Historical Society Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society will be held at 1:30 p.m., Sunday, May 19, 1963, in the Seventh Day Baptist Building, 510 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, N. J. All members authorized under the by-laws have voting privileges, and all interested friends are cordially invited to join in the consideration of the Society's work.

— Albert N. Rogers, president.

Sacred Album Being Prepared

"Seventh Day Baptists Sing unto the Lord" is to be a high-quality disc recording of special music (mostly vocal) prepared at great pains and considerable expense as a project of the Radio and Television Committee of the Tract Board. It is designed primarily for private and group enjoyment and will be priced as low as professional production costs will allow.

Accessions

By Baptism: North Loup, Neb.

Kerry Fuller
Richard Fuller
Robert Fuller
Bernard Gene Keown
Colleen Keown
Darlene Lamela
Vicki Walkup
Allen Williams
Mildred Williams

By Profession: North Loup, Neb.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Walkup

Obituary


Mr. Bullock had for many years found his greatest pleasure and satisfaction in Christian work. He was active in the meetings of the Schenectady mission of the Berlin Seventh Day Baptist Church in the years before it was organized into a church. In more recent years he has devoted most of his time to distributing Seventh Day Baptist and other tracts, particularly on the railroad (where he was formerly employed). Witnessing to strangers and friends day and night hastened his death but satisfied his soul. Although not a member of the Berlin church (across the street from his home), he was active in its work and a strong supporter of local and denominational projects.

Mr. Bullock is survived by his wife, the former Mary E. Green; 2 daughters, Mrs. Beatrice Subt of Curamonga, Calif.; and Mrs. Janet Dickenson of Fayetteville, N. Y.; 2 sons, Robert of Columbus, O., and Delbert of Fayetteville; 2 sisters, Mrs. Van Houten and Mrs. Lilian Philips, both of Berwick, Pa.; and 11 grandchildren.

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“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20).

Paul reminds the Christians at Corinth, "Ye are Christ's" (1 Cor. 3: 23), and tells the Romans, "Whether we live or die we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14: 9).

We are HIS! "Bought with a price." The precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19). A slave could be released from bondage upon the payment of gold or silver. But these were not sufficient to effect freedom from the dominion and curse of sin. As the New English Bible translates it: "The price was paid in precious blood, the blood of Christ." The Lord Jesus declared His mission: "The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10: 45).

"Precious blood." Various translations are given: "valuable," "costly," "highly honored." Griffith Thomas comments: "Precious to the Father Who gave. Precious to the Son Who died. Precious to the Spirit Who applies. Precious to the believer who receives. Precious to all eternity to God's praise and glory." What a price!

"Redeemed." Loosed from the bondage of Satan, the sovereign of the kingdom of darkness, and from "the curse of the law," death, the penalty of sin. Satan is no longer our tyrannical ruler. Death no longer threatens. Even physical death has lost its sting and terror.

God, in His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, has done this for us. How our hearts go out to Him in love, "because he first loved us." Here is one of Paul’s "therefores." "Gloryfie God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Spoken gratitude, "the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13: 15) is not enough. It must be supplemented and proved by our living and our service.

We are admonished, "Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10: 31). The articles in this issue are designed to show how we can glorify God, because we are HIS!
Peace, an experience for which men and nations yearn, but all too seldom realize, is the gift of God to all who abide in God's will. Such peace can be gained only through accepting the authority of God in the affairs of the individual and of society.

Peace is Broken

In the beginning man was at peace with God. "And God saw everything (which included man) that he had made, and beheld it was very good" (Gen. 1: 31). That peace was broken when Adam rebelled against the authority of God in an effort toward self-realization and self-determination apart from the standpoint of God and between men

Strained relationships between men and God and between men and men, a resultant of rebellion, continued as mankind moved farther away from God into idolatry. On God's side wrath and condemnation justly rested upon man. On man's side was restlessness — individual and social. In one sense, God gave mankind up to the consequences of rebellion and warfare, so that freedom of choice to operate. On the other hand He set into motion a plan for reclaiming fallen mankind and achieving peace.

