning services. On December 12, carols were sung by the Cherub, the Junior, and the Senior Choirs of the church. Pastor Warren had a meditation on Christmas as a fitting highlight of the service. On the following Sabbath, the Senior Choirs of the Union University Church and the Seventh Day Baptist Church joined in presenting "An Arrangement of Christmas Carols and Chorales" arranged and directed by Dr. David N. Johnson. The pastor's meditation was "Emmanuel." These two choirs presented the same program the following day at the University Church service.

On Sunday evening the church Christmas Party was held in the parish house. This consisted of a family dinner under the sponsorship of the S. D. Fellowship for all families of the church, followed by a program by the Sabbath School. At this

time, one of the features was the singing of seasonal selections by both the Cherub and the Junior Choirs.

On January 10, the church held its annual business meeting following a family supper in the parish house. The following officers were elected: president, Winfield Randolph; vice-president, Berwyn Reid; treasurer, Mrs. Edith Place; clerk, Dr. Paul Saunders; assistant-clerk, Mrs. Leah Crofoot. Elected to the Board of Trustees were Mrs. Claire Randolph, Frank Snyder, and Dr. Willard J. Sutton.

— Correspondent.

DAYTONA BEACH, FLA. — The Lay Development Program in our church has created much interest with a very high percentage of the congregation participating. Everyone has felt the inspiration of meeting together to discuss our problems and ways we may better serve the Master. Already, some of the recommendations made at the "Buzz Sessions" have been put into practice and we begin this new year with a great deal of zeal and anticipation for the months ahead.

The annual business meeting with election of officers was held in the church on January 5. Annual reports were read and other business transacted. A fellowship dinner followed the meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. Lyman Coon, winter residents here (from De Ruyter, N. Y.), were honored with a reception in the social hall on December 29 for their Golden Wedding Anniversary. A gift of money was presented to the couple by Dr. O. B. Bond, from the church members.

Church Aid meetings are held monthly during the winter and spring. Sewing children's cotton garments for Nyasaland is a project under way at present.

The Sabbath School presented white gifts of canned food at Christmas, which were later distributed to needy families outside of the church family. A lovely Christmas pageant took over the Sabbath School period on December 19, with both the children and adults taking part.

Visitors from our northern churches have been numerous during December and January and we welcome any others that may be in the vicinity of Daytona Beach on the Sabbath. We are located at 145 First Avenue, just off of U.S. 1 which runs through the city.

— Correspondent.



The Sabbath Recorder

First Issue June 13, 1844

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Member of the Associated Church Press

C. REX BURDICK, Editor

REV. LEON M. MALTBY, Managing Editor

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Guest Editor

States Purpose

Of This Issue

Rev. C. Rex Burdick

It has been the editor's purpose in the preparation of this issue of the Sabbath Recorder to bring to our thought and attention some of the basic factors which relate to the life and work of the church. It is presented with the hope that readers may find a richer and more meaningful church life through its study and that the church may increasingly become the force in the world that God intended it to be.

Mr. Burdick comes to his first editorial assignment well qualified by training and experience. His purpose as stated above, will be found to be well carried out.

A successful and much-loved pastor, he has served in three more or less rural churches and one city church. As a student of Alfred School of Theology he pastored the Independence, N. Y., Seventh Day Baptist Church during 1945 and 1946. Continuing his seminary studies at Faith Seminary in Philadelphia he pastored the Marlboro, N. J., Church from February, 1947, to January, 1955. During this time he earned his Bachelor of Theology and Master of Sacred Theology degrees.

In his college town of Salem, W. Va., he taught in the Religious Education Department while pastoring the local church from February, 1955, to December, 1958. His present pastorate is at Verona, N. Y.

For 12 years Mr. Burdick served as chairman of the Publications Committee of the Tract Board. He is now a member of the denomination's Ministerial Training Committee.

He and his wife (the former Bette Lippincott of Battle Creek) have five young children. Their buoyant faith has brought them through numerous trials.

Expect a blessing as you read this issue and write to the publishers if you would like to have the weekly Sabbath Recorder on a subscription basis.

—Managing Editor.

Concerning the Meaning of Church

By the Guest Editor

Commonly, that building is called a church in which public worship is conducted and which houses the functions and activities of a worshipping congregation. Also the group which worships in such a building is called a church. Sometimes a particular denomination or organization of people who profess Christ is called a church. These are limited secondary meanings of the word for the Biblical concept of church cannot be comprehended in wood, stone, and mortar, nor confined to a geographic area or to persons of a single persuasion. Church translates the Greek word, *Ecclesia* (literally, called out), and in its Christian use very appropriately refers to those persons of all time and all places who have been called out from the error of godless lives and the dread of godless eternity to the joys of forgiveness of sins, life-sharing fellowship and service of Christ, and the hope of eternity in the presence of God.

Very conceivably some who do not belong to local congregations at all may be a part of the church in this larger and spiritual sense, while some faithless persons whose names are on the church roles may know nothing of this true and spiritual church. The true Church, it may be fairly said, in that universal body of believers of all places and all time who trust in Christ and follow Him in lives of godly service.

The Church is the Body of Christ

"For as in one body we have many members, and all members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Rom. 12: 4, 5). See also 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. This is a very beautiful figure which St. Paul used to describe the Church. There are many implications, but two will surely make the experience of our own church life much richer.

If the Church is the Body of Christ, then Christ is the Head of the Body, the

Church (Eph. 4: 15). Now the purpose of the head is to direct the movements of the body. From the head, impulses travel out over the nerve system to each particular organ and the organ responds to the direction from the head. Only when the organ is diseased does it refuse to do the bidding of the head, or in case the nerve line of communication is damaged, it does not receive the message from the head.

Is it not the same with the Body of Christ, the Church? Our purpose is to obey the will of the Head, Christ. If we do not do it, it is because we are spiritually diseased and incapable of doing His will — or because the line of communication (prayer) has been broken and His will is not getting through to us.

The Bible also teaches in the same passages that as members (organs) of the same body, we belong to each other. We are not so many isolated individuals, but we are bound together in a mutual fellowship in which we all share. Only the condition of Christian love can possibly exist in the true Church and the whole Body (Church) becomes ill when even one member is out of fellowship with the rest. The healthy functioning of the whole is assured when each member finds his place and does his part in the love of Christ.

The Church is the Bride of Christ

Another very beautiful figure used in the New Testament to describe the Church is that the Church is the Bride of Christ. This speaks of the sacredness of the home, but it also speaks of the relationship of love and submission which the Church holds to the Savior. Basically, the relationship which the Church holds with Christ is a relationship of love. Anything less is unworthy the Biblical concept of the Church which we see in this picture.

A bride may have many lovely qualities which endear her to the heart of her husband. She may also have valuable possessions and resources that may appeal to him. Other circumstances may exist which



In discussing this subject it is necessary to consider at the same time two other questions related to it. If the answers to these are not clearly understood the answer to the main question is likely to be misunderstood. First, let us ask why one needs to become a Christian anyway. Then after thinking about how to enter that life we must consider how becoming a Christian is going to affect him from then on.

Two New Testament characters will help to show the universal need of what Christianity, or rather Christ, has to offer. The woman of Samaria, about whom we read in the fourth chapter of John, had plumbed the depths of sin and disgrace to a point where, humanly speaking, there was no return. Nevertheless, Jesus offered her the water that would be a fountain springing up into everlasting life. On the other hand, Nicodemus had tried in his own strength to perfect his knowledge of the law and to observe it. Even to him

make her desirable. But neither the qualities nor the resources nor any other such circumstance make her the bride. A woman becomes a bride because, and only because, a man has chosen her and she has accepted his proposal.

In the heavenly counterpart, nothing under the sun that we are or have will make us the Bride of Christ. Individually and personally we become a part of the true Church, the Bride of Christ, when, and only when, we realize He has chosen us, and we respond by accepting His proposal.

Jesus said, "You must be born again (literally from above)." Nicodemus' knowledge only showed his need of the life from God which Jesus in His life and death came to give (see John 3).

Paul, in the first three chapters of Romans, gives what is perhaps the most complete discussion of the need of man. He tells of all of the depths of selfishness and idolatry to which man has gone. He shows that this is in spite of what we may know of God in nature, in spite of the knowledge in his own conscience of what he should do, and in spite of the sacredness of God's written law. Then he concludes that "there is none righteous, no, not one" and that "therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

That the knowledge of good and evil is not enough to keep man from evil is dramatically shown in the account of the first sin in the third chapter of Genesis. There were two special trees in the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were offered the fruit of the first but were forbidden to eat of the latter. Satan skilfully persuaded them that the knowledge of good and evil would make them able to be good of themselves. They were told that they would be like God, implying that they would not need God. However, they soon found out what a lie that was. They saw that they were naked before God and very much in need of forgiveness and a covering for their sins. How different it would have been for them

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A newspaper article recently told of an occasion when all of the members of a family were at home for the evening. Father was reading the newspaper, Mother was stuffing clothes into the automatic washer before settling down with a book, and the children were watching television.

When the electricity through a power shortage was cut off for several minutes, they lighted a candle, and the family grouped around it in a circle. The father who had served overseas in the Armed Forces thought it well to do something to entertain, so he began telling of experiences he had had and places he had been.

The electric power was resumed in some ten minutes, but the family remained in its circle for over an hour. One of the children begged wistfully as they dispersed, "Daddy, if the lights ever go off again, will you tell us some more about the adventures you have had?"

In all too many ways, all too many families do not know what it is to have group fellowship or a family circle. For some, the "circle spirit" has never been formed. For others, it has been broken by circumstance of conflicting schedules. And for still others, it has been shattered by marital incompatibility consummating in divorce.

