

* Early draft of an unpublished biography of
Pastor A. H. Piper

CALLED TO THE HIGHEST SERVICE

BY

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CALLED TO THE HIGHEST SERVICE

A LIFE STORY OF
ALBERT HENRY PIPER, 1875-1956,
PIONEER MISSIONARY TO THE PACIFIC,
AUSTRALASIAN LINK WITH THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY,
MAN OF FAITH AND COURAGE

BY

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Called to the Highest service is by the author of:

* *A Million Times Glad*, Review and Herald, 1970,

* *Tell Me About Ellen White*, Review and Herald, 1975.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have discovered that writing a biography resembles the assembling of a jig-saw puzzle, for there is the same sorting of colors and linking and relinking of pieces.

I have also discovered a difference, for the final picture of a jig-saw is rigidly pre-determined and settled, but not so with a biography. Its shape and emphasis are determined by the way the author selects and joins available pieces of information.

This portrait is the result of thirteen years of collecting and critically evaluating biographical data about Albert Henry Piper, first missionary from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australasia to go to the Pacific Islands; herald of a long and courageous tradition. He is also remembered as an efficient administrator during the depression years of the 1930's and, in particular, as "The Australasian Link with the Spirit of Prophecy." (1)

Unknowingly, I began to collect fragments for this portrait in 1949 when I was an Avondale student. It was not until 1971, however, that I wrote about him in response to Elder Kenneth Wood's request for a contribution to the *Review and Herald* series, "The Most Unforgettable Adventist I Ever Knew." (2) At that time, response from readers and relatives about this deeply spiritual and charismatic figure, plus my own steady conviction that his life story should be recorded as a part of church history, urged me on.

During the years key contributors have died: Mrs Nellie Piper, Pastor Ben McMahon,

(1) See Appendix A. Letter written by Pastor L.C. Naden, who served as Secretary, President and Field Secretary of the S.D.A. Church in Australasia.

(2) Marye Trim, "The Australasian Link with the Spirit of Prophecy," *Review and Herald*, September 21, 1972.

Dr W.G.C.Murdoch, Pastor L.C.Naden, Pastor George Sterling, Pastor A.G.Stewart and Pastor W.G.Turner.

I am especially indebted to relatives of A.H.Piper who shared freely with me: Pastor and Mrs Frank Breden, Mr and Mrs Laurence Piper, Dr Athol Piper, Mrs Mabel White, Mrs Amy Williams and Mr and Mrs Dalton Veitch. I value Clarice Breden's assurance of trust, believing I would show with sensitivity how "all things worked together for good."

I am also grateful for the assistance given by Dr Arthur Patrick, Mrs Eleanor Scale and Mr Brian Townend of the Ellen G.White Research Centre at Avondale, for the use of the centre's resources. They also gave me access to A.H.Piper's personal papers.

To the Ellen G.White Estate, Washington, I am indebted for manuscript release # 952.

In addition, I acknowledge the perceptive and informative contributions of Pastor and Mrs L.Coombe, Pastor L.Gilmore, Miss Marjory Grieve, Pastor D.Jenkins, Pastor E.J.Johanson, Mrs M.O.Knight, Dr Ron Knight, Pastor E.L.Minchin, Pastor Robert Parr and Dr A.K.Tulloch, as well as many others.

My cousin, Jean Sceats of Christchurch, New Zealand, researched the Piper genealogy in New Zealand archives, and contributed valuable history of early Canterbury.

The verse from "The Long Harbour" is by Mary Ursula Bethel and is published in *Collected Poems*, from Caxton Press, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1950. I believe it suits the mood I wanted to convey, and, furthermore, focuses where the story began.

A.H. Piper's sermons that are quoted come directly from his notes. I found that reading and handling this material became a moving and spiritual experience, so imbued were they with faith, courage in the Lord and Holy Spirit power.

My daughter, Elisabeth Carol, assisted with typing the manuscript, while my husband encouraged me during the long process.

Te Deum Laudamus!

-- The Author.

FOREWORD

In *Called to the Highest Service* Marye Trim writes with serious purpose and considerable skill about one of the most fascinating figures in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australasia.

Albert Piper touched many who still remember him with affection. As a theological student at Avondale College and later as a young minister, I remember his pleasant, resonant voice with the soft, not quite w-sounding *rs*. How we tried to imitate the tone and this peculiarity!

He entered my life in another way. Marye Trim describes in some detail the great revival that swept through Adventism in 1939. It found me as a lad in the Tasmanian campmeeting of that year. In the fallout of that remarkable Spirit-inspired event, I gave my heart to the Lord and was baptized. A whole generation of young people with an age spread of twenty years felt the influence of the revival Albert Piper encouraged, protected and shared.

To assess the influence of this remarkable man one must examine a number of areas of Adventist development. His courageous and positive approach set the tone for many young preachers and lives on in them even today. His island field work left its stamp on more than one developing church community in the South Pacific.

But perhaps the most important contribution of all emerged in the strong positive attitude toward the writings of Ellen White that dominates the thinking of my generation and many who have followed after. Undoubtedly he was the most influential figure in building confidence in the writings of the messenger of the Lord that the church "down under" has known. As one of only two or three long-lived individuals who carried personal memories of the servant of the Lord, he was able to bring thousands of Adventists back into

the teachings, the style and even the homelife of Mrs White.

He ought to be read about. He ought to be part of the history and story on which the church builds its future.

For several years I felt his influence in yet another way. Clarice Breden, his tall and gracious daughter, was "pastor's wife" to me as I struggled to find my way through the first years of ministry.

Marye Trim has done us all a service by writing this book. I read it through without pause, or desire to pause, on a flight from Australia to New Zealand. You will feel the same way about the book. At the end of the story you will feel good about the life you have surveyed, about how God can take a dedicated talent, and about the church that produced such individuals and gives them leadership roles.

Had I been writing the book I might have been tempted to use another title. Perhaps that is because of the memories I have of this elderly, kind and gentlemanly church statesman who left indelibly on my mind the words, "Courage in the Lord." It would make a fine title. But Marye has said it better, for Albert Piper himself would have wanted us to know that ministry took second place to nothing. For him and the church he served it was the "highest service"; to be called to it a lifelong delight; to prove it with his Lord a never-ending source of joy.

As the book tells us again and again, he loved people and people loved him. That not only speaks of personal qualities, but also shows how closely he followed Christ, and how much of the Spirit of Christ entered his life.

Walter R.L. Scragg.

CHAPTER 1 A BLOOD-STAINED BIBLE

Spring, 1896

A north-easterly wind whipped waves about the New Zealand inter-island steamer, *S.S. Rotomohana* and rippled a young man's hair as he strode onto deck. Al, as we shall call him for the present, stood tall at the deck-rail in the half-light of early morning, straining to discern land off starboard. His blue-grey eyes watched with interest as the vessel left open sea behind and, gradually turning, began to plough a channel between cliffs toward the east coast port of Lyttelton.

Screeching sea-gulls swooped over the steamer as they had done at Wellington harbor the previous evening. Their flight blurred with the memory of the parting scene at the docks.

"Are you sure you want to do this --to go to a sheep station in the South Island?" His mother's concern for her twenty-one years old son had surfaced at departure time.

His father had spoken brusquely. "Now, now, Mother, he'll be all right! Your relations will welcome him like a prodigal, so don't you worry! Anyway, he'll be back in a few weeks, rushing off to the government office every morning."

"Of course!" Al remembered himself replying. "I'm proud to work in the Public Service."

A crew member hurried by, disturbing Al's thoughts at the deck-rail. "G'Mornin, Sir. Soon be in port, Sir."

Al nodded while gazing out at the bays and islands within the ancient crater walls of Lyttelton harbor. He recalled how his father

had seen this sight when he was ten years old, after travelling with Al's grandparents aboard the *Strathallan* from England. That was nearly forty years previously after a one hundred and ten days journey -- not a mere overnight trip from the North Island as Al's had been. Al tried to picture his father as a boy, standing on deck, seeing the sight his own eyes now beheld...

The steamer inched into dock. Al found himself straining to catch sight of a familiar face on shore or to recognize a voice. Then he shrugged, smiling at his foolishness. He was no ten-year-old with a father's hand to hold. Rather, he was a man with a special quest.

The evening of that same day, Al left the Christchurch to Dunedin train at a country station called by the Maori name, *Waimate*. On the lantern-lit platform his Uncle Tom met him.

"That you, Al? Good to see you again! It's been a long time since Mary moved to the North Island. You were just a little chap then, in a sailor suit, I recall. Well, you've grown into a tall man and I'm glad to have your help at shearing time."

At the waiting buggy the brown mare's breath fanned out like frost in the light of the lantern.

"You'll be finding it cooler down here. The Southern Alps never lose their snow, you know. And we've had some late falls on the foot hills. Could do without it at shearing time!"

Al's uncle continued to talk as the buggy turned onto a narrow dirt track. "How did you enjoy our new train contraption, eh? It's going to make a difference to these parts --open up the country. Gedup there, Bertha!

"Now tell me about your mother. Last few letters we've had she's talked about some new American religion. Wanted to convert the wife and me!" He laughed, then went on talking when Al did not reply.

"And your father? Managing his affairs better these days? Keeping off the --er, and what does he think about this new religion? Very sensible of you to get away from it all for awhile. Gedup there!"

Al made an obscure reply, peering out into darkness that lined the route. Eerily overhanging branches, the steel-sharp thrust of icy air and the jolting of the buggy as it went forward into what seemed like an abyss of blackness, filled him with foreboding.

For a time they rode without conversation, the only clear sounds being the echoes of the horse's hooves. Eventually his uncle said, "You'll see the homestead lights when we go over the next rise. Busy day tomorrow. I'm planning to use you as a baghand. First time, eh?"

"Yes, first time. I'll do my best."

After Al had greeted his aunt and drunk a cup of hot sweet tea in the farm-house kitchen, his uncle led him by lantern light to a one roomed cabin that was set by a grove of trees not far from the house. "You really should be sleeping in the house. Your aunt is quite upset about it. You're welcome, you know."

Al shook his head. "No, Uncle. I appreciate your kindness but I'd prefer to be treated as one of the station hands."

"A no-frills holiday, eh? Well, if you insist. But you'll find it a different life from your posh government job up in Wellington."

Al followed his uncle into the cabin, noting the empty bed where he would sleep. His uncle had already told him he would be sharing the cabin with Robbie, a Scottish shepherd.

Robbie snored on as Al said goodnight to his uncle on the cabin steps. The Southern Cross hung low in the sky overhead, its two silver pointers gleaming. Almost within reach swirled the diaphanous splendour of the Milky-Way. A Mopoke called and an answer echoed from the near hills. Al closed the cabin door and prepared for bed.

"Wha--What's that?" Minutes later, or so it seemed, Al woke with a start.

"Good mornin to ye!" Robbie, a red-whisked mouse of a man spoke from the bed in the opposite corner as he tugged on a boot.

Al blinked, struggling to identify his surroundings. "Oh! Is it morning already?"

Now the two men studied each other. Al noted an older man than himself who stared with piercing eyes from a weather-beaten face.

"Know any about sheep?"

"Not much. I work in a Wellington office, but I needed to get away..."

"That I understand," said Robbie, pulling on a woollen coat. "Be ye ready for breakfast?"

"Nearly." Al was already pulling on his shirt. He poured icy cold water from a jug on the chest by his bed, then quickly splashed his face and hair. Robbie waited.

Outside the cabin three Collie dogs, their sable coats damp with frost, came bounding toward the men as they walked toward the homestead.

"Gedown! Heel! Good dogs!" Robbie commented to Al, "Not used to strangers here. Except for shearing time it's very quiet. That's when you hear the ghosts -- especially Jamie Mackenzie's ghost and his collie they hung for a witch."

Al looked over curiously at Robbie before stepping into the welcoming warmth of the farm kitchen.

Breakfast over, it was time to be initiated into the work of a baghand. As he had promised, he did his best, working hard all day at bagging fleeces while hating the frantic bleating of sheep, the itinerant shearers' oaths and the odour of blood and sweat. Sensing his discomfort, one of the shearers enjoyed telling a story about finding dead lambs in a gully ; graphically portraying how parrots had sunk their hooked bills into the lambs' backs and devoured their livers.

The following days passed in a blurr of bags and fleeces, blood and bleating lambs. No time to remember the quest that had driven him to this place.

Only on Sunday came respite when Al attended the Presbyterian Church at *Waimate* with his relatives. Tuned to the season of the year, the minister spoke of Moses who had cared for sheep for forty years while God prepared him for his life's work. He likened sheep to people, often bleating, always needed a shepherd --stubborn sheep!

Voices echoed in Al's mind. His mother's, then his own. *"No, Mother, NO! Thank you for the invitation but I am very happy with my friends at the Petone Presbyterian Church."*

Now Nina's voice intruded. *"And I know the reason why!"* She had added a teasing smile to her words.

Well, it was true that there was a special young lady there. But it was more than that. He chose to go to the Presbyterian Church because it was traditional and... RESPECTABLE, that was it... If his sister chose to go with his mother, that was her business!

As the minister spoke on, a picture flashed into Al's mind. He saw himself, immaculate in his white tennis flannels, carefully avoiding the family sitting room where he knew his mother entertained an elderly American lady. But the guest had met him anyway. She enquired pleasantly, "Where are you going, young man?"

Al had made his tennis raquet conspicuous. Surely, if Mrs White was a prophet, as his mother insisted, she could prophesy that much!

Then Al remembered how she had talked with him --about his pleasure in tennis, his work in the Stamp and Deeds Department of the Public Service and his involvement with the Petone Presbyterians. Before they parted she had spoken the words that nothing could erase from his memory: *"I can see that you will preach the gospel of Christ's second coming."*

Back in the shearing shed on Monday morning, the words intruded again as he worked, mingling with the *Waimate* preacher's concern for sheep that needed a shepherd. The problem that had driven him to this place would not be dismissed.

Robbie saw him reading his Bible and praying beside his bed. "Ask the Spirits to help ye, Mon," he urged. "Ask the Spirits..." But there was madness in his eyes.

Eventually the shearing was finished. Now the shearing team had boiled its last billy of tea and eaten the last of Al's aunt's great cooking -- date scones, pikelets with cream and raspberry jam, and thick steak or apple pies. Now Robbie's dogs panted in the shade, satisfied that the muster was finished. The windows of the shearing shed were shuttered.

Robbie saddled his horse and galloped away. Al noted his intention to go rabbiting by the shotgun in his saddle bag. It gave him the chance to have have the cabin to himself where he rinsed out some socks and read his Bible. He left it open on his bed.

Late that evening, after visiting some distant neighbours with his uncle and aunt, Al returned to the cabin, contemplating his return trip to Wellington on the following day. His problem was still unresolved although he had pleaded with God to guide him.

It was dark and quiet at the cabin. No mice or opossums scuttled on the roof. No candle glowed inside. Al turned the handle of the cabin door.

"What's up? Has Robbie locked it?"

Al fumbled under rocks about the door then searched along the window sill. No key. He called, "Robbie, are you there?"

A fading star swept an arc across the sky before falling amid the grove of trees closeby.

Now with force Al pushed at the door. Suddenly it shuddered open, thrusting Al forward past his bed.

As he jolted himself to a halt, he knew that something was terribly wrong. He smelt a dull stench that resembled a blend of wine and gunpowder. He fumbled for a candle and match.

There in the sombre shadows of candle light he saw Robbie's eyes, bulging and glassy beneath a shattered skull. Robbie the shepherd's life was ended; finished by his own hand. The gun lay across his sprawled body.

And over on Al's bed lay the still open Bible, spattered with brain tissue while a crimson stain soaked through its pages.

Over at the homestead, Al sat in shock and horror. He felt numb with cold despite glowing logs in the fireplace. He held his head in his hands, gazing at the embers.

Early in the morning as a night bird hooted at the first glow of dawn and roosters stirred, Al came to himself, clear thinking and perceptive. He believed that God was calling him, Albert Piper, through the events of the sad night, God was calling him to choose faith and peace of mind rather than the despair to which poor Robbie had fallen. Jesus, who died for Albert Piper, reminded him of this through the blood-stained Bible.

Like the prodigal son who planned a speech for his return home, Al planned to tell his mother, "I am willing, now, to study the new Bible truths that you believe and understand."

CHAPTER 2 SHIP AHOY TO NEW ZEALAND

On the twenty-first day of January, 1859, the 550 ton sailing ship *Strathallan* arrived at Lyttelton via Timaru from London. There were 259 assisted emigrants aboard, keen to settle in the young colony of New Zealand. Half of the passengers landed at Timaru and the remainder travelled on to Lyttelton, near Christchurch.

Among those who disembarked at Timaru was the Piper family from Middlesex. The father, thirty-four years old Joseph, was a tin plate worker, according to the ship's legend. With him were his wife, Julia, aged thirty-eight years and their children, Joseph, aged ten years, John, eight years old, their one daughter, Julia, aged six, and a baby son, Charles Albert, one year old. Henry Piper, who had migrated in one of the early ships to the Canterbury Plains settlement -- the *Samarang* in 1852 -- welcomed them to their new home.

The eldest son, Joseph, grew up to follow his father's trade. By the age of twenty-four, he earned a good living as a copper smith and owned a plumbing shop in Castle Street, Christchurch. So fine was his craftsmanship that he won medals and awards at the Dunedin Exhibition. A handsome man, six feet tall, with light brown hair that he parted down the middle, he wore a handle-bar moustache and a tidy beard. He sang in the Durham Street Methodist Choir in Christchurch.

Over in the contralto section of the choir sang Miss Mary Kingsbury. With her family she had felt the thrill of Ship Ahoy, being bound to New Zealand, when she had come as a child from her home in Somersetshire. She had disembarked at Lyttelton, walking over the Bridle Track to Rangiora on the north Canterbury Plains. One of nineteen children, she had been trained to keep house efficiently and, at eighteen years of age, was widely

recognized as a young lady of integrity. She did not turn her head if a young man whistled or winked his eye. She never fluttered her eyelids coquettishly or revealed the lace of her long petticoat. Conscientious and thorough in her responsibilities, she worked in a doctor's household.