Throughout history a degree of peace was experienced by men and nations recognizing in measure the authority of God imposed by a right obedience according to the light of God's revelation of Himself to them.

Example of Perfect Peace

The coming of the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9: 6) was promised in the Old Testament. In the New Testament we find the record of Jesus, that Prince of Peace, who was in perfect peace with God. The testimony of the voice of heaven at the time of baptism (Mk. 1: 11), and later at the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9: 7), bore witness to the fact that every aspect of the life of Jesus met with God's approval. On the eve of the Cross, Jesus said, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name" (John 12: 27-28a). Thereupon the voice of God again spoke, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (v. 28b). The significance of these statements shows that amidst outward conflict there was inner peace and assurance because Jesus accepted God's authority for His life and mission, and He depended upon the spiritual resources available in God for facing the hour of special trial.

Basis for Re-established Peace

Since Jesus was Himself at peace with God, He could impart peace to others. He said to His disciples:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14: 27).

The peace that He gave is of higher quality than that of the world. The peace of the world is a shaky peace at best. Man's knowledge and power, although considered great, are incomplete. Man is unable to control all inner and outer aspects of his life or to govern the lives of others. For example, sickness, disaster, war and death constantly upset the equil­librium of the "self" and breaks the so-called peace.

Jesus was talking about an inward spiritual peace by a right relationship with God — a peace made possible through His death and resurrection. The mystery of the cross lies in the fact that God's wrath and condemnation, which had rested upon mankind because of sin and rebellion, was transferred to Christ. Christ's death and resurrection was God's answer to spiritual need. Peace between individual men and God is re-established by the believer's acceptance of Jesus as his personal sacrifice for sin.

John says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned" (Jn. 3: 18). Paul says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5: 1). Apart from the acceptance of Christ and His authority over individual lives and nations, there can be no lasting peace.

Peace Realized Through Faith and Obedience

But Christians often fail to realize the inner peace expected. The fault lies not with God, but in the continued failure of the Christian to achieve all that is made available in Jesus. Paul said to His disciples, "These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16: 33). Paul speaks in Ephesians 2: 14, "For he (Jesus) is our peace." In Romans 8: 6 we read: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

These verses all testify to the fact that the Christian must abide in Christ if he is to have peace. The Christian must recognize it is impossible to go along with the world (to be carnally minded) and enjoy at the same time the spiritual blessings made possible in Christ. The Christian can take hope in knowing that the Lord has overcome the world, and will do so in one's personal experience. He abides in Christ. Whenever the Christian realizes failure in some measure, when forgiveness is sought and restitution made, peace with God is restored. When inner peace is restored, it will be reflected in attitudes toward God and toward others. Christian love, as described in 1 Corin-
orward conflicts may occur, for his hope lies not in himself or in others, but in the ability of the Lord to overcome in His way and time even sin, death, and the grave (Rom. 8: 28, 31-39). Like Paul we can say, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 57).

Peace Realized

Though the peace felt by the Christian may not be constant during his earthly life, he can look forward to the time of perfect rest with the Lord. There is a future time promised when the believer will be removed from the weakness and failures of human flesh to dwell with God in His glory. What a wonderful day of rejoicing that will be for all who have accepted and followed Jesus! (Rev. 21: 1-5).

A CHRISTIAN WILL... 

Pray
He will make prayer a part of his everyday life, the source of his spiritual strength.

Read the Bible
By habit he will read God's Word and will strive to make it the chart and compass of his life.

Attend Church
He will be loyal to his church and attend regularly to worship God and to have fellowship with God's people.

Give
He will give as God has prospered him, making it one of his primary responsibilities to support the Church and the promotion of the Gospel.

Serve
He will serve Christ and His cause in every possible way, and witness by word and life constantly.