For years many have asserted that the home is one of the great bulwarks of our civilization. In these days some are grave-

*Rev. Alton L. Wheeler, a past president of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, is pastor of the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Riverside, California. He has had a considerable amount of experience in the field about which he writes in this article.

ly concerned over the Communist attitude toward marriage and the family, yet perhaps we need to have equal concern regarding the American attitude, yes, the Christian concept and interpretation of what factors may contribute toward lasting happiness and stability in the home. More specifically, what can the church do, teach, or stress to help stabilize and enrich family ties?

I

The church should interpret the spiritual and moral, as well as the social significance of marriage. Marriage is basically a spiritual institution. Whereas some will not go so far as to conceive of it as a sacrament, surely all will agree that it has spiritual import, and should involve a relationship with God. Genesis 1: 26-27 says that God created man, and Genesis 2: 24 records the Lord's interpretation of marriage. Said He, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Mark 10: 6-9 records Jesus as quoting the Father and adding "so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

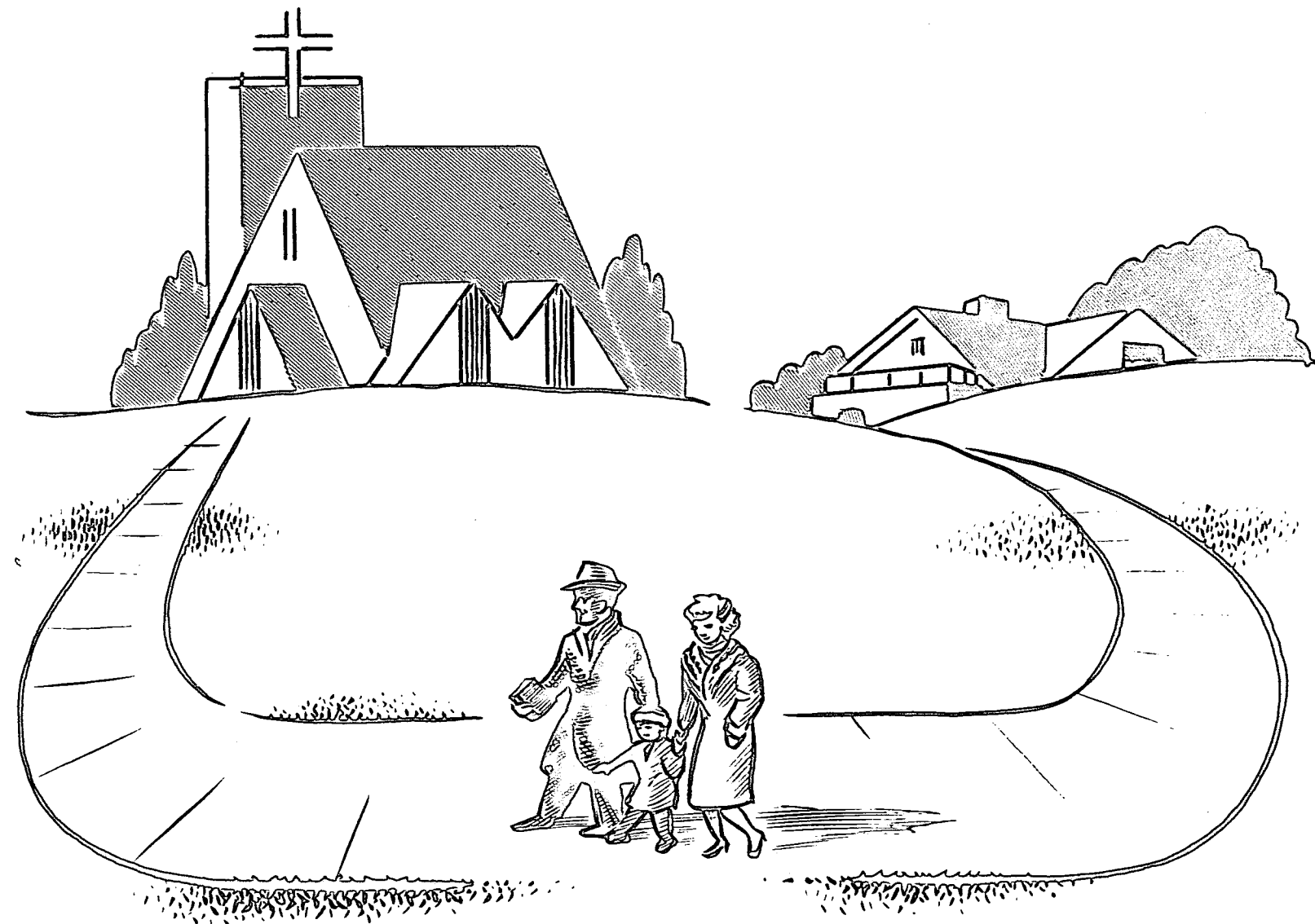
The Church, then, as the Bride of Christ, would do well to reiterate this two-fold proclamation. Since the Lord has declared that it is He, who under ordained circumstance unites two persons in wedlock, encouragement should be given to having weddings in the church as the House of God or in a religious atmosphere; and ministers as the servants of God should wisely be sought to officiate on such religious occasions.

II

The church periodically and systematically should well educate its people, and especially the young people, as to how to interpret marriage, establishing standards in early pre-marriage years.

The Apostle Paul was constrained of the Holy Spirit to urge that believers "be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion

The church would do well to interpret and to proclaim the joining of two persons in wedlock, so far as the Lord is concerned, as a spiritual experience. Young people, even of pre-adolescent years, should be instructed and should enter into discussions about the factors which make for marriage as God intends it to be. They will do well to realize that they should associate with the right "crowds" and choose the right type of friends, for



"The best steps a family can take to insure happiness are the steps it takes from the home to the place of worship."

hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for YE are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6: 14-17). While Paul is herein making a general statement governing human relationships, marriage would surely be one of those specific situations in which the principle should apply.

the standards by which they choose these may come to be the standards by which they choose their life mates. They should in adolescent years consider the need for being mature, stable, and spiritually established before entering into marriage. They should be made aware of the advisability of one's deciding on his life-work, and in some situations should complete the academic preparation for one's earning a livelihood before involving himself in holy wedlock. They should discuss dating and intermingling with those

of the opposite sex, the advisability of engagements, and the wisdom of becoming acquainted with each other's families as well as with each other. Above all else, they should decide their relationship to the Lord before they give consideration to how they feel toward each other. The church, especially through its pastor, should avail competent counseling service to couples anticipating marriage. In addition to the ideal of having several "conversations," as some prefer to call them, the minister should have books and leaflets available on loan for the bride and groom to read. The pastor should be made welcome in their home during ensuing months after the home is established.

The church should stress parental responsibility involved in bringing children into this world and in rearing them. The Psalmist has said that "children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3). Joseph wisely said to his father one day, "These are my sons, whom God hath given me. . . ." Jacob and Isaiah similarly conceived of their children as being gifts from God (Gen. 33: 5; Isa. 8: 18).

An increasing number of churches are holding services for dedication of babies on Christian Family Day or at other times of the year. In the progress of the service parents are often reminded that even as Hannah brought the child Samuel to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, and as Mary and Joseph presented the infant Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem, so they do well to dedicate their children to the Lord. While reminded that no ceremony, however ancient or solemn, has the power to change the character of a child or to alter his relationship to God, nevertheless, the measure of consecration which the parents give, the manner in which they guide and instruct their children, and the faithfulness with which they exemplify in their own lives the life and spirit of Jesus Christ, will determine in large measure the child's character and will help to lead toward the dedication of his life to the Lord.

Even as the state holds parents responsible for their children until they are of

age, so the Lord holds them accountable for their sons and daughters, especially during those growing and formative years of mental, physical, social, and spiritual development.

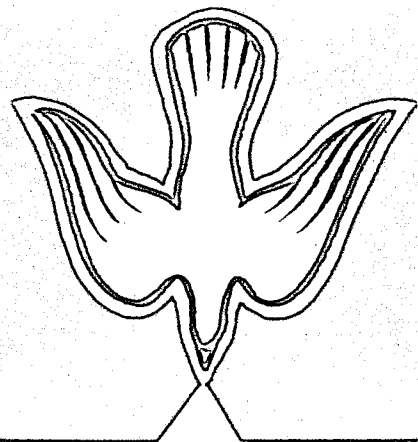
IV

The church should furthermore supplement the teaching and training efforts of the parents ministering spiritual instruction and guidance, and helping to provide a spiritual community. The word "supplement" is advisedly used, for the responsibility of training as well as seeing that children are spiritually trained should rest primarily with the parents. Moses announced to God's people, ". . . thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. . . ." (Deut. 6: 5-7).

Teaching "fundamentals of the Christian faith" must be accepted by parents as their primary responsibility. First, they should love their own children as does no one else. Second, they have teaching and exemplary opportunities many hours of six and more days of each week, while the church has but an hour or more on the Sabbath. Third, most of their questions are asked during the week of the parents and while they are alone, rather than in the Church School while they are with the group. Fourth, especially in these days, when families move from state to state, or from one area to another, the "church" as such cannot have the sustained interest in or opportunity of teaching or praying for them for many consecutive years.

To cultivate a spirit of teamwork between church and parents, some systems hold periodic parent-teacher meetings. In other situations written lesson assignments are sent home by the teachers, so-

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The Holy Spirit's Work In the Church's Life

By DAVID C. PEARSON*

When one reads The Acts, one sees the power of the early church. This power was the result of the Holy Spirit as He worked in and through those early believers. We rejoice in the spiritual victory the church once knew. We despair, however, that today's church is not what it was, for spiritual poverty is abundant. The Holy Spirit of God is not with us in power.

