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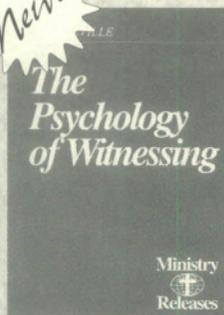
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Serving With Grace at the Lord's Table

Joel Sarli



When we invite guests to partake of a meal at our home, are we not careful to see that everything about the table makes the meal inviting? And when we serve the food, do we not strive to do it with grace? Then what should we do when we lead God's people in partaking of the emblems at the Lord's table? Dare we do this service for our Lord without any preparation?

Let us think a moment of the beautiful service of the Lord's Supper. No service in the church can mean so much in building up the faith of the members as the communion service. For this service the pastor and the elder need to prepare themselves. At no time is their background on parade so much as when they are at the table. If this be true in ordinary life, it is just as true, and may be more so, when elder and minister are serving at the Lord's table.

The one leading out in this symbolic meal should be a master of flawless technique. At this sacrament of communion we reach the peak of Christian worship. The occasion is made more impressive if our words are few and well chosen. Words are the most valuable currency in the elder's mint. But at the table of the Lord not only words but every act should be an act of worship.

There must be created a sense of oneness with God and with one another. It is not our table, it is the Lord's table, and the elder is serving in Christ's stead. Nothing coarse, crude, or clumsy should be permitted there.

To leave a deep impression one must be gracious. When we conduct these sacred services our method is almost as important as the message. To be graceful is good; to be gracious is better.

When our people gather at the table of the Lord, everything should be so inviting that they will be unconscious of all else save Him. Let us, then, as ministers of the Lord, emulate Him of whom it was written that "grace was poured upon His lips, that He might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 253).

Let us remember too that at the Lord's table we are representing our Lord. To do service for a king is an honor. To do service in place of a king is exaltation. To be an ambassador of the King of heaven is an honor that demands the very best in culture, training, and consecration.

This issue of the *Elder's Digest* comes to answer many requests of elders and pastors from different parts of the world field. Often we are asked to make suggestions as to the best methods of performing the communion service of the church. As you can understand it is impossible in this brief compass of a single issue to do full justice to any of the services of the church. But in this issue we are sharing ideas that for sure will stimulate thought and will help elders and pastors improve their techniques in this area.



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Why Baptism Is Important To Me

Phil Brown

I remember my baptism well. I was 17 years old. It was a typical hot Australian summer's day. I made my way down the river bank and waded into the waist-deep water of the Snowy River. After a short message from the minister, he lowered me under the water and baptized me.

I emerged from the water to a group of family and friends singing one of those all-time favorite hymns. The event indelibly etched itself into my memory.

I'd always been a Christian, having been raised in a devout Christian family. Earlier in my life I'd made the choice to commit my life to God. So why bother with baptism as a 17-year-old?



There is a rich, spiritual meaning attached to the act of baptism.

WRONG REASONS FOR BAPTISM

Pressure. I didn't request baptism under duress from parents or as a result of pressure from friends, peers or our church minister.

My baptism didn't mean I was perfect or had arrived at some plane of spiritual maturity. And it wasn't because I had a full knowledge or understanding of the Bible.

Unfortunately, baptism didn't guarantee that I'd never again fail God or make another mistake in life.

Baptism represented my commitment to God and marked a very special passage in my spiritual journey. It did include the following biblical and personal reasons—reasons that have an even deeper meaning to me now than on that day.

REASONS FOR BAPTISM

I was baptized because Christ commanded it. To His followers, His parting words—sometimes called the “great commission” (Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV)—were: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”

Previously Jesus had also said that a person is unable to enter His kingdom unless they are “born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5). This “water” is understood to symbolize the cleansing of baptism, and the “Spirit” refers to the changing and empowering work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. It isn't the actual baptism that saves a person; it's simply a witness to the reality of salvation in Christ.

(This doesn't preclude a person from salvation who doesn't have the opportunity for baptism. The thief dying on the cross next to Jesus was assured of his salvation—see Luke 23:42, 43.)

❶ The word “baptize” means to immerse or to dip. Some are christened as a baby; however, the baptisms described in the Bible were all clearly performed by the complete immersion of the body. Those baptized were also “believers,” or persons of some maturity who were able to understand its meaning.

So, as a young adult with a knowledge of what I was about to do, I wanted to be baptized just as Jesus had been—completely under water and in a river like the Jordan.

When a person believed in Jesus Christ, the Bible says they repented of their sin, and committed themselves to follow Christ. Baptism is a symbol of that commitment.

In the book of Acts, following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the time of Pentecost, the apostle Peter tells the people who responded to his message,

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven” (Acts 2:38, NIV). Repenting involves heartfelt remorse and a change in life’s direction.

☛ The focus of this change of direction was belief in and commitment to Jesus Christ. The Ethiopian official (Acts 8:26-40), while returning home from a visit to Jerusalem, became engaged in conversation with the apostle Philip.

Upon learning about Christ, and seeing a body of water nearby, he asked Philip if he could be baptized. “Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’” The Ethiopian answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37. NKJV). Following this expression of faith, he was baptized.

☛ As I’d grown up committed to God, my baptism simply affirmed my recognition of my own need of His grace. It recognized my failure in the light of a Holy God, despite my best efforts, to live as I believed I should. My baptism was also a recognition of my grateful acceptance of the gift of salvation—which I found a joyful and releasing experience, for I knew my eternal future didn’t depend on my “goodness” and achievements, but on that of Christ.

There is a rich, spiritual meaning attached to the act of baptism. In baptism, a person identifies with Christ’s “death, burial and resurrection” (see Romans 6:1-7). When a believer is immersed under the water, the act symbolizes “death” to past sin and a self-centered life, and its “burial.” The water symbolizes the cleansing of one’s life by Christ’s blood (see Titus 3:5).

As baptized believers rise from the water after baptism, they identify with Christ’s resurrection from the dead and go on to live in a newness of spiritual life as a Christian.

☛ Since my baptism I’ve found that maintaining that special newness of spiritual life is a challenge. To maintain a vibrant daily relationship with Christ requires effort and energy. Sometimes I’ve found I’ve missed the mark. Fortunately for me—all of us for that matter—God has ways of calling us back.

WHERE DOES THE CHURCH FIT?

Baptism means the entry into and belonging to the church family. The church is described as a “body” of believers, with Christ as its head (see 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:15). In the time of the apostles, when believers were baptized they immediately became involved in the church family. They were a part of the church family (see Acts 2:41-46).

Some wish to be baptized into Christ without any connection to a “body of Christ”—that is, the church.

But to be fully committed to the head of the church—that’s Christ—means that believers must also be a part of the “body.” Christianity is foremost a personal relationship with God, but it’s also a relationship with the community of believers. Christianity is personal, not individualistic.

Belonging to the body of Christ and being part of a spiritual community enriches and enlivens my spiritual journey. I belong. I have friends to encourage me when I start to lag spiritually.

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Baptism is a public witness to one’s belief and faith. There’s something about baptism that’s more significant and binding than just words. A baptism is like a wedding where mutual pledges are given in a public setting—where the special love relationship between myself and God is cemented and sealed. God promises the Holy Spirit as a special wedding gift (see Acts 2:38).

Just as a couple is not married until the wedding, so, in a spiritual sense, one’s baptism is the official recognition of a new relationship and status with God. Sharing the act of baptism with my family and friends served to strengthen and reaffirm my resolve and commitment to Christ.

BAPTISM IN A NUTSHELL

My baptism was a deeply spiritual event, certainly much more than symbolism. My baptism was the enactment of a concrete commitment. It was a major marker along side the road of my spiritual journey. It reaffirmed my faith. It helps me stay fixed in my life’s direction. It reassures me of God’s love for me. It confirms my salvation.

I’d recommend baptism as the best decision, the best action, that any sincere truth-seeker and follower of Christ could make. **E**

Phil Brown writes from Australia.

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The Need for Warm-Hearted Greeters

Leslie Parrott

The recent research of Daniel Yankelovich indicates that 70% of adult Americans have many acquaintances but few close friends. One must wonder if this is also true in the average congregation. Since Americans seem to feel the need for more closeness, this may be why the highest virtue among church greeters is their willingness to express human kindness. A warm-hearted church and a kind-hearted greeter go together like the pulpit and the sermon. In church work there is no warmth without kindness. Coolness is usually rudeness.

When church greeters allow their ministry to become officious by ordering people around, the good they hope to do becomes a stumbling block. Even being efficient in directing the flow of traffic is usually unproductive to relationships. Suggest, lead, guide, or do anything else that is an extension of the human smile—but don't order people. Be a warm-hearted friend, not an officer.

The one common denominator that brings everyone down to the same level of equality is the need for human kindness. This is why Peter placed kindness above godliness and just below unconditional love in his hierarchy of Christian graces: “. . . and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love” (2 Peter 1:7).

KINDNESS TO NEW PEOPLE WHO FEEL STRANGE AND DON'T KNOW THEIR WAY AROUND

When Paul wrote about his shipwreck on the island of Malta, the first thing he mentioned was the kindness of the people to himself and the other strangers who had landed on their beach: “The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold” (Acts 28:2, NIV). And the modern day strangers who come in out of the rain and cold of the weekday hassle into the sanctuary of your church will respond to that same flame that kindles human kindness.

KINDNESS TO THE ELDERLY WHO INCREASINGLY FEEL ALONE

In one of the bonding conversations which nourished their deep friendship, Jonathan said to David as they walked through the fields, “But show me unending kindness like that of the Lord as long as I live . . . and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family . . .” (1 Sam. 20:14-15, NIV). As people grow older, kindness becomes increasingly important. If you want to minister to the Jonathans of this world, just let them hear that you have been kind to their family, especially their elderly.

KINDNESS TO THE CHILDREN WHO ARE OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE

Hosea wrote some wonderful words about kindness to Israel, whom he called a child: “When Israel was a child . . . I led them with chords of human kindness . . . I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them” (Hos. 11:1, 4). The most loved greeter in our church was a man who had a way with children who were uncomfortable in the spaces and sounds of a large foyer and the labyrinth of church corridors where people moved to and fro and carried on loud conversations. It is important to remember that small children may be easily lost or confused. They may be overpowered with the sight of strange adults who look like hordes of giants. Or they may just be uncertain of themselves in an unfamiliar setting. This good man always bent down, or even kneeled to say a reassuring word to a child who needed him. Because he had a reputation for loving children, he was also deeply appreciated by both the children and their parents, even their grandparents. In an era of broken homes, abuse, and loveless families, children are open more than ever to the ministry of a loving greeter. When a child needs a hug, give it to him or her.