HE GIVETH MORE GRACE

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater. He sendeth more strength when the labors increase; To added affliction He addeth His mercy. To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His power no boundary known unto men; For out of His infinite riches in Jesus He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

— Annie Johnson Flint.

"The living faith of the dead becomes the dead faith of the living." (Kenneth Smith)

Some people use religion like a trolley car — they ride on it only when it is going their way. (Anon.)

"There are no hopeless situations; there are only men and women who have grown hopeless about them." (Anon.)

"Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, live like men, be strong! Let everything that you do be done in love" (2 Cor. 16: 13, 14, Phillips). Wisdom! Challenge! Contradiction — or just plain folly? And he (Jesus) spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18: 1). "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (verse 8b).

The words of the parable contained between the above statement of fact and the question at the close should give every child of God the assurance that he is on God's side and that the first quote from the pen of the Apostle Paul is true wisdom and a real challenge today as never before.

Prayer to most of us seems to be limited to specific needs, times, places or postures. Not so to the apostle, as he said, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5: 17). It is rather the attitude of life, well upping from deep within that draws strength from an infinite source rather than fainting at every trial or tribulation. It becomes a means to an abiding fellowship with and confidence in the Author of life itself. Thus we establish the connecting link of faith with the heroes of old and life's purpose becomes not our own, but God's.

"...He sendeth more strength when the labors increase; To added affliction He addeth His mercy, To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace." (verse 8b).

In Matthew 18: 3, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Here is humility at its best — willing to receive blessing and instruction alike. Then as He challenged the disciples in Matthew 5: 48, we find the following: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." One rendering of the word translated "perfect" that has come to my attention is "mature." Thus we find two attitudes represented by stages of life and the whole of life to be lived in between. How shall we live acceptably from the trusting prayer of childhood, "Now I lay me down to sleep" until the time to say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," unless our lives are rich in fellowship and faith? How much alike and yet so much to separate the two stages — all of life, for between or worse — of vanity or true value!

Yes, life must consist of fellowship in prayer from first to last, that we may realize that we are "not sufficient, as of ourselves," and so pray, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," until the victory in Christ is ours. As we utter our thanks for the joy of sins forgiven we are also made aware that we are not of the "world" and that we are kept from the evil of this present age by the power of the Father (Spirit). Read John chapter 17.

How great are our needs in this hour of materialism and confusion! Matthew 7: 7a, "Ask, and it shall be given you," is the promise of Jesus. And yet, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (verse 13). Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his com-
mandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 John 3:17, 22). Prayer keeps the heart in tune; and a heart in tune is one of our most powerful assets. Why should we neglect it and trust to our own understanding? Sickness, either of sin or affliction, says James, will yield to the “effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous” (5:13-16).

Christ, the sinless one, prayed at the tomb of Lazarus, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the multitude of the people he spake not plainly, but said, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; and I go to awaken him.” Such prayer is the gift of God as its broad sense: of which we believe, help thou our unbelief.”

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Follow Him where? Did you ever ask yourself that question? Don’t you suppose Peter and Andrew, James and John, asked it? And Jesus had an answer.

They were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was talking before them: “And as they went he said, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily.”

The bravest men will confess to pangs of fear when facing danger or death. We are all familiar with stories of men being decorated for bravery, who confessed that they had been “scared to death” when the crisis came. And what about martyrs of the faith? Do you suppose that John Rogers or Polycarp felt no fear when the flames began to leap up his cross? Did John James feel none when the horrible torture of his sentence was announced? Was Jesus Himself free from fear as He faced the cross? Read the story of Gethsemane: “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But there was not only an inner courage, there was power from above to overcome fear.

THE SABBATH RECORDER
"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

Who are His Witnesses?

All those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior are His witnesses, not only the pastor, deacons, missionaries, and Sabbath School teachers. We become witnesses by having the experiences described in John 3: 16, Acts 2: 38, or Romans 10: 9-10. Through repentance and the New Birth we are branches of the true Vine (John 15: 5).