In John 16: 7-11, Christ said that it was expedient for Him to go away in order that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, might come. The Holy Spirit would reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Jesus Christ, though divine, knew the limitations of a physical body. The Holy Spirit would come as a spirit without bodily limitation to dwell within the believers. As an omnipresent spirit He could continuously work within all believers simultaneously. God willed that the Holy Spirit should so come.

Christ went away. The story is told in the first chapter of Acts, of His having been received up out of sight into a cloud. Those standing by were comforted by two heavenly messengers who assured them that this same Jesus would come again even as He went away.

Approximately ten days after Jesus' ascension the Holy Spirit descended. Strange

signs accompanied His coming, such as a sound from heaven like a rushing, mighty wind, cloven tongues like unto fire, and the gift of tongues that each might hear in his own language.

Joel had prophesied of this Spirit-outpouring: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . ." (Joel 2: 28).

The Holy Spirit Convicts and Converts

With the coming of the Holy Spirit the church dynamically began with a will. Peter standing before the group preached his famous sermon which, through the Holy Spirit, resulted in the conversion and baptism of 3000 souls. Herein is seen the convicting and converting work of the Holy Spirit. Fifty days before Pentecost Christ had been crucified. Proud Jerusalem had to learn that the Christian cause was not to suffer defeat, that though hell should rage in fury, God's plan would be effected. Pentecost occurred not so very far from the tragic yet wonderful scene of the cross, and here a large throng embraced what was perhaps thought of as a new cult. This was no mere cult, but rather the beginning of the greatest movement ever to act upon this earth.

The Holy Spirit Empowers

The work of the Holy Spirit did not end with the conversion of sinners, but

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HOW MAY ANYONE BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

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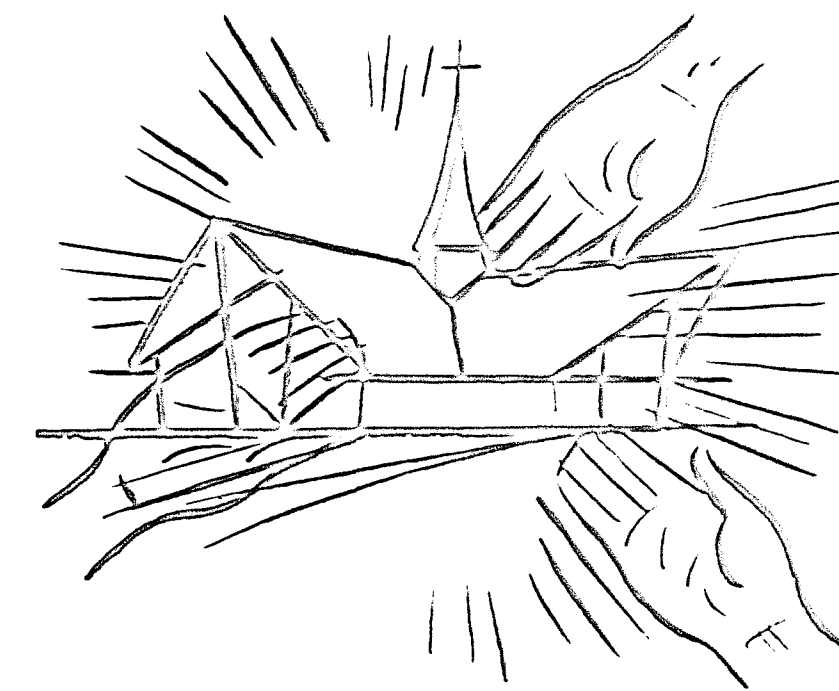
had they chosen to eat of the Tree of Life. They would have been partaking of the life that God provides, the life that He in Jesus gives for all men, thus sharing His own life with them. The only condition is that men come to Him for it. It is because God so shares His life with us that Jesus loved to call Him "Our Father." He was referring to this life and this fatherhood when He told Nicodemus he "must be born again."

Our description of the need of salvation has led us right into the answer to the question, "How may anyone become a Christian?" or as the Philippian jailer worded it, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul's answer was God's answer. The Amplified New Testament attempts to give the full meaning of the Greek words so I quote Paul's answer from it: "Believe in and on the Lord Jesus Christ — that is, give yourself to Him, take yourself out of your own keeping and entrust yourself into His keeping, and you will be saved; and this applies both to you and your household as well" (Acts 16: 31). Jesus' answer is similar. He gives it in connection with His discussion of the bread of life as found in John 6: 47. I use the same translation again. "I assure you, I most solemnly tell you, he who believes in Me — who adheres to, trusts in, relies on and has faith in Me — has (now possesses) eternal life."

A Christian is one who follows Jesus' teaching, accepts what He offers in the way He offers it. A Christian is one who comes to God in the name of Jesus and accepts life eternal, believing that He has offered it. It is as free now as it was for Adam and as simple as plucking the fruit of a beautiful tree and eating it for pleasure, nourishment, and for life itself.

At this point the question always arises, "Does not a person have to be like Christ in order to be a Christian?" In the light of all of the Bible teaching we may say that the more reasonable question is,

"Does not a person have to become a Christian before he can be like Christ?" This, too, is a miracle. The Bible is full of accounts of miracles of all kinds. The teaching of both Old and New Testaments is that true righteousness is miraculous. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," says Isaiah (64: 6). He also says, "He hath clothed me with garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61: 10).



Listen to Paul: "Christ liveth in me." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Gal. 2: 20; Phil. 4: 13). The lives of great Christians from the times of the early church to the present have borne witness to the fact that they have depended on God through prayer in Christ's name. Like the heroes of faith listed in Hebrews eleven they have "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises. . . ."

It has been very well said that it costs one nothing to become a Christian but it costs everything to live the Christian life. It costs everything but in return one re-

Rev. Ralph H. Coon is professor of physics and mathematics in Salem College, Salem, W. Va. Before assuming his present position he served as pastor in Seventh Day Baptist churches in Colorado, New York, and Rhode Island.

The Face of Concern

Does the Church reflect
His face of Concern?

Sometimes a haunting face lingers long in the mind, and try as we will to forget it, it persists to haunt us and to baffle us. It may be a face that we have seen somewhere in the normal intercourse of our lives but that we cannot place, or it may be one born of a dream or a mental image. It may be a face of splendor or it may be a face of horror, it may be a face of wistful beauty or one of rock-like strength. It intrigues us, haunts us, defies us. It refuses to be explained and it refuses to be forgotten. There it is and there it will forever remain, its mystery forever unsolved, forever in the regions of the shadows, sometimes so real it could speak, yet always defying the mind.

There is a face that often rises before the eye of my mind; a face shrouded with mystery, never quite clear, never like other faces, yet not too different either. It is a face with one word expressed in every line, the word **concern**. The face of concern is the face of Jesus. We may have our visions, and we may paint our pictures. We may see Him as an effeminate man with a weakly beautiful face, as many have, or we may see Him as a specimen of virile manhood with brawny back and rippling muscles, fresh from the carpenter shop. He may be given hair and beard of fiery red, or more likely an olive skin blending into His dark hair, beard, and deep black eyes, and dominated by the Hebrew features of His own race. He

receives a **much, much greater everything**: peace, joy, hope, satisfaction, and fellowship with God and man. All of these things are eternal in character. We must use every means at hand to tell the Gospel of free salvation and proclaim the glories of the God-given life.

may wear an oriental garb, or be dressed in kingly splendor, or be clothed with simple African dress, or in the garments of a slave. It matters not.

But as we read, the picture painted by His daily activities and engraved into the life that we have come to know and love, and as we search for the spirit which motivated Him, we find one word which most assuredly characterizes that great soul, and surely must characterize His face — forever clothed in mystery though it is — the word **concern**.

Lowell Russel Ditzen in his sermon of the month in the March, 1957, issue of **Christian Herald** has well said, "Students of the New Testament may do a great deal of haggling about the meaning of what Jesus said to people. But there can be little disputation about the way Jesus acted toward people. His was an open, concerned, affectionate spirit toward everyone." Whenever and wherever we see the Savior of men, we see His concern for people. Perhaps this concern is best expressed by His own words in reverie, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings and you would not" (Luke 13: 34).

Concern for His Own People

When Jesus came to reveal God to men and to show them the Father's way, it would seem as though He might have looked for and expected the support and cooperation of the Jewish leaders of religion. The Pharisees were very religious men, and pretty good men, too. Yet, far from the Spirit of Christ, they rejected Him and His teaching completely, and

treated Him shamefully. John says, "He came to his own home (or creation) and his own people received him not" (John 1: 11, RSV). Yet His heart went out to them and He yearned over them and He yearned for them. He knew that these **good people** needed something more than the outward goodness which they possessed. He longed to have them come to Him for life, the life of the Spirit, everlasting life, which He was ready to offer. Had He been more human He might have treated them with contempt, but instead He held in His heart only concern for them. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen

gathers her brood, but you would not!" This surely spells concern. And some of the Jewish leaders responded to Him. We know of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, and we have no reason to doubt that there were others among the company of the Christians.

Concern for the Alien

But here we have the upper class, accepted people of His own nation. For reasons of expedience one might be generous with such who may be able to do much in return. But note some of His other contacts, and that His action forever spells concern for all, even for those who

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THE HOME — A SACRED INSTITUTION

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liciting the aid of parents in supervising Bible study and "home work" during the week, and being responsible for the teaching of almost all memory work in the home.