KINDNESS TO MOTHERS WITH BABIES IN THEIR ARMS AND TODDLERS AT THEIR SIDES

Harried young mothers may be strong enough to do all they do, but they also are amenable to acts of kindness. Making a load lighter by lifting a package, opening the door, or helping a small child up the steps is more than a social civility. It is a way of saying "we are glad you are here" and "good things are waiting for you in this church."

KINDNESS TO PEOPLE WHO SHOW UP REGULARLY AT THE SAME TIME AND AT THE SAME DOOR EVERY WEEK

The dependable people who attend regularly may show no visible need for kindness. They may seem uninterested in your welcome greeting. But be friendly anyway, because the rewards in your ministry do not depend on reciprocation from the people you greet, but on the love of the Lord whom you serve.

KINDNESS TOWARD THE PASTOR AND STAFF WHO SOMETIMES NEED AN ADVOCATE AT THE DOOR

If someone feels the need to say an unkind word about your pastor or a staff member, find a way to come down on the pastor's side. The minister's load is big enough without a church greeter adding to his or her burden by reinforcing someone's negative feelings.

KINDNESS TO PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS WHEELCHAIRS AND CRUTCHES

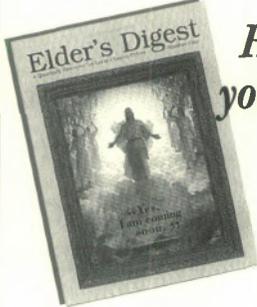
People who need specialized help because of physical problems may also need extra amounts of kindness and thoughtfulness. They may even learn to enter by your door exclusively just because they need the hug or loving pat on the shoulder you can be counted on to give. It is always good to anticipate the needs of wheelchair people, those on crutches, and those who use walkers. The elderly and the disabled need more time and more space than others, and more of the kindness you can provide.

KINDNESS TO PEOPLE WHO DON'T SEEM TO NEED IT

Sometimes kindness is misunderstood. When Peter and John were called in before the court following the healing of the lame man in Acts 3, Peter began his speech to the judge by saying, "If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple . . ." (Acts 4:9, NIV). In Jerusalem or wherever you live, there are people who will resist your welcome ministry even when it is extended in kindness. The unlovable drunks who wander in, the angry teenager who sulks through the door, the sullen neurotic who is out of tune with life, and even the

panhandler who manipulates Christian humanitarianism for his own purposes are not immune to a kind attitude even when they do not respond favorably. We are not admonished to be kind to the people we like, but to each other, whoever the "other" may be. **E**

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The Trinity—Heaven’s First Family

Beatrice S. Neall

See Jesus in new dimensions as I study the doctrine of the Trinity. The First Family of the universe is a model to every earthly family of loyalty, joyful cooperation, exuberant creativity, mutual admiration, and self-sacrificing love. The way they interact is extraordinary. Jesus comes from a splendid family.

I am glad that God is a family. If He were a single individual, then in the eternity of the past before He created anyone He would have been alone. But God is love, and since love cannot be solitary, there must always have been someone to love. So the Bible reveals God as a wonderful family of three living together in exquisite harmony. Three is the number of unselfishness. One can be self-absorbed, as Plato’s god, the Demiurge. Two can be wrapped up in each other, excluding all others. Three is the number of openness, requiring the ability to love impartially.

Would it be accurate, then, to say that we serve three Gods? No, this would be a great mistake. We must hold to the oneness of the Trinity. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut. 6:4, NIV). Three Gods would mean three separate, rival beings. They would fight for supremacy over the universe. If they were equal in power, each would gain control over one third of the territory. Immediately there would no longer be a universe, but a multiverse, each section having differing properties and laws. There would not be one Supreme Being, but three lesser gods with lesser dominions. This is the state of all polytheistic religions.

God is truly one because He has one character. The word for *one*, *echad* in Hebrew, comes from the verb *yachad* meaning *to make one, unite*. God says of husband and wife, “They will become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24) even though they are two. Love is the cement that holds a marriage together, transforming two into one. Love holds the Trinity together, transforming three into one.

We are introduced to the Trinity as far back as the very first chapter of the Bible. “In the beginning, God. . . .” The word for *God*, *Elohim*, is not singular

but plural showing that God is a composite Being. The Spirit enters the scene in the second verse as He broods over the face of the waters. Later we hear the members of the Godhead talking to each other as one says to the others, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Then God creates a human trinity of man, woman, and the potential child, to model the divine Trinity.

The reason why the Old Testament writers insisted on the unity of God is that they were combating polytheism. God did not want His people to think of God as they did the heathen gods—a male with his female consort and son, plus numerous other deities. This makes for small gods, each one sovereign over his own country (2 Kings 17:26), ultimately lower even than humans (Isa. 44:12-19). So God insisted on His oneness and sovereignty over all creation. The reason the Old Testament says very little about Satan (though he appears in a few places like Genesis 3, Job 1, and Zechariah 3) is that people tended to ignore a benevolent god and worship only ones they feared would do them harm. They would have worshiped Satan! So God took upon Himself the responsibility for all that occurred, even evil—“I . . . create evil” (Isa. 45:7, KJV); “an evil spirit from the Lord” (1 Sam, 16:14, NIV); the Lord (Satan) tempted David (2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1). At the risk of being misunderstood, God took responsibility for all that happened so His people would not worship Satan.

The Trinity can be seen in the Old Testament. While the Father appears seated in majesty upon His throne (Isa. 6:1; Eze. 1:26-28; Dan.7:9-10), Jesus is the one who often appeared in human flesh. Abraham bargained with Him (Gen. 18:20-32), Jacob wrestled with Him (Gen. 32:22-30), Joshua encountered Him as “captain of the Lord’s host” (Josh. 5:13-15, KJV), the three worthies walked with Him in the burning fiery furnace (Dan.3:25). We know it was Jesus because God said, “You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live” (Ex. 33:20, NIV). Jesus appeared in human form long before He took on human flesh in Bethlehem.

The Holy Spirit also appears in the Old Testament. He brooded upon the face of the waters as a mother hen bringing forth life (Gen. 1:2). He filled the heart of Joseph (Gen. 41:38) and Joshua (Num. 27:18), and changed Saul into a different person (1 Sam. 10:6). David, after his sin, pleaded “Do not . . . take your Holy Spirit from me” (Ps. 51:11, NIV).

In the New Testament Jesus gave precious insights into relationships between the members of the heavenly Family. They live together in an incredibly warm relationship of love and fellowship. They are social, generous, and hospitable. They are masters of communication. They put themselves at each other’s disposal and achieve tremendous fulfillment in doing each other’s will. They affirm each other. They not only enjoy intimacy, but open up the circle of intimacy to all who wish to enter.

The three members of the Trinity are equally God. John’s gospel presents the highest view of the deity of Christ. He begins with the premise that Jesus is God (1:1) and concludes with Jesus accepting worship as God (20:28-29). Eight times Jesus calls Himself the I AM, corresponding to Yahweh, the I AM of the Old Testament.

Jesus identifies Himself so closely with the Father that to see Him is to see the Father (14:9), to believe Him is to believe the Father (12:44), to know Him is to know the Father (8:19), to dishonor Him is to dishonor the Father (5:23), and to hate Him is to hate the Father (15:23-24). He is one with the Father (10:30; 17:11, 22). The relationship between Him and the Father is so close that He is in the Father, and the Father in Him (10:38; 14:10-11; 17:21).

Though Jesus was God in the highest sense, He submitted to His Father. He did nothing of Himself (5:19, 30) because all His powers—to raise the dead, execute judgment, lay down His life and take it again—were derived from the Father (5:25-27; 10:18). His whole mode of life was to do not His own will, but the will of the Father (4:34; 5:30; 6:38). He came in His Father’s name (5:43) and lived and died to glorify the Father (12:28). The Spirit also does not speak His own words, but Christ’s (14:26; 16:13-14). He bears witness to Christ (15:26) and glorifies Christ (16:14).

What looks like subservience to us is really something very different. When Jesus said, “By myself

I can do nothing” (5:30, NIV) He was not confessing the weakness of His humanity. He was saying in essence, “In the Godhead We never act on our own. I do nothing by myself. We do all things together” (see vs. 19-22). The Father behaves the same way Christ

and the Spirit do. He makes no judgments on His own (5:22) but always works jointly with the Son (5:17) and takes Him into all His counsels (v. 20). The Father works together with the Son and the Spirit.

There are different roles in the Godhead. In the work of creation, salvation, and revelation, the Father is

the power behind the scenes, while the Son is the active agent in carrying out the divine will. The Father created the world through the Son (Heb. 1:1), reconciled the world through the Son (2 Cor. 5:19), and revealed Himself to the world through the Son (John 1:18). The Spirit seems to be the power that penetrates matter and mind as He too cooperates in the work of creation (Gen. 1:2), salvation (Eph. 4:30), and revelation (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Whenever one member of the Trinity is working, the others are supporting and cooperating. One never works in isolation from the others.

In Luke 15 Jesus told three parables to show how each member of His family works to save lost human beings. The good shepherd who seeks the lost sheep is a picture of Jesus (compare John 10:11). The woman with the lamp who searches for the lost coin depicts the Holy Spirit (see Rev. 4:5). And the one who receives his wayward son back with open arms is the heavenly Father Himself.

Since the divine Family are united in Their plans, They find fulfillment in accomplishing them. It was Jesus’ sheer delight—His food and drink—to do His Father’s will (John 4:34). He felt immense satisfaction when He finished the work God gave Him to do (17:4). The Father enjoyed doing what the Son requested (12:27-28).

The heavenly Family also find fulfillment in bringing glory to each other. The Son glorifies the Father (John 17:4), the Father glorifies the Son (Matt. 3:17), and the Spirit glorifies the Son (John 16:14).

The First Family of heaven is not exclusive. Though They live in an atmosphere of glory, the door is always open to Their circle of intimacy. Jesus

Continued on page 30

The First Family of heaven is not exclusive. Though They live in an atmosphere of glory, the door is always open to Their circle of intimacy.

Thy Will Be Done

Dr. Richard W. Guldin

Life on this earth is a series of never-ending choices. We face a blizzard of choices every day. How we respond to the choices facing us goes a long way toward determining what kind of person we are, what kind of life we have, and, ultimately, whether or not Christ will take us to heaven at His second coming.

Choices. Think about all the choices we make. When we woke up this morning, you started right in making choices—to get up or just lay there for a few minutes; to pray, to read the Morning Watch, or to turn the radio on to listen to the weather forecast. On getting dressed—do I wear the gray suit or the blue one? A red tie or a blue one? I imagine most of us have already made 40 or 50 choices this morning from awakening to right now. Maybe more.