Why Witness?

If we have really had this experience, we are anxious that others, too, should "... Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34: 8). So we witness that our fellow men may experience eternal life. Since Jesus commanded us to be His witnesses, we do so in obedience to Him. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15: 8).

What is Witnessing?

Christian witnessing means attesting to the reality of our New Life in Him; testifying to His saving and keeping power; the Gideons serving as a living proof of His power that we do, and all that we say. Unfortunately, we at times give a negative witness through carelessness or through not living close enough to the Lord.

How Can We Witness?

There are many ways of witnessing. On Sabbath morning one may stand on the steps of an active church and watch the witness of hundreds of people walking or riding to attend the services in order to be strengthened for further testimony. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10: 25). As we live the Word of God, we witness. The annual reports at the business meeting of a spiritually alive church serve as a witness of the activity and faithfulness of the church to the cause of Christ. The personal worker senses the duty at hand as a method of witnessing, whether it be shoveling a path through the snow for a disabled neighbor, running an errand, nursing the sick, visiting those in hospitals, homes, etc. For the church, the witness is meetings held by the Governors of the States of the Union at the time. Over one hundred thousand persons from the Cabinet, Congress, the Judiciary, the diplomatic corps, government agencies, and private life heard the effective prayers and a wonderful message by the Rev. Billy Graham about God's place in Government. He recited what happened to nation after nation that underestimated God's power and right to direct their actions in righteousness. The President and Vice-President also spoke. President Kennedy stressed the necessity of prayer for power equal to the tasks at hand.

Witnessing to the Unbeliever

Perhaps the most difficult type of witnessing is the actual testifying of our faith in the saving power of Christ. How does one start such a conversation? His witness will respect the Holy Spirit's leading and steps He should know the Scriptures concerning the need the unsaved has for salvation, know the Scriptures about God's willingness to give salvation and on how to receive salvation. He did so prayerfully seek an opening to converse with the one who needs salvation.

Witnessing to the Unsaved

Have you ever had a good morning to someone only to have him reply, "What's good about it?" Here is your opening. As a child of God you can tell him what is good about it and through Scripture lead him toward the Lord. This of course, should not be mechanical. Every "What's good about it?" should not bring a canned sermon. Be led by the Holy Spirit. Use verses on the blessings of God, on rejoicing and thankful-ness. A witness needs a sense of humor so he will not be offended by jabs and jeers if his message is not accepted. Give the Scripture with consideration and in the spirit of Christian love. Don't crush, but woow the Word. Knowing this, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5: 8). Be ready to stop before the saturation point is reached. A message can be given too much at one time, having confidence in the Holy Spirit who will lead the man to another witness if need be. Do not argue. Keep a kindly considerate attitude. Your Christian attitude will be remembered even though he forgets your message. Your feelings are not at stake; it's his soul.

Concluding Remarks

Since we recognize the Holy Spirit's part in our ministry of witnessing, we must spend much time alone with God and the open Bible. Suggestions for private devotions should be taken to heart and acted upon. We receive much power by agreeing in our prayers with others at family worship. As we pray for each other, or take another's burdens to the Throne of Grace, both they and we receive added power. To witness in our own strength without these spiritual aids would be pure egotism. Let us walk humbly with God. Without Him we can do nothing, and giving Him the praise for the results of our ministry as His Witnesses.

Free Tracts Offered

The Tract Society has both Gospel and Sabbath tracts. 'Change Your Mind,' a good tract to use if the one who is being visited is seeking the form. "What and Why Are Seventh Day Baptists?" 'What Membership Implications Are" informative. 'What the Bible Teaches' 'Pro and Con,' "What Is the Difference?" 'Lovest Thou Me?" give the Bible basis for and the motive for Sabbathkeeping. For any of these, and complete list, address S10 Watchung Ave., Plainfield, N. J.
Two of the most important questions asked of me at the time of my ordination into the Seventh Day ministry, were my belief in the Bible and why I became a Sabbathkeeper. Since I was a first-day minister for four years, I am frequently asked the latter question, especially by Sundaykeepers. How can a person teach something, and sincerely believe it, then suddenly for apparently no reason, begin to teach what he at one time had called "foolishness"?