One evening after choir practice, Joseph Piper offered to escort Mary Kingsbury and her sister to their home. Thus began a courtship that culminated in the marriage of Joseph and Mary in 1873.

Their wedding, held in the village of Cust, was a festive occasion with relatives and friends present from all over the province. When all the speeches had been said, while the guests went on dancing and feasting, Mary and Joseph travelled fifteen miles by horse-drawn sulky to Rangiora for their honeymoon.

After the honeymoon Mary took up housekeeping in her own two-story home in Peterborough Street, Sydenham, an early borough of Christchurch. About two hundred yards from the river Avon, it was near enough to the Cathedral Square to hear the peel of church bells. Not far away was Piper's Road, named after another relative, "Whistling Piper", a timber merchant. Over at Jackson's Creeks were old clay pits called Piper's clay pits where they deposited rubbish.

Mary fixed her house so that it looked cosy and welcoming. She set out an embroidered white cloth on the mahogany table in the sitting room, and a frilled lace doily she had crocheted herself under the shiny green aspidistra in the hall. She polished the furniture and filled vases with Sweet Williams and ferns.

In the kitchen she preserved apples and peaches and boiled up chutneys and jams. She kept the cake tin filled with Joseph's favourites, especially shortbread from a Kingsbury family recipe.

Out in the yard there was an excellent supply of artesian water, and she used peat for fuel. She raised her own poultry, bought milk from a neighbour's cow, and bought flour from Wood's Mill in Windmill Road.

On Sundays, she and Joseph continued to worship at the Durham Street Methodist Church.

After a time Mary began to stitch tiny white garments and to knit a baby's shawl. Her figure filled out and her eyes shone with expectancy.

When Mary woke on the twenty-first day of February in the year 1875, her body signalled to her that this was to be an eventful day. For some hours she kept busy at sweeping, dusting, washing and ironing. She watered the Sweet Williams and Marigolds, filled the hens' dishes with water and corn, then retired to her bed.

By evening a baby's cry confirmed that the day was indeed an eventful one. Joseph rushed to the upstairs bedroom.

"A boy," the midwife told him. "No, you may NOT see your wife."

While celebrating with relatives downstairs, Joseph heard a a shrill cry. He put down his glass of Port and started upstairs. What was wrong with his son?

Mary's sister met him. "Joseph, you have twin sons! How wonderful!"

Joseph clutched at the bannister. "Twins? And how is Mary?"

"Mary needs to rest. So do the babies, especially the second little one."

Within a month Mary was strong and busy again. The first-born progressed well, surveying the world with wondering blue-grey eyes and showing special interest in meal times. The younger twin struggled to survive --and lost. Mary and Joseph wept for the loss of tiny Joseph Aldabert, but not openly for long because they had the older twin

flourishing before their eyes.

On April 4, 1875, Mary dressed the surviving twin in the Kingsbury christening gown and he received the rite of baptism by sprinkling. He was named Albert Henry Piper. As a chubby-cheeked toddler he called himself "Al" or "Aldabert."

Eighteen months after the birth of the twins, a daughter was born to Mary and Joseph. They named her Nina Marion.

Two years later, Albert and Nina were joined by Wensley¹ Joseph and in the years 1880 and 1882 two more boys were born, Reginald Kingsbury and Harold Edgar.

As Mary looked at her five children in the evenings when they were all scrubbed, ready for bed, they looked like little angels to her eyes and she reaffirmed her determination to train them well. She wondered if she could possibly know more happiness than this -- a caring husband, a comfortable home and five loving children. Her eyes lingered over Albert, her eldest. Did she only imagine a special purpose for his life?

Busy days turned into busy weeks and months as Mary worked hard to keep her home and family in perfect order. She scrubbed dresses and pinafores, shirts and sailor suits by hand on her washboard until they were spotless, then dipped them in boiled starch and hung them in the wind to dry. In the summer months when nor'westers hurtled over the plains, her washing dried easily. In the freezing months of winter when the Southern Alps stood like white-bearded patriarchs in the distance, she hung the wet clothes about an ever-blazing fire in the kitchen.

She provided a nourishing table -- fish from the fish barrow man, apples from relatives at Rangiora, eggs from her own hens, vegetables from the back garden plot... With flour and sugar from the Sydenham grocer, plus dripping from the Sunday joint of mutton, she baked cakes or biscuits, sometimes adding a handful of black raisens

¹ Mary's mother had been a Miss Wensley before marriage.

that had come all the way from California.

Thus the children grew up, clean, well-fed, well-clothed, well-disciplined and cherished. In keeping with Victorian philosophy, both Mary and Joseph believed that "children should be seen and not heard" and that to "spare the rod was to spoil the child."

Added to this home education was the influence of the church which the family attended every Sunday. On Sunday afternoons they sometimes walked beside the Avon River to feed ducklings or to feast their eyes on golden-trumpeted daffodils, growing wild in Spring. But Sunday was always a day of rest and worship; for holy books and quiet demeanour.

Gradually a shadow darkened this perfect scene because of Joseph. He grew too fond of the social "glass" and gambling. Then his business suffered. As a result he grew short-tempered and severe with his wife and children.

The boys particularly felt his wrath when he discovered their two temptations. First of all he found that they were stealing honey by the handful from a large tin of honey that was stored half-way up the stairs on the landing. It was so easy to have a taste as one passed by!

In response to punishment they promised to be good --promised most earnestly. They forgot, however, that evening when the tall peach-covered tree outside their bedroom window enticed them out onto its branches. What fun to eat and slide down its stout branches! Joseph did NOT approve. Neither did Mary.

Both Mary and Joseph felt pride in Albert when he became a choir boy in the Christchurch Cathedral choir. Albert liked it, too - the slow, singing procession, the surplice and ceremony and the representations of the first four ships that brought pioneer families to Canterbury, carved on the floor of the choir and sanctuary. As he sang

or listened to the sermons preached in that fine stone cathedral, he absorbed further the language and concepts of the Bible.

Joseph rarely demonstrated affection for any of his children. One Sunday afternoon, however, he revealed it in a memorable way.

"An abscess in the ear," diagnosed the family physician after he had examined Albert who lay in bed with high fever. "I will give him morphine but you must see he has absolute quietness. The lad is very ill."

Joseph escorted the doctor to the gate. There his ears caught the sound of marching feet and tinkling tambourines. He stared as the local Salvation Army band and its followers formed a circle of witness at the end of his street.

Then the band began to play: trumpets, trombones, cornets, kettle-drums and big bass drum. *Dumetty-dum-daaa; loometty-loom-looooo!* Altogether now in enthusiastic witness, prepared for battle for the Lord of Hosts: *Dumetty-dum; loometty-loom...*

In the interlude between verses, the penetrating tinkle-tinkle of tambourines vibrated the air: *Tinkle-tinkle-tinkkkk...*

Then the band began to march, playing and singing in triumphant procession right to the Piper home.

Joseph left his house abruptly. He stood in the way of the Major who bore the huge Salvationist flag. "Excuse me, Sir."

The band marched on-the-spot as Joseph, using his index finger for emphasis, insisted, "My son is very ill. I would appreciate it if you moved to another street."

The Major clutched firmly at the crimson flag, emblazoned with a golden cross. "Can't do that, I'm sorry."

Joseph appealed again, his face darkening.

Now the Captain spoke, gripping his New Testament between the

clenched thumbs and fingers of both hands. "Can't do that, Mr Piper. We've come out to confront the devil!"

At that, utterly provoked and impatient for quietness for his son, Joseph stabbed the taut side of the big bass drum with his pocket knife. "You've certainly met him now!" he declared, standing tall and menacing.

In stunned silence the band moved away. Not even a tinkle of tambourines reached Albert's ears.

Later, when Albert heard the story from Wensley, his eyes at first expressed horror as his brother dramatized, "You've certainly met the devil now!" Then his eyes sparkled with laughter. Then they softened at evidence of his father's regard. He wished he saw it more often.

During the late Eighteen-Eighties, the family moved from their home in Sydenham to the North Island of New Zealand due to deterioration in Joseph's business and personal habits. With Mary and the five older children was little Violet Mabel who had been born on the nineteenth day of June in 1886 after a long and difficult confinement when twins were again expected.

They moved into 51 Fitzherbert Street in the suburb of Petone, near Wellington. From her kitchen window Mary saw gorse-covered hills where she planned to walk with Violet Mabel and the younger boys while the older children attended the Epuni Hamlet school; while Joseph tried to build a new life, working from a workshop at the back of the house.

It was a much plainer home than the two-story house at Peterborough Street. Single-storied, with peeling cream paint, it was a plain box shape with a front door set between two front rooms and a passage-way for the length of the house. To the front, behind a picket fence, lay a neat lawn. At the back, Albert and Wensley dug and established a vegetable garden.

CHAPTER 3 BEGINNING A NEW LIFE

Beginning again. Hard times. Poverty. Few friends. And another baby-- a sister for Violet Mabel, born in 1889, named Amy.

One summer day in 1890, the Wellington newspaper, *The Watchman*, published a story about an American sect that had begun meetings in the Exchange Hall. Joseph commented to his wife, "Here's a preacher going to tell about the book of Daniel and the end of the world. Humph!"

Mary replied, "I wish I could understand what the book of Daniel means. All those strange beasts--they must have a meaning."

The Watchman continued to publish about the meetings and the preacher, Mr A.G.Daniells. Mary wished that she and Joseph could go to hear, but it was quite impossible.

The following year, in 1891, a young man from South Australia, Stephen McCullagh, preached in a tent set up on a vacant lot in Petone. Here was Mary's opportunity to understand Bible prophecy.

Several times she and Joseph attended Mr McCullagh's meetings, despite rain, hail and gales. When gales almost demolished Mr McCullagh's tent, he preached in a hall and private houses. Joseph stopped attending.

Mary and the children --except for Albert who worked with the Public Service -- continued to listen and learn. They began to attend a meeting called a Sabbath School, held on Saturday mornings, for which Wensley and Reginald carried the school organ to a private home. This they did on Friday afternoons, returning it on Sundays to the jeers of their school mates. "Got ya days mixed up, 'aven't ya?"

" 'Eavy, eh? Got to stop to change 'ands!"

"Why don't your God 'elp ya?"

"What, stopping to change 'ands again!"

That year Mary noted a new beginning in the family Bible, *March 7, 1891, Kept the Sabbath.*

Mary, and the children from Nina down, became more involved with the Seventh-day Adventist Church following Mary's baptism on May 3, 1891. Joseph tried to drink less but his work still suffered. He read the *Review and Herald* and the *Bible Echo*, and other papers that Mary brought home, with interest but never full belief. Once he took them to a local minister for discussion. Mary prayed for both Joseph and Albert.

Albert was away from the house much of the time because of his work, and involvement with tennis and the Presbyterian Church. Yet he, too, sometimes read the papers that his mother placed in the sitting room to catch his interest.

He also overheard conversations that revealed his mother's new outlook. One day five years old Mabel rummaged in a trunk that stored baby's clothes. When she uncreased a little singlet and petticoat to pull onto her doll, her mother cautioned, "Not those, Mabel. I'm keeping those for Nina in case she gets married and has a baby. Of course you little girls will never need them. The Lord will have come before you grow up."

During the time she stayed in Wellington, Mrs Ellen White visited the Piper home on a number of occasions. It was on such a day that she met Albert and was impressed by the young man.

On August 13, 1893, she wrote a letter that mentioned four members of the Piper family, including Albert.¹

Dear Son Willie:

We are packing up to go to Hastings...

The girl, Nina Piper, has been with us several weeks. She is a remarkable girl among girls. She is a sincere Christian and they have a

¹ Manuscript Release, # 952, Letter 138, 1893

large family and it is hard to support them. Mr Piper has been a drunkard and poverty has been their experience. I pay the girl seven shillings per week and she is getting herself some clothing. But she was very sad when we decided to go to Napier. She had been told by her father that she must go out to work and earn her food and clothes. He has work now and has not drunk for two or three years, but he is not a Christian. I thought it would cost too much money to have her go with us, but as the time drew near when we must go, I told Emily my mind was ill at ease. I could perhaps get a girl in Napier but she might be frivolous and want to be with the boys. She might be wasteful. She might be one who would be ill satisfied with the work, and Nina is feeling she is so privileged. She is willing to work hard and is saving, quiet, not forward. She answers well for us... we decided that we will not in the end save anything to go at a venture and leave a good girl behind.

When I proposed the matter to her, she was so elated and felt so privileged, she acted as though it was a dream. I never saw a girl as thankful, and it is a rare thing to have anyone who does the common duties of life thankfully. I felt thankful that it was my privilege to make anyone so happy. She immediately communicated with her father and mother. They both felt very much pleased to have the girl with me and the mother said it seemed so much of a favour to do her, to employ her daughter. She thought it was too good news to be true.

She went to the government office where her brother is employed in the stamp department, and she told her brother of the proposition made to her. He told her that her lines had fallen in pleasant places. He is not a believer and is a staunch Presbyterian, but she came back

so happy. She said he told her he was glad to see her. The mother came down evening after Sabbath and remained until past ten. I had a pleasant interview with her. I never saw a woman more thankful, for she has a mother's interest in her child. The mother is a sweet-faced, amiable-looking woman.

We shall have no trouble now in getting the help we so much need, and we know what we have by experience, a child in years, yet a woman in stern experience...If I go to Sydney I shall certainly take her with me.

August 15. We leave here for Napier. I think we will be comfortable...Late last night Nina's father came to see us and her. He seems quite an intelligent man. He thinks it the most wonderful thing that I take an interest in their daughters and expressed great gratitude as though we were doing them a great favour. I assured him we would have an interest in her. He thought it was such a rare thing, so unexpected.

One evening in 1893 Mary Piper told her husband that she hoped to attend the Adventist camp-meeting to be held in Wellington. As she spoke she slipped herself onto his knee in an endearing manner.

Joseph pushed his wife away from his lap and stormed out of the sitting room.

Albert rushed over to his mother. "I will not have Father hurt you. Oh, oh, I-I-I HATE him!"

Little Amy and Mabel looked on in shock. Then they heard their mother reply, "Albert, your father is really a good man. That was just the Devil in him speaking. It is the Devil you hate. And you see, we will go to camp-meeting."

The twelve day camp-meeting began on November 30. Crowds attended, including Mary Piper and six of her seven children. The crowds came not only from Wellington but also included Adventists from all over New Zealand. Even a delegation travelled down from *Kaeo* in the far north of the North Island where lived the Hare family, first Sabbath keepers in the colony.

Wensley, Reginald and Harold chattered to each other about the missionary ship, *Pitcairn*, a graceful vessel with glowing white hull, anchored in Wellington Harbour. Dr Merritt G. Kellogg, the medical missionary from aboard, was at the camp. So was the president of the world church, from America, and Mrs Ellen White to whom God had given prophetic insight.

Mabel and Amy were greatly taken by the children's meeting. On the first day their teacher said, "We have a memory verse for you to learn. Say it after me, *Thou, God, see-est me.*"

Mabel, Amy and the other young children had repeated the text again and again, promising to return to the meeting on the following day, still knowing their memory verse.

Mabel practised and practised --to mother, then to big-brother-Albert when he came home at night, for the family were not living on the grounds. Before she went to sleep she prayed:

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
 Look upon a little child.
 Pity my simplicity;
 Suffer me to come to thee.
 And please help me to remember,
 Thou, God, see-est me.

Next morning, back at the camp-ground, Mabel recited the words perfectly. She was the only one to do so. She blushed vividly when the teacher told her she was a good girl. . . . Albert, later, said he was proud to have such a sister.

On the final Sunday of the camp, Joseph put on his Sunday suit and accompanied his family to hear Mrs White speak. That day she spoke to an enormous crowd of people on the subject of Temperance, which at that time was a political issue in New Zealand.

During Mrs White's talk, Joseph stole a look at his wife, wondering if she could sense his new resolve to sign the pledge and stay away from intoxicating liquor forever. Mary squeezed his hand.

Talk about camp-meeting continued long after the tents were pulled down, both in Wellington and in the Piper home. There was talk of the angels who, Mrs White said, had visited the encampment, two men of noble bearing who walked throughout.

Reginald and Harold wanted to improvise a tent in their back yard. Amy and Mabel played children's meetings. Wensley was full of the mission ship with the initials S.D.A. on its pointed pennant at the masthead. Joseph was ready to debate Temperance with all takers. Mary smiled at her family and went on praying for Albert.

Nina was away, assisting Mrs White. She invited Mabel to visit. Mabel returned with chatter about Mrs White calling her "Silver-Hair," and giving her dried apricots to chew. She told Albert that Mrs White was like a nice Grandma.

Three years passed. Joseph began to worship with his wife and children although he did not seek baptism. His business expanded and he hoped to be elected to the town council. Since fully taking on the Temperance cause, Truth and Right had become his personal motto.

Everyone in the Piper family was happy, now, except Albert. And Albert could not be fully happy because he struggled to quell the Holy Spirit that called him to explore the Bible more fully.

In the Spring of 1896 he took leave from the Public Service to go to *Waimate*. There in the shadow of the Southern Alps he sought peace of mind.

CHAPTER 4 INTERVENTION BY A PROPHET *Summer, 1897.*

Overwhelmed by the welcome-home meal on his return --best linen and Mary's best cooking -- Albert's eyes caught his mother's look of endearment. He wondered if she already sensed his changed heart.

As soon as they could talk together he told her of Robbie, and how he believed that God had spoken through a blood-stained Bible. After that he began extensive reading of Adventist literature to study and evaluate Adventist teachings.

As a result of his reading, Albert requested the Public Service to allow him Saturdays free from work.

The refusal from the Public Service came in both written form and in conference. "Never, Piper. Absolutely impossible! Why ever should a talented man like yourself consider such a step? It could only lead to leaving the Public Service. What folly!"