Do we think about all these choices we make each day? Probably not. Confronted with getting out of bed each day, many of us make the same choices day after day. That pattern of behavior is called a “habit.” A habit is nothing more than choosing the same thing each time we are confronted by a certain situation. We all have habits. For example, I always tie my necktie with a full Windsor knot. It is a habit. I could tie a half Windsor if I had to, but given the choice, I prefer a full Windsor. Another habit is making hoagies for Friday supper. Linda usually prepares the Sabbath meal on Friday, so, to save her the effort of cooking two meals on Friday, I usually make hoagies. It’s a habit.

Our question this morning is this. With all the possible choices we face each day, how can we know what the “right” choices are? Do all choices have a “right” answer?

Those are tough questions. They have been the subject of scholarly thinking, debating, and writing for millennia. Most philosophers agree that choices are not “right” or “wrong” in and of themselves. The “rightness” or “wrongness” of a choice can only be evaluated on the basis of some set of values or standards. By comparing the choice to the set of values or standards, rightness or wrongness is

determined. Do standards exist to guide our choices? Yes, many standards exist. The Ten Commandments are one set of standards. Laws and regulations are other kinds of standards. Why do so many different laws and regulations exist? They exist because humans are selfish and sinful. You may have never thought of it that way before. But that answer is true and correct.

Take driving an automobile as an example. There are lots of laws and regulations that govern driving. You have to take a driver’s test to demonstrate your knowledge of the traffic laws and regulations. Why do these laws and regulations exist? They exist to enforce certain values and to support certain habits to protect innocent people. For example, most states have stringent laws against driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Why? To protect other people—drivers and pedestrians—from being injured by drivers under the influence of alcohol. Medical research has demonstrated that drinking alcohol or smoking dope severely reduces a person’s depth perception, peripheral vision, and muscle reaction time. That’s a medical fact. If a person drives under the influence of these substances, then other people are at increased risk of injury.

If we had true Christ-like characters, we would love our neighbors as ourselves. We would love our fellow humans so much that we would avoid any choices which would harm them. We would even avoid choices that just increase the risk of harming them. Here is where sin enters. When someone chooses to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, what that person is really saying that their personal desire to get “high,” their personal “good feeling,” is more important to them than the safety of other drivers and pedestrians. This is their choice: Love of self, selfishness; or agape love for fellow human beings. To restrain a person from overindulging in self-love through alcohol, laws and regulations were written prohibiting drinking and driving.

Nearly all of the laws and regulations in America relate, in one way or another, to fundamental Biblical principles, such as having agape love for your

neighbor. That is why philosophers, theologians, and political scientists say that American society is based upon Judeo-Christian principles. Other countries are founded on different principles. For example, Saudi-Arabian laws and regulations are based on Islamic principles. Because Judeo-Christian principles are the key underpinning of American laws and regulations, the social values that create expected patterns of behavior—habits—primarily have a biblical foundation.

What guides our choices? Do we make choices that glorify self or that glorify Jesus? If we want to make choices that glorify Jesus, what are those choices? There are two kinds of answers to that question. One is the quick answer, the reflex answer: “Do the will of God.” If we want to serve Jesus, to bring glory to Him, then we ought to do His will. That seems simple enough. Friends, I think it is too simple, and perhaps also too superficial. The quick answer simply begs the original question, leading to the more difficult and, I think, more insightful question, “If doing the will of God is the right choice, what is the will of God?” We pray in the Lord’s Prayer for God’s will to “be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10, NIV). What are we praying for when we pray, thy will be done?

There are 11 different Greek words in the New Testament that are all translated into English as “will.” Let me share some texts to illustrate the differences in meaning between them:

- ❶ Some texts use the word to mean a future time, such as Matthew 2:13 (KJV), “Herod will seek the young child.”
- ❷ Another usage is to do a kindness, as in Luke 2:14 (KJV), “Peace, good will toward men,” or Ephesians 6:7 (KJV), “With good will doing service, as to the Lord.”
- ❸ Another usage is as an agreement or a judgment, as in Revelation 17:17 (KJV), “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will.”
- ❹ Another meaning is to intend to do something, to be willing to do it, as in John 18:39 (KJV), “Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?”
- ❺ Another meaning is to burden heavily with something, as in 1 Corinthians 9:17 (KJV), “If I do this thing willingly,” meaning, if I do this thing of my own heavy burden. All these are not the meaning we seek this morning.

There are three closely related Greek words translated “will” that match our concern this morning. Consider Matt 7:21: *Not everyone that saith*

unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

This is the text that best illustrates the meaning we are interested in this morning. If we want to enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus says, we must do the will of His Father. Notice the emphasis on the word “do”, we must do the will of God. What is this “will of God” the Father that we must choose to do to enter heaven?

The Greek word translated “will” in Matthew 7:21 is, “*thel-ay-mah*”, which means an act or a choice. Specific meanings include a purpose or a decree. More abstract meanings include a willingness or an inclination. English synonyms are a desire or a pleasure. Literally, *thel-ay-mah* means, the choice of God, the purpose or decree of God, the inclination or willingness of God, the desire of God, or to do the pleasure of God.

There are 59 times in the New Testament where *thel-ay-mah* is used. There are several that capture the real essence of the will of God. John 6:37-40 (RSV): “*All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*”

This text is interesting for several reasons. First, two different wills are contrasted. Jesus says he came not to do His own will, but the will of His Father. Thus, everyone has their own will; a will separate from God’s will. Second, the last phrase defines the will of the Father—that every one who sees the Son and believes on Him should have eternal life. God’s will, literally God’s desire or God’s wish, is that everyone who sees Jesus and believes on him should have eternal life. Third, and most important in my opinion, is that this will of God the Father is something that we have to choose to do. Following the will of God involves our free choice. This text presents a conditional promise. If we choose to do something—see the Son and believe in Him—then it is God’s wish for us to have eternal life.

Too often, people believe that the will of God is some powerful force that automatically creates a set of conditions we are powerless to influence. The insurance industry declares that certain unusual events—hurricanes, tornados, floods, hailstorms—are “acts of God.” When these things happen, and good people lose their belongings or are injured or killed, some people proclaim that the losses were “God’s

will” because they were “acts of God.” Friends, this may be a valid insurance argument, but it is certainly not a valid theological argument.

Why would a loving God bring death and destruction upon His followers, those who love Him? We cannot reconcile a loving God acting this way. I believe that Satan is behind this notion of acts of God, perpetrating it to cause people to doubt and disbelieve God. If Satan can convince us either that God is unloving or that we are not loved by God, then Satan has succeeded in injuring our relationship with God, replacing trust in God with doubt. Sadly, many people have swallowed Satan’s argument that God is an illogical dictator who turns us into robots and forces us to do things, and if we resist being turned into robots, that God hurts us. Rubbish! We are not puppets in a fantasy where God pulls our strings. God created us with freedom of choice. We bear the responsibility for the outcomes of the choices we make. If I choose to build a house in a flood plain, I will eventually be flooded out. If I choose to settle along the Carolina seacoast, I will have to endure an occasional hurricane. We must bear the responsibility for the outcomes of choices we make. Satan would have us believe that we should not have to bear the consequences of our choices.

I believe that God loves each one of us, and that we should never allow any situation to threaten our faith in God and His deep, abiding love for us. I also believe that we must always recognize that our choices bear consequences and evaluate those choices and potential outcomes before finalizing our decisions.

In *Messages to Young People*, page 156, Ellen White said: “There are three ways in which the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us . . . God reveals His will to us in His word, the Holy Scriptures. His voice is also revealed in His providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our own ways, doing according to our own wills, and following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the voice of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God. Another way in which God’s voice is heard, is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart which will be wrought out in the character. If you are in doubt upon any subject, you must first consult the scriptures. If you have truly begun the life of faith, you have given yourself to the Lord, to be wholly His, and He has taken you to mold and fashion

according to His purpose that you may be a vessel unto Honor. You should have an earnest desire to be pliable in His hands, and to follow whithersoever He may lead you. You are then trusting Him to work out His designs while at the same time you are cooperating with Him by working out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, page 512).

God’s will is revealed in three ways: (1) through the Scriptures; (2) through providential workings; and (3) through the prompting of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts. Begin with studying the scriptures. Then surrender yourself wholly to God and follow Him.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians (5:15-20, RSV): “*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of God is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, always and forever giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.*”

In this text, Paul tells us to look carefully at how we live our lives, making wise choices and not foolish ones. Foolish choices are contrasted with the will of God. Wise choices include addressing one another in psalms and hymns and giving thanks. Friends, that means attending worship services. The will of God is that we worship him, and not alone but with other humans, “always and forever giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In *Testimonies*, Volume 4, pages 53 and 54, are these words: “God calls after you again. He seeks to reach you, girded about with selfishness as you are, and covered with the cares of this life. He invites you to withdraw your affections from the world and place them upon heavenly things. In order to know the will of God, you must study it, rather than follow your inclinations and the natural bent of your own mind. “What wilt Thou have me to do?” should be the earnest anxious inquiry of your heart.”

Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 4:2-5 (RSV): “*For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: That you abstain from unchastity, that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God.*”

Sanctification is the will of God for us. Does this mean that we are automatically sanctified because that is what God wants for us? No. It is God’s desire that we be sanctified, but we have a choice in the matter. Only as we choose daily to follow Christ’s

teachings do we become sanctified. God wishes that each day we would put aside our love of self and choose to follow Him in loving obedience. The hope of God the Father is that we follow His instructions and allow the Holy Spirit to enter our lives and work within us to make us fit for resurrecting on the last day. This is what the will of God means. It is God's desire, God's hope, God's wish, God's preference, God's intention for us. But in each and every case, it is our choices that determine whether or not we fulfill God's hopes, desires, wishes, preferences for us.

God does not force us, enslave us, or cause us to bend our choices to His way if we do not wish to follow him. God does not say, "I am the boss and you will do what I wish." The actuating influence is not force from God, but love from man. Through love for God we make choices to follow Him.

The children of Israel forgot these lessons. When they chose to worship Baal, God allowed the Babylonians to take them into captivity. Certainly God played a role in that; but only after the children of Israel made certain choices. Recall the ministry of Jeremiah, how the priests and leaders chose paths inconsistent with God's teachings and how the people worshiped strange Gods. Those choices had consequences. Yet in spite of their foolish choices, God still promised to restore a remnant who would faithfully choose to follow God's way while in Babylonian captivity.