To me the answer is very simple. Which is the more important, what I believe, or what the Bible teaches? This is the first question I had to answer for myself, a question that each individual must answer for himself at one time or another in his life.

I had been taught to believe, from a child, that Jesus arose on the first day of the week. The Scripture says that Jesus was already [Mark 16:9] as the women went to the tomb, "He is not here, for he is risen" (Matt. 28: 6). The angel of the Lord was definitely speaking in the past tense. It is almost invariable, taught that Jesus was crucified Friday evening and rose early in the morning of the first day. If this be true, then the Bible and the words of Christ are false. God forbid! Jesus said, speaking of His own body, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it" (John 2: 19). Again He said, "... and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matt. 12: 38-40). In order for the words of the Bible to be true, Jesus had to be in the tomb for three days and nights or seventy-two hours, not a day and a half or thirty-six hours.

I was taught to believe that the disciples were gathered in worship on the first day after the resurrection of Christ. The Scripture says that the disciples were gathered because they were afraid of the Jews (John 20: 19). If the disciples had believed that Jesus had risen and conquered death, they would not have feared death because they were followers of Christ. It was not until late that evening when Jesus appeared to them that any worshiping took place. Remember, not all the disciples believed that our Lord had risen.

According to those who keep Sunday, it is done as a memorial to the resurrection of Jesus. Our Lord established His own memorial. Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper we are reminded of His death. The Lord's Supper is to be observed in remembrance of His death, until that glorious day when He shall return (Matt. 26: 26-28; Luke 22: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 26). Further, according to Scripture, there is no mention made that God blessed the first day nor does He offer any blessing for its observance. "For where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4: 15b; 1 John 3: 4).

Why did I become a Sabbathkeeper? For the same reason I convinced so many Catholic people to leave Catholicism. I found myself the victim of false teaching. I was taught that it is an infraction and terrible sin to work on the first day of the week. The Scripture does say that we are not to work or to compel others to work on the seventh day of God (Ex. 20: 10, 11). There is no mention made that God blessed the first day nor does He offer any blessing for its observance.

Why did I become a Sabbathkeeper? For the same reason I convinced so many Catholic people to leave Catholicism. I found myself the victim of false teaching. There is no biblical backing for the change from the seventh-day Sabbath to the first day of the week as the Sabbath. Neither Jesus nor any of His disciples ever kept the first day of the week. There was no Sabbath that day. As such, we are not bound to the moral laws of God as long as we are not bound to the moral laws of God as long as we are not bound to the moral laws of God as long as we are not bound to the moral laws of God. The ten commandments are fixed. They are never to be changed or altered in any way. As Christians we are bound to the moral laws of God as long as we live on this earth. Why? Because the Sabbath is the more important, what I believe, or what the Bible teaches? This is the first question I had to answer for myself, a question that each individual must answer for himself at one time or another in his life.

I challenge my Sunday brothers. If we are not bound to the moral laws of God in saying that we are followers of Christ, why then did I teach, and why do they teach that it is against the Commandments of God to kill, steal, commit adultery, bear false witness? And above all, why do they teach that it is an infraction and terrible sin to work on the first day of the week? No penalty is provided for working on the first day of the week. The Scripture does say that we are not to work or to compel others to work on the seventh day of God (Ex. 20: 10, 11). There is no mention made that God blessed the first day nor does He offer any blessing for its observance. "For where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4: 15b; 1 John 3: 4).

SABBATH BRIEFS

Gleaned from Here and There

God specified a certain day, the seventh, to be kept holy. He instituted the week of seven days to keep the Sabbath before man, for the weekly cycle has never been broken. There have been calendar changes, to be sure, but they have affected only the days of the week and not the cycle of the week. Our Sabbath is the same seventh day that Jesus and the apostles kept, and coincides with the seventh day of the Jewish calendar which is over five millennia old.