V

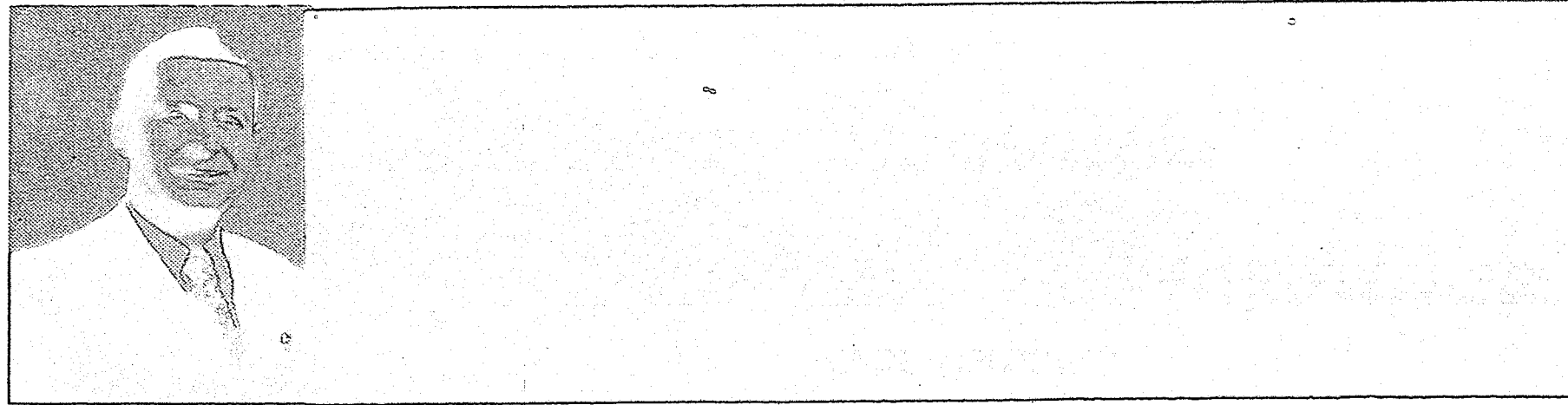
Again, the church should urge couples or members of families to seek counseling aid when it is needed. Problems recognized during inception are much easier to solve and differences are much more easily arbitrated when help is sought before they become too ingrown or involved.

The church, through its spiritual leaders, should make it both easy and desirable for those suffering marital tensions to seek counsel freely, with the full assurance of being aided in a confidential way. It should also be acquainted with services available through family counseling agencies. Above all else, it should re-emphasize that since marriage is a spiritual institution, God is involved in the problem as well as in the solution.

With all age groups, whether among those who have not been married, or with those who are united in holy wedlock but are suffering marital tension, it should be taught that divorce in the sight of God

is not a satisfactory solution to such baffling problems. In other experiences of life, one may cancel a magazine subscription, trade off a car, or sell his house, but life is too sacred, and the vows are too binding for one to absolve his relationship with his "life" mate by resorting to divorce. Jesus declared, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10: 11-12). The Church as the Bride of Christ and as the Servant of God is not in a position to alter the Lord's judgment.

In conclusion, it might well be stated that the church and the families are inseparably involved in a fellowship of love through God. We are everyone members one of another — and together "we are the body of Christ." May the same lasting spirit of love, patience, and intercession pervade amongst us as God's people, as they persist in the heart of God for man. Above all else, may Christ have "pre-eminence in our churches, homes, and personal lives." "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. . . . Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Ps. 127: 1, 3).



It is my firm belief, coming out of the experience of my life, that a knowledge of the Sabbath of the Bible and the keeping of the Sabbath of God bring a genuine blessing to the individual Christian and to the church.

The Church of Jesus Christ is that body of believers, from the time of its beginning to the present day, which has confessed Christ as Savior and Lord and which has claimed and known the forgiveness of sins which is promised through His sacrifice on the cross. Also, the word church applies to the local group of Christians gathered together for fellowship, worship, and service. Yet withal, the individual Christian and his life and the effect upon his life is the concern that is before us.

To establish the Sabbath of the Bible is not difficult for there is general agreement among scholars that the Sabbath of the Bible is the seventh day of the week, commonly called Saturday according to our calendar.

I

There has been an attempt during the past four hundred years to make a sabbath out of Sunday. This is an attempt which has miserably failed since we find Sunday to be very much a holiday in our time. This is the same type of holiday which Sunday had become in England before the time of the Puritan movement. It reflects, to a great extent, the no-sabbath attitude

*Rev. Earl Cruzan, a past president of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, is pastor of the Pawcatuck Seventh Day Baptist Church at Westerly, Rhode Island, where he is active in the work of the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society.

of the early reformers. This attitude is that one day is no more sacred than another, but that the church needs a specific time for worship. Sunday was the convenient time chosen. Puritanism tried to transfer the sanctity of the Sabbath of the Bible to Sunday and succeeded to a considerable extent, especially in the early history of Christianity in America. Yet today, Sunday occupies much the same place that it did before that attempt was made. On Sunday, most Catholics attend Mass; many Protestants attend a worship service (a service often scheduled early, especially in the summer, to avoid conflicts with holiday plans), and the most of the day is given to crowding in the many things which do not get done the rest of the week. It is a time for sleeping in, for catching up on chores around the house, and for taking a holiday with the family. But little time is given for the church and the things of God.

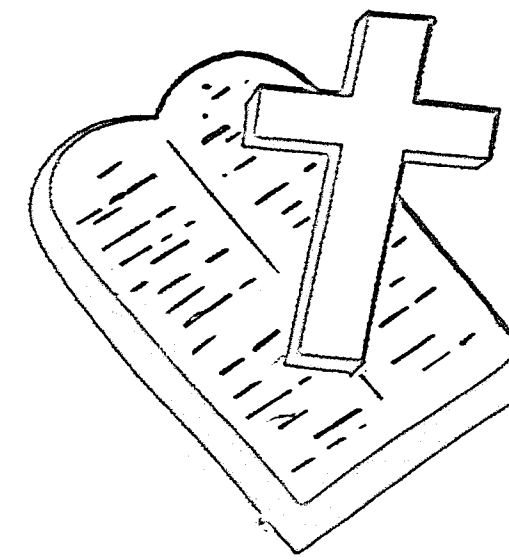
Almost all of Christendom recognizes the need for a Sabbath — a rest from the daily toils, a time for the renewal of the mind and soul in communion with God. In the business of modern life (less hours to work, but not enough time for the many activities that would claim our attention) there is increased need for Sabbath rest. There is need for a time for the renewal of spiritual strength, a time for the dropping of the pressures of daily living, a periodic cessation from the decisions which press upon one daily.

God recognized this need of man and gave him the Sabbath. This was before man became the busy, frenzied creature

that he is today. We have already established that the Sabbath day which God gave and sanctified was the seventh day of the week, Saturday.

II

The Sabbath of God was gradually neglected by the Christian Church. This neglect was partly due to the antagonism of the Jews toward the Christians on the one hand, and on the other to the close identification of the Sabbath with the Jewish religion. To an even greater extent it



was due to the increasing popularity of Christianity as it became the religion of the Roman Empire. As the accepted religion, rather than one that came out of conviction even in the face of sacrifice, there was an accompanying accommodation to pagan practices within the Christian Church. Thus by the fourth century the Sabbath of the Bible was lost to the main stream of Christianity.

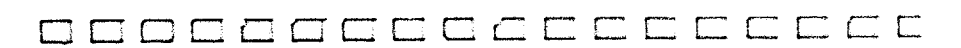
There was the resulting no-sabbathism already referred to. The reasoning was that all days are alike but that it is good to set aside Sunday, or at least a part of Sunday, as time for the church. Puritanism attempted to make a sabbath out of Sunday. This attempt has rather hopelessly failed until today we more nearly approach the attitude which existed in Luther's and Calvin's day.

III

There is a blessedness in Sabbathkeeping. Seventh Day Baptists turned to the Sabbath of the Bible and of God during the time of the Anabaptist movement. This came out of a return to the Bible as

authority for faith and practice. This blessedness is not evidenced in numbers, but is evidenced in the lives of those who truly try to keep the Sabbath of God. It is not evidenced in numbers because it is not popular to be different, nor is it always convenient in a civilization that is geared to a basic work cessation on the first day of the week.

Contrary to the accusation of legalism which is often levied at Sabbathkeepers, for the true Sabbathkeeper the Sabbath is kept out of the utmost love for God and a sincere desire to follow in the way of life which He has revealed for mankind. There is no more legalism in his approach to the Sabbath than there is legalism in his respect for private property, the sanctity



The Logic of Sabbath Observance

- Jesus Christ loved and observed the seventh-day Sabbath.
I am a follower of Jesus Christ:
Therefore I keep the Sabbath.
- The Bible teaches Sabbath observance as God's will.
The Bible is my guide in matters of faith and practice:
Therefore I keep the Sabbath.
- The Church changed Sunday by its own authority.
The Church is not above the Scripture in matters of faith and practice:
Therefore I keep the Sabbath.
- Our Society is weary, anxious, and spiritually threadbare.
The Sabbath is God's provision for spiritual restoration:
Therefore I keep the Sabbath.
- Public opinion regards Sabbath-observance as eccentric.
God's will has priority over public opinion:
Therefore I keep the Sabbath.

— K. E. Smith
in The Advance.



of life, or his respect for a neighbor's wife or husband. He keeps the Sabbath, not out of fear of punishment, but from a desire to do the will of God. This is done in the knowledge that in following God's will to the best of his ability there is a blessing which comes unsolicited in the believer's life.

The blessings to the individual have been suggested. I can testify better out of my own experience than I can from the experiences of others. From my earliest boyhood recollections, there have been the preparations for the Sabbath on Friday afternoon so that at the coming of sundown that evening the responsibilities of daily toil were put aside. As a child, it made the coming of the Sabbath stand out from the rest of the week. It was welcomed because there was a different pace to the day's activities. There was attendance at church on Sabbath morning and no worldly pressures throughout the day. This has come to mean more to me as I have grown in years.