The choices we make today about following Christ are determining the state of our sanctification. Our choices are important to our eternal salvation. The choice to follow God's will is in our hands. On each of life's decisions, we ought to ask God to help us understand the outcomes of our options so we can see if they conform to God's desires and wishes for our lives. Pray for understanding and insight. Then pray for courage to make the right choice. Make this sort of prayer a habit. After making choices repeatedly for God's way, doing God's will will become a habit. Good choices will create habits that reshape our physical, spiritual, and emotional lives in God's image. That is God's will for us.

Testimonies, volume 4, page 561 says: "By study of the scriptures and earnest prayer seek to obtain clear conceptions of your duty, and then faithfully perform it. It is essential that you cultivate faithfulness in little things, and in so doing you will acquire habits of integrity in greater responsibilities. The little incidents of everyday life often pass without our notice, but it is these things that shape the character. Every event of life is great for good

or for evil. The mind needs to be trained by daily tests, that it may acquire power to stand in any difficult position. In the days of trial and peril you will need to be fortified to stand firmly for the right, independent of every opposing influence."

Friends, our choices determine our response to God's love, our response to God's desires for us, our response to God's will. In all of our daily choices, we need to choose those actions and do them that will draw us closer to God the Father. God's will is that we have sanctification and eternal life. God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. That wonderful gift was God's choice. The sacrificial gift of His life for our sins was Christ's choice. What is your choice? What will you do in response to God's will for you? **E**

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When God's Love Intervenes

Alfred L. Greenway

"Behold, for peace I had great bitterness" (Is. 38:17).

1. The Tragedy of Sin's Deceptiveness

- Bitterness follows persistent hardness (Heb. 3:13; Ps. 95:8; Prov. 28:14; Rom. 2:5).
- Bitterness follows blatant wickedness (Job 20:4-29; Job 27:13-23; Ps. 9:15).
- Bitterness follows complacent self-righteousness (Prov. 30:12; Jer. 2:35; 2 Cor. 10:12).

2. The Victory of Love's Attractiveness—"But thou hast in love . . . delivered"

- The meaning of divine love (Deut. 7:8; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:1).
- The measure of divine love (John 3:16; Eph. 2:4, 5).
- The magnetism of divine love "up from the pit" (Jer. 31:3; John 12:32).

3. The Reality of God's Graciousness—"Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back!"

- Its expression—"Thou hast cast".
- Its extent—"all my sins".
- Its effectiveness—"behind thy back".

Illustration—Love Will Find a Way

It was a cold night. Outside the little church, keeping well within the shadows, there stood a young woman, clutching a babe to her breast and listening intently to the opening hymn. She was thin, almost emaciated, and poorly dressed, her shoes worn down at the heels. She started, and shrank back at the sound of a voice, with its unmistakable Welsh accent addressing her. "Good evening. Enjoying the singing?" It was the minister's wife who had been detained and was arriving late for the service. She looked intently at the girl, for she was not much past her teens, and saw the tell-tale marks of vice etched upon her face. The girl mumbled something, and made to move away. But the opening question was followed by another. "Would you care to go inside to listen to the service? By the way, I am the minister's wife, and I'll sit with you, if you would like me to do so."

There was a long pause. Then the girl began to speak timidly at first, but soon with more freedom. "If you only knew the kind of girl I am, you wouldn't be seen talking to me. This is my child, and I am unmarried. Oh! if you only knew the life I've lived you would not be asking me to go in with you to Church." Then followed a shocking confession of guilt and failure, as the words poured out from an over-full heart. As she concluded and bowed her head in shame, impulsively the minister's wife put her arms around the girl and kissed her, whispering as she did so: "But Jesus loves you in spite of all that, dear. He loved you enough to die for you."

The girl put her hand to her cheek where the lips of a pure woman had touched her in a loving caress. "You kissed me," she said in wonder. She wept her way to Calvary and found the forgiveness that blots out all transgression.

In a short space of time the minister had the inestimable joy of leading her parents, and brothers, and sisters, to the Saviour, and of marrying her to a good man. Happy in her new-found sense of release from bitterness, she is rejoicing in the peace of God, another trophy of love's intervention.

Alfred L. Greenway writes from Hamilton East, New Zealand, where he is a minister of the gospel and teacher at The Bible Training Center.

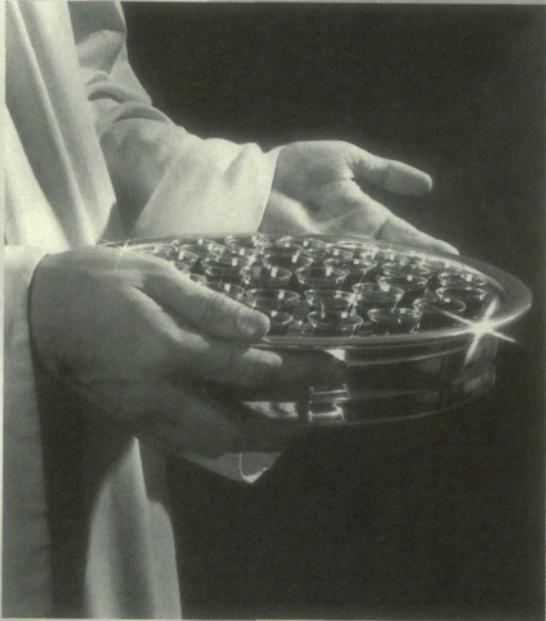
Seven Facts About RELIGION AND HEALTH

"He who has health has hope, And he who has hope has everything" (an Arabian proverb).

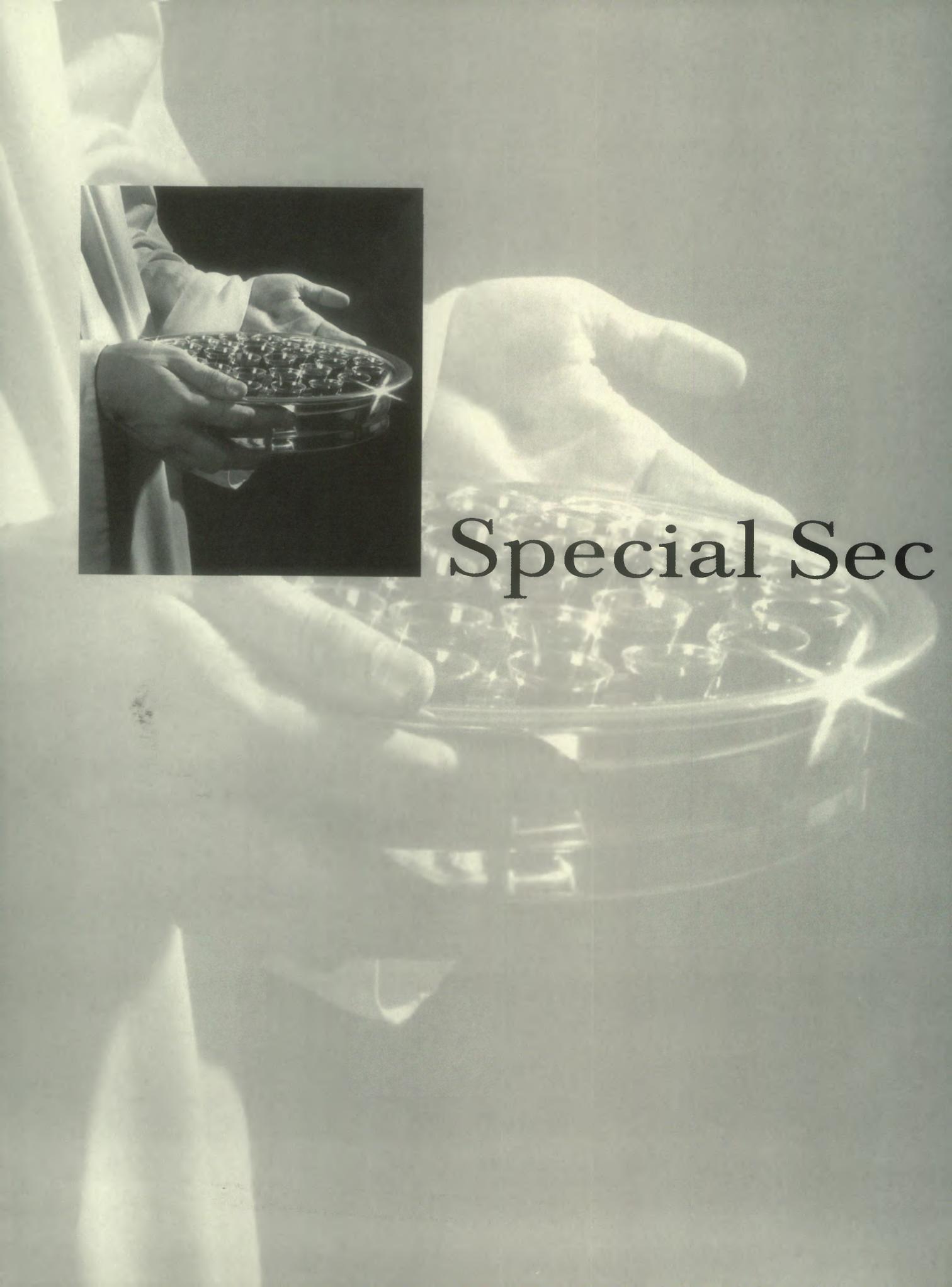
- God is Interested in Man's Health**—3 John 2.
 - Jesus came to impart abundant life—John 10:10.
 - Both physical and spiritual—Psalm 103:3.
- Conformity to God's Requirements Will Bring Health**—Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 7:12-15; 32:46, 47; Proverbs 4:20, 22.
 - Sin limits our possession of health—John 5:14.
 - Ignorance of natural laws of health and hygiene brings unnecessary sickness—Hosea 4:6.
 - Violation of health laws brings retribution—1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Galatians 6:7.
 - Our physical strength is a trust from God. The sixth commandment forbids any shortening of our lives through indulgence or neglect—Exodus 20:13.
- The Christian is Under Obligation to Care for His Health.**
 - The reason: 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; Ephesians 5:29.
 - We owe it to our families—Romans 14:7.
 - We owe it to God—Acts 17:58; Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

A health-conscious person will foster the harmonious development of mind, body and spirit. Christ set an example—Luke 2:52.
- He Provides Help in Mental Development—"In Wisdom."**
 - A clear conscience—Acts 23:1; 24:16.
 - A positive attitude—Philippians 4:8.
 - A cheerful spirit—Proverbs 17:22; 1 Timothy 6:6.
- He Provides a Plan in Physical Development—"In . . . Stature."**
 - Eating wholesome food to be enjoyed—Ecclesiastes 3:13.
 - The best diet—Genesis 1:29; 3:18. Note food prohibitions in Leviticus 11.
 - Injurious habits condemned—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:19-21.
 - Adequate sleep and rest—Ecclesiastes 5:12; Mark 6:31.
 - Stimulating work—Genesis 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.
 - Temperance—"the total abstinence of all that is harmful and the moderate use of all that is good" (1 Corinthians 9:25-27).
- He Provides the Means of Spiritual Development—"In Favor With God."**
 - A simple faith in God—Mark 11:22; Matthew 9:22.
 - A bended knee—1 Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 4:16.
 - Sanctification embraces a clean body and a pure mind—2 Corinthians 7:1.
- He Provides the Answer to Social Development—"In Favor With . . . Man."**
 - Right relationships with other people—Romans 12:18.