A group of Juniors was asked, "How do you know that Saturday is the seventh day?" One little fellow blurted out, "Look at your calendar!"

As soon as we realize that the Sabbath is the Lord's Day, most of the questions about it will be settled. Ask yourself, "Is this my work or the Lord's?" Jesus, "as his custom was," spent the Sabbath in worship, teaching, and serving. It is a day for us to do the things we don't have time to do (or think we don't) during the week.

Sabbathkeeping is not a substitute for faith in Christ; it is the natural expression of our faith and love.

The danger to the Sabbath springs from the thoughtlessness that makes physical recreation and material gain the supreme ends in life.

Your attitude toward the Sabbath shows your attitude toward God who instituted it and toward Jesus Christ, who is the Lord.

If you say, "All time is holy," be sure to carry the sanctity of the Sabbath into all the days, and not the profanity of all the days into the Sabbath.

In a life of "threescore years and ten" there are ten years of Sabbaths. How will you spend ten years of your life? As God intended, or for your own pleasure?
A question that should be asked by everyone is: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" If it is asked in all sincerity, the answer will come as surely as it did to the Apostle Paul when he asked this question. "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9: 6). We need to surrender our lives to Him to be used as He directs. Therefore, in sincerity, and probably do, insert our own desires or actions in service to the Lord. When we surrender our lives to God, we yield our will completely. "Not my will, but Thine, be done."  

The Lord said, Arise. Be above the normal conditions. Consecrate your lives thoroughly to Him. He did not call us to remain the same as we are, but to be different, to be an example of Him. Have you given yourself to be His in a life of service?  

Go into the city. Seek the people who are living in a pretentious attitude of service for God. Be an example before them that they may know God's plan for people.  

It shall be told thee what thou must do. When we obey the directions of the Lord, we follow closer to the leading of His Spirit and know and understand what He wants us to do. "He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words; keep my commandments, and live" (Prov. 4: 4). Many have failed in their service because they did not depend upon the leading of the Holy Spirit. They trusted in their own ability. Our ways are not God's ways nor our thoughts His. We should willingly serve according to His directions wherever and whatever it may be.  

It is only in Christ that we live and move and have our being (Acts 17: 28). If we are Christians, we are dead to ourselves and alive unto God. Paul wrote, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2: 20). We cannot serve God with this unity of spirit while we are in our old state of being. God has made a new and lasting covenant with us that we should not serve in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of spirit. We must experience the "born again" condition about which Christ told Nicodemus. One false hope commonly accepted is that God will accept us if we do the best we can. This is not scriptural! If God would accept us for the best we could do, we would not need to have the indwelling power to make us different from our old sinful selves. It is needful for us to have the Holy Spirit within us.  

"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3: 24). If we consecrate our lives to Him in service we shall receive that reward. In John 10: 15 He has promised those who are faithful in His service. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 8).  

Having many promises of a reward to those who are faithfully His in a life of service, may we examine ourselves carefully to see if we are falling short of His call. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20: 32).  

The week is an arbitrary division of time, established as a memorial to God's creation rest. He "sanctified" the seventh day, i.e., set it apart from the other days for religious purposes, thus making it holy. He "blessed" the seventh day, putting His presence into it in a special way.  

Note that it was the day which God blessed and sanctified, not the institution. The sanctifying of the seventh day made the institution of the Sabbath.  

God made the observance of the Sabbath one of the Ten Commandments, one of the basic principles of righteousness. It is on a par with the other nine. It is just as imperative that we keep the Sabbath holy as that we refrain from murder or idolatry.  

The Sabbath is to be kept in all seasons, even the busiest. It is not just a matter of convenience. God considers it more important than material gain (Ex. 34: 2). Sabbath desecration was so iniquitous that it carried the death penalty.  