With sadness he finished his duties at the Stamp and Deeds Office, closing the books, pulling in his chair, shutting the office door and walking away with finality.

He told his young lady friend what he had done, and why. Her eyes looked back at him in bewilderment as she affirmed, "But I could never leave the Presbyterian Church. Oh Albert, I - I - I did so want to be your --for us to--but..." When her tiny lace handkerchief was soaked with tears she blew her nose on Albert's large white one which was already just a little damp from his own moistened eyes. He knew she would be hoping to see him again at church on Sunday night, but she would be disappointed for Albert had purposed in his heart to worship on the Biblical Sabbath thereafter. It was a part of his call, intensified through Bible study and prayer.

In late January, 1897, Albert packed his portmanteaux again, impressed that he should return to the South Island where Pastor Eugene Farnsworth was preaching in Christchurch. Once again Albert farewelled his family.

"Come now, Mother, cheer up," Wensley told his mother. "You've still got ME!"

"And me... and me..." echoed the girls.

Harold and Reginald did not join in. Harold planned to go to the Avondale school as soon as he could. Reg planned to do missionary work among the Maori people, although for the present he learnt the sheet metal trade beside his father.

The family at Petone awaited Albert's first letter from Christchurch with eagerness. When it came it contained amazing news; that Pastor Farnsworth had asked Albert to be tent master for his Ferry Road preaching series.

In time, another letter told of Albert's transfer to the coal-mining town of Westport on the west coast of the South Island where he would continue to assist in the work of Adventist evangelism. He mentioned that he found himself thinking more and more that he needed the training of the Avondale School which would begin in May. He knew, however, that it was impossible for him to afford a ticket to Australia.

"Australia! A sea voyage," exclaimed Wensley. His mother shook her head at him. It was quite impossible, unless, unless...

Then came another amazing letter. Albert wrote of a Miss Martha Brown who had been a student at the St Kilda Road Bible School in Melbourne. Encouraged by Mrs White, Martha Brown had decided to loan Albert Piper fifty pounds to go to Avondale!

Albert struggled with the problem of debt, wondering if he should borrow so much money. He prayed for guidance.

The answer came through his father. Joseph heard about a price-cutting war between rival shipping companies. He exclaimed, "The present fare to Sydney, Australia, is only five shillings. A mere five shillings for that long journey across the water!"

Albert saw this incident, coinciding with the offer by Martha Brown, as timely and providential -- his opportunity. Trusting the Lord to help him repay the borrowed fifty pounds, he arranged to enrol at the Avondale School.

Before Leaving New Zealand, Albert made one more attempt to share his excitement with the Bible among his tennis and church friends. Their ears seemed closed. With sorrow he returned a portrait of the sweet-faced Presbyterian young lady who had held special hopes for their friendship.

Late in May, 1897, as winter bronzed the poplars out on the Petone plains, Albert Piper boarded the ship that would carry him across the Tasman Sea. At the Wellington docks, buffeted by wind and rain, the Piper family huddled together to say goodbye. They wondered if they would ever meet on earth again. Surely the second coming of the Lord was near!

Once again Wensley lightened his mother's heart by his assurance, "Now remember, Mother, you've still got ME!"

"Yes, for the present. But I have dedicated ALL my children to the Lord's work." She turned to wave to Albert until his face disappeared through the mist.

On the fourth day of June, Albert travelled by train from Sydney to Morisset where he was met by an Avondale student in a horse-drawn cart. As the cart rattled along Albert learnt that the term had officially begun on the twenty-eighth of April although the principal, Pastor Cassius Hughes, had arrived from America only ten days before Albert himself.

"How many students are there?"

"About thirty, now. Could reach eighty by the end of the year, or even more, I've heard. Accommodation will be squeezed."

"What's the accommodation like?"

"Well, we boys live above the dining room though we were to have had the loft over the saw-mill, down by Dora Creek. But Sister White said it was far too cold and uncomfortable. So now we have half the second floor, alongside the chapel."

The two men talked about the school fees. Albert was reminded that for a furnished room, plain washing, tuition and two meals a day, if he paid in advance it would cost him two pounds and fourteen shillings a month.

The driver asked him, "Do you want piano or organ lessons? Or typing?"

Albert did not reply. He was busily calculating how long his fifty pounds would last.

Now the road swung right. "Soon be there," the driver smiled. "See that road to the left? That's where Sister White rented a hotel after they sold the Bible School in Melbourne and moved to Cooranbong. The Industrial Department began there in '95. They built a saw-mill to prepare the timber."

"I heard they had classes too," Albert commented.

"Right. Worked from eight every morning until half-past two in the afternoon. Then classes till nine at night. We have to study to prepare ourselves for service in the islands of the sea or wherever God wants us to go. That's what I tell myself!"

Albert agreed although the *islands of the sea* was a new proposition to his mind.

"The track isn't so good here, so hang on," apologised the driver. "We've turned off the coach route. You'll see the school any minute."

Sure enough, over a rise, two double-storeyed buildings appeared in view.

"Welcome, Albert," said the driver of the cart, reigning up beside the first door. "This is Avondale."

Next day Albert began his school programme. He rose in the dark to take a cold bath before dressing for Pastor Haskell's six o'clock Bible class in the chapel.

He listened attentively, knowing that before him stood a seasoned Bible student and preacher, for Pastor Haskell had been one of the first Adventist preachers in Australia in 1885 and was then an experienced evangelist and administrator.

Albert chuckled as the speaker referred to the early days, telling how one American Conference president had remarked to him, prior to his departure to Australia, "Do you want to go down there and convert those kangaroos?" Laughter rippled through the chapel.

After Albert's morning classes and dinner were over, he joined the gardening crew, weeding among corn and potatoes. In uncleared land to the edge of the gardens, to his delight he noticed a group of wallabies that hopped away into thick scrub.

"Plenty of them around here," remarked a work mate. "Wallabies galore as well as koalas and bandicoots. You know, when we planted this corn we had to cover it with tar to stop the Bandies from digging it all up before it germinated."

He continued with other information about the Avondale School and estate --about the orchard that would bear the following summer; of the healthful cookery classes that were planned; of the requirement that every student work for eighteen hours a week.

Albert listened and hoed, sorting and categorising the information into his orderly mind. Meanwhile a blister formed on one hand...

Not many days after, Mrs White came over by phaeton from her home. Albert never forgot the words with which she greeted him, "Albert Piper, I knew several years ago you would come to this school."¹

From dawn to long past dusk Albert worked and studied. On his shelf lay the required text books: *Bell's Grammar*, *Hill's Rhetoric*, *Steele's Physiology*, *Well's Academic Algebra*, plus history and physics books, another for shorthand, and his Bible and other books for Bible study.

He wrote:

The devotional meetings, especially the Friday night meetings and the Sabbath morning services and the prayer bands formed among the students, are very helpful and conducive to spiritual fellowship.

The school programme, the continual inspirational urge to live a spiritual life, the value of employing one's time fully, the encouragement gotten from men and women of

1

Told to the author by A.H.Piper, his family, and Pastor A.G.Stewart.

*experience, and the earnest desire to fit one's self
for God's work, are ever a great moulding influence in my life.*

As the months passed, Albert felt increasing gratitude for the financial aid he had received, especially when some students had to leave due to lack of funds. With the rest of the students he rejoiced when in October, 1897, the Avondale faculty opened a fund to assist worthy students.

Two of the names, to whom the action applied, took Albert's attention. He was glad that Miss Nicholas from Rarotonga was allowed to make up her debt of six pounds four and sixpence from the students' assistance fund and that Pastor Hughes was considering the case of Miss Newcombe from Adelaide. Both of these young ladies attended Pastor Haskell's six a.m. Bible study, and Miss Nicholas was working hard at translating tracts into the language of the Rarotongan people. *Rarotonga* -- how liltingly it came to one's lips!

On October 17 the closing exercises for the 1897 school year were held in the new Avondale church which seated four hundred people. It had been built in only seven weeks and dedicated debt free, due to the sacrificial giving of the community. Albert gave a donation.

The second school year began on March 16, 1898. Albert returned from selling books in South Australia and was invited by Ellen White to live in her home at Sunnyside. It was not uncommon for her to have students staying in her home, and because of her interest in the Piper family she invited Albert to be her house guest.

At Sunnyside, Albert settled into a small upstairs bedroom with a dormer window. From there he could see the young orchard that Mrs White had on her property, as well as the nearby forest which frequently sounded with the call of curlew, the tinkle of bellbirds

and laughter of kookaburras.

Across the road lived Ella White, Mrs Ellen White's sixteen years old grand-daughter who was frequently in and out of Sunnyside and who may have helped along an innocent friendship between Albert Piper and Miss Hettie Newcombe, the slim young lady of French descent who had been able to return to Avondale in the second year. It would have been so easy to relay an apparently casual comment, such as, "Do you see Miss Newcombe at all? Are you in her classes?" Or, "Miss Newcombe really appreciated the way you read the Scripture in chapel. She wonders how you liked selling books in her home state."

As the months of his second year at Avondale passed by, Albert wondered how he could convey his growing regard for Miss Newcombe to the young lady herself. Certainly the year-end approached when she planned to go to Newcastle to assist in a city evangelistic programme. What could he say or do when courtship was discouraged? Yet he did not want her to leave Avondale without having said something about his respect for her.

Inspiration came as he walked through the bush between Sunnyside and the chapel. To the edge of the path he noticed a dainty creeper with a delicately formed cluster of blue flowers. To his eyes it seemed to perfectly symbolise Miss Hettie whom he so much respected and admired; Miss Hettie, slender as a reed, who reached in height to his chin.

Albert stooped to pick the creeper with its china-blue bells. Then he wrapped it carefully. In the college dining room at mid-day, he twined it around Miss Hettie's napkin ring. He passed it over to her and, as she accepted, meeting his eyes briefly before looking down, without any words being spoken between them, each knew what the simple ritual signified.

How difficult it was to study after that when all he wanted to do was
SING!

In 1899, Albert Piper became first minister of the Seventh-day Adventist believers at Hamilton, New South Wales. With him was his bride, Hester Elizabeth (Hettie), now Mrs A.H.Piper. The newly-weds set up housekeeping at Lindsay Street, Newcastle, where Hettie demonstrated her talents as a home-maker, making her husband's heart sing again.

Albert worked hard to promote and plan a church building at Hamilton. He also became secretary-treasurer of the New South Wales Conference. Then, following camp-meeting at Maitland at the year-end, the couple moved to South Australia where Albert enlisted and trained men to sell *Bible Readings* and *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*. The church paper recorded his success at Kadina and other places, and the resulting growth in tithes.

Hettie busied herself with visiting those who were ill, giving Bible studies and acting as Sabbath School Secretary for South Australia. She sat up at night to meticulously enter her report, entering the information in her immaculate handwriting:

June 30, 1900.

<i>Name of Sabbath School:</i>	<i>Adelaide, Queenstown, Prospect, Kadina, Kargarilla, Broken Hill, Cawler, Moonter. Eight altogether.</i>
<i>Membership:</i>	<i>253</i>
<i>Total Contributions:</i>	<i>Fourteen pounds and five shillings.</i>
<i>Tithes from Schools:</i>	<i>One pound, ten shillings and elevenpence.</i>
<i>Donations to Missions:</i>	<i>Seven pounds and twopence.</i>
<i>Special donation for charity work in the Sydney San:</i>	<i>Eighteen shillings, two pence and one half-penny.</i>

Happy days in South Australia! Albert and Hettie discovered more and more about each other and their love increased. Never mind the cupboards made of packing cases and pleated cotton; never mind the plainness and sameness of diet, especially when the church treasurer received insufficient tithes and offerings to pay them a wage. They had each other. And they followed the call of their Lord.

That year, 1900, was the year of federation for the Australian states. Federation fever gripped the country in its birth pangs of nationhood. The Pipers read the headlines, saw the sky filled with fireworks in celebration, but were even more absorbed in their citizenship of Heaven. A letter from Pastor Farnsworth in June brought exciting prospects. He enquired if they would be willing to go to the South Sea Islands as missionaries.

Hettie drew in her breath and looked with shining eyes up at her Albert. "Where to, exactly?"

"To Rarotonga! Remember Miss Nicholas who came from there? She began translating in '97, and last year the first leaflet in the Rarotongan language was printed. And now..."

Hettie replied, "Only last week I read in the *Union Conference Record* of Dr Caldwell's medical work in Rarotonga. He asked his readers to pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest. And I have been praying for the mission work every day!"

Hettie hurried into Albert's outstretched arms where they clung for a few silent moments. Each of them knew there would be only one answer they could honestly give.

On the sixteenth day of July, 1900, Mrs Ellen White sat down at her Cooranbong home and wrote a serious letter. She addressed it to Mr A.H.Piper in South Australia.¹

Albert read and re-read her thousand words message. Primarily it concerned the money loaned him three years previously for the purpose of his education. Mrs White expressed dismay that the loan had not yet been fully repaid, and concern for the lender. She wondered if the money, which should have been used for education, had been used as a donation to the Avondale Church.

She also referred to a telegram that had come to her from Pastor Eugene Farnsworth wherein he indicated that the Pipers were willing to go to the South Seas should this be desired.

She advised Albert not to go until his debt was paid.

The letter, in its larger view, went far beyond being a chastisement of one she regarded like a son; one with whom she had talked and counselled on many occasions in her home at Sunnyside and whose role in the Seventh-day Adventist Church she had foreseen even before his conversion.

Much of this letter concerned the topic of character --the character of man whose course of action determined his destiny for eternity; and the character of God who felt sympathy for his people. In a flow of moving eloquence she referred to the ministry of Christ, describing the unremitting nature of Christ's work when he was on earth.

And she used the metaphor of a ladder, just as she had done in a testimony written in Copenhagen on July 17, 1886. At that time she had written:

¹ This letter has not yet been released by the E.G.White Estate.

Look to the top of the ladder...Jesus is
this ladder. Climb up by Him, cling to Him,
and ere long you will step off the ladder
into His everlasting kingdom. ¹

Albert read until the words of the letter were engraven into his heart and mind, especially her tender appeal, that Jesus must be his ladder.

This was no stern rebuke from an authoritarian figure. Seen in its proper setting, it was a letter of loving intervention by a prophet of God for one who had been called to the highest service.

¹ E.G.White, *Testimony for the Church*, Vol.8, p. 130.

CHAPTER 5 MISSIONARY TO RAROTONGA 1900

"The Cook Islands have six principal islands. Their names are Rarotonga, Mangaia, Aututaki, Atiu and --" Albert looked over to Hettie.

From her chair by the fire in the Piper's Petone sitting room, Hettie prompted her husband with a smile. "And Mauke and Mitaro."

Albert continued talking to his rapt audience --his parents, sisters and brothers, including baby Charles, the eighth child. "The total area is about 150 square miles, I believe, with a total population of seven to eight thousand. We expect to work on the principal island of Rarotonga, known to our church as the Rarotongan Mission. There are about 2,000 inhabitants."

"How big is Rarotonga?" Reg wanted to know.

"About twenty miles around. And 116 miles to the nearest island, Mangaia, and 150 miles to the furthest."

"What about the language? What have you found out about that?" Joseph fingered his moustache as he asked, "English won't be much use, will it?"

Hettie answered, "We plan to learn the native language, Father."

Albert added, "Yes indeed. We understand that the entire Bible is already translated into Rarotongan."

They had arrived that morning and the house had been full of talk ever since. Wensley, Reg and Harold plied Albert with questions about Avondale, Sydney, ships, Aborigines...

The girls wanted to know if the snakes were terrible and had Albert ever seen a koala real close-up in the Australian bush? Did Hettie like Mabel's new hat? And what sort of dresses would she wear in Rarotonga?

Joseph wondered if Albert had met any of the descendents of Captain John Piper who had built the first Sydney mansion.

Mary asked about Sunnyside and camp-meetings in Australia and the progress of the Lord's work.

There was so much to say and so short a time to say it all!

Soon the time for farewells came and the couple sailed away, promising to write and hearing their family assure them of their prayers. It was October, 1900.

Little did they know it was a final goodbye to Wensley.

On December 3, Wensley was out rowing in Wellington Harbour with members of the Petone Rowing Club when the skiff he sailed aboard started to draw water.

"Hug the shore!" shouted the Captain of the Wellington Star Boating Club that had donated the skiff to the new Petone club. "Hug the shore."

Wensley and his sailing mate struggled to steer the skiff toward shore. With waves beating over them and the skiff still drawing water heavily, it was a hopeless task. The young men dived overboard to swim to the beach. Wensley, overcome by freak waves, did not survive.

Mary Piper's heart filled with grief as it had done when she lost little Aldabert, although in a different way. The little twin had survived only in her imagination as she had watched Albert's progress. But Wensley had been a very real and genial presence in the family. How he had liked to tease her, though meaning it, "Mother, you'll have ME!"

She found comfort in the fact that he had been a good son and an earnest Christian. He was greatly missed by the Petone Adventists

who had chosen him as their deacon.

Meanwhile, Albert and Hettie had sailed to the Cook Islands, their steamer manouvering through the coral reef and docking at the northern port of Avarua. This was where Dr J.E. Caldwell pioneered Adventist medical work in 1894.

"Came here on the *Pitcairn*," Albert told Hettie. "The natives call him *Taote Via Vera*,"

"Which means "Doctor Hot Water," said Hettie with twinkling eyes. "Yes, I've been doing some language study."

The Caldwells met the young couple and took them to their home at Aorangi which lay about five miles from the port. There the Pipers saw the house which they would have to themselves when the Caldwells left for New Zealand in a few weeks. A white-washed house with ten inch walls to keep out heat, the doctor had built it of bricks formed with coral burnt with lime and sand. It had six rooms and a cheerful green front door.

"Please teach me all you can," Hettie pleaded with Julia Caldwell.