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Special Sec



The Communion service points to Christ's

second coming. It was designed to keep this hope

vivid in the minds of the disciples. Whenever they met

together to commemorate His death, they recounted

how "He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to

tion: Communion

them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of

the new testament, which is shed for many for the

remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink

henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when

I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." In

their tribulation they found comfort in the hope of

their Lord's return" (*The Desire of Ages*, pg. 583 [659-660]).

The First Celebration of the Ordinances of the Lord's House

Do you have a clear mental picture of the setting of the first celebration of the ordinance of humility as it is given in John 13? Some seem to imagine it something like this:

Jesus and His disciples, with dusty feet, arrived in the evening at the upper chamber where they were to eat the Passover supper. A

pitcher of water, a basin, and a towel were there, ready for use, but no special servant appeared to wash their feet. None of the jealous and resentful twelve, who had been quarreling among themselves as to who should be chiefest among them, offered to do the menial task. The Passover supper was spread on the table, but they waited in stubborn pride for their feet to be washed. The embarrassment of it all was keenly felt. The suspense was broken when the Master girded Himself with the towel, poured water into the basin, and washed their feet. When this was done, they sat down together to eat while He conversed with them.

Nevertheless, that is not the way the facts are presented in the Scripture. Christ and His disciples sat down with unwashed feet and ate the Passover meal, after which

He rose from the table and washed their feet. Note this statement:

"Christ ate the Passover supper with His disciples, then arose from the table, and said unto them, 'With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' He then performed the humiliating office of washing the feet of His disciples. . . .

"Jesus then took His place again at the table, whereon was placed bread and unfermented wine, which arrangements had been made according to Christ's directions" (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pages 201-203).

When we turn to the account by John, the only New Testament writer reporting the foot washing, we find it borne out that this ceremony took place after one supper had ended. The narrative opens by speaking of "supper being ended," and of Judas having purposed in his heart already to betray the Saviour. (John 13:2, KJV) Then "he [Jesus] riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments: and took a towel, and girded himself" (verse 4). The supper that they had been eating, and from which Christ rose to wash the disciples' feet, was the Passover supper, according to Mrs. White.

"After he (Jesus) had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and *sat down again*, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?" (verse 12) Thus Jesus returned and took His place at the table after He had washed His disciples' feet. This is borne out also in the Spirit of prophecy.

In verse 18 Christ is reported to have said in the words of the psalmist: "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." This shows that they ate together after Christ had returned to the table. It was during this second eating that Christ gave the sop to Judas (verses 26-30). This occurred while they were "at the table" (verse 28). The other Gospel writers likewise testify that it was while Jesus and His disciples were eating that Judas received his portion. (Matt. 26:21-23; Mark 14:18-20; Luke 22:21.)

Thus the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus occurred between two sittings at the table—between the Passover supper and the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper

In the first celebration of the Lord's Supper, as commonly depicted by artists, Christ and His

disciples are seen sitting around a long, rectangular table in about the same fashion as a family sits at supper today. One seldom sees in art a true representation of that first communion service as it is described in this statement by the Spirit of prophecy:

“At the time of their deliverance from Egypt, the children of Israel ate the Passover supper standing, with their loins girded, and with their staves in their hands, ready for their journey. The manner in which they celebrated this ordinance harmonized with their condition; for they were about to be thrust out of the land of Egypt, and were to begin a painful and difficult journey through the wilderness.

“But in Christ’s time the condition of things had changed. They were not now about to be thrust out of a strange country, but were dwellers in their own land. In harmony with the rest that had been given them, the people then partook of the Passover supper in a reclining position. Couches were placed about the table, and the guests lay upon them, resting upon the left arm, and having the right hand free for use in eating. In this

position a guest could lay his head upon the breast of the one who sat next above him. And the feet, being at the outer edge of the couch, could be washed by one passing around the outside of the circle” (*The Desire of Ages*, page 653).

The expression “man at the table” in John 13:28 is really a phrase formed of a plural participle of the Greek verb *anakeimai*, meaning “of the ones lying down” or “of the reclining ones.” In Luke 22:21, 30 the Greek noun translated as “table” is *trapeza*, which simply means a dining table. The Greek verb rendered as “sat down” (Matt. 26:20), “sat” (Mark 14:18), and “sitteth” (Luke 22:27) is also from *anakeimai* (to lie down, to recline). The words “sat down” in Luke 22:14 are translated from *anapipto* (to fall back, as one does in leaning back in a reclining position).

Hence the Scriptures state that “there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples” (John 13:23, 25). That disciple was the beloved John.

Wherefore we read:

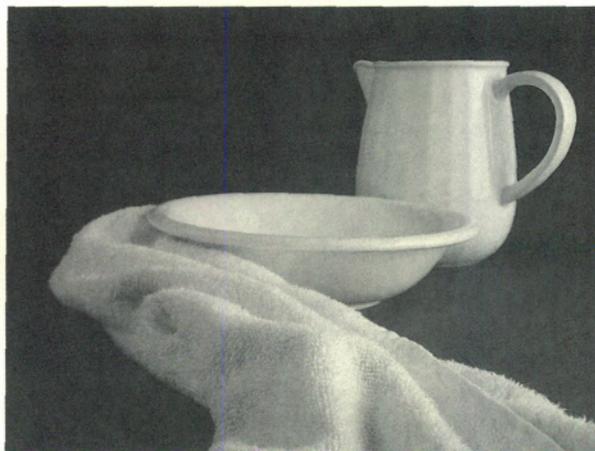
“When the disciples entered the supper room, their hearts were full of resentful

feelings. Judas pressed next to Christ on the left side; John was on the right. If there was a highest place, Judas was determined to have it, and that place was thought to be next to Christ . . . Judas, in choosing his position at the table, had tried to place himself first, and Christ as a servant served him first. John, toward whom Judas had felt so much bitterness, was left till the last. But John did not take this as a rebuke or slight” (*Ibid.*, pages 644, 645).

Some of these details are important, and a correct mental picture of this first service will help us better to understand its significance. ■

Robert L. Odom, pastor, scholar and professor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for many years, was pastor at Texas Conference when he wrote this article.

All scripture in this article are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.



New Members and the Ordinances of the Lord's House

Louise C. Kleuser

Introduction: Memorials With Deep Significance

"Christ was here instituting a religious service" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 650).

"Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. . . . The national festival of the Jews (Passover) was to pass away forever" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 652).

"He was now in the shadow of the cross, and the pain was torturing His heart" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 643).

I. The Preparatory Service

A. Lessons to Be Gained

1. Attitude of His disciples: James and John had asked for highest places; other disciples were jealous; wounded pride. "He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty" (*The Desire of Ages*, pages 644, 645).
2. Lesson of true greatness timely and imperative.
3. Serving His disciples: Judas deeply touched, served first (*The Desire of Ages*, page 645). Peter's heart broken at Christ's condescension. Refused the service—"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."
4. Washing the already washed—disciples had been washed (baptism), John 13:10.
5. "Until brought into a state of *humility and love*, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 646).
6. A change of heart—"A change of feeling was brought about. . . . They had become humble and teachable" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 646). "He had washed the feet of Judas, but the heart had not been yielded to Him" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 649).

B. Why Ordinance of Preparation Is Important

1. "Being so infinitely superior, He imparted grace and significance to the service" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 649).

2. "Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 650).
3. "The ordinance preceding the Lord's supper, is to clear away these misunderstandings, to bring man out of his selfishness, down from his stilts of *self-exaltation*, to the humility of heart that will lead him to serve his brother" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 650).
4. "A chain of memories is called up, memories of God's great goodness and of the favor and tenderness of earthly friends. . . . The mind is energized to break down every barrier that has caused alienation" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 651).
5. "To those who receive the spirit of this service, it can never become a mere ceremonial. Its constant lesson will be, 'By love serve one another.' . . . They covenant that the life shall be given to unselfish ministry" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 651).

C. Points on Which to Help New Believers

1. Jesus commanded this service because of need of personal humility.
2. Its significance better understood after partaking. John 13:7.
3. Washing must accompany a heart experience. John 13:11.
4. Preparatory service for clearing away difficulties.
5. Holy Spirit energizes the mind to recall points of alienation.
6. This service is more than a ceremonial service; it is an experience.
7. We covenant a life of unselfish ministry.
8. It is important because it is a miniature baptism.
9. It involves doing, not just being willing to serve. John 13:14, 15.

II. The Lord's Supper

A. Practices and Types

1. Transition from Passover. Study in light

of Israel's experience.

2. The sinless Antitype.
 - a. "The unleavened cakes used at the Passover season are before Him" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 653).
 - b. "The Passover wine, untouched by fermentation, is on the table. . ." (*The Desire of Ages*, page 653).
 - c. "Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot'" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 653).

B. As Affecting Character

"Judas became only the more determined. From the sacramental supper he went out to complete the work of betrayal" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 655).

1. Presence of good and evil angels. "More than human eyes beheld the scene" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 656).
2. Each personally witnesses to his faith. "None should exclude themselves from the communion because some who are unworthy may be present. Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 656).
3. An act of the new covenant. "In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer. He committed to them the new covenant, by which all who receive Him become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. . . . This covenant deed was to be ratified with the blood of Christ" (*The Desire of Ages*, pages 658, 659).
4. Supper a season of rejoicing. "But the communion service was not to be a season of sorrowing. . . . They are not to stand in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 659).
5. Communion service points to Christ's return. "The communion service points

to Christ's second coming. It was designed to keep this hope vivid in the minds of the disciples. . . . In their tribulation they found comfort in the hope of their Lord's return. . . . It is only because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming" (*The Desire of Ages*, pages 659, 660).