With the assuming of the responsibilities of a family and the provision for their lives, the Sabbath has been an increasing blessing. One of the personal blessings which means more and more as life goes on is the rest that comes. This is not primarily physical rest; although that is a part of its blessing. The greatest blessing is in the dropping for twenty-four hours the making of decisions which are so much a part of the tension of life. Regardless of how pressing a problem may be, I have consistently tried to put it out of mind throughout the Sabbath. It is amazing the fresh approach one has as he takes it up again. Having set a pattern of activities for the Sabbath which excludes as far as possible the demands of the world and the pleasures of the world, there is the blessing of not being annoyed by what television programs to watch, or whether or not to go to a ball game, or to some social event which would otherwise be inviting. The decision has long been made: This is the Sabbath and its time is reserved for other activities.

With the Sabbath thus set apart from the rest of the week, the day does not be-

come an infringement upon other activities, but an island from the busy metropolis of life, separated by the calmness of time apart — a time given to the seeking of a special closeness to God. Attendance at church services becomes not a demand upon our time, but a joyous use of time in the corporate worship of God. And there is blessedness that comes if we can come to church unhurried and leave in the same manner. There is time in which the worship of God can reflect in our minds, and the thoughts which have been set in motion have time to become a part of us rather than being crowded out by

"We cannot turn the worship day into a work day, the holy day into a holiday, without suffering spiritually." — Osborn.

other demands that rush upon us. This accepted pattern of life — that there are twenty-four Sabbath hours which God has specifically sanctified and set apart for us, and which we have vowed to set apart from the daily pressures of life — is one of the greatest blessings which may come to our lives. Rest, renewal, refreshment: what greater blessing is there in life?

This same blessing is extended to the church, for with individuals who recognize God's Sabbath there is time for worship and reflection and meditation.

Why can't it be done with any day of the week? Man's mind says that it should be possible. But man's nature responds, "Except the Sabbath has the blessing and sanctity of God, I will seek my own pleasure and my own way." Unless man is convinced that the Sabbath is as much a part of God's revealed will for man as the rest of the Ten Commandments, but little blessing will be received from it.

A final word to those who know the Sabbath of God and the Bible: for over 400 years the church has tried to make a sabbath out of Sunday and it has failed. There is a blessing in Sabbathkeeping. Let us not lose that blessing by trying to make a Sunday out of Sabbath.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Continued from page 8

continued to act mightily in the lives of the believers.

Peter had known the Lord and together with James and John, he formed part of Christ's inner circle. On the Mount of Transfiguration he had seen the glory of the Lord; yet later under stress, in the presence of a maid, he denied his Lord of Glory. After the Holy Spirit's coming we hear of no more defection in the life of Peter. Notice his new-found power in Acts 2: 22-24: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

These words show us how the Holy Spirit of God gave new strength, courage, and spiritual wisdom. Though unlearned he had been with Jesus and could but speak the things which he had seen and heard.

Stephen is another illustrious example of the Spirit-filled believer. His shining witness cost him his life, but his name has lived on through the years — a hero of the Christian faith. His spirit of forgiveness is frequently associated with his Savior's, ". . . Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. . . ." (Acts 7: 60).

The Holy Spirit Disciplines

The Holy Spirit also serves in the discipline of the church. Discipline does not have a pleasant connotation and has all but disappeared in our churches today. Our thoughts direct us to Ananias and Sapphira who lied against the Holy Ghost. They suffered death, a very severe penalty, reminding us that we dare not play with God. "And great fear came upon all the church. . . ." The Holy Spirit convicts, converts, empowers, and disciplines.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: never-

theless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed" (Hebrews 12: 11-13).

The Holy Spirit

Restrains and Constrains the Believer

In Acts 16: 6, 7, Paul and Silas are forbidden to preach in Asia and Bithynia. Surely the Spirit was interested in these places, but preferred the work in Macedonia for that particular time. A vision was used to direct Paul's thinking.

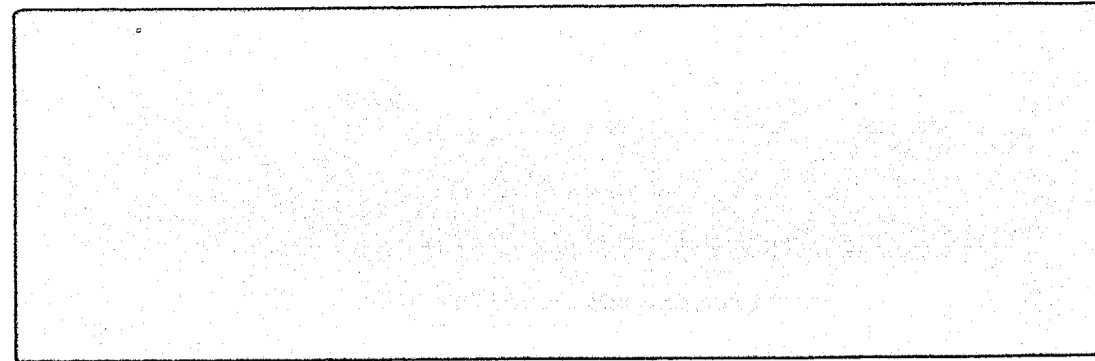
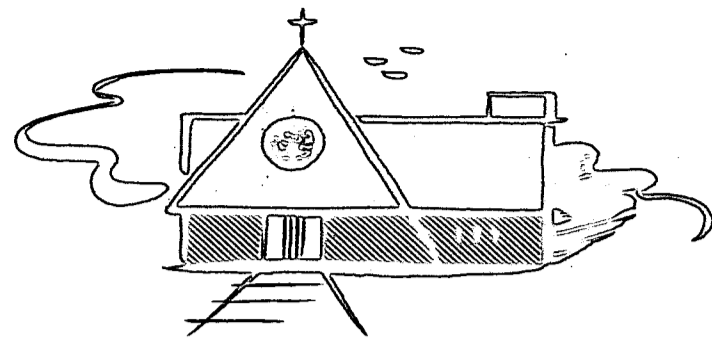
Earlier in Acts (8: 29, 39) the Spirit directed Philip, whose witness in Samaria met with startling success, to leave Samaria for the lonely desert near Gaza. Here by the Spirit's direction Philip was able to lead the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ, and Christianity found its way into the continent of Africa.

In chapter 10: 19, 20, Peter was divinely led to Cornelius, which was an important event for the Gentiles. Hitherto the Christian message had been confined to the Jews. Now the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles with power signaling a new era in Christianity in which Gentiles would play perhaps the most important role.

When the Spirit leads, either by restraining or constraining, results occur. Even good deeds must be done in their proper time. Our efforts, however noble, must fall in line with the policy and plans of the Holy Spirit.

Can it be that we have yet to learn that the greater tasks of the world are not wrought by might nor power, but by the Divine Spirit? Does not the early history of the Christian Church, as set forth in Acts, verify this truth? Is there no hope for the present and the morrow? Is it necessary for clergy and laity to remain impotent?

Our only hope of meeting the tremendous needs of the hour lies in a cooperative effort with the Holy Spirit. He is still free to move; He is anxious to fill us; He is anxious to empower us; He is anxious



Thousands of years ago an embittered, jealous man killed his brother, a more startling headline then than now, perhaps. The incident has been repeated thousands of times, and therefore might be said to have little special relevance for the 20th century. But there is a bit of reasoning in this incident which has persisted through the millennia to our own day. God spoke to the heart of Cain on that occasion and said, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain, refusing to face up to his responsibility in the matter, shrugged it off with the words, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Through the centuries man has advanced culturally, socially, scientifically, technologically, educationally, even religiously, but in general we still hesitate to face up to the responsibility that is ours, and we sometimes refuse to accept it because responsibility is hard to bear.

But responsibility is of the essence of Christianity. Those who bear the name of Christ must share the responsibility. Those who have experienced the redemptive love of God as it is revealed in Jesus Christ have a responsibility to share that experience with the thousands who have

to direct us; He is anxious to help us. But our sin and indifference stand in the way. It must be removed.

The task of the church is colossal. Heathen are more numerous today than when the Great Commission was given. The power of the Holy Spirit is available. It can be ours. The hour is late, but it is not too late if we will allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in and through us.

Acknowledgment is made of help received from Robert Hall Glover's Bible Basis of Missions.