Sabbath desecration brought trouble to Israel. It was linked with spiritual death. In turning from the true God to Baal, they turned from God's Sabbath to Baal's day. For seventy years they were in captivity and their lay waste; because God considered His holy day more sacred than city and temple and worshipers where His Sabbath was not hallowed. The cause of the captivity was Sabbath desecration.  

The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people. It is a sign of separation. We have been "set apart." God has redeemed us from the bondage of sin and Satan as He delivered Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh and Egypt. We should keep the Sabbath holy in gratitude for our deliverance and setting apart.  

God warns against formality of Sabbath observance. Just observing the Sabbath while neglecting other matters of Christian living is not enough. Jesus' teaching was along the same line (Isa. 1: 13; Amos 8: 4, 5).  

Our Lord emphasized the Sabbath both in His example and in His teaching. He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath "as his custom was." Note how much of His teaching is concerned with proper Sabbath observance (Mark 2: 27, 28; Luke 4: 16).  

A special blessing is promised for Sabbath observance. We find the highest standard of observance connected with this promise. The Lord desires the observance of the Sabbath as we honor His Lord by honoring His Day (Isa. 58: 13, 14).  

Too many people consider the Sabbath truth as an issue between them and people who hold other religious views rather than as an issue between the individual and God. We cannot desecrate the Sabbath by using it for our own purposes without suffering spiritual loss.  

God says, "O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever" (Deut. 5: 29).  

Keep holy the Lord's day — and use it the Lord's way.
How tangled the affairs of this world are! Never before, it seems, was it so full of suspicion and greed, of violence and crime. Peace parleys, summit conferences, pacifist propaganda, the United Nations and all other agencies fail to prevent war. "Wars and rumors of wars" encircle the globe. There is the continual threat of World War 3 — not idle talk, either. Civilization seems on the verge of destroying itself. Reformers are despondent and statesmen are despairing. A pall of hopelessness hangs over the earth.

Yet there is hope! The world needs to know that "this same Jesus" is coming again to set up a kingdom of righteousness on this earth, a kingdom of peace and joy. "The Lord Himself shall descend" — in His own majestic person. When He ascends His throne and takes up the reins of government, all of the problems of mankind will be solved: social injustice, racial prejudice, poverty, crime, and all the rest. Then "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Then we will not fear to go anywhere we please in the darkness, and will not need to lock our doors, nor put our valuables in vaults for safekeeping.

It is hard to understand the dread and terror some Christians seem to have when they contemplate the second coming, or why they have a distaste for it, and shrink from discussion of it. It is the holy hope of the world!

Oh yes, it will be a time of judgment — but not for believers! If you tremble at the thought of His return, could it be that you have not received Him as your crucified Savior and your risen Lord? It will be a time of terror for unbelievers, for those who have rejected Him, for those who have more or less politely bowed Him out of the picture, but to Christians it is a "blessed hope." In writing about the Lord's coming to receive His own unto Himself, Paul says, "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

We are living in troublous times, and darker and more perilous times seem to loom ahead. But back of all this is the figure of the coming King, whose victory is as certain as the word of God. This hope steadies, encourages, comforts us.

Yes, Jesus is coming to earth again. The royal Son of God, who came the first time to die on Calvary to make atonement for our sins, who lives and dwells within the hearts of Christians as the dynamic for living, is one day coming to reign in glorious majesty. Handel caught the vision when he used Revelation 12:15 in closing the "Messiah": "The kingdoms of this earth are become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of kings and Lord of lords! Hallelujah!"

When Jesus was here on earth talking about His return, He said to His followers, "Watch therefore for ye know not the day nor the hour when your Lord will come." True watching is an attitude of mind and heart which would joyfully turn from any occupation to meet our beloved Savior, exclaiming, "This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. 25:9). There is a beautiful phrase in 2 Timothy 4:8 which speaks of those "that love His appearing."

The outlook does, indeed, seem hopeless. But praise the Lord for the hope of His sure return — THAT BLESSED HOPE!