6. Symbols of God's daily sustaining power. "To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. . . . The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 660).
7. Sacred emotions awakened. "The plan of salvation is glorified before us, and the thought of Calvary awakens living and sacred emotions in our hearts. . . . For pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the soul that keeps fresh in the memory the scenes of Calvary" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 661).
8. The service brings spiritual strength. "As faith contemplates our Lord's great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion. The service forms a living connection by which the believer is bound up with Christ, and thus bound up with the Father" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 661).

C. Lessons for New Believers.

1. The proper emblems of Lord's Supper.
2. Decorum and reverence for the service.
3. Angels as watchers—looking for us individually.
4. Need for service whenever conducted.
5. The joy of communion is our privilege.
6. An important act of the new covenant.
7. Points forward to second coming of Christ.
8. Our witnessing to our faith in these provisions.

*Continued
on page 22*

Consider Jesus

Aim

To prepare those in attendance for the ordinance of humility by revealing the condescension of Christ our Example.

Text: Hebrews 3:1

Consider Jesus, who condescended to take upon Himself the frailties of human nature.

Thoughts to be developed

1. Our need of a humble spirit.
2. Jesus' example in the foot-washing service.
3. We are to consider Him at all times.
4. The blessing that comes in following His example.

Supporting Scriptures

Philippians 2:5-8; Galatians 4:4; Romans 8:3; Matthew 4:2 (Moffatt); John 4:7, 6 (Weymouth and Moffatt); Matthew 8:23, 24; Isaiah 53:2, 3 (Moffatt); Philippians 2:7; Matthew 2:23; 8:20; 13:55.

Robert Pierson

Spirit of Prophecy and Other Helps

See *E. G. White Index* and the *S.D.A. Commentaries* for comments on Scripture references. See also: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 69; *Early Writings*, pages 116, 117.

Illustrations

** Forgiveness at the Altar*

Many years ago a native New Zealand Christian found himself kneeling at the Communion altar by the side of the man who had killed his father and drunk his blood. Here was a man whom, years before, the native Christian had sworn to kill in revenge. What thoughts surged through his mind! What a battle was waged in his heart! He got up and returned to his seat without taking part.

Back in his accustomed seat the simple Christian began to meditate—this time not on revenge for his father's murder but on the Saviour's earthly ministry. Before his mind rose the scenes of Gethsemane, Pilate's judgment hall, and finally Calvary. Christ suffered more than he

had ever suffered. Faintly he seemed to hear the words of the Master, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The dusky Christian could stand it no longer. Rising, he walked resolutely back to the altar. Kneeling again by the side of the man who had taken the life of his father, he received the emblems of the Lord's Supper.

** Secure your own appropriate illustrations on humility and the condescension and humility of Christ.*

Appeal

Base on John 13:14, 15: To learn the lesson in humility.

Robert H. Pierson was pastor, evangelist, administrator, and former president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

New Members and the Ordinance of the Lord's House

Continued from page 21

9. Definite spiritual strength received from service.
10. Symbols of God's sustaining power (Aaron's rod that budded laid up with commandments).

Further Reading

- Approach carefully in new communities. *Early Writings*, page 117.
- Referred to in vision of Advent path. *Ibid.*, page 15. Why various ordinances required of Israel. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, page 607.
- Administered often. *Early Writings*, pages 101, 116.

Louise C. Kleuser was an Associate Secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association when this outline was written.

Graven Upon His Palms

Communion

Aim

To point out the closeness of the ties with which our Saviour has bound Himself to the human family.

Text: Isaiah 49:16

Graven upon the palms of His hands.

Thoughts to be developed

1. Christ forever bound to humanity.
2. Extent of Christ's affection for the lost.
3. Sin in the light of the cross.

Supporting Scriptures

Song of Solomon 8:6; John 3:16; Matthew 27:46; Hebrews 6:6

Spirit of Prophecy and Other Helps

See *E. G. White Index* and the *S.D.A. Commentaries* for comments on Scripture references. See also: *The Desire of Ages*, pages 25 and 26—Family of heaven and earth bound together; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, page 357—If life hid with Christ, Isaiah 49:16 for us; *The Desire of Ages*, page 479—Jesus knows us individually; *Steps to Christ*, page 104—Trust all to hand nailed to cross; *The Desire of Ages*, page 490—Saviour on side of tempted and tried; *Steps to Christ*, page 31—Sin in light of cross.

Illustrations

1. Use illustrations from your own experience.
2. Luther Takes Communion

D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation* records the account of a touching Communion service in which Martin Luther took part. Several of the Reformer's friends had dropped in to see him at one of the critical periods of the Reformation. All were marked men in the records of the Catholic Church. Luther feared that this would be their last meeting—their parting might be forever as far as this world was concerned.

In what better manner could these earnest Christian leaders spend their last hours together than in celebrating the Lord's Supper? Luther's friends "agreed, and this little band of faithful men communicated in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. What feelings swelled the hearts of the reformer's friends at the moment when, celebrating the Eucharist with him, they thought it was perhaps the last time they would be permitted to do so! What joy, what love, animated Luther's heart, as he beheld himself so graciously accepted by his Master at the very moment that men rejected him! How solemn must have been that communion! How holy that evening!" (p. 197)

Robert Pierson

Appeal

Base on Hebrews 6:6, Shall we crucify the Saviour afresh?

Robert H. Pierson was pastor, evangelist, administrator, and former president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



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The Art of Sermon Delivery

Edmund H. Linn

The inadequacies of content are inseparably related to delivery. Effective delivery cannot be put on as a coat. Like enthusiasm it springs from within, from significant ideas, clearly understood, firmly believed, and vividly expressed. Trying to correct the faults of delivery without first giving attention to invention, organization, and language is like trying to run a car without gasoline. In a word, many of the abuses of delivery have both their cause and cure in content. Having said this, we may state certain defects of presentation.

Monotony in delivery comes from the lack of variety in vocal and bodily action. If variety is the spice of life, it will certainly add life to the sermon. See the delivery of the typical preacher. His face is a dead pan. His hands are glued to the pulpit, locked behind him, or hanging limply at his sides. His voice rises in pitch and volume, evens out in rate, and drones steadily on to the bitter end. His eyes, since they rarely make contact, appear glassy. He looks at his manuscript, the floor, back wall, ceiling, or out the window. There are exceptions, but in general his facial expression resembles the Sphinx, bodily action the wooden soldier, and vocal expression the drone of an electric motor. The "holy tone" is still with us. Voices wear clerical robes. This is shown by the fact that nine out of ten radio preachers can be identified as preachers by the use of their voices long before their words are understood. Not so obvious as it once was, the holy tone is still devastating to the listener.

Delivery can be interesting and persuasive. To make it so, preachers must achieve directness in eye contact and vocal quality, and variety in vocal and bodily action. To be sure, these qualities of delivery should arise naturally and spontaneously as the preacher responds to ideas and feelings. Preachers, nevertheless, can do more than prune away mannerisms and hope

that they will not return. They can free themselves to develop an effective delivery in these ways.

First, think of preaching not as a new species of talk but as enlarged conversation. Yes, conversation, just the same as when you talk to your parishioners on six days in the week—natural, direct, and personal. At the same time enlarged enough to fit the subject and the congregation. The word preach is unpopular today, not so much because of what is said as because of how it is said. People say, "Don't preach to me,"

Think of preaching not as a new species of talk, but as enlarged conversation.

because the holy tone suggests condescension. Try talking to your people as man to man. Give your parishioners the naturalness and directness of conversational voice quality. The holy tone presents a subject in front of an audience but

not to an audience; it destroys the vital I–thou relationship. Eliminate the holy tone and improve vocal expression by holding to conversational speech. The value of recording equipment in this task cannot be over-estimated. Every preacher ought to have an adequate recorder and a record library, which will permit him to hear not only himself but examples of both vocal faults and vocal excellence.

Second, master the extemporaneous method. It would be well if you could learn all the methods of delivery: impromptu, extempore, memorization, and reading. Time rarely permits such proficiency. Consequently, the most useful method should be mastered first. This is the extempore method. Write the manuscript, therefore, in full when possible, and then speak from a written or mental outline, rethinking the sermon ideas, not the words, as they are presented. Speaking from an outline will provide freedom in presentation. The memory method is less desirable than the extempore method, because it puts great strain on the speaker, limiting vocal variety and spontaneous adaptation to the congregation. The reading method restricts spontaneous adaptation to

the congregation, vocal variety, eye contact, facial expression, and bodily activity. Moreover, few preachers have time to write all their sermons for either memorization or reading. Thus, the extempore method will best free your voice and body for effective presentation.

Third, learn to speak without a lectern or a pulpit. If the pulpit would confess its sins against effective speechmaking, it would cry: "Woe is me! I am a barrier between a preacher and his people. I encourage indirectness and the unholy tone. I invite the preacher to read or to use extensive notes which cause him to lose eye contact and to limit his vocal variety. By urging the preacher to cling to me I cripple his bodily activity for life. O miserable offender that I am!" Once the preacher has learned to look at his congregation, to talk to them, and to enter fully into the speaking situation, nothing—not even a pulpit—can cripple his delivery.

What's wrong with preaching? The content has been diagnosed as having superficial ideas, hazily understood, weakly believed, and drably stated. The proposed cure is a greater emphasis upon Biblical and doctrinal themes, long-range preaching programs, appeals to the emotions, picturesque language, and the "how" of religion. Delivery has been found indirect and dull—indirect because of the lack of vocal naturalness and eye contact; and dull due to monotony in voice and body. The recommended remedy is the directness and the variety that come from conversational quality, extempore method, and learning to speak without the support of a pulpit.

In brief, preaching has a lot wrong with it, but nothing that thorough speech training, common sense, and the grace of God cannot cure! **E**

Edmund H. Linn was an instructor in speech at Andover Newton Theological Seminary when he wrote this article.

Essential Elements in a Call

Mark Finley

An important practical question is "How should a call be given?" What are the essential elements of a call?

Spurgeon says that the most important element in a call is the *earnestness* of the individual giving the call. The audience must perceive that you believe that the call is significant, that you are in earnest about it, that God has given you an urgent message.

Before Billy Graham went to Scotland, he was told that it was impossible to make an invitation there. He was warned, "No one will respond." Throughout his sermon he struggled, wondering what to do. As he came to the conclusion, he, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, made a direct appeal. At first no one moved. As he often does, Graham stood, arms folded, head bowed, praying. It was as if he were closed in with the Almighty. Raising his head, looking out upon that great stadium, he noticed hundreds coming forward. The Scottish clergy sitting on the platform had tears in their eyes, sensing that his earnest, prayerful appeal had touched hearts.