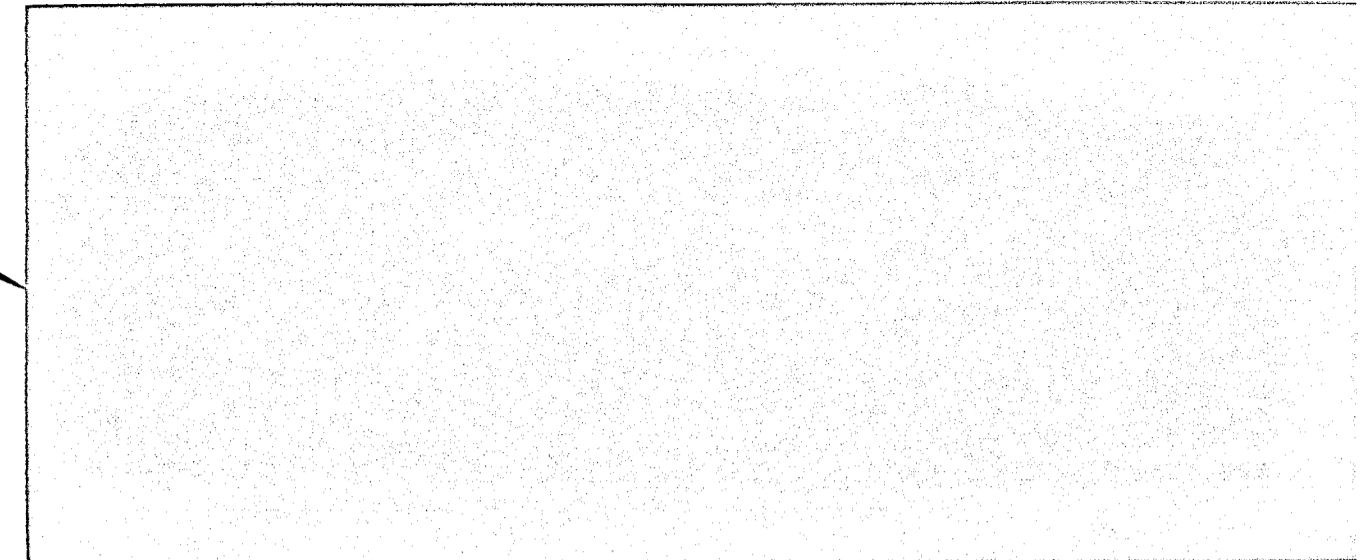
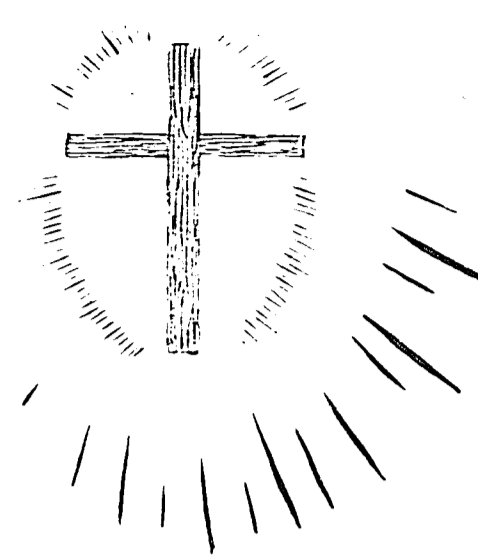
not heard, or who have not answered. Those who enjoy the benefits of Christianity, whatever they are or may be, have a responsibility to bring those benefits within the reach of every man.

Jesus, when He walked upon this earth, did not have a great preaching ministry. His ministry was one of teaching as He gave Himself to the teaching of His disciples who in turn would share the Gospel with others. Apparently it was not His intent, either, that the disciples should have great preaching ministries, though they were quite effective in preaching. It was His intention that they would be personal evangelists, and to that end He commissioned them when He sent them out two by two, first the twelve, and later the seventy. These teams were to go throughout the land proclaiming the Gospel of God's Kingdom, and living and acting consistently with the Kingdom which they proclaimed. And this they did, utterly convinced that the faith that they had found and which meant so much to them was also worth sharing.

Jesus' last words to His followers have come to be known as the Great Commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel" (Matt. 16: 15). This is the foundation upon which our evangelistic responsibility rests. Again Jesus said, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). The responsibility of the Church and its desire to share its faith do not grow out of the psychological phenomenon of a desire to reproduce one's self and one's ideas in others, though that may add motivation to it. Rather the responsibility rests squarely upon the com-

Continued on page 22

THE SABBATH RECORDER



"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14: 13-14). "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15: 7). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16: 23-24).

These promises, along with others just as precious, are great and wonderful. They were offered by Jesus to His disciples, and through Him to us who are His followers today. Yet, how often we have prayed and apparently received no answer. The difficulty of unanswered prayer lies in one of two areas — either God's promises about prayer are not true, or we have somehow failed in our part of prayer. As we come to understand God through an obedient faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we realize that the trouble lies not in God's unwillingness to answer, but in our own difficulty in hearing what God really says, and in our obeying Him.

James wrote, "Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (4: 2-3). Is this not a true picture of conditions today? Many times the lack of spiritual

life within us as individuals or within the church is because we ask not; at other times perhaps we ask for wrong things — things which God in His wisdom, love, and truth knows it is best not to grant. Answered prayer hinges upon our willingness to abide in Christ and allow Him to abide in us. We suspect that many prayers are not backed by a believing faith in action, which is reflected in our behavior, both inward and outward.

It would seem that much so-called prayer is not really the kind of prayer which meets God's conditions. Jude speaks of "praying in the Holy Spirit" (20); Paul speaks of "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6: 18). Jesus, when speaking to the woman of Samaria, said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4: 23-24).

Worship and prayer are akin to each another in that they are both "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2: 5). A key to proper un-

*Rev. Donald E. Richards is a Seventh Day Baptist missionary pastor in West Virginia. Residing in Berea, W. Va., he serves churches in that area and has recently been employed by the American Sabbath Tract Society to do additional missionary-tract work.



derstanding of the importance and place of prayer within the church life lies in the phrase "in the Spirit." Except as worship or prayer is made "in the Spirit," God who Himself is Spirit, does not receive it with honor. Jesus made this very clear in the parable of the Pharisee and publican. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not as other men; the publican said, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18: 10-15). The publican placed himself where he could receive of Christ; the Pharisee did not even sense his need for that which God wanted to give.

Genuine prayer becomes important because through it one enters into the Spirit of God and the spirit within man is strengthened. The control centers of man's thought and action are transformed by inner power. Real prayer becomes Christ-centered rather than self-centered. Such prayer goes beyond the normal intellectual interpretation and meaning of words and phrases in one's natural understanding of himself, of others, and especially of Christ (2 Cor. 5: 16). Paul wrote to the Church at Rome: "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (8: 26-27).

At this point it is also well to remember Paul's advice to the Corinthian Church: "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14: 15). Real prayer will make a difference inwardly in the thoughts of our minds, as we are controlled by the Spirit. This difference of thought patterns and allegiances will be reflected outwardly in our attitudes and actions toward others. As the Christian's understanding is being perfected — a continuous process of the working of the Spirit within — that understanding will want to be humbly shared with both Christians and non-Christians, that they, too, may be brought into a more

perfect relationship to and knowledge of Christ.

As has already been pointed out, the real importance of prayer lies in one's entering into the spirit. Written prayers and liturgy may be of help if and when the individual pray-er becomes conscious of the fact that this is the expression of his own inward desire to God. The same is true even of spoken, spontaneous prayers which may all too often be spoken for the benefit of fellow listeners rather than as being in the very presence of God.

Why is it then that real prayer is so important to the individual or to church life? Genuine prayer becomes a two-way street which links the power of God to man and man to God. Without this power nothing, absolutely nothing, of any great importance can be accomplished within or through the individual — within or through the church.

Prayer had a central place within the lives of Jesus and the early Christians. It was Jesus who often spent the night in prayer and labored among the people through the day. It was while the little band of disciples prayed in the Upper Room that the Holy Spirit was given to them (Acts 1: 14; 2: 1ff.). As other groups at different times became empowered with the Spirit, it was often after prayer. Prayer was made for special workers chosen for special tasks, as was evidenced by the ordination of deacons (Acts 6: 6) and the sending out of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13: 3). It was while in an attitude of prayer that Cornelius and Peter, as well as others, received definite visions from God (Acts 10). Peter's release from prison took place while a group of faithful Christians prayed for his deliverance (Acts 12: 12).

That which is found true within the Scriptures concerning prayer is also borne out after a careful study of the greatest Christian workers of more recent time. Individual lives were changed and charged while engaged in prayer; churches, whose witness was nominal, became dynamic in power only after waiting upon God in prayer; missionary movements and enterprises were established and have become a

THE FACE OF CONCERN

Continued from page 11

can do very little for Him. The narrow exclusivism of His own nation's religion could not imprison the spirit of Jesus. He was bigger than the established religion and the practices of the religious leaders. He would not cheapen Himself to conform to party power, and so win the support of the Pharisees. He steadfastly maintained the universal scope of true religion and His practices repeatedly pointed up His concern for all men everywhere.

On one occasion Jesus' journeyings took Him through Samaria, the land that most Jews avoided for sheer hatred of its mongrel population. It was on this occasion that Jesus sat at the historic old well and requested a drink of water from the hated Samaritan woman. And it was on this same occasion that Jesus also offered to her the living water, spiritually symbolic of the life which He alone could give to her.

Again in Jesus' ministry He was confronted by a Syro-Phoenician woman who would have her daughter cured, and out of the compassion of His great heart He performed the cure, refusing to withhold from an alien that which He would offer to a Jew. Again, on another occasion, Jesus was called to help a Roman whose servant was ill, and on this occasion He told His hearers that He had not found an equal faith in all Israel. Jesus has cut across the boundary line, and has now for-

power for God in the changing of many human lives around the world. Power has come when men were willing to wait upon God in prayer, and then be obedient unto the vision received.

Prayer changes things. This slogan is true today for each who will learn to pray aright. As you have prayed and felt the Spirit work within your life or the life of your church, you can raise your voice in thanksgiving and praise to God. If prayer has failed to charge your life or the life of your church with increasing power to live and work for Christ, something is wrong on your part in prayer, not

ever freed true religion from Jewish exclusivism, though some without success try desperately hard to mold Christianity into the form of a Jewish sect. The religion of Jesus Christ was not a religion for nationals, but for all nations, and the concern of Jesus was not simply a concern for His own people, but was a concern for every person who had a need. His is a universal religion.

Concern for the Outcast

But again Jesus shows concern for another class of people, people of His own race who were outcasts because of their work, their sin, or their social level. It was certainly a great day for Zacchaeus, and it may be counted equally a great day for Christianity, when Jesus entered the home of an outcast tax collector, and most likely a dishonest one at that. To the Jew, Zacchaeus was a hated quisling, an outcast: to Jesus he was a human personality with a soul worth saving. Concern motivated Him to enter that house, and concern won Zacchaeus to be Jesus' follower.