So the experienced missionary initiated Hettie into ways of housekeeping in Rarotonga. "Yeast for making bread from fermented orange juice --I make it like this. And here are recipes that use bananas or sweet potatoes and coconut."

"Mmm. They sound good. Do tell me how you made the pie for lunch."

"Of course, my dear." Mrs Caldwell looked at Hettie with tired eyes though the younger woman's enthusiasm cheered her considerably. She chose not to disillusion Hettie by telling her that the diet grew monotonous; that the heat, the mosquito-carried diseases and the constant mission work might sap her strength as it had her own. (1)

(1) Julia Caldwell died in 1902 of the effects of Dengue Fever.

Julia Caldwell added, "Supplies will come from New Zealand occasionally, now that a steamer service has begun. But don't depend on it, Hettie. I suggest you use local foods, and when your supplies come, store them safely away from weevils, rats and cockroaches." She did not say that the supplies might be damaged or unusable when they arrived. She knew that Hettie would learn fast enough, as she had during her six years on the island. Instead, they walked together among vividly flowering plants in the garden. Then they watched a crimson and gold sunset.

Inside the house the men were too busy talking to watch the sunset. Albert watched the doctor's face as he described a problem that affected the mission programme.

"The problem began, really, with the fact that the London Missionary Society missionaries who came here seventy-seven years ago came from the west and failed to reckon with the date-line. So they established their Sunday rest day on what was actually Saturday."

This information was not new to Albert but he listened on.

"Our problem intensified with calendar reform last Christmas day when it became compulsory to worship on the first day of the week. You think about it -- here we have people who have worshipped on the seventh day for nearly eighty years. Now they are locked out of their meeting houses; forbidden to preach or worship on Saturdays. If they insist on the seventh-day Sabbath they are threatened that their homes will be burnt down."

Doctor Caldwell continued. "You know, some think that the skippers and missionaries who first came to these parts, after the famous John Williams who pioneered Christianity here, were really neither ignorant nor careless. There is reason to believe that they may have deliberately taught the Bible as it reads so that the true Sabbath was followed."

"Why do you say that?"

"Brother, the evidence is in the language, as you will soon discover! Monday is *Ruirua* --meaning second day. Tuesday is *Ruitou*, third day. And Saturday is *Raitu*, *the seventh day!* In heathen times the natives divided time into weeks but the language became fixed when early missionaries translated the Bible, reducing the local language to a written form. And the fact that they numbered the days of the week correctly, exonerates them from a charge of ignorance of the day-line. You see?"

"V-e-r-y interesting!" Albert commented.

By this time their wives had entered and were listening to the men's conversation.

"Tell them about the road," Julia urged her husband. "And don't forget to tell them about the white cloth signals that let us know when natives need medical help."

"The road? It's a long story, Albert, but basically we are at the place where the penalty for seventh-day Sabbath observance is a cash fine or three days work on the public roads. Our believers choose to work."

"You should see them!" Mrs Caldwell exclaimed. "Every morning whole families go out, babies and all. The women build ovens beside the road they are making and roast their mid-day meal there. Then at night they all trek back. Day after day...It leaves them so little time for their own houses and gardens."

"But they remain faithful," said the doctor. "The ten or so strong families, as well as up to sixty others who are interested but sometimes wavering."

Albert determined to approach the administrative officers of Rarotonga to discuss the issue. His work with the Public Service had given him experience and confidence; so had his faith in an omnipotent ruler in Heaven.

Soon after the Caldwell's departure for New Zealand, for work among Maoris,

Albert Piper met with Colonel Gudgeon, administrator on behalf of the New Zealand government.

The colonel explained that he was bringing in New Zealand law slowly and cautiously, lest he arouse opposition from the local chiefs, called *Arikis*. He had allowed them to administer justice in their own way.

When Colonel Gudgeon heard Albert Piper's case he investigated for himself. Thus he found that the *Arikis*, pressured by Roman Catholics, had sentenced Sabbath keepers to hard labour as well as posing other difficulties, such as preventing two young people from going to Avondale. He chose to over-rule the action of the chiefs.

Albert and Hettie, along with the families from Titikaveka who were most affected, rejoiced at the Colonel's decision and praised God for this evidence of His care.

At this time the Pipers were the only Australasian missionaries in the South Seas --the very first. Albert recognised the challenge when he wrote to believers in Australia and New Zealand,

Our one desire is to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that we may be fit vessels to disseminate the last rays of light that are shining to enlighten and save a perishing world. 1

The year 1902 was a momentous one for Albert and Hettie for two reasons. Firstly, after thirteen months of waiting and praying they had bought land and built a church at Titikaveka. Albert wrote the details out methodically and hid the paper in a bottle in the church's foundations. They did not expect the bottle ever to be found for the Lord would come soon.

1 A.H.Piper, *Union Conference Record*, may 1, 1902.

The second reason had a name -- Albert Joseph Piper! Their baby was born in New Zealand on the sixth day of June.

When little Albert was nearly seven weeks old Hettie began to pack.

"But you can't go back to Rarotonga yet," Mary Piper protested.

"Not yet!" echoed Mabel and Amy.

"We hope you will stay at least three months until you and my grandson are strong enough for the voyage," Joseph insisted.

Hettie smiled and thanked them, but went right on packing and planning to return. As she journeyed, Albert wrote to his mother :(1)

Aorangi
Rarotonga
Cook Islands
July 27th, '02

My Dear Mother,

I suppose that before this letter reaches you Hettie will have left on her return journey... very likely she will reach Rarotonga in three weeks from tonight.

I shall be very glad to have her with me again for I have missed her very much during the four months and nine days that she will have been away. We have been working hard to have all in order as far as possible by the time she reaches here. We have also planned many little surprises for her...

And now, Mother, I want to thank you for all your trouble, love and kindness that you have shown to Hettie. She has not been slow to tell me in her letters of all that you have done for her and our little one.

She has told me how glad she is that she went to you and how much you have taught her. I am very grateful to you for it all. You have always been a good mother to me. As I let my mind run back the years before I left home, I remember all the sacrifices that you made for us, your

1 Letter kindly loaned by Laurence Piper, second son of A.H.Piper.

children. When we were sick, so kind you were to us. When money was scarce and times were hard, I can look back and see all you did for us.

Many, many times during those years I was tempted to do things I would have been sorry for after, but a mother's love kept me from it all...

For more news you will read my letter to Father. Why do not Amy and Mabel write to me now? Much love to you and all at home and wishing you much blessing from God,

Your loving boy,

Albert

As mid August arrived Albert began to watch out for the steamer. He calculated that it should arrive by Monday, the eighteenth. But no smoke smudged on the horizon. On Tuesday, again he watched, but vainly. Then, on Wednesday afternoon as the children were leaving their island school, Albert said, "I think the steamer is coming!"

His pupils crowded around him, eagerly gazing toward the horizon. Broad smiles spread over their brown faces as they recognised the shape of a steamer and exclaimed, "Mama and the baby!"

Some of the older boys ran to get loin cloths that they then tied on the trees. The wind lifted them and they waved like flags as the steamer neared shore.

"My Hettie!"

"Oh Albert!"

It was a joyous reunion. Albert looked from his wife to his son; from his son to his wife, over and over again. He felt as if his heart would burst with happiness and gratitude to God for His protecting care.

Back in her house with the green door, Hettie soon welcomed a stream of visitors who came to inspect the blue-eyed, white-skinned baby. They brought presents made of flax, shells or coconut fibre, or sprays of bright

yellow or scarlet flowers. Little Albert was already an excellent missionary, winning friends and blowing away prejudice as easily as he blew bubbles and goosed.

Although their journey had been a most stormy one, Hettie and the baby soon recovered and settled into life on Rarotonga. They were busy days with two schools to run, now assisted by a teacher from Australia. Albert and Hettie were "Master" and "Mama" to the community and their days never seemed long enough for all that needed to be done. On some nights, and for weeks at a time, they had little sleep due to the dancing and noisy feasting of some of the natives on their island.

January 1904 came. On furlough at this time, Albert was ordained at the New Plymouth camp-meeting in New Zealand; his call to ministry, confirmed.

As the time approached to return to the Cook Islands, Albert developed serious difficulties with his teeth. The only dental appointments available clashed with the steamer's sailing dates. What should they do?

"I will return myself, with Albert junior, while you have your teeth attended to," Hettie declared.

To Albert's protest she replied, "Why not? I am feeling rested and I should go back. The women on Rarotonga need me! If I stayed on here with my family at Adelaide, I would be filled with guilt. I believe time is short and the Lord has given me this work to do."

Thus Hettie returned alone to Aorangi. She took over from the teacher, who went on furlough, and Captain G.F. Jones who had filled in for her husband. The former sea captain reported in the November, 1903, *Union Conference Record*, of Pastor Albert Piper's successful mission programme and his wife's neat and unextravagant organization at Aorangi.

For nearly three months Hettie worked, alone, resolutely taking on every responsibility.

At last the expected steamer appeared on the horizon, past the coral reef. Natives who prepared their wares for trading promised her that the "Master" was coming. And he came, handsomely well, pink cheeked from the cooler climate and plumper after eating at Mary Piper's table.

In his luggage he carried a thousand copies of *Thoughts on Daniel*, a thousand copies of a hymn book and another thousand copies of a tract about the first chapter of the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. All of these had been translated into Rarotongan. Pastor A.H.Piper was ready and eager for work again.

But Hettie, always slim, now seemed a thin reed that the wind in the coconut palms could pick up and blow away. She seemed more eyes than body; eloquent eyes that welcomed her husband and told of loneliness, toil and love, more than words could express. Together they began to plan their second term of service on Rarotonga.

"I want to buy a property away from village life," Albert told Hettie. "I have a place in mind..."

So, in time, he built a boarding school at Mizpeh where Hettie worked as matron, tucking little Laurence Alvin under her arm as she went back to supervise the school dining-room, soon after his birth on July 28, 1905.

Like Albert Junior, this premature, tiny mite was an excellent missionary, simply by being a hungry, cute, white-skinned baby that belonged to everybody's *Mama*.

Hettie found that she could not breast-feed her new baby for long so his staple diet became mashed milk-arrowroot biscuits. Hettie had so much to do ...She felt continually tired... so tired...

In the *Union Conference Record* during 1907, a writer expressed concern for Hettie Piper's health in the trying conditions of Rarotonga where she worked so hard as matron in the boarding school. "It is feared that in a very little while it will prove too much for her. She has undertaken it simply because there was no other available person there to take up the work...On every hand there is a call for workers. Are you preparing to go?"

Several Rarotongans offered to go to New Guinea as missionaries, evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit on the island. Over in Mount Vernon Academy, U.S.A. two teachers were "preparing to go." They were George Leighton Sterling and Maybelle Henrietta Klopfenstein, who, on graduation in 1908, would be called to the South Seas and to the Cook Islands in particular. But that was still in the future...

In 1907 the Pipers' furlough time came again. Pastor Piper determined that he and his family would take a full furlough together, as was their due. He would not allow Hettie to rush back alone this time.

He looked at his boys --at Albert Junior who was five years old, a long-legged, skinny lad, all eyes, rather like his mother. Then he studied Laurence, his "Rarotongan" son, grown from a wriggling mite to a busy, loveable two-year-old. Yes, it would be good for all of them to furlough with their relatives. Especially Hettie. He made mental note of her need for a thorough medical examination. Precious Hettie -- *Mama* to so many.

So they crated up their goods for storage until their planned return. Then they said goodbye to the students and prayed a prayer of benediction; waved goodbye to Tonga, head church deacon, to Timi, Rau Solomon and the rest of the crowd of singing, waving, weeping islanders. "God be with you till we meet again. Goodbye... Goodbye..."

CHAPTER 6 TWENTY TWO THOUSAND KISSES

After arrival in Sydney the Piper family travelled to Turrumurra and alighted at the Eastern Road railway station. From there they travelled by phaeton to the Adventist sanitarium that had been opened on the north shore of Sydney on January 1, 1903. With interest they gazed at the building and at the nurses in their long white starched uniforms.

Pastor Piper exclaimed, "How the work of God has grown! Ten years ago, when I came to Australia, the medical work was in a house at Summer Hill. Then it moved, as you remember, Hettie, to the Avondale Health Retreat. But look at this!"

The children and Hettie looked. But Hettie's eyes were glazed with fever. She needed immediate nursing care.

Dr Lauretta Kress identified Hettie's condition. The persistent, dry cough, weight loss, chest pain and sweating all declared tuberculosis. Dr Kress advised that they delay their return to Rarotonga.

Furlough time passed and Hettie had not recovered. Pastor Piper now worked in church work in New South Wales in the Morpeth and Raymond Terrace districts. Then he served as president of the New South Wales Conference. From there, with improvement in Hettie's health, he moved to Western Australia as president. There he built a home in the Darling Ranges where he hoped Hettie would fully recover.

By 1911 Hettie was well enough to revisit the Cook Islands with her husband, but not to stay, according to medical advice. There they initiated George and Maybelle Sterling into missionary work on the island of Aitutaki. Although sad that it could not be themselves, they felt glad for their island friends as they recognised, in the Sterlings, characters as true as their name.

On their return to Australia, Hettie's health went down. The family settled into a small house in Fox Valley Road, near to the Sanitarium which provided Hettie with nursing care. Nurse Louise Dawkins and Nurse Eleanor Kreutzberg were two who frequently helped with Hettie and the boys. Albert junior now attended school and needed help with this or that. Then both children became ill with whooping cough. Pastor Piper travelled from home and was always busy, now being secretary of the Union Conference, the organization that preceded the Inter Union Conference and the Australasian Division of the world church. He endeavoured, however, to spend time with Hettie.

Hettie worried about her sons' exposure to her disease. She encouraged her husband to take them to stay with his sister, their Aunty Mabel. She had graduated from teaching in 1909, taught at the New Zealand Adventist College at Cambridge, and was now married to a ministerial student, Harold White. Mabel assured Hettie that the boys were very welcome.

The journey was a memorable one, especially from Dora Creek station where the boys and their father boarded a launch that would carry them to Avondale. On a black-dark night, moving through black-dark water, every creak of the boat sounded ominous. From the bush that lined the creek came the plaintive sounds of nocturnal creatures while phosphorescent plants shed an eerie glow.

Albert junior, his eyes wide with fear, grabbed Laurence. "What if there are snags in the creek? We could be marooned here! What if -- I wish we didn't have to leave Mama."

Laurence began to wail.

"Don't be frightened," their father said. "The two Long Toms know this creek like the palms of their hands. They will get us there safely."

Laurence wiped his eyes to study the two Long Toms, as the two Toms who manned the launch were known. Then he shuddered. What was that sound in the bush? And what was th--a--t, weaving before them like a crocodile shape in the creek?

Their father placed his arms about both boys. Meanwhile, the two Long Toms, like guardian angels, steered the launch to safe mooring.

Back again at Fox Valley Road, Albert Piper did his best to make his beloved comfortable. He coaxed her appetite with sweet white or black grapes. He brought home dried figs and muscatels; beat up raw eggs for her to drink with grape juice, as Dr Kress had advised them.

Hettie herself spent much time in prayer or Bible study. She also did fine needlework, creating delicately embroidered book-marks and wall mottos for her family and friends.

Some afternoons she walked with one of the nurses in the bush behind the house. There she collected Flannel Flowers, Everlasting Daisies, fragments of bark, finely pattered leaves and sweet-smelling gum-nuts. "I have a plan in mind," she told Albert when he teased her for hoarding like a squirrel.

As the disease pervaded her body and Hettie rested more, she struggled to complete her embroidery. She smiled as her husband showed her the embroidered cross on a background of pink silk, and a spray of Lily-of-the-Valley in muted tones of green that he had framed in white.

She also made more book-marks in cross-stitch, then out came the squirrel hoard --that collection of dried flowers and other special items from the Australian bush. She pasted these gently on tinted cards before writing

messages to her dear ones. *Goodbye, Father. Meet me again in Heaven. Your Hettie...* To her husband, speaking of her father-in-law she said, "I wonder when Father will come right with us in the message. I want to meet him by and by, for I do love him so much."

On another card she wrote, *Goodbye, my dear Mother. Another one of yours laid aside until the resurrection day. Your Hettie.*

Hettie realized that she was failing, and although she had previously said she could not get any weaker, yet she did indeed grow much weaker.

First of all her left leg began to swell at the foot and gradually the whole leg... At that time she was embroidering the word PEACE on a book-mark. She got as far as the last E. Then, too weary to continue, she folded it away. Never again did she touch her work.

Swellings continued in various parts of her body. She said that the end was steadily approaching.

Finally her left leg became so extremely painful that it took the care and attention of two nurses all night long. Pastor Piper, her hand in his through much of the long night, gained little rest.

During her last nine days, she received letters from her sons. Ten years old Albert wrote:

Dear Mama and Papa,

I love you very much. I am trying to be a good boy. I am so sorry that you are so ill, Mama. I often talk and think of you both... Aunty Mabel has been telling us about how ill you are and that we might not see you again on this earth; but we will love Jesus and try to do right... so that when Jesus comes to take all his children home to Heaven, we will be there to meet you.

I will never, never forget you, Mama, and I will try to remember all that you have told me. We will always love

*our dear Papa for your sake and be good to him.
And now, to my own dear Mama (I have shown you
my best writing), all of my love I send.*

I am

Your son,

Albert.

TWENTY-TWO THOUSAND KISSES.

Hettie read and re-read Albert's letter, smudging it in part with tears.

Twenty-two thousand kisses came as soothing, yet stinging balm, on that winter day.

Six years old Laurence wrote also.

My dear Mama and Papa,

I love you all. Albert is doing his homework now. I have done my homework. We received Papa's letter today. We are so sorry that Mama is so ill. We have been getting wood. Ivan is asleep now.

Dear Mama, I will try to be such a good boy, so that if I do not see you again on this earth I will meet you when Jesus comes to take us home. We will always remember you, dear Mama, and we will take care of Papa for you. With all my love,

I am,

Your little Laurence.