Not only must the appeal be earnest and

prayerful, it must be *clear*. Leighton Ford says: "When I ask people to come forward at the end of an evangelistic meeting, I try to make it clear what I'm asking them to do. At the beginning of the sermon I may say something like this, 'Tonight at the end of my talk I'm going to ask you to do something about it, to express your decision. I'm going to ask you to get up and come and stand here at the front. This is an outward expression of an inward decision. Just as you make a promise to someone, mean to keep it, and shake hands on it; just as a young couple come to love each other, want to give themselves to each other, and then openly express that covenant in a wedding, so I'm asking you to express your coming forward. There's nothing magical in coming forward. Walking down here doesn't make you a Christian. You could come down here a thousand times with your feet and it would make no difference at all if that's all it was. But as you come here with your feet, you are saying with your heart, God, I'm coming to you and leaving behind those things that are wrong and

sinful. I'm trusting Christ as my Saviour and I'm coming to follow Him in this church from tonight on."

People need to understand what the invitation means and what it doesn't mean. The call must be clear. Are you inviting people to accept Christ? Say so. Are you inviting them to prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus by surrendering some sinful habit? Tell them! Are you inviting people who once knew Christ to come back to Him? What about those who once used to be Adventists; are they being invited to return? If you're inviting people to keep the Sabbath, to give up unclean foods, to be baptized, make that clear. Be sure, of course, that you do not include too many groups in a single call.

One of my typical calls goes something like this: "If you've never accepted Christ, I invite you to make that decision tonight. If at one time you had accepted Christ and you've drifted away or allowed some sin to control your life, come."

This particular call is effective early in an evangelistic series. Later in the series my call might be: "If you believe that you've been hearing the truth of God and are convicted that God wants you to follow it and you want to say, 'Yes, Jesus, I'm going all the way with You and following Your truth,' I invite you now to get out of your seat and come forward."

For a call to be effective, the evangelist must have a sense of *urgency*. He must believe that there are people in the congregation that very night who will respond. In every discourse fervent appeals should be made to lead people to forsake their sins and turn to Christ. There is something about an evangelist with a sense of urgency that God can use to enable audiences to respond.

On October 8, 1871, Dwight Moody preached a sermon entitled "What Shall I Do With Jesus? At the close of the sermon Moody said, "I want you to take the message home with you tonight and think about it. Next week when you return, I will invite you to make a decision for Christ." Then Ira Sankey began to sing, "Today the Saviour calls, for refuge fly; the storm of justice falls and death is nigh."

Sankey never finished the hymn. While he was singing, there came the rush and roar of fire engines on the street outside. Before morning Chicago lay in ashes. To his dying day Moody regretted that he told the congregation to come next week and decide what to do with Jesus. He said, "I have never dared to give an audience a week to think of their salvation since. If they were lost, they might rise up in the judgment against me. I have never seen that congregation since. I will never meet those people again until I meet them

in another world. But I want to tell you of one lesson that I learned that night which I have never forgotten and that is, when I preach I press Christ upon the people right then and there and try to bring them to a decision on the spot. I would rather have my right hand cut off than give an audience a week to decide what to do with Jesus."

Such urgency in appeals enables the Holy Spirit to work powerfully on hearts and minds. **E**

Mark Finley writes from Thousand Oaks, California where he serves as the director of It Is Written, an international evangelistic telecast program.



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Paul's Alignment Shop

Marvin Hunt

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12, KJV).

With a face full of trouble Tim turned into a run-down part of town passing the weathered and peeling sign of "Paul's Alignment Shop." His old car crunched through the graveled parking lot as he searched for a place in the row of cars waiting for front end alignments.

Tim yelled down to his friend in the grease pit, "Paul it's me, gotta minute?"

Paul's voice echoed from under a car over the pit, "Timmy, long time no see. Come on over and have a set down."

Paul's alignment pit was his pulpit. Strange terminology was common in Paul's oily pulpit pit. His speech was peppered with words such as drag-link, tie rod and ball joint mixed with stained-glass words such as propitiation, charity, immortality, light, and resurrection.

Tim sat down and sighed, "It's been tough Paul." Tim continued as Paul fished out his biggest hammer and started clobbering a stubborn drag-link on the undercarriage of the car. Between blows Tim said, "You know Paul, there's a lot of good folks who will tell you they are your friend and then let you down when you need them."

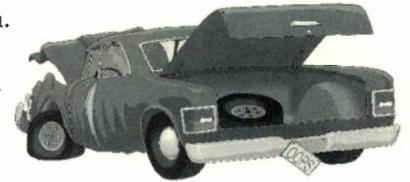
Paul, nodded his head and said, "Yup," while continuing pounding mercilessly on the automobile undercarriage. The part didn't budge.

"It's rusted. These things spend years stuck in one place. Once they get like this it's almost impossible to move them."

Finally he landed the telling blow and abruptly the worn drag-link released its grip and fell helplessly onto the grimy floor. Standing astraddle the fallen part the greasy warrior drew a victor's breath.

Tim asked, "Paul, what do you think makes people want to act like they do? We're all supposed to be Christians." Paul thought for a minute and then replied, "I learned a long time ago that a person has

very few true friends. I don't mean to sound gloomy, but son that's just the way the wheels lines up. I figured out that lots of people are like nations. They say nations don't have friends, they just have interests. I could have failed history and figured that one out! Look at the way we trade with our former enemies. Today we call them friendly nations, but everyone knows we have an interest in them and they have one in us. We both have something to gain. That's just the way it is. Now Timmy, it ain't no different with most people. They don't have friends. . . . they just have interests. Made up my mind about that a long time ago and it don't worry me no more. Them that wants to be friends is fine with me and them that wants to behave like nations . . . well I know they only have "interests." I don't let it bother me no more. I just shake it off and press on. I forget the past and think about the future."



Paul laid his hammer aside and turned to his dog-eared repair manual. As he was thumbing through the instructions he looked up to Tim and said, "It's all in here you know. The directions that tells you how to do things. It tells you what you can and cannot do. Tells you where to pound and where to be careful. In our business you gotta live by the book. If I make a mistake and mess up the steering, it's a matter of life or death."

Tim stared at part on the floor, thinking about how Paul kept persevering until he had victory. He smiled.

Paul looked up at his young friend, "Timmy, don't let people get to you just because you're young. You be an example to them and go by the book. By the way, did you need a front end alignment?"

Tim smiled and replied, "No, . . . you already gave me one." **E**

Marvin Hunt writes from Oakwood, Georgia where he is a pastor.

A View of the Conflict

by ELLEN G. WHITE

Our only safety is to stand as God's peculiar people. We must not yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age, but stand in moral independence, making no compromise with its corrupt and idolatrous practices. . . .

The prevailing spirit of our time is that of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of pretended illumination because of a knowledge of the truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. There is a spirit of opposition to the plain word of God and to the testimony of His Spirit. There is a spirit of idolatrous exaltation of mere human reason above the revealed wisdom of God. . . .

No Despair. Yet we do not despair. We have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers there can be no true Christians, but this is not the case. God has promised that where the shepherds are not true He will take charge of the flock Himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities. But the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.

The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. . . . Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. . . . In the daytime we look toward heaven but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the


*“Be strong in the
 Lord, and in the
 power of His
 might. Put on the
 whole armor of
 God, that ye may
 be able to stand
 against the wiles
 of the devil. . . .”*
(Ephesians 6:10-17)

firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.

Test Coming. The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and con-formed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the

ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.

When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare. The deeper the night for God's people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors. Then will the church of Christ appear “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

Fruit Borne. The seeds of truth that are being sown by missionary efforts will then spring up and blossom and bear fruit. Souls will receive the truth who will endure tribulation and praise God that they may suffer for Jesus. “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be

of good cheer; I have overcome the world." When the overflowing scourge shall pass through the earth, when the fan is purging Jehovah's floor, God will be the help of His people. The trophies of Satan may be exalted on high, but the faith of the pure and holy will not be daunted (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol 5, pages 78-82).

Great Conflict. In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world's insignia; the other was led by the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust as company after company from the Lord's army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. An angel flying in the midst of heaven put the standard of Immanuel into many hands, while a mighty general cried out with a loud voice: "Come into line. Let those who are loyal to the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ now take their position. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters. Let all who will come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

The battle raged. Victory alternated from side to side. Now the soldiers of the cross gave way, "as when a standard-bearer fainteth" (Isaiah 10:18, KJV). But their apparent retreat was but to gain a more advantageous position. Shouts of joy were heard. A song of praise to God went up, and angel voices united in the song, as Christ's soldiers planted His banner on the walls of fortresses till then held by the enemy. The Captain of our salvation was ordering the battle and sending support to His soldiers. . . .

Victory. At last the victory was gained. The army following the banner with the inscription, "The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," was gloriously triumphant. The soldiers of Christ were close beside the gates of the city, and with joy the city received her King. The kingdom of peace and joy and everlasting righteousness was established.

Better Day Coming. Now the church is militant. Now we are confronted with a world in midnight darkness, almost wholly given over to idolatry. But the day is coming in which the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Then the nations will own no other law than the law of heaven. All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving—the robe of Christ's righteousness. All nature, in its surpassing loveliness, will offer to God a constant tribute of praise and adoration. The world will be bathed in the light of heaven.

This is the scene that is presented to me. But the church must and will fight against seen and unseen foes. Satan's agencies in human form are on the ground. Men have confederated to oppose the Lord of hosts. These confederacies will continue until Christ shall leave His place of intercession before the mercy seat and shall put on the garments of vengeance. Satanic agencies are in every city, busily organizing into parties those opposed to the law of God. Professed saints and avowed unbelievers take their stand with these parties. This is no time for the people of God to be weaklings. We cannot afford to be off our guard for one moment.

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . ."

(Ephesians 6:10-17, KJV).

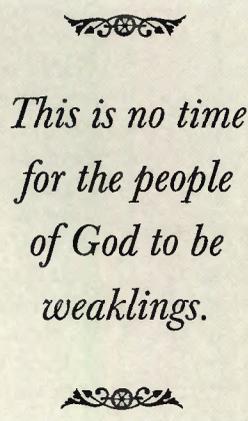
"This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:9-11, KJV).

"Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: . . . stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (verses 27-29).

Vision Needed. We must have a vision of the future and of the blessedness of heaven. Stand on the threshold of eternity, and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life have cooperated with Christ, regarding it as a privilege and an honor to suffer for His sake. As they unite with the angels, they cast their crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, exclaiming: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. . . . Honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Revelation 5:12, 13, KJV).

There the redeemed ones greet those who directed them to the uplifted Saviour. They unite in praising Him who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. All tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the redeemed stand around the throne of God. . . .