Jesus was severely rebuked by His self-righteous entertainers when He accepted the public adoration of the street woman who poured the costly oil over His feet in evidence of her high regard for Him. To Jesus her act was more acceptable than theirs for they cared nothing for Him, while in return for His forgiveness this woman gave her life to Jesus and His service.

Perhaps climactic is that great experi-

God's. Have you earnestly asked God to show you your error, sin, or doubt, and to grant you forgiveness, cleansing, faith? Have you been willing to follow with patience the path God has shown you?

God can and will fill the depths of your spirit with His love, grace, and power — if you will let Him. "Be still and know that I am God" is God's call to you. Cease your struggling and fighting; learn to rest upon God and be unafraid. "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30: 15). The question is: Will you do it?

ence when the prostitute was brought before Jesus to receive His condemnation. The Pharisees pressed their claims hard and bitterly. Jesus refused to give ground. Concern was welling up within Him. Of course He was concerned with the sin that she had committed. But He was more concerned about reclaiming a life and delivering a soul from bondage to sin and judgment than He was in harshly executing the demands of law without a chance to repent and make restitution. Again, this act spells concern.

The Pharisee, the devoted Jew, the hated alien, the outcast, the sinner, all were objects of Jesus' concern. His experiences were with every strata of the society in which He lived. His religion knew no artificial boundaries.

What has all this to do with us? As Christians we surely must seek to exhibit a face of universal concern. What does it mean to be a Christian? Among other things, it surely means to let something of the Spirit of Jesus live through us in our day. One cannot be a genuine Christian without holding a concern for every man — a universal concern.

The Church Has Not Failed Nor Has It Really Succeeded

But we must frankly confess that the church has not always been as concerned for all people as it ought to have been. It is true that the denominations and the councils of churches have made helpful pronouncements about the race problem, the plight of the migrant worker, the slum situation, alcoholism, crime, and countless other situations which merit our concern. It is true that every denomination and most local churches have programs of evangelism to take the message of Jesus Christ to those who are outside the church. Much of this, however, remains a matter of principle and not a matter of practice, for many of us within the Christian community have never developed a godly concern for those who are somewhat different from ourselves.

We observed, with a sense of shame, that in one Christian conference the hall filled to overflowing and people remained

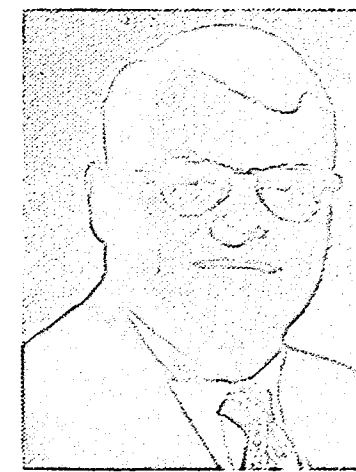
standing throughout the service while seats remained vacant on either side of a Christian Negro couple. We have noticed even in predominately Christian neighborhoods the appearance immediately of For Sale signs after the first Negro family has moved into the community. These events are mild compared to some racial incidents in which Christians have become involved.

We were attending a special service in a church of some distinction when two rather shabbily dressed men entered and were told there was no more room in the sanctuary — they must go to the balcony. Presently, a very personable couple was ushered with dignity to a point toward the front of the congregation.

On yet another occasion we overheard a conversation between two members of a local church in which a certain family was under discussion as prospects for church membership. Said one, "I'm not sure that those are the kind of people we want in our church." Surely the heart of Jesus was grieved for this lack of concern, who Himself opened His heart and arms to the outcasts about Him.

Examples such as these may be duplicated and reduplicated in every area of social and spiritual concern. Perhaps these are enough to alert us to the lack of concern on the part of the Christian community. The charge has been made that the church is fast becoming a white-collar church catering to the men and women who have the most to offer to the church. Whether this is true or not is difficult to determine. If it is true it explains the tremendous upsurge in interest in The Jehovah's Witnesses and other sub-Christian sects who claim to minister to those whom they say the church has neglected.

In parable (Luke 14), Jesus told of the man who filled his house with guests from the highways and hedges. "Go out . . . and compel them to come in," he said. Dare we — have we the courage of Christian conviction to adventure, to pioneer as this man did, in the area of concern for those with whom we have been uncon-



Followers of Jesus Christ have long been puzzled over what is the will of God. Earnestly and sincerely they have sought to find it so as to bring their own activities into harmony with what He wants of them. Yet in all of man's seeking for the will of God he has often failed to really find what he has been looking for. He fails to find this will of God because he is too busy to follow the simple instructions of God. The Lord has told us repeatedly how to know His will. One who desires to learn this plan must "tarry in the closet of prayer." "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5: 17); "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7: 7-8). When man follows God's instructions then to him will be made known the Divine purpose.

The will of God will be made known in the realm of the spiritual. God has revealed His will concerning the spiritual side of man. The Scriptures declare that

cerned? We must allow ourselves to be awakened to a sense of concern for those about us, whoever they are and wherever they are, that we may take ourselves, our Savior, and our Christian commission seriously.

The Church of Christ in the world today may be a narrowly exclusive sect — or it may be the fellowship of the concerned. The face of Jesus is the face of concern. Let those who look to the church also behold the face of concern.

God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3: 9). That is why He sent Jesus Christ into the world. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1: 15). It was and is the will of God for man to accept this gift of Christ Jesus for his redemption. After man has received the gift of God for redemption, God further reveals His will for spiritual growth and development. Through the Bible, He says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15). He tells us to hide His word in our hearts so we will not sin against Him (Psalm 119). He bids us to pray in secret, and not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10: 25). God continually supplies food for the seeking soul which will enable it to grow spiritually.

The difficulty, in many cases, is not in failing to know the will of God in the spiritual realm for God reveals it clearly to those who seek. The difficulty often

"Sabbath observance develops faith. To say, 'I can't make a living' is to trust self, not God. His commands are His enabling. Depend on Him, not your own efforts. Where is your faith?"

—Osborn.

lies in our lack of concern to bring our own wills into harmony with the will of God so as to do what He tells us. Frequently we find a discord between God's will and ours, and so men are lost, spiritually weak, and in a state of spiritual and emotional turmoil. Many Christians are unhappy because they want to follow the devices and desires of their own wills and yet be in the center of God's will.

Salvation and inner peace of mind can only be ours as we yield our wills to the will of God for all our spiritual concerns. If you retain your own will you will be unhappy, for God will not force His will upon you. Yield your will to God; let it become supreme in your life, and spiritual peace will be yours.

God will also make His will known to you in the realm of the physical. The will of God for man's physical body is no less than the standard of perfection. Jesus Christ said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5: 48). Perfection in body and mind is the will of God for man. God has given perfect instructions to help man to obtain the goal. God has expressed His will in the Ten Commandments, in the Person of Jesus Christ, and in His written Word. There is little left to be said about man's conduct after reading and studying these. A life lived in the center of the will of God is so clearly outlined that one feels helpless to live up to this expressed standard of righteousness.

God gave His Spirit to dwell with those who follow His will in receiving His gift of salvation. Through the Holy Spirit whose temples we are, we can better strive toward the mark set by God: "Know ye

not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6: 19-20). It is the Holy Spirit who dwells within us who helps us to do the will of God, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (John 2: 1).

What then is our difficulty in doing the will of God in the area of physical concerns? It is the same as in the area of the spiritual. It takes yieldedness, the kind of yieldedness Jesus Christ displayed while among men. He constantly yielded His will to the will of the Father. He prayed, "Nevertheless, not my will be done but thine" (Luke 22: 42). It was this yielding that enabled Him to do the will of the Father.

When man's will is pitted against the will of God there is hostility and turmoil. When man yields to God's perfect will, peace and happiness are the result. The doing of God's will basically depends upon the yielding up of one's own will to the will of God. The person or church which wants really to do the will of God must come to the place of yieldedness, must heed the exhortation of Scripture: "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6: 13).

*Rev. Robert P. Lippincott is pastor of the Seventh Day Baptist Church at Nortonville, Kansas. When serving as pastor in Shiloh, New Jersey, he was a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Sabbath Tract Society.

we hear and heed Christ's own commission, a commission which every Christian holds, a commission to share his faith, a commission from the Lord whose name he bears. We have no right to claim the name unless we also accept the commission, no right to bear the name unless we also share the faith.

The response of the early church to this commission is one of the most exciting stories that has ever been told. We expect

the powerful witness of those who had accompanied with Jesus through His earthly life, but the later followers were equally dedicated, equally responsible to the commission to share their faith. Seven young men were chosen to help with the benevolence work of the church. Probably by strategy these seem to have been chosen from the Christian converts from the Jews of the dispersion, or possibly proselyte Jews, for they all bear non-Jewish names. Their wider background made them more sympathetic towards others who were on the fringe of Judaism. At least Philip and Stephen went beyond their benevolence office to become outstanding evangelists, taking the Gospel for the first time (except by Jesus himself) to those outside of the confines of narrow Judaism. Philip met with startling success in his evangelistic witness in Samaria, and Stephen labored among the fringe groups in Jerusalem itself. The story of Stephen is one of the most thrilling in all history, sacred or secular. There is no record as to the extent of his success in his witness, but he made impact enough so that he aroused the hostility of his Jewish opponents. Perhaps no man has ever captured the Spirit of Christ as did Stephen who was able to face his murderers with the prayer of his Master upon his lips, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And so in his dying words, he proclaimed the Spirit of Christ as well as the name of Christ.