With many kisses. 1

After she had memorised much of their letters, Hettie clung to Albert.

"Oh Albert, take care of our little boys. Bring them to me again some day."

1 The letters from both Albert and Laurence were kindly loaned to the author by Laurence Piper.

Life is like a woven fabric with warp and weft that blend in shades of light and dark. Sometimes the yarn may knot and tangle so that only a dark pattern emerges. On such days Hettie asked the nurses' singing band to sing, "Rock of Ages ... let me hide myself in Thee."

"I treasure those words," she confided to Albert, "and the music drowns the roaring in my chest."

On the first day of June, 1912, although a pale winter morning, Hettie's life fabric glowed with the serene colours of faith and peace. She spoke with loving tenderness of her sons and their twenty-two thousand kisses; asked for the violets on her dressing table to be placed where she could see them clearly; requested her prettiest nightgown. "Maybe I will go to sleep on this Sabbath day and have sweet Sabbath rest. But I do not know. Jesus knows."

In the afternoon, Pastor J.E. Fulton, president of the Adventist Church in Australasia, prayed with Hettie. She welcomed his visit. "I look upon Pastor Fulton as my pastor," she told Albert.

That evening, following prayers and praise to close the Sabbath, Hettie fell back against her pillows. She tried several times to tell her husband, "I do love you." Her lips grew pale; her voice weakened.

At about nine o'clock Albert left the room briefly. Just then, in a supreme effort, she spoke of her husband, "Oh I do love Papa! I do love Papa!" They were her last words, and by ten o'clock, simply breathing less and less, Hester Elizabeth Piper rested completely.

Albert wrote: *You do not know what feeling came over me when I realized that I would never hear her voice again... Brother Fulton came to me. I saw he was touched himself. He put his arms around me... and it did seem to break me up. But God helped the tears to flow and it relieved my pent-up feelings; feelings that had been gathering for months as I noticed her*

going down, down...

I do not know what I am going to do. I have no plans whatever. I cannot think long enough to know where to go or what to do... I suppose the Lord will lead me day by day. But I know that God is good, and while I feel almost broken-hearted at times, yet deep down in my heart there is a peace that I cannot explain. I realise now what the Scripture means when it speaks of the peace that passeth understanding...

Believe me to be,

Yours stricken with sorrow but with a heart full of peace because
I know that my Father knows,

Albert Piper.

CHAPTER 7 COURAGE IN THE LORD

After Hettie's death, Albert Piper travelled to the United States of America to represent the Australasian Adventists at a world conference. He returned to his sons with hope and courage restored, and also minus his dark beard. Albert junior and Laurence stared at their father for a long silent moment before they identified what made him look different. Whether Papa wore a beard or not, however, it was so good to be with him again!

Now our story-camera changes from focus on Albert Henry Piper to another whose own life contributed to his life story. Let us see, now, the white sails of a sailing ship as they billow in an Atlantic wind. The vessel journeys from Southampton, England, toward the Southern Hemisphere. It is the nineteenth century again, in the year 1884.

Aboard the sailing ship we meet a bearded man with German accented speech, his dark-eyed, pretty English wife, and their four children. The youngest, two years old Nellie, clings shyly to her mother's long gown.

After sixteen weeks at sea, the ship glides through the heads of Sydney harbour. The family settle at Ammandale, a Sydney suburb. The father, a master jeweller, establishes a jewellery business with his name, *Frederick J.A. Kreuzberg, Watchmaker and Jeweller*, inscribed over a large clock-face that keeps regular time for the neighbourhood. The family are happy and soon a new baby is born, displacing Nellie as the youngest.

When Nellie is seven years old there comes a night she can never forget. Her mother kisses her goodnight. Then, as if she cannot bear to part with the child, hugs her fiercely, saying, "Always be a good girl, like you are now. Remember my darling!" She hugs Nellie again before resting back against her pillows, her eyes lit with sudden pain and premonition.

"Come, child," beckons her father. "You can see your mother in the morning."

But Nellie did not see her mother in the morning, nor ever again. And the frail infant who cried feebly at midnight soon died also.

Nellie's father denounced God, while grief wound itself into a tight knot inside Nellie.

The family moved to an inland town in New South Wales, called Mudgee, to try to begin a new life. The father grew increasingly bitter and Nellie's fears increased. She seemed filled with questions that she could confide to no-one. Why had God taken her mother away from her? Was she watching from Heaven now, holding the baby that had died? Did they need each other there and was that why they had both "passed on", as people called dying?

In the night she often cried to God, "Please take me to my mother!"

But God was a severe gentleman with a bearded face like her father and he lived afar off, yet he must have heard her prayers for one Sunday Nellie discovered him at a Salvation Army service.

*Pass me not, oh gentle Saviour, hear my humble cry
While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by,*

the nine-year-old sang from a red-covered song book. Then the Salvation Army Captain spoke, urging his congregation to give their hearts to God. Nellie sat stiffly in her chair.

"Come," urged the Salvationist preacher. "Come to the penitents' rail and give your life to God who loves you."

At that moment the preacher caught Nellie's eye. Flushing deeply, she stood up and forced her black-laced boots to walk to the front. There

her heart warmed with assurance that, from this moment on, she belonged to God who loved her. Loved her -- timid Nellie Kreutzberg who had no mother! Then the tight knot inside her heart began to unravel... She wondered if she should tell the Salvation Army officer that her name was really Eleanor Maude, for it was such an important event.

About this time Nellie began piano lessons because she had shown a remarkable ear for music and ability to play any tune she had heard. Her teacher lived across the street from the Kreutzberg's and Nellie went to her teacher's house often. By her thirteenth birthday she played competently.

One afternoon, while curled up in a big chair with one of Mrs Vincent's books about Mozart, Nellie noticed two ladies enter the spare bedroom.

"Those ladies will be staying here for a few weeks," Mrs Vincent explained. They have some books to sell in the district."

"Oh," replied Nellie. Two ladies selling books would not concern her. Yet they did...

Soon after their visit, Mrs Vincent asked Nellie not to go to her house on Saturdays any more for lessons. She told why. "I have learnt that the seventh day of the week, which is Saturday --not Sunday -- is God's true day of worship. It is a day of rest and worship for all those who love and belong to him."

Nellie went home with much more than crotchets, minims and two-four time in her head that day. She went home determined to rest and worship on the seventh day of the week because it was a day set apart for those who loved God. No texts. No arguments. Just acceptance and belief.

Friday came. "Nellie," reminded her father, "tomorrow I want you to help me in the store."

She did not argue because never in her life had she treated her father that way. She determined, however, that she would rest on the Sabbath day.

Next morning, when the breakfast dishes were put away and her bed had been patted smooth, Nellie stole away to fields beyond her home. In her hand she clutched a hymn book from which she planned to read and sing all day.

Hours passed. Once Nellie thought she heard a brother and sister calling her name but she knew they would want to play hide-and-seek or take her home, so she did not reply. She walked and prayed, read and sang.

In the afternoon she found a green patch near a pile of logs beside a creek. There she sat down to memorise a hymn she especially liked. "Beautiful flowers, bright with morning dew..." she repeated the words to herself.

Suddenly came the awareness that she was not alone. It was as if she received a message, "Nellie, go away from here. There is danger. Go NOW." In response to the impression she rose and hurried away. In her flight, half-turning around, she saw a man rise menacingly up from behind one of the logs where she had been sitting.

Nellie believed an angel had warned her of the man's evil intentions. This gave assurance of God's care for her on the first Sabbath day she tried to keep holy.

At sunset, returning to her home, she wondered what her father would say about her disobedience to him. Soon she knew.

"Vat you do today? You did not come to the store. Vere you haf been." Her father eyed the hymnbook with hard eyes. His voice cut like a sword.

"I kept the Sabbath, Father." Was that thin little voice her own?

"Ess not your mother's Sabbath good enough?"

"Oh Father, Mrs Vincent said --"

"Has she bound you to this idea? Are you forced into it?" Her father's

voice warmed a little.

"I want to keep the true Sabbath because -- because I belong to God. He loves me, and I love Him."

"Vat ees God who make a child disobey his father?" her father stormed. You must forget all this. Forget it!"

Nellie did not forget, however. Her jaw could be as set as her father's when she chose.

Mrs Vincent tried to make reconciliation between father and daughter but he refused to listen. He made it clear that Nellie could choose to obey him and live at home, or to obey God and the Sabbath and be turned away forever. As a result she moved into Mrs Vincent's home.

When Nellie was approaching her fourteenth birthday her father arranged a position in the country. With a small box of possessions she boarded the coach that would take her away from Mudgee. She scarcely saw Mrs Vincent's wave for her eyes were filled with damp pictures: of her father as he went to work that morning without looking at her where she stood across the street; of her brothers and sisters; of her Mother's dark eyes and gentle words.

As the coach rumbled away, Nellie's tears flowed freely. It was a sad, lonely day, like the darkest of nights when her mother died.

Thirty miles on Nellie alighted. She looked up at her new employer, seeking some sign of kindness, but there was no sign in the unsmiling face above a black, pin-tucked bodice.

That night, after she had washed and dried a pile of dishes, and scraped and scrubbed a stack of greasy pans, she crept into an attic bedroom. There she prayed to God and promised to be true to Him, yet how her heart pounded with fear. Floor boards creaked; a mouse scuttled under the bed; and whatever

made that wailing from the wild bush beyond the stock rails? She did not know, then, that it was only curlew birds that cried in the night. The cries seemed an echo of her own heart-cry. Only in the early morning hours did she fall asleep.

On her first Saturday Nellie tried to tell her employer that she could not sweep and scrub that day. The woman replied, "My religion teaches me to be clean. Do your work as I have told you. Get busy at once!"

The children of the house taunted her,

Jew girl, Jew; Jew girl, Jew!
Get a piece of pork. Set it on a fork.
Jew girl, Jew; Jew girl, Jew!

That Saturday night Nellie felt weak with hunger for she had not been offered food all day because she refused to work. When sunset came she preferred not to eat bread that had been baked on the Sabbath. By her bed she pleaded, "Oh God, take me to my mother."

A week passed during which the girl was forced to work harder than she had ever done in her life. Although she was a perfectionist, having learnt this from her father, her work was never quite good enough for her unsmiling employer. And always there was one more room to polish or one more shirt to patch.

Eventually Nellie returned to Mudgee where again her father demanded that she give up her belief in the seventh-day Sabbath.

Again Nellie boarded a coach that would take her away from her home. This time the parting was final. She went to Sydney to live with an Adventist friend of Mrs Vincent's. There Nellie worshipped on the Sabbath day and found happiness with her Adventist "family." A girl in the family was like a sis. Four years passed. She grew to be a slender young woman of five feet, two inches in height, with long golden hair as bright as a sovereign, quiet

thoughtful; daily dependant upon God for courage.

After she had heard Ellen White speak about the right use of talents, Nellie wondered what hers might be. Then she read in 1 Corinthians 12:28 about the various gifts in the church and noticed the gift of "helps". She stopped at the word, her mind suddenly illuminated. Yes, she would be a helper to others in life! And what better way to help than to be a nurse!

In 1901 Nellie enrolled at the Summer Hill Medical and Surgical Sanitarium. Her old enemy, Fear, taunted her as she approached the place but she prayed silently for courage. She walked in with serious face and head held high; one small bag in her hand and two pennies in her purse.

She was placed on probation to begin domestic duties in the hospital. So she assisted with cooking, serving, washing up, scrubbing floors and doing laundry work. Another probationer, Lydia Davies, worked alongside her. "I'm the chief cook," laughed good-natured Lydia, "and you are the chief bottle washer!"

"I wonder when we will receive our uniforms and start nursing," pondered Nellie.

"Very soon," their supervisor, Mrs Shannon, told them. "You're both good reliable girls." Nellie blushed.

Nellie had another task -- one that absorbed her after-work hours. Darning! Those stockings of hers -- how they snagged or wore thin before exploding into holes! They were just too old and there was no money for any others. So she darned and she darned until the original heel and toes disappeared. And then she told God about her problem, timidly asking Him if He would help her.

Next day she found some new stockings on her bed. So then she told God about another problem, ashamed that she should have to bother Him with such a trifle, but not knowing where else to turn. "It's about hair pins, Lord," she said. "I've lost so many that I have scarcely enough to pin up my hair."

Soon after, a packet of the long hair pins she needed for her hair lay on her bed.

One evening as she came off duty she heard her friend, Lydia, calling excitedly, "See what's arrived. On your bed!"

In her room she discovered two nurse's dresses, three aprons, two pairs of stockings, one pair of shoes, and Lydia, beaming as she paraded in her own newly acquired uniform.

Both girls felt cold when icy winds blew over to Sydney from the Blue Mountains in the west. Both prayed about it and rejoiced when a grateful patient donated a bolt of flannelette that was shared among needy nurses to make warm petticoats and drawers.

To Nellie, God's face no longer appeared like that of a severe gentleman. She knew she could trust Him completely in the little and big things of life. As a result, one Sabbath afternoon during her training, Pastor J.E. Fulton baptized her in a pool in a gully, down behind the new sanitarium building at Wahroonga.

Nellie attended every prayer-band and devotional meeting that she could because she felt starved for knowledge and spiritual understanding. Even if she needed to wash her apron, if it was prayer-meeting time, she would leave her suds and go to the meeting. She often repeated her cherished Bible texts: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15) and "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." (Proverbs 22:1)

She passed her examinations successfully, with praise from the doctors. After graduation, in 1903, she went to Adelaide to work as head nurse at the Adelaide Sanitarium.

On one occasion, at camp-meeting, she heard a young minister speak of God's loving care. Impressed by his sincerity and bearing she remarked, "What a noble young man!"

That minister was the one who had heard a call to his heart through a blood-stained Bible; who had lived in Ellen White's home and gone to Rarotonga as the first Adventist

missionary to the Pacific Islands from Australasia; who, while president of the New South Wales Conference, invited Miss E. Kreutzberg to engage in Bible work at Campsie. He was Pastor A.H. Piper.

Following her experience as a Bible worker, Nellie resumed nursing at the Sydney Sanitarium where she had earlier graduated in its first nursing class. While there, she helped care for Pastor Piper's wife and children in 1911-12 during Hettie's last days.

CHAPTER 8. IN THE GOLDEN WEST

On the seventeenth day of September, 1913, it was a beautiful Spring day, bright with smiling pansies and violas and sunlight. Just the day for a wedding!

A wedding day it was, indeed. The bride was thirty-one years old, Miss Eleanor Maude Kreutzberg, known to her friends--such as Lydia and Louise who were smiling wedding guests--as Nellie. The groom was Pastor Albert Henry Piper, seven years her senior. Pastor J.E. Fulton was the officiating minister.

It was a simple ceremony, held in the New South Wales Conference office at Strathfield. The couple spent their honeymoon at a church conference. Soon afterwards they, with Albert junior and Laurence, travelled across the Australian continent. "To the golden west," declared A.H., as he was becoming known. "The golden west," echoed his bride.

In Perth, A.H. began his work as president of the Western Australian Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He chose not to live in Perth, however, preferring the air of the Darling Ranges where he had built a home previously. There, at Heidelberg, in a timber house with shady verandahs where golden-cream roses trailed; on a two acre property with an established vegetable garden and orange and peach trees, the family settled down to make a new life.

Every week-day morning A.H. left on the seven o'clock train to travel to the Conference Office. At seven in the evening he was always met by Albert junior and Laurence, vying to carry his Gladstone bag. This was time for A.H. to share with his sons -- Albert, nearly twelve, and nine years old Laurence, still small and energetic. Both boys attended the Bickley Church School and had tales to tell of their day's activities or the antics of their temperamental cow. Or about what their new mother had said or done...

Before the boys left for school in the morning, Nellie insisted they help with washing and drying the breakfast dishes. One morning Laurence failed to scrub the porridge pot completely clean.

A knock sounded at the school-room door. The teacher went to the door and began to talk to someone outside. At times during the conversation she glanced over to Laurence who grew more and more aware that her conversation concerned him.

The teacher returned to the room, leaving the door ajar. Outside stood the new Mrs A.H.Piper, zealous in character training for her step-sons. She had come to take Laurence home to complete his chores properly.

The teacher fully agreed that "if a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well"; that "we must shape characters for eternity." She offered red-faced Laurence no sympathy, only telling him he must hurry back to complete his maths ---otherwise they would have to be done for homework. Nor did his father offer much sympathy that evening at seven when the train arrived from Perth. Laurence shrugged, bearing no malice, and made sure that next time he cleaned the porridge pot he did a superlative job!

Albert settled down less easily than Laurence. He muttered about having to water the garden every afternoon, to chop and stack fire-wood and to care for the cow. That cow was a cow of a cow --always chose Friday nights to get sick or to produce calves, just the time when Father was away.

As for the so-called family picnics when the family went out into the bush, Albert junior pointed out that you got your nice lunch only after you had filled the cart with wood, and that was hot, heavy work.

He threatened to run away. But where could he run? Grandma Mary Piper, whom he loved, lived far, far away in New Zealand. Aunty Mabel, who was fun and loveable, lived even further away than Grandma, for she was a missionary in Fiji with Uncle Harold and cousin Ivan. Mrs Butz, who had been kind and gentle with him when he had stayed at her house at Cooranbong, had probably moved by this time, and Mrs Freeman, another lady he had stayed with ... Too many homes! Too much confusion! His mutterings and unrest hid anguish for the loss of his own, deeply precious mother.

"Let's hurry up and do our chores," suggested Laurence, "then we can play in our tree-house. Ship ahoy! --full steam to Rarotonga!"

For a brief play-time they were children. Inside, when the inside jobs were done, Laurence read. "You're becoming a book-worm, Son," commented his father. Albert junior chose to do artistic needle-work.

Nellie approved when the boys were busy. She believed that not a moment should be frittered away in idleness. At lunch times she sat with them as they ate their lunch, reading to them from *Desire of Ages*.

In the winter of 1915, A.H. received a letter from W.C.White about the death of Ellen White, his mother. For several days sorrow embraced Albert Piper as he remembered her intervention in his life, led, he firmly believed, by the Spirit of God. She had been prophet, mother and friend. Her influence would stay with him always.

1916 came, bringing a new teacher to the church school. She told Laurence his writing looked as if a spider had wandered all over the pages! Laurence hid his smile.

Outside the school there was much talk of the terrible war that raged on the other side of the world. The boys overheard discussions about "combatants" and "non-combatants." A.H. wondered how the Adventist believers in Europe were faring.

Soon after Christmas day, 1916, a golden day occurred --the birth of a baby girl, named Clarice Muriel. She did not time her arrival well for A. H. had travelled to church meetings in South Australia. When the news reached him his eyes lit with joy. "I have a baby daughter," he sang in his heart all day."

In Perth, resting after the birth of her first child, Nellie Piper recalled a vow she had made years before, "My home will be my kingdom. I will LOVE my children. If they are good, they will have good faces. I would rather have good faces than curls!"

Over in South Australia, A.H. continued to sing in his heart, "Praise the Lord! I have a baby daughter."

At home, Albert junior and Laurence presented a bouquet of flowers to Nellie, asking, "May we wheel the pram?"

In the following September, A.H.Piper became principal of the Darling Range School that was situated a mile from his home, beyond a Jarrah forest through which he walked every day. He now applied to the school scene the spiritual leadership and diligence in stewardship that had characterized his ministry since he received the letter from Ellen White in 1900.

Twelve year old Laurence noticed his father's care in buying when he accompanied him to the Perth grain merchant. He began to grow aware of the importance of financial books balancing and absorbed his father's philosophy that, as one ascends the ladder that is Jesus, right-doing pervades every aspect of life -- even in buying fodder at an economical rate for a school dairy herd.

February 20, 1918, the Piper family rejoiced at the birth of a boy, Athol Vivian, named after the Athol Gardens at Campsie, where Nellie had worked as a Bible Worker.

Clarice, by this, was fourteen months old. She stayed with the school teacher, Miss Schnepel, while her mother was in hospital. Her fingers traced the outline of pink rose buds on the wallpaper in the strange bedroom, fascinated by their colour and form. When Miss Schnepel turned off the light, the little girl stayed bravely in the dark but she hoped her Mummy would come home soon...

Around the world many were hoping and praying for the return of loved ones from World War I. When they returned they brought with them the virulent post-war flu. It even entered into the Darling Ranges, where A.H. felt deep concern for his sixty students, especially since he himself had spent several days on a train quarantined outside of Kalgoorlie.

"That day-student, Len Minchin -- news has come that his mother has died from the

flu," A.H. informed his faculty. "We must all support him through his grief and point him to the hope of the second coming of our Lord."

"A pleasant young fellow," commented the Bible teacher, "but timid. Low self-esteem, I'd say. I think he'll take his mother's death very hard."

"Abused as a child by a public school teacher. Verbal abuse and physical punishments until he has grown up believing that he really is a dunce. I was pleased to see him baptized. The Lord can transform even a dunce and dullard, although I do not believe that Len Minchin is such," added Pastor A.H. Piper.

Len Minchin appreciated the kindness and friendship of the principal, staff and students of the Darling Range School during his time of grief in 1919. Happily he became a boarding student in 1920, despite the five a.m. waking bell and the sprint to be in chapel by half-past five. He loved to attend the Friday night devotional meetings and noted the presence of all the Piper family. He felt impressed by the way his teachers prayed in the classroom, and the remarkable way he was learning and soaking up knowledge. Above all, he loved and respected Pastor A.H. Piper who set the tone of the campus. He watched as his principal entered the school grounds, noticing his gracious, refined manner; the way he held himself erect with head high; the way he showed genuine interest in every student, often saying, with his hand on a young man's shoulder, "The Lord wants you."

One day Nellie Piper saw her husband intent on preparation for a chapel talk. "What is it you will talk about today?" she enquired.

"I have called it *God's Plan for Our Lives*," he replied. "You will remember Mrs White's marvellous statement --"

Nellie repeated, "There is no limit to the usefulness of one, who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart--"

A.H. joined in with his wife, completing the quotation, "and lives a life wholly devoted to God."

"So what will you tell the students?" continued his wife, pausing briefly from her mending.

"I will speak as the Spirit of God moves me but the sermon notes I have prepared elaborate on Bible characters who have heard God's call. Then I will tell them that God takes young people as they are and educates them for His service, if they will yield their lives to Him."

Len Minchin listened intently as Pastor Piper spoke that day in the chapel. He heard Ellen White's words, *There is no limit to the usefulness of one, who, by putting self aside...*

Then he heard Pastor Piper's reasoning tones, "These are divinely inspired thoughts, are they not? This means that any of you --any young man or woman who is willing to put self aside-- can be of limitless use to God. Any of you --the girl in the kitchen, the boy from the farm--"

At that, Len Minchin riveted his attention on the speaker's eyes. Why, *he* was the boy from the farm. The college principal was talking about *him!* But he was a dunce...

"God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him, the servant of the Lord has told us," insisted Albert Piper. And as he spoke, it seemed to the young man that God placed his hand on his shoulder and said, "I want *YOU!*"

He responded, "Lord, I want you, too!" He resolved to prepare to become a minister. And from that day on he regarded Pastor A.H. Piper as his spiritual mentor.

They were busy, happy days at the college in the golden west, marred only by Albert junior's continued unrest. Laurence now lived in the college dormitory, where Len Minchin was a friend and fellow student. Laurence continued to be a lover of books and

showed ability for business subjects.

A mile away through the Jarrah forest, in the wide verandahed timber house, Nellie Piper listened to three years-old Clarice as she talked about the last college picnic when she had ridden in the college dray, pulled by an enormous draught horse. Her blue eyes looked big and round as she talked about the b-i-g horse and how, at the picnic, she had found two pennies in a tree stump.

In his cot, Athol, a toddler who talked and toiled until he dropped, lay with spread arms and legs in his afternoon nap. Looking at her two children with their healthy complexions and handsome features, Nellie wondered about the future...

On February 20, 1920, Olive Heather was born, exquisite as a velvet-petalled flower.

Albert and Nellie rejoiced at the beautiful family God had given them, vowing, again, to train their young lives with diligence and to surround them with love. Only little Clarice complained. She had lost her celluloid doll.

At the end of the school year, the Piper family began to pack for A.H. had been asked to become conference president in Victoria. For seven years he had led in the west. Perhaps some considered him exacting, but he asked nothing that he, himself, was not prepared to do or donate.

Goodbye, happy home at Bickley where golden wattles spread about the front gate.

Goodbye, house of many memories, with lattice work of golden-cream roses tipped with crimson; where heart-ache healed and new life began.

Goodbye, students of the Darling Range School, where the Lord called and you answered.

To Victoria...

CHAPTER 9. THE GYPSY'S WARNING

Four children played in the back garden of 69 Victoria Street, Box Hill. Two were fair-haired sisters, Clarice and Heather. With them were their brother, Athol, and their cousin, Ilma. They were playing hospitals.

"I want to do an operation," announced Athol, picking up Clarice's doll. "She has a very bad saw-dust ache."

"Ye-s," agreed Clarice, cautiously. "But only if it is a PRETEND operation. Last time you did one you really slit my doll's mouth open to take out her tonsils. And you ruined her!"

"Oh that was a long time ago -- when I was little, after I came home from hospital at Warburton; after I'd had gastroenteritis." He pronounced his final word with style.

"Yes, and I hid you from Mother, so you would not be punished. And Mother told me that mothers have to chastise their children if they are to grow up good and go to Heaven. So if you wreck my doll today, you'll be in trouble, Athol Piper!"

"What's chastise mean?" asked Heather.

"Oh, you know!" said Ilma. "No supper when you've been naughty, or a beating. Go on, Athol, do a boperation."

While Heather and Clarice giggled, Athol looked reprovingly at his cousin. "Boperation! That's what I said when I was very little, so you stop teasing! Come on Clarice, you need to take off her dress or there'll be blood on it!"

"Promise it's a PRETEND operation."

"Promise!"

Surgery began. Heather, not needed at the operating table, ran to the front of the house to gather some leaves and tiny flowers from which to make ointments and medicine.

While she was there a stranger opened the front gate and walked along the path. Heather noticed the woman's swarthy skin, her head-scarf and skirt of striking colors, the bracelets at her wrists and hoops at her ears. Fascinated, she followed the stranger around to the back door.

The other children paused to listen as the stranger asked for assistance. Then they resumed their game, for strangers seeking food or clothing were a common sight at their door. The children knew that Mrs Piper would help anyone in need, like they did themselves when they playing a game about the Good Samaritan.

Heather, however, sat down on the grass, watching as her mother gave the woman some bread. She also watched the dark-complexioned stranger who now looked over at the children. There she saw Athol, firmly bandaging a doll's abdomen, and Clarice, poised ready with a blanket to wrap the patient warmly. Ilma fed another sick doll from a tea-spoon.

"Cross my hands with silver and I'll tell you your fortune," coaxed the stranger to Nellie Piper. "I could tell you what lies in the future."

"No thank you," said Nellie Piper firmly. "Our lives are in God's hands. Good afternoon."

The woman repeated her offer in a whining voice. Again Nellie Piper refused.

"Then I'll tell you, anyway!" The woman eyed the children again with her dark brown eyes, then she said, as in a trance, "The tall girl will grow up to be very efficient. The boy will be a doctor for sure, afar off. The other girl -- not yours, Ma'am -- will live a successful life. And the little one --" She dwelt on Heather's upturned face. "To the little one much sorrow will come. And I see other trials in the future... If you could cross my hand with silver, perhaps I could change all that... No? Then you have been warned!"

Nellie Piper hurried the stranger away to the front gate, hoping the children had not heard. Fortune telling was of the Devil.

Athol continued his interest in operations. When the cow was ill from overeating pollard, the little boy watched intently as a veterinary surgeon made an incision in the beast and spooned out the grain. Yet he feared dogs and Clarice, self-appointed mother-substitute, did her best to reassure and teach him. Gradually he learnt to pat a dog.

Heather, however, loved animals. She would have kept a menagerie if she had been allowed. An unusually pretty and happy child, she showed no signs of being overcome by sorrow, as the gypsy woman had forewarned. Nellie almost forgot the occasion...

A.H. missed many incidents of his second family's early childhood years because of his presidential appointments that took him throughout the State of Victoria. His homecomings were always joyous occasions from the first sound of him calling "Toot-toot" as he approached the house. After the hugs and kisses were over, he unpacked his Gladstone bag finding surprises as he did so. "Why, what have we here? An orange for Clarice! And what can this bulge be, inside my shirt? Why, it's a shiny pencil for Heather. And Athol, my son, here's something you will like! And little Mother, I wonder if you could do anything with this dress length?" He never forgot them.

Neither did he forget his older sons. Albert junior, who had chosen to stay in Western Australia, still caused his father heart-ache for he was so unsettled. Albert prayed earnestly that healing would erase the pain from his oldest son's heart.

Laurence had also stayed on awhile in the west but had come to the Health Retreat at Warburton early in 1921. There he worked as a general assistant, doing a variety of jobs during the day and studying accountancy in the evenings. One day, so his father heard, the administrator caught Laurence reading *Hemingway's Accountancy, Book 1*, while milking a cow slowly, slowly...

In 1922, after passing his first auditing and book-keeping examination, Laurence went

to Wahroonga, New South Wales, to work at the head office of the Adventist Church in Australasia. He was appointed to the Union Office Treasury Department and boarded with his Aunt Mabel who had returned from Fiji. Her husband, Pastor Harold White, was now Home Missions Secretary for the Australasian Union Conference.

A.H. praised God that Laurence, still only a young man, was a committed Christian and would be of usefulness in the work of the church.

"Yes, Heather, perhaps you could have a kitten when we live at Avondale. Yes, Athol, there is a creek there, and Clarice, you will learn the piano." Nellie Piper prepared the children for a move to the college at Avondale where A.H. was going to be Bible teacher in 1923

They moved into a faculty home, a hundred yards or so from Bethel Hall. As A.H. joined the staff he wondered where the past twenty-five years had gone. And still not in the kingdom of Heaven. Why had the Lord delayed his coming? They must work and pray harder!

With energy he planned his classes, passing on to the young men lessons from his own ministry. One topic concerned *The Department and Bearing of the Minister*. He presented nine aspects that he considered important:

1. The Person: dress, collars, boots, nails, hands. Never hands in pockets.
2. The Voice.
3. The Personality: never be coarse or reckless in language. Calmness in preaching, entertaining or in conversation.
4. Behaviour in Pulpit: attitude to prayer. If things go wrong, do not get excited. Never let things be by chance. Plan your work -- work your plan.

5. Relationships to the opposite sex.
6. Beware for the buying-selling habit.
7. Let not your good be evil spoken of.
8. Study habits.
9. Pray and shave every day. (1)

On another occasion he advised his class about integrity in finance and record keeping. He foresaw that energetic and dedicated young men such as David Sibley, a former black-smith, and Alex Campbell, eager for mission work, might well be in positions of leadership in the future, Thus he passed on counsel that he himself had received.

On the domestic scene, Heather became "mother" to a cat which soon became a mother itself, producing kittens on one of the beds. Cries of both dismay and delight came from A.H.'s women-folk. Athol regarded the tiny bundles of wet, mewling fur with interest.

Thus 1923-24 were memory-making years for the young family at Avondale: They discovered the bush and the tiny orchids and delicate ferns that grew there. Clarice, Athol and their mother caught a severe flu and had to be cared for by A.H. and Heather, who showed no sign of succumbing to any disease.

Clarice had her tonsils out and was pestered, afterwards, by Athol who wanted to know all about it. Torrential rains made the winter memorable. Then came a holiday at Mereweather Beach -- hurrah for the sea! Then home again to Louquats and Isabella grapes that ripened in the garden.

Athol built a step-ladder that his mother used with caution and pride. But she was NOT amused when he chained his father up with a cow chain and padlock so that A.H. almost missed a train to a committee meeting at Wahroonga.

1925-26, A.H. was back for a second term as president of the South New South Wales

(1) These lecture notes are among A.H.Piper's papers.

Conference. The family moved into a home not far from the Sydney Sanitarium, in Elizabeth Street, Wahroonga.

A.H. travelled daily to the office at Strathfield by train. At night, he left the train at Normanhurst, walked up the hill, over Pennant Hills Road, down Mt Pleasant Avenue, across Lipscombe's field, then through the gully to home. As he saw the little lights twinkling out a welcome to him, he called "Coo-ee" several times so that Nellie could expect him.

"Coo-ee", he called again at the gate as Heather's Border Collie barked in recognition. Once A.H. had gone inside, the Collie would bark again at shadows, phantoms and the moon, but the scene inside Elizabeth Street, Wahroonga, home of the A.H. Piper family, was cosy, secure and abundant in love.

CHAPTER 10. HOLD STEADY. HOLD STEADY!

During the years 1927-37, Albert Henry Piper was at his peak in administrative leadership of the Adventist Church in Australasia. During this time he served as Secretary of the Australasian Union Conference, and as Vice-President for Island Missions. The latter appointment particularly concerned the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island.

His skill as a committee man became more and more apparent and respected. As discussion flowed back and forth he would remain silent, listening and analysing. At the psychologically right moment he would stand and "pool together diverse viewpoints and sum them up in one masterful conclusion. While not educated as a lawyer, he had a legal mind and could present a flawless, logical argument." (1)

Records of the period indicate his extensive involvement and responsibility in various areas: publishing, religious liberty, camp-meeting devotionals, Sydney Sanitarium Board, field secretary for Sabbath Schools...

On April 1, 1931, he presented Adventist views regarding a new arbitration bill to the New South Wales Legislative Council. Two months later, on June 10th, he helped to word a petition to the League of Nations regarding calendar reform. The following December, the Union Conference committee heard of the defeat of the calendar proposal at Geneva.

He was also involved in purchasing various mission sites. One of these was for the Amyes Memorial Hospital on the island of Malatia in the Solomon Islands.

In the Union Conference minutes, September 5, 1935, it is recorded that A.H.Piper was asked to prepare material for the church paper, urging young folk to greater simplicity in wedding services.

(1) W.G.C. Murdoch, in a letter to the author, August 21, 1980. See Appendix.

The minutes for March 31, 1936, refer to departure to U.S.A. for the pre-session meetings and the General Conference, his second visit to the United States.

These were years when he exemplified maxims he lived by, such as, *Plan your work, then work your plan.* Others, for which he became known were, *Duty before inclination;* and, *When in doubt, don't!* And in his calm, constant faith: *Hold Steady; Hold Steady!*

During these years A.H. travelled from home frequently, yet he wrote every week to his wife, enclosing little letters for each of the children.

When he arrived home it was a great event for the family. Athol especially liked the time when he went outside Sydney Harbour in a pilot boat to meet the steamer on which his father was travelling.

Excitement reached a peak as A.H. unpacked his suitcase for there were surprises for everyone: a cake of perfumed soap, a lovely shell, a piece of softly tinted coral or perhaps a boat carved by an island chief. A.H. did not celebrate the traditional date of Christmas, but he made up for it with gifts during the year.

At home again, between trips to the Pacific Islands, to New Zealand or around Australia, A.H. visited patients in the Sydney Sanitarium every Friday evening. Athol, who often accompanied him, soon learnt that God heard the prayers of his father for those in grief or pain. The doctors and nursing staff appreciated the way that Pastor Piper visited, not lingering and tiring a patient, but moving on after some encouraging words and a prayer.

One Sabbath afternoon, A.H. took Athol with him when he baptized a man in a bath tub in the hydrotherapy treatment rooms. Another time the boy watched as his father anointed a dying minister. During the solemn service, the Holy Spirit for whom his father prayed, anointed his own son's heart, calling him to service for humanity.

On many Sabbath afternoons the Piper family walked in the bush which grew near the

sanitarium and bordered their Elizabeth Street house. As they wandered among the Gums and wild flowers, crossed the stream in the gully or climbed up to be King of the Castle on a rocky outcrop, A.H. subtly directed his children's thoughts to their marvellous creator-sustainer-God. Nellie walked part of the way, then found a pleasant place to sit and rest her varicosed legs while father and children pursued a 'possum's nest or walked further into the bush.

If he was at home when a family pet died, A.H. mourned with the children. He helped them make a grave and a suitably encribed head-marker: *Here rests Fluffy...*

Summer holidays came with their sun-drenched, hot days. "Where are we going for our holidays?"

"To Collaroy beach, of course!"

So off they went for two weeks by the sea, with much of the children's time spent in their swimming costumes. But never on Sabbaths. A.H., however, took a daily cold bath by diving into the surf every morning, Sabbaths included. He did not swim about -- just rubbed himself down, walked up on to the sand and dried himself. Those were times when Athol and his sisters wished they had a daily cold bath habit, too!

Back at the home in Elizabeth Street they would have hardly unpacked and bought new supplies for the pantry when visitors started arriving. "It's like George Street here," laughed Mable one day. "Do you ever have the house to yourselves?"

"Oh, there's only one lady from the country staying with us at the moment." answered Nellie, seriously. "And her two children. They had nowhere else to stay while their father is in the sanitarium very ill."

"And last week you had the parents of a nurse from New Zealand. And tomorrow the Tolhursts from Tonga arrive. And the Sterlings from the Cook Islands after that..."

"We had a good time when Napthall from Fiji stayed with us," Clarica told her Aunty Mable. "Mother always has room for people who need help."

Meeting with missionaries, church members, and leaders of the Union Conference in the Elizabeth Street house gave the Piper children an excellent social education that added to their lessons at the Wahroonga Church School which they attended from age seven years on. At school the three of them demonstrated that they had good minds as well as "good faces." Clarice especially shone at art. She received many congratulations when she won a State-wide art competition. She also enjoyed playing the piano and accompanied the singing for school worships by the time she was ten. At camp-meeting, a young minister, Pastor Len Minchin, enjoyed her pounding out, "The Captain calls for you!"

Nellie worried about where her children would go to high school, for at that time there was no Adventist secondary school in Sydney. So she prayed to the God who had provided her with hair pins and flannel drawers in her former time of need. As a result, when A.H. returned from a trip to Fiji in 1927, his wife told him that an Adventist high school was planned to begin at North Sydney the following year, next to the Chandos street Adventist Church. Clarice believed that her mother had prayed that school into existence just for her!

No matter how much homework the children had to do, or music scales to practise, Clarice, Athol and Heather knew -- as had Laurence and Albert junior, in Western Australia -- that their parents expected them to work with industry about their home. So while other children may have played, Athol cut firewood, gathered hay for the cow or dug the vegetable garden alongside his father who always cultivated a garden of flowers and vegetables.

The sisters learnt to sew, cook, clean house and care for their own corner of the fernery. In their spare time they dressed little dolls for sales of work to raise money for missions.

Sometimes the children resented the emphasis on duty rather than pleasure. Nevertheless they were growing to be children of good character and honest faces who

followed the pattern of industry, faith in a personal Lord, courtesy and unselfishness that their parents exemplified.

Athol, however, had a boyhood problem about his father. *WHY* did he shake hands with so many people all the way down the church aisle until he reached the family pew near the front? The lad felt embarrassment, for a time. Later, Athol realized that his father's genuine interest in people was one of the things that endeared him to so many all over Australasia.

The children never at all saw their parents angry, quarrelsome, critical or using bad language. The nearest thing to an expletive that Athol ever heard was when his father searched for the cow, saying, "I wonder where that blessed cow has got to?"

Over in Western Australia, Albert junior, now married, worked as a builder, but he had abandoned his Adventist faith. A.H. praised the Lord that his eldest son was now more settled, so that healing had begun at last. He also continued to pray with great earnestness that Albert junior would find complete renewal in Jesus.

Laurence continued to give his father no worries. A genial, well-adjusted man and qualified accountant who had worked for the Adventist Church in both Sydney and Melbourne, Laurence became auditor of the Australasian Union Conference in 1931. A.H. enjoyed visiting Laurence in his home. Laurence's wife, Gwen -- the former Nurse Gwen Bridges of the Sydney Sanitarium -- had decorated it with well chosen drapes, matching cushions and decorative touches that made their home a beautiful and restful place. A.H. commented, with what Laurence detected as a wistful note in his voice, "Laurence's mother would have loved it." On the wall hung a white framed picture in delicate cross-stitch...

One evening when he visited Laurence and Gwen, A.H. told them about his recent visit to New Zealand where he had given a series of meetings at the New Zealand Missionary College. He had also called in to Wellington to see his mother, widowed since Joseph's death in 1930. Nina had died, too, of a heart disorder. A.H. reported on these things. Then

he said, "While I was in Wellington I called in at my old department with the New Zealand Public Service. I spent some time with the Commissioner of Stamps and Deeds -- used to be my junior, back in 1896."

Laurence asked, "Does that mean you would have been Commissioner now in the ordinary course of events?"

His father inclined his head. "Yes, I believe so. In fact my friend, the Commissioner of Stamps and Deeds, reminded me of it. So I asked him if he travelled at all. He said that he hardly ever left Wellington, and certainly did not go outside New Zealand."

Laurence and Owen smiled, thinking of the thousands of miles that A.H. covered in the course of his work; the heathens he had seen converted to clean living; his experiences and friends all over the world.

A.H. added, "The Lord is a good pay-master!"

Comfortable in the attractively furnished lounge room, they continued to talk. A.H. commented on the pleasure it gave him to have his motion passed by the Union Conference that the early estates owned by the church at Avondale, Wahroonga and Warburton should always be maintained. In response to Laurence's remark, he also agreed that he was on the Founders' Board of the local Hornsby Hospital.

Then Laurence asked his father if he had any news of his friend, Pastor William Warde Fletcher, former evangelist and administrator of the Adventist Church in Australia, who had vigorously propounded misleading theories concerning the Bible topic of the Sanctuary.

A.H. Piper shook his head sadly. "All I know is that the Union Conference was forced to take away his ministerial credentials. I counselled with him; pleaded with him to hold steady and not to be overwhelmed by the shifting sands of ambition and false doctrine, as was Canright in America. We did our utmost to get him back on to the fundamentals of the Spirit of Prophecy but he insisted that he could not do that and hold his own views." A.H.

paused, lost in contemplation.

He continued, "We got him to write out his ideas. He couldn't accept our counsel. The brethren sent him over to the General Conference and there he still maintained his teaching against all counsel. What a pity! What a loss!

"My son, the two great principles are the Law and the Testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. We must hold steady; hold steady!"

W.W.Fletcher's personal dilemma weighed heavily on A.H.Piper, for to him fell the lot of preaching to the church at camp-meetings and special gatherings about the former leader's misconceptions. And the man had been his dear friend.

A.H. confided his dismay about the total experience to Athol, as they hoed weeds together between orange trees. Yet, disappointed as he was in W.W.Fletcher's decision and the outcome, personal friendship could never stand in the way of right-doing. Holding steady to his calling, it was an instance of Duty before Inclination.

CHAPTER 11, PENTECOSTAL POWER-- AVONDALE 1939

"What's the new principal like?" a student of the Australasian Missionary College at Avondale asked another student in the year 1938.

"Well, he wears a black suit and looks like a gentleman. So you'd better watch out!"

"Come on now, what's he really like?"

"Like I said. And he's got a face a bit like a Kruschens Salts' advertisement. But he's okay, mate! I heard him talk at our camp-meeting and that's why I came to Avondale."

Over in Bethel Hall, where the girl students roomed, one of the students who had previously worked in a Conference Office informed her friends, "I helped look after the delegates' tents at camp-meeting and Pastor Piper was the most thoughtful of any of the ministers. He made his bed and kept his tent tidy and came to thank the office girls and the cook after camp. I think he's a gentleman to his boot-laces! I'm really glad he's our new Principal."

Her room-mate added, "His daughter, Clarice, was here in '36, my first year. She's doing shorthand and typing this year. And you must know Athol Piper -- doing accountancy. And there's another daughter, tall and pretty, called Heather. I think she's taking Business Studies."

The Piper family had returned to Avondale, and the students soon circulated word that while A.H. Piper always upheld principle in his dealings with students, he neither spoke nor acted with harshness. Moreover, he seemed genuinely kind and interested in them.

"Why did they choose him?" someone ventured. "He's no academic. More like a patriarch than your usual college Principal!"

"One of C.H. Watson's bright ideas -- you know, Union president. Wants us to have a college Principal that sticks closely to the blue-print! Ellen White and all that. A.H. lived

at Sunnyside in Mrs White's home while he was a student here. I heard him talk about it when he took Week of Prayer at my home church. It was because of his preaching that I chose to come here. I think he's great; always remembers you!"

Pastor A.H.Piper's conversation and chapel talks soon made it clear to everyone what sort of man he was. One of his early sermons concerned the theme of Righteousness by Faith. He climaxed his preaching with John 1:12:

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become
the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

At that, he took a book-mark from his Bible, and, holding it in one hand and the open Bible in another, he changed his voice to a conversational tone. Now he said, "Let this book-mark represent the Lord Jesus Christ. And let this Bible represent my life."

Then, placing the book-mark in the open Bible, "Just as this Bible receives the book-mark, so we receive Christ."

Having again repeated John chapter one, verse twelve, his voice exalted the words, "The power is a person and the person is Christ!"

On another occasion he implored his listeners to practise unbending integrity.

Often he would keep students enthralled by his stories and story-telling skill. Frequently they were stories from the early days of the Cook Islands mission, sometimes about the faithful Rarotongans who built a road rather than break God's Sabbath. "And the best road on the island it was, too." Stories about the early students at Mizpeh such as the boy who worked in the kitchen and whose parents wrote a letter of rebuke to A.H.Piper, claiming he had made their son a servant.

"I asked the boy, "Are you tired of cooking?"

"No, no I like it. Why do you ask?" the boy replied.

"So I read him the letter. It distressed him greatly. Later he wrote this letter to his parents. I will read you parts of it."

Why did you write to us as you have done?

I want to become a servant of Jesus Christ.

I want to cook in this place or any other...

Why have you sent your anger to us?

*This I have to say to you, Pray to God
in order that you might be happy again.*

*It belongs to Mama and myself to cook
the food and we are happy in our work.*

*Have I not become a servant to Mama and
has she not become a servant to all the
children and have they not become servants to me?*

We are not divided.

Look you to Philippians 2:verses 7 and 8.

Look and see the character of a servant...

Look you to Matthew 5, verse 5.

That is all.

Other stories concerned the Solomon Islands where formerly blood-thirsty savages had been transformed through the power of Jesus in their lives. To a breathless audience he told the story of the Marovo Lagoon incident when natives sped across the water in war canoes... Or he told of twenty-six years old Norman Wiles' death from Blackwater Fever in 1916, among the Big Nambus tribesmen of the New Hebrides ; how his wife bravely buried her husband and then travelled alone, except for unseen angel hosts, to the mission headquarters, by sea ,and then overland through hostile villages. Or of the local girl, Muriel Howe, so impressed that she should become a missionary nurse to China that she

let absolutely nothing stop her.

It was all thrilling stuff for aspiring missionaries. And why else did you go to the Australasian Missionary College at Avondale? To one young man who said he felt no sense of call to the mission field, his Principal's face momentarily expressed utter amazement.

Two young lady students discovered that A.H.Piper possessed a pleasing sense of humor. One humid Sunday morning, having been up from two a.m. to get the college laundry done, Elma and Fern turned on hoses to hose the laundry floor clean of suds and fluff.

They hosed the floor. They hosed the walls. ("Ha-ha!") Then they hosed the ceiling. ("Ha-ha-ha!") Then they hosed each other, laughing the whole time, until cool at last, they dripped with water.

Suddenly at the door, who should appear but Pastor A.H. Piper!

"Are you having a nice cooling down, girls?" he enquired on the verge of laughter.

They laughed. He laughed. They all laughed together as water continued to form puddles about their feet. Departing he said, "Well, carry on with your good work!"

During the vacation of 1938-39, the Piper family invited a sister and brother from New Zealand to spend two weeks vacation with them at Terrigal in a beach cottage. Thus the two students who could not afford to travel home to their own family, found a marvellous substitute family. They soon found themselves thinking of A.H. as a "really nice father" who shared their fun with them.

Mosquitos plagued Terrigal that summer. One mosquito-buzzing day, Athol was late taking his place at dinner. "Are you coming, Athol?" his mother called.

"Coming, Mother," he responded, entering the dining room swathed in mosquito netting -- a dramatic entry that caused peals of laughter right around the table.

On another day they planned a picnic. After preparing a special lunch and travelling to

the picnic spot, they sat around the table cloth spread on grass while A.H. asked the Lord to bless their food.

Everyone said "Amen" and spread out his table napkin, awaiting the food. "Mother, the salivary glands are working," announced A.H.

But where was the food? "I put it on the kitchen table..."

"I thought you put it in the car..."

"I left the water-melon in the refrigerator to keep it cool until we left..."

The lunch had been left home by mistake! Another cause for laughter, about a meal that was blessed but failed to appear.

The college year of 1939 began with an unfortunate accident at the Sanitarium Health Food Factory where many students worked to support themselves financially. On Thursday night, January twelve, an explosion and fire lit the factory like a Roman Candle. The explosion blew nineteen-years-old Milton Adams through a hatchway right into the heart of the blaze, causing his death.

Gently Pastor Piper consoled his students, directing their thoughts to Psalm 139:17,18:

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!

How great is the sum of them!

If I should count them, they are more in number

than the sand. When I am awake, I am still with Thee.

He called his talk, "Precious Thoughts, More than the Sand." That night he became, more than ever, a shepherd to his student flock. Through the open windows of the chapel they could look out into a dark night but their Principal's voice reassured them, "The way may seem dark. Life is strangely tangled at times. But God has already thought out a solution."

A gentle breeze stirred the leaves of the Jacarandas outside, sounding strangely like

waves along the sea-shore; reminding that God's thoughts for His own are precious, more in number than myriad grains of sand.

After a chapel talk like that, one went quickly and quietly to the dormitory, still hearing waves lap the sand...

In May, 1939, a second student died. She was in her first year at college, aged nineteen years. Lois Jean Andrews died soon after an appendectomy.

A.H. told his students that Lois's last words were, "I know that Jesus will save me."

These deaths sobered the college for a time but college life went on as usual with its usual balance of study and singing, pranks and play, feuds and friendships. It was in the area of friendship that A.H. Piper excelled as a preacher and guide. At camp-meetings around Australasia he was known for his series on Love, Courtship and Marriage. Those meetings were always crowded out.

At Avondale he took up this theme and although he was now a man of sixty-four years, the majority respected his counsel to young people. He admonished them that while at school, students should not allow their minds to be confused by thoughts of courtship. He painted a picture that stayed in many minds long after, as he said:

Remember, young men, the loving Creator who made the beautiful young ladies with a lovely bloom, just like the grapes on the vine.

You have noticed that delicate veil that just nicely covers and protects the skin of the grape.

Young men, never mar that natural delicate bloom of a young lady when you are courting her. It is God's natural protection to preserve her character to His glory. Do not handle her carelessly. That will smear the delicate bloom, as would happen to a grape if you rub your fingers over its skin.

Frank Breaden was one who listened attentively to such talks. He had spent a weekend in the Principal's home as Athol's guest and had also attended Athol's twenty-first birthday party. Frank wondered how one wooed and won the Principal's elder daughter.

One day he asked Clerice her opinion of a backdrop he was painting. Their eyes met and held. And both of them knew... It was like that moment back in 1898 when Albert Piper wove a blue-flowering creeper around Miss Newcombe's napkin ring.

Over on the young ladies' side of the chapel sat Miss Kathleen Kent from Bendigo, Victoria, talented as a singer. She also listened intently to Pastor Piper's advice about selecting a life partner. She half-glanced over at Athol, the principal's handsome son.

Miss Heather Piper, beautiful in both looks and character, smiled as she listened to her dear Daddy. Someday, God-willing, her knight would come riding...

A male student older than most, a well-educated gentleman from an upper middle-class background, Douglas Jenkins, considered and evaluated his Principal's words, finding them sound counsel. He also wondered at the fact that he himself was at the Avondale Missionary College. He had been baptized only a few months previously, having discovering Adventist teachings through the Radio Church of the Air. As his mind drifted from concentration on A.H.'s talk, he pictured himself in the Principal's office; hearing A.H. say on a recent day, "Douglas, I feel impressed by the Lord to tell you that the Lord could use you in His service if you will train for the ministry."

He recalled his own reply, "Pastor Piper, I have come to college for only one year, to study the Bible. I plan to return to my country property and to serve the Lord in my community."

A.H.'s words again caught Douglas's attention: "Under the untimely excitement of courtship and marriage, many students fail to retain that height of mental development which they might otherwise have gained." Pastor Piper referred his hearers to the fifth volume of Ellen White's Testimonies for the Church, to page 203.

Douglas felt quite sure that this would not concern him -- after all he had come to Avondale to study the Bible, not to find a wife. Then back to the farm...

It is the year 1939 for which Pastor Albert Piper is especially remembered at Avondale. Forty-five years and more afterwards, 1939 was still remembered as a high-water mark in the spiritual voyage of many hundreds of Seventh-day Adventist senior church members in Australasia. To talk of the outstanding event of 1939 touched the softest part in the hearts of even those who left the faith of their youth.

The memorable event was the Week of Prayer, known ever after as the Avondale Revival.

Pastor Len Minchin, now Youth Leader of the Australasian church, was the speaker, fully supported and encouraged by A.H. Piper who believed that the Lord had anointed his protégé. Supporting the speaker, also, was a nucleus of prayer cell groups which had been organized by the students themselves.

Late in August the week began in an ordinary way. Pastor Minchin felt that there was not, in fact, the response he would hope to see. By the Tuesday night, longing for Holy Spirit power to reach his hearers, he invited anyone who would like to pray with him to meet him after the evening program. He promised to wait in the music building.

To the music room came the leaders of the student movement with some others. This group prayed together, haltingly at first, then with confidence and joy. They told of their faith and what a personal God meant to their lives. A deep sense of supernatural presence began to pervade the room. At 2 a.m. some were still there, talking and praying with Len Minchin.

They decided to walk, and talk further. At the gravel pit behind the chapel they paused, resuming Bible study and prayer. At dawn they were still there. "I have never felt before

such a spirit of prayer, surrender and praise," testified Pastor Minchin. Those students who had spent much of the night in prayer, yet did not feel tired, agreed with conviction. One of them said, "Something is happening here..."

Next morning Pastor Minchin delivered the talk he had prepared on "The Spirit-filled Life." In a pause that followed, one of the students stood up and said he wanted to apologise publicly to a teacher for the wrong attitude he had shown all year. The teacher stood and replied with feeling that he himself was largely to blame; that he wanted the student to forgive him. He added that he longed for the sort of experience that Pastor Minchin had described in his talk.

These unprogrammed episodes motivated others to speak in confession and repentance. Others stood and praised God for His leading in their lives; for the assurance of His guidance in the future and the certainty of sins forgiven as they trusted in Jesus. As both faculty members and students spoke, the hands in the round-faced clock in the chapel moved on past the time allocated to a morning chapel service.

Pastor Minchin noticed the clock with some embarrassment for he realized it was time for students to be in classes. Yet many were standing, waiting to testify. Turning to his mentor he asked, "What shall we do, Pastor Piper?"

Clearly the students heard their Principal's reply, "Pastor Minchin, we shall continue with our chapel period. We cannot programme the Holy Spirit. Classes are not important in a time like this."

The meeting resumed. Sometimes a student walked out. Then a friend would follow to pray with that person and they would return together to say that they wanted Jesus and His power in their lives. This happened over and over again as the hour-hand on the clock continued to advance. Past the regular time for lunch, the students stood with bowed heads for a closing prayer to that amazing experience.

It was the beginning of the revival at Avondale. In the days that followed, the same

reaching out for forgiveness and power to live victoriously, continued in the college.

Prayer groups met at the Swing Bridge, some went into the orchard or bush, praying for themselves, for one another, for the college, for their families, for their church and nation. At night everyone assembled for Pastor Minchin's inspirational talk. A sense of joy began to grow.

In the Boys' Hall parlour, one young man began to play secular music with words and beat that were alienated to the mood of the week. In his room upstairs, one of his friends began to pray about it, telling the Lord that he wanted his buddy to know Jesus, too. He had scarcely finished praying when the music stopped abruptly.

That night a student stood and told how he had been playing some wild music during the day when strangely he had been overwhelmed by the conviction that what he was doing was the Devil's business. He decided he really neither wanted to listen to it nor play it again.

Some students began to write home, describing what was happening at Avondale and asking their parents to forgive certain wrongs. These letters began a chain reaction of heart-searching in churches all over Australasia.

Mrs A.H.Piper herself had a peculiar experience. While working in the garden at the Principal's house near the water tower, she was approached by two men, visitors to the Avondale estate.

Soon after they had exchanged greetings one of the men said, "Excuse me, but what is different about this place? I'm a Jew, myself, and I follow the practice of never smoking on Sabbaths. I was smoking about ten minutes ago, but as I came on this property I began to feel the spirit of the Sabbath. I just couldn't go on! There is a presence here!"

When Friday night came, Pastor Minchin found he did not need his talk on "How to make Surrender Real" for the students, themselves, made it an evening of spontaneous praise.

Avondale Week of Prayer, August 1939; occasion of Holy Spirit visitation. Such a

sacred time that even in retrospect Pastor E.L. Minchin found it difficult to talk about or to describe fully, although an after-glow remained in his heart.

Remarkably, at the same time of E.L. Minchin's meetings, down in the Melbourne the youth leader there, Pastor Stan Leeder, also conducted Week of Prayer meetings. With a smaller group but with the same intensity and power, the same outpouring of the Holy Spirit was revealed.

Straight after the week at Avondale, Pastor Minchin drove to The Entrance, a coastal resort town, to meet with Youth Leaders of New South Wales. As he described the Avondale experience to them, the same Spirit descended. Next day college students arrived, anxious to share their story, and so the prepared agenda was neglected for some time giving place to prayer and praise.

Back at Avondale, students asked if they could light a bonfire on which to burn their former treasures. Pastor Piper agreed and came to witness the huge fire on the lawn in front of Girls' Hall. Into the blaze went trinkets, books, records, sheet music, clothes, and anything that made its owner feel unclean.

Pastor Piper realized, with wisdom, that where the Holy Spirit works so too will fanaticism of the Devil. He thus talked to the students about "The Relationship between Fact, Faith and Feeling." He duplicated the material and distributed it. Some students kept it for reference for many years.

September 3, 1939. This day is underscored in history as the start of World War II. The event followed rapidly after the August Week of Prayer. The declaration of war made plain to college Principal, Week of Prayer speaker and Avondale students that they had been prepared for the holocaust that might ensue. Those who would serve as medics or nurses during the war, or in other roles, certainly needed a power beyond themselves to sustain them.

Laurence Gilmore was an Avondale student in 1939 who responded to the deep spirituality and father-image of A.H. Piper; who felt the impact of Pentecostal power in the Avondale revival. Following graduation in 1940 he spent 1941-45 as a medic in Papua-New Guinea, that island where Alex Campbell, A.H.'s student of 1923-24, excelled as a missionary. Laurence never lost the inspiration of the Avondale revival or A.H.'s often quoted words: "Courage in the Lord, Brethren." His voice echoed in shell-fire, dangerous river crossings or on days when the jungle throbbled with pain. Courage in the Lord sustained Laurence through those war years and in the following decades when he returned to the Pacific, another in the long line of missionaries that began with A.H. Piper in 1900.

Following the revival, Pastor C.H. Watson told the Union committee, "Let us be very careful how we criticize this movement. We cannot program the work of the Holy Spirit!"

One of the 1939 faculty described A.H. as he appeared to them:

Very kind to students and also to myself. "Courage in the Lord, Brethren..." is one of his maxims which should go into print. Another which has helped me through the years is "It does not matter what happens TO you. It's what happens IN you that counts."

"He had quite a few brickbats during that year, and I think that some were deserved, but he was always smiling and cheerful and he never showed any concern or worry. For that I admired him.

A saint is not a man without faults, but one who has given his life without reserve to God.' Maybe he qualified.

From the college glow, fires of revival swept the eastern states of Australia and beyond. A.H. allowed students to travel to tell their experience and, with each

sharing, the Holy Spirit challenged, disturbed and changed more lives.

At the Youth Congress held in Melbourne late in 1939, the power surged. On New Year's Eve, the youth chose a time of testimony and praise rather than frivolity. Some waited up to three hours to speak. Youth baptisms were greater than ever before.

Pastor E.L. Minchin, who went on to become Associate Youth Leader for the world-wide Adventist Church, marvelled at all he experienced. Never could he erase the memory of that last Friday night of the Avondale revival when he saw the eyes of his congregation gazing up at him in love. He recognized himself as a mere instrument, a former dunce and dullard made of use in ministry, the highest service, when he laid self aside. He saw a memory from twenty years in the past. It was of a shy young man who sat in the chapel of the Darling Range School, hearing A.H. Piper's voice ring out, "There is no limit to the usefulness of one who...makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart."

At Avondale at year-end, one young lady was approached by A.H. who commented he had noticed recent meetings between herself and a certain theology student.

"Have you told your parents?" A.H. asked.

"I will see them in a few days. I want to tell them myself rather than write."

He smiled his approval at her plan before saying, "I want you to know you go home having my blessing."

His words of interest seemed to add an extra glow to her friendship. Was this not the sage of Love, Courtship and Marriage? "I liked him very, very much, and greatly appreciated his counsel. So many of us did," she said. "He knew how to draw people's goodness out."

To Les Coombe, leader of the prayer fellowship in 1939, A.H. advised, "Brother, there are two things to do when you get criticism in life. If there is truth in the criticism, then turn to and correct the matter, and learn from the experience.

"If there is not truth in the criticism, then ignore it, but LIVE so that you prove the criticism untrue."

To a future administrator of the Adventist Church in Australia, they were words of wisdom.

December, 1939, the last of purple Jacaranda flowers fell in a mini-carpet in front of the Avondale chapel where crowds had gathered during the college year. Soon the flowers would die and the tree would become as bare of blossoms as was the campus. It was the end of a momentous year that began with death and ended with the deathly bruises of war.

All over Australia and New Zealand, however, students' memories could not die. Sad memories, happy memories, and A.H. pervading most of them. At college picnics, in his white panama hat and white trousers; inspecting the vegetable garden or being a dignified host at a dining table. And his sayings, such as that one which made you think: "Draw warmth from other people's coldness." Or the one that students chorused together, "When in doubt --DON'T!"

There were serious memories, and humorous ones such as the time that Pastor Minchin turned to A.H. and said, "Isn't that right, Brother Piper?" At that, Brother Piper stirred himself, and stood up and announced the last hymn.

1939. Not only was it the end of an era, but it was the year of modern-day Pentecost!

AVONDALE

Blue sky, green grass; feet that pass

down hallowed halls; cream walls.

Laughter, song; all day long

a breath of prayer, somewhere.

And God.

CHAPTER 12. THE GYPSY'S VISION

The woman was dark complexioned as if she had travelled long under Romany skies, dwelling in caves and cooking by campfires; a wanderer, like Cain. She wore a head-scarf and skirt of striking colours -- vivid scarlet and purple, woven with the ebony of witch-craft. Bracelets swung at her wrists, hoops from her ears. Her eyes had projected far beyond the 1920's into the future...

Now it was the 1940's and Pastor A.H.Piper again led the South New South Wales Conference. His staff included Pastor A.J.Dyason, Home Missions and Sabbath School Secretary, a consecrated and creative servant of God who gave his president full support. Eric Hon was there, too, a man of vision for the Chinese community in Sydney. Encouraged by A.H.Piper and Pastor Dyason, he read the *Ministry of Healing* and became enthused for health ministry. The church in Sydney was expanding.

Now, however, began a time of trouble for A.H.; the time of his three trials...

The first of these began in the Conference office among clerical staff; a subversive whisper, perhaps initially in jest. It was a whisper of innuendo concerning the character of A.H. Probably it sprang from one who had been chastised by the president for flirtatious behaviour in the office.

At morning worships, Pastor Piper more than once referred his staff to Ellen White's appeal to members of the Australian Churches, which she had written back on March 5, 1907. A.H. knew this message well for he had underlined it in many places and read and re-read it. Flirting and foolishness seemed to him to be quite out of harmony with her message that he passed on:

So much that is frivolous is brought into the home and church life
that the Spirit of Christ is grieved... Our daily course of action is
to be an interpretation to others of what the higher life means.

Just as a slight stirring among leaves grows to a breeze that disturbs an entire tree;
just as a breeze whirls into a wind that sways a forest, so too did the Innuendos grow.

Over at the Union Conference Office at Wairoonga, Pastor Charles H. Watson,
previously world president of the Adventist Church during the depression, 1930-36, was
president of the Australasian Union. A Melbourne wool-buyer, he became an Adventist in
1902 and had been A.H.Piper's friend for about forty years. Certainly the two men had
much in common -- they were of similar age; both had knowledge of wool and loved the
feel of a good sample of worsted cloth; both chose Duty before Inclination in their ministry

C.H.Watson, on behalf of the Union Conference Committee, called A.H.Piper in to give
account. (1)

Decades later, the charges seem trifling. The first concerned coupons for gasoline
which was rationed on account of World War II. How was it that A.H.Piper appeared to have
access to coupons beyond his personal allocation?

He told them the truth, naming those involved-- that a respected doctor of the Sydney
Sanitarium had given him some, and that he had received, from an officer of the
Union, some of the Union Conference supply for special needs and visitation.

(1) The author found no reference to this incident in records of the Australasian
Union Conference. Although the Piper family were distressed, it apparently was not
widely known. In order to write a just biography, the incident has been included. The
response of A.H.Piper and subsequent events vindicate this man of God.

A second charge related to the Piper family, suggesting that A.H. Piper gave his family prominence. Certainly in Adventist employ there were, in addition to Albert himself, Pastor Harold Piper (brother), now Secretary of the Union Conference, Mabel White (sister), a widow by this time and teaching English at Avondale; Laurence (son), Wholesale Manager in New Zealand for the Sanitarium Health Food Company; Clarice (daughter), secretary to her father; and Athol (son), under appointment to ministry in Broken Hill. For a time Reginald Piper (brother) had worked as a missionary in Rarotonga and among New Zealand Maoris, and there were also A.H.'s nephews and neice in denominational work: Ross Piper, Elva Piper, Ivan White and Sefton White. Pipers for the Lord everywhere, and probably more to come!

Like the second charge, the third was vague and baseless. "Could it be that A.H. Piper was involved in the sinful business of buying and selling?"

"Now I think of it, didn't I hear about him offering someone a piece of cloth -- or was it clothing? Or was that somebody else?"

Pastor Piper refuted this ludicrous charge, using the words of Paul, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," adding from his heart, "I have proven the Lord a good pay-master!"

When Athol heard the accusations against his father, he reacted with both shock and anger. He was at that time in hospital, convalescing from a severe back injury that he gained while lopping an apple tree in the Elizabeth Street garden. "As soon as I get out, I'll...I'll see that the person who started all this ends up HERE!" he threatened.

To Athol, A.H. expressed concern for his son's anger, stressing, "It doesn't matter what happens *to* you. It's what happens *for* you that counts."

Certainly Athol learnt at this time the greatest lesson his father ever taught him -- how to react to injustice. Athol observed that his father revealed no bitterness or rancour.

It was probably during the first trial of Piper's time of trouble that for weeks he spent hours praying in the bush for God to remove bitterness from his heart. (1)

Perhaps a personality clash was at the root of this first trial. There is no doubt that Pastor A.H.Piper possessed a charismatic personality plus an unusually perceptive and spiritual nature. Moreover, he was rock-like in confidence regarding the prophetic role of Ellen White. Working alongside such a person could be daunting and threatening to lesser personalities.

The arena of A.H.Piper's second trial was not within the Church but without. It concerned a barrage of attack on Adventism in Australia from one named Dimitry Nicolici.

Mr D.Nicolici represented the Reform Church which accused the Seventh-day Adventist denomination of abandoning its foundation principles. It had come into existence as a result of dissensions concerning military service by Adventists in Europe during the Great War. (Those days when Albert, at the Darling Range School, had thought about combatency versus non-combatency, and wondered how the European members fared.)

During the 1940's, Dimitry Nicolici greatly disturbed people who longed to lead holy lives, by the flood of letters and booklets that flowed from his pen. Was what he said true? they wondered. Had God forsaken the Adventist Church, seeing it as Babylon?

C.H.Watson wrote extensively to expose false charges made by the Reform Church. So did W.M.R.Scragg, then president of the Tasmanian Conference. But A.H.Piper became the spokesperson and warrior for truth all over Australasia.

In preparation for battle he needed to study. And he did, preparing his "loins girt about with truth; having the breastplate of righteousness; his feet shod with the gospel of peace... the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit...praying always..."

(1) A.H.Piper referred to this in a sermon when he warned against bitterness, in a Conference-wide meeting at the Assembly Hall, Melbourne, August 3, 1946.

On his desk, letters of enquiries piled alongside the writings of Mr Nicolici and others. One manuscript concerning the Reform Church came from as far as Rumania, addressed to *Pentru Fratu nisi din Australia.* (For Russian Brethren in Australia.)

It is not easy to be a defender of faith, constantly having to attack or defend; to find rapport with people's minds and to persuade them via Holy Spirit power while the Arch enemy, Satan, holds ground and gives little.

A.H. particularly deplored the Reform Church's misuse of Ellen White's writings and their claim that the Adventist Church was Babylon. He said:

The two great fundamental principles are the Law and the Testimony;
if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no
light in them.

The truth, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study and testified to by the power of the Lord. What a wonderful foundation we have, and if this foundation be destroyed, what shall we do? Where shall we run?

The waymarks will be preserved. He looks upon us to hold firmly with a gleam of faith... Take courage in the Lord.

Not only did A.H. contend against the Nicolici movement which was rife in Sydney because its headquarters were located in the Sydney suburb of Summer Hill, but he also battled against a "Shepherd's Rod" movement and the agitation in New Zealand of R. Yowless and his wife. In addition, he campaigned against compulsory unionism, an issue in which his brother, Reginald, became involved when he took over his father's plumbing business due to Joseph Piper's failing health. Reginald's application for non-membership became a test case and resulted in recognition being given to all bona fide conscientious objectors.

During these years of trial, A.H.'s notes show other aspects of his ministry:

- * A dedicatory service at Guildford Church on the fifteenth day of May in 1943.
- * Festival of the Blessed Hope -- a three day program at Wahroonga Church, in September of 1944.
- * A spring service at North Sydney in October of 1944, when he used a story about violets in his mother's garden, and pointed to the beauties of Heaven.
- * The Week of Prayer at the Australasian Missionary College in April, 1947.
- * A Sabbath School rally at Avondale in August, 1947.
- * Blacktown camp meeting in October 1947. Topic: Certainties of the Advent Message.

The soloist was golden--voiced Kathleen Piper.

* Memorial Service for A.G. Minchin, 1947. (Colporteur, Home Missions Secretary, Secretary and Treasurer of two Conferences, Sanitarium Manager and Chief Auditor), called to ministry by A.H. in 1909.

In the memorial service he based his address on 2 Samuel 3:38: Know ye