Will you catch the inspiration of the vision? Will you let your mind dwell upon the picture? Will you not be truly converted, and then go forth to labor in a spirit



entirely different from the spirit in which you have labored in the past, displacing the enemy, breaking down every barrier to the advancement of the gospel, filling hearts with the light and peace and joy of the Lord? Shall not the miserable spirit of faultfinding and murmuring be buried, never to have a resurrection? Shall not the incense of praise and thanksgiving ascend from hearts purified and sanctified and glorified by the presence of Christ? Shall we not in faith lay hold of sinners and bring them to the cross?

Self-consecration. Who will now consecrate themselves to the service of the Lord? Who will now pledge themselves not to affiliate with the world, but to come out from the world and be separate, refusing to pollute the soul with the worldly schemes and practices that have been keeping the church under the enemy's influence?

Should we not see in the world today Christians who in all the features of their work are worthy of the name they bear? Who aspire to the doing of deeds worthy of valiant soldiers of the cross? We are living near the close of the great conflict, when many souls are to be rescued from the slavery of sin. We are living in a time when to Christ's followers the promise specially belongs: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end" (Matthew 28:20, KJV). He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, He who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, bids us let our light shine brightly before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. In such rich measure has light been given to God's people that Christ is justified in telling them that they are to be the light of the world. . . .

Work and Pray. Throughout our churches there is to be a reconversion and a reconsecration to service. Shall we not, in our work in the future and in the gatherings that we hold, be of *one accord*? Shall we not wrestle with God in prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit to come into every heart? The presence of Christ, manifest among us, would cure the leprosy of unbelief that has made our service so weak and inefficient. We need the breath of the divine life breathed into us. We are to be channels through which the Lord can send light and grace to the world. Backsliders are to be reclaimed. We are to put away our sins, by confession and repentance humbling our proud hearts before God. Floods of spiritual power are to be poured forth upon those prepared to receive it.

My dear brethren and sisters, I speak to you in words of love and tenderness. Arouse and consecrate yourselves unreservedly to the work of giving the light of truth for this time to those in darkness. Catch the spirit of the great Master Worker. Learn from the Friend of sinners how to minister to sin-sick souls. Remember that in the lives of His followers must be seen the same devotion, the same subjection to God's work, of every social claim, every earthly affection, that was seen in His life. God's claims must always be made paramount.

Christ's example is to inspire us to put forth unceasing effort for the good of others.

All Are Called. God calls upon every church member to enter His service. Truth that is not lived, that is not imparted to others, loses its life-giving power, its healing virtue. Everyone must learn to work and to stand in his place as a burden bearer. Every addition to the church should be one more agency for the carrying out of the great plan of redemption. The entire church, acting as one, blending in perfect union, is to be a living, active missionary agency, moved and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

It is not alone by men in high positions of responsibility, not alone by men holding positions on boards or committees, not alone by the managers of our sanitariums and publishing houses, that the work is to be done which will cause the earth to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. This work can be accomplished only by the whole church acting their part under the guidance and in the power of Christ.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8 pages 41-47. **E**

Ellen G. White was one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A prolific writer, she produced more than 100,000 pages by the time she died in 1915. Her work continues as a prophetic voice within the Adventist Church.

The Trinity—Heaven's First Family

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prayed for His earthly family, "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us" (John 17:21, NIV). And the Godhead joyfully accepts human hospitality: They will come in and make Their home with anyone who loves God (John 14:23). They invite us into Their circle of intimacy, and They welcome an invitation into ours.

Jesus' view of His family and of how He relates to it gives us insights into how to relate to our families—the home, the church, and the world. By becoming one with the heavenly Family and absorbing Their love, we learn to experience oneness with each other (John 17:21). We are able to love with Their love. And as this love from the heavenly Family permeates the human family, it leads the world to believe in Jesus (v. 21). **E**

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Put this information in your file. It may be useful to you in the future.

Helpful Suggestions

✦ *Prayer and Communion Emblems*

We read that it was the night in which He was betrayed, that great climactic night to which His whole life and service had been focused, the night of His humiliation and shame, that Jesus took bread and broke it. But He did not break it until He had given thanks.

Following His example, we too offer thanks.

This should not be a prayer asking the Lord to forgive our sins. He has already done that. The congregation that comes before the Lord is a cleansed congregation. If the preparatory service and everything that has led up to it is all it ought to be, the minister does not have to talk about sins now, but may thank God for a congregation cleansed from sin. Here we "come to meet with Christ. . . . [We] are not to stand in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light. . . . With hearts cleansed by Christ's most precious blood, in full consciousness of His presence, although unseen. . . . [we must]. . . hear His words, 'Peace I leave with you'" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 659).

There are two things this prayer should embrace: first, praise to God for His unspeakable gift, and second, the consecration of the emblem (bread or wine) to the service. That is the purpose of this prayer. It need not be long, but it should be a very deliberate prayer. Such a prayer calls for preparation.

✦ *The Physical Emblems*

The Lord's Supper was instituted on the night of the Passover, the feast when all the leaven was removed from the homes of Israel. Leaven, as we

know, is yeast, and yeast is made by fermentation. But fermentation is the result of death. Without death there could be no fermentation, and without fermentation we would not have what we know as leaven. But death is the result of sin. Nothing that reminds us of sin and death could rightly be an emblem of the spotless Son of God, because in Him was no sin. Therefore the bread is unleavened and the wine is unfermented.

Moreover, this symbolic bread is better if made from whole-wheat flour rather than from devitalized flour, which is the case when white flour is used. Yet any flour is the result of a crushing and bruising process by which the grain is made palatable to us. However, this crushing and bruising does not destroy the life element. So the life-giving element of Jesus, who referred to Himself as a corn of wheat that fell into the ground, was not destroyed by the crushing and bruising of the judgment hall and Calvary. Instead, we are assured that by His stripes we are healed.

Likewise the wine. It is not the whole grape, it is the crushed grape. So the Lord went through the breaking, bruising, crushing, sorrowing experience of Gethsemane and Calvary that He might give to us His life today. Nor does the crushing of the grape destroy its life-giving element. As with the wheat, so the grape also must be crushed.

Perhaps the nearest thing to human blood in the natural world is the unfermented juice of the grape. In some twenty minutes after the close of the service, the wine is actually assimilated into the life blood stream of the worshipers. It is perhaps the easiest of all foods

to digest. It passes more rapidly into the life-giving stream of the blood than any other food. It has been proved scientifically by medical scientists that you can actually, under some conditions, transfuse grape juice into the blood stream; there are some types of unfermented grape juice that are so close to the blood stream that they can actually mingle with it.

The Lord's table is an occasion when all barriers should be broken down. Racial barriers, social barriers, denominational barriers—everything that would separate us—must be broken down, because we are one in Christ Jesus.

✦ *Preparation for the Ordinances*

In the Adventist Church the ordinances are usually celebrated once each quarter. In spite of the fact that the service is always announced the week before, this announcement does not always register with everyone in the congregation.

Would it not be a good practice perhaps for one quarter each year to have a sermon on the meaning of the ordinances one week before they are celebrated? Invariably we tell our people—and rightly so—that the occasion of foot washing should be preceded by self-examination and a righting of any wrongs between members. But is this not rather short notice for those who have forgotten that this is the day for the ordinances? However, if all this is carefully brought out in a sermon a week earlier, and perhaps followed up with some personal work and visitation on the part of the pastor, it would seem that there is much more opportunity for intelligent spiritual preparation for the ordinances.

✦ *Pouring the Wine*

Perhaps other deaconesses have trouble, as we did, in pouring the wine for the ordinances. It is difficult not to spill it, and deaconesses do wish to do this sacred work nicely for the sake of Him who gave us the service. We found that a quart (or pint) ink bottle with the special cap for pouring is a great

help. Rarely does one spill a drop when using it. Ruth Moyer, Azusa, California

✦ *Communion Bread a Complete Symbol*

Many inquiries come to the Ministerial Association asking for a recipe for communion bread, and we are happy to supply this as a tried recipe. Communion bread is symbolic bread—therefore the ingredients should be such as can be a fitting symbol of the Lord's body. This recipe calls for whole-wheat flour. Ordinary white flour has actually been so prepared that the original life-giving element has been largely destroyed. This might well be a symbol of a denatured or a devitalized gospel. We need the whole grain to typify a complete Saviour. Some recipes suggest that cream or milk be used. This recipe calls for olive oil, where procurable. This oil, being a symbol of the Holy Spirit, has a definite place in this symbolic bread. In the ancient Hebrew service water and salt were prominent in the sacrificial offering, and Jesus mentioned them symbolically. All and only these ingredients are found in this recipe.

✦ *Communion Bread Recipe*

✦ *Ingredients:*

- 1 cup sifted fine-ground flour (preferably whole wheat)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- 1/4 cup olive or vegetable oil

✦ *Procedure:*

Sift the flour and salt together. Pour the water into the oil but do not stir. Add to the dry ingredients and mix with a fork until all the flour is dampened. Roll out between two sheets of waxed paper to the thickness of thick pie pastry. Place on an ungreased, floured baking sheet, and mark off with a sharp knife into bite-sized squares, being careful to prick each square to prevent blistering. Bake at 450° F for 10-15 minutes. Watch carefully during the last 5 minutes so that the bread will not burn. This recipe will be sufficient to serve about 50 persons.

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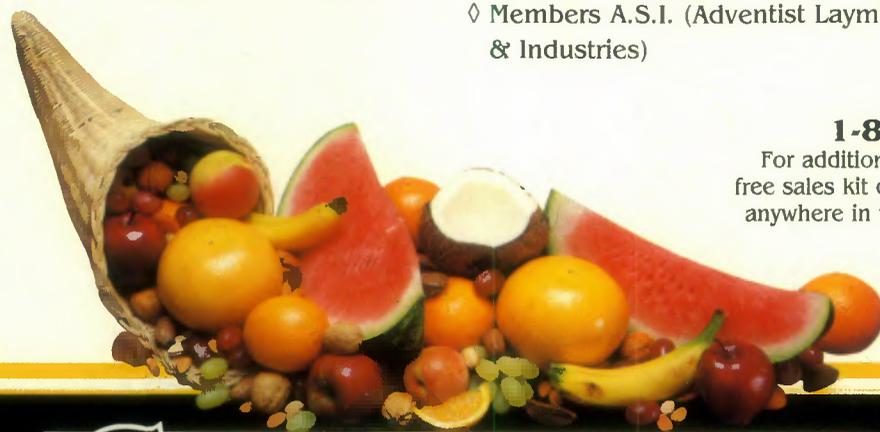
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