The cynical and skeptical young rabbi who seems to have directed the stoning of Stephen could never get the picture out of his mind. Though he may have thought that he was doing service to God, Saul of Tarsus knew very well that human life was not to be so lightly handled as Stephen's was on that day, and in the relatively long journey to Damascus where he planned to continue his fiendish work he had plenty of time to think it over. The awfulness of the murder, the forgiving spirit of the victim, and the strange radiant light on the face of Stephen, all helped to prepare Saul of Tarsus for his encounter with the Christ on the Damascus Road.

Thousands of pages, hundreds of volumes, have been written about that Da-

mascus Road experience. Some doubt it; some defend it; some seek to explain it. How it happened is not important; the fact that it happened is vitally important, for it has changed the whole course of the world's history. It makes little difference whether Paul saw the resurrected body of Jesus, or had a mental vision of Jesus, or if simply through psychological experiences, he had an inner assurance of the presence of Jesus which resulted in the outward expressions of which we read. The important thing is not how the experience occurred. The important thing is, that it occurred, that Saul of Tarsus met Jesus the Christ.

Most thrilling it is that Saul, the skeptical, cynical rabbi, had the strength of conviction to alter the whole course of his life to bring it into focus with his newly found Lord and Master. We follow St. Paul to Damascus where he does exactly the reverse of his intention — preaches Jesus and confounds the Jewish opponents. We follow him as he spends parts of three years in Arabia, silently, alone with the Lord, rethinking all of his previous pre-suppositions, bringing his tremendous learning into its new position as that of a Christian scholar. Then we see him back in Damascus again, now the object of the bitterest hatred of his former friends and allies. The persecutor becomes the persecuted; the hunter becomes the hunted.

It appears to us in the direction which St. Paul's ministry took, that he took his cue from Stephen to whose martyrdom he had contributed, to continue Stephen's work to those outside the narrow pale of Judaism, making the Gospel freely available to Gentile as well as to Jew. Soundly converted, deeply spiritual, and grievously aware of his previous maltreatment of the Christian community, St. Paul is altogether willing to recognize his responsibility to God and to those about him. Indeed he becomes his brother's keeper instead of his brother's destroyer.

These few incidents mentioned above demonstrate how seriously the early Christians took their responsibility. As soon as they took the name of Christ for them-

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

Continued from page 16

mand and commission of our Lord. He who commands our faith, as Lord, also commands our service, as Master. That we ought to tell others about our faith is in no sense a matter of interpretation. It is a matter of commission. We do not here interpret the Bible to teach our responsibility, though it clearly does. Rather

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selves they took the name of Christ to others. Theirs was a live, active, virile faith which could not be contained within a life. Once that faith took hold of a life it possessed the whole life until that life became a vehicle by which it was carried to the lives of others. This is the way that Jesus intended that the Gospel would be spread. Personal witness was the most effective means of evangelism then, as it may be now.

We believe that Christianity has something to offer to every man today. It makes the life of every man infinitely richer here and now, and if we may believe the words of the one whom we call Lord, Christianity also has to do with life eternal. Surely if Christianity is worth what we think it is, it is worth an effort on our part to take it to others. If it is worth having, it is worth sharing.

It is not right that any man should be deprived of the benefits of Christianity. All of God's creatures have an equal right to hear, and we who know have an equal responsibility to speak. To say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is to give God "the brush-off," and shrug off responsibility which rightfully belongs to us. We pray God that the virile, active, working faith of the early church may not become a senile, armchair religion for the 20th century. Our salvation cannot be a comfortable salvation until every last man has heard the message of the Christ. We are our brothers' keepers to share with them the glorious truth of the Gospel.

"Someone has supposed the scene that he thinks may have taken place after Jesus went back to heaven. The Master is talking with Gabriel, talking intently, earnestly, Gabriel is saying, 'Master, you died for the whole world down there, didn't you?'"

"Yes."

"You must have suffered much," with an earnest look into that great face.

"Yes," again comes the answer in that wondrous voice, very quiet, but strangely full of deepest meaning.

"And do they know all about it?"

"Oh, no, only a few in Palestine know about it so far."

"Well, Master, what's your plan? What have you done about telling the world that you have died for them? What's your plan?"

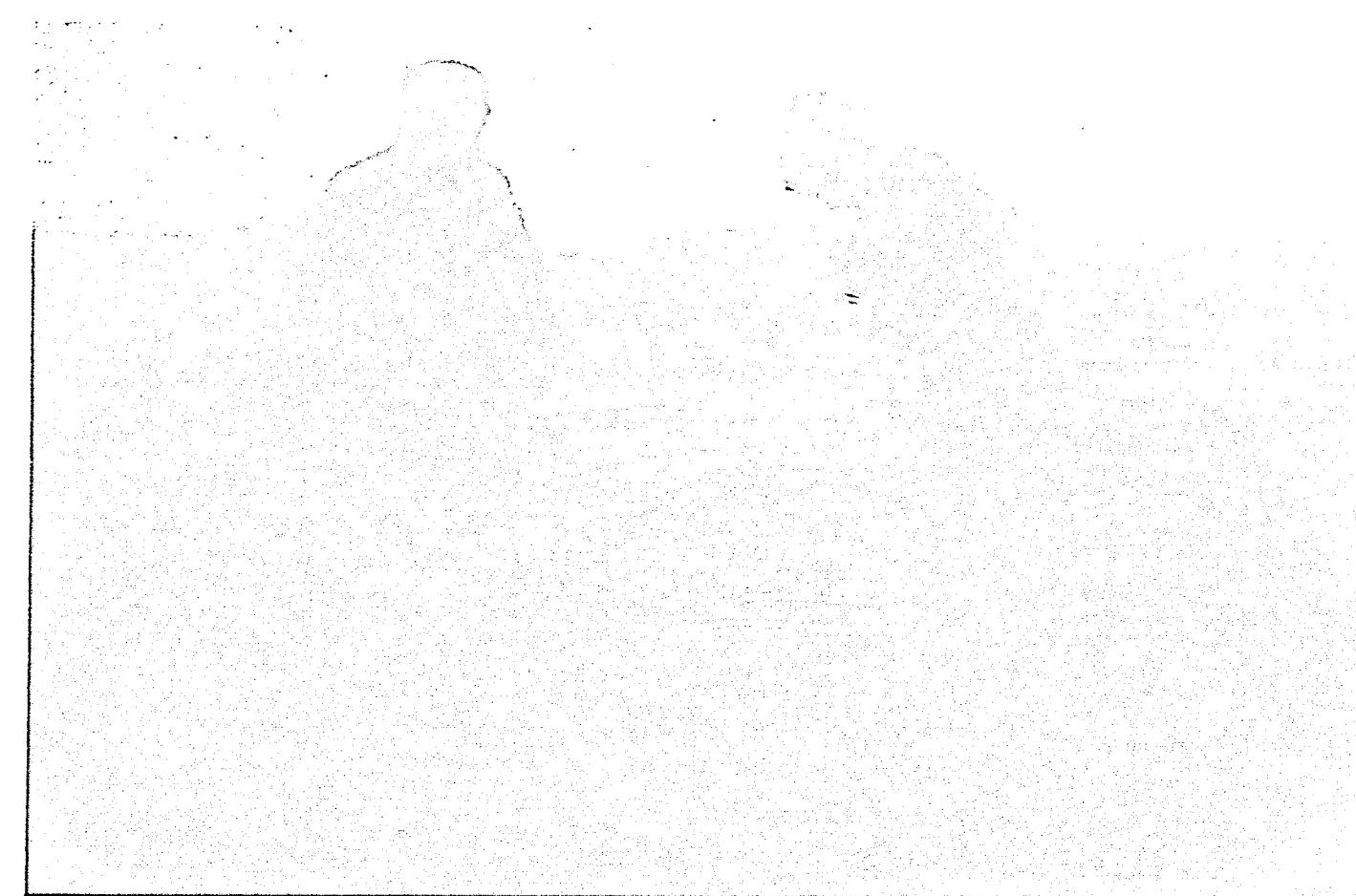
"Well," the Master is supposed to answer, 'I asked Peter, and James, and John, and little Scotch Andrew, and some more of them down there just to make it the business of their lives to tell others, until the last man in the farthest circle has heard the story, and has felt the thrilling and thralling power of it.'

"And Gabriel knows us pretty well; He has had more than one contact with the earth. He knows the kind of stuff in us, and he is supposed to answer with a sort of hesitant reluctance, as though he could see difficulties in the working of the plan, 'Yes — but suppose Peter fails. Suppose after a while John simply does not tell others. Suppose their descendants, their successors away off (in the middle of the 20th century) get so busy about things — some of them proper enough, some may be not quite so proper — that they don't tell others, what then?'"

"And his eyes are big with the intense-ness of his thought for he is thinking of the suffering, and he is thinking — too — of the difference to the man who hasn't been told — 'What then?'"

"And back comes the quiet, wondrous voice of Jesus, 'Gabriel, I haven't made any other plans — I'm counting on them.'"

God is counting on His people in the world today to bring the light of His glorious Gospel to the troubled and darkened masses who are living apart from Him, many of whom may be our own next-door neighbors. Our indifference to these will cast a blighting pall over the whole work of God and His Church in the world. Our full acceptance of responsibility for the spiritual welfare of those about us will guarantee the glorious onward movement of God's Kingdom on earth. O people of God, we must not allow God to count on us in vain, but let us join in one mighty united voice as our lives spell out the words, "I am my brother's keeper."



THE SENTINEL

The morning is the gate of day,
But ere you enter there
See that you set to guard it well,
The sentinel of prayer.

So shall God's grace your steps attend,
But nothing else pass through
Save what you give the countersign;
The Father's will for you.

When you have reached the end of day
Where night and sleep await,
Set there the sentinel again
To bar the evening's gate.

So shall no fear disturb your rest,
No danger and no care.
For only peace and pardon pass
The watchful guard of prayer.

— Author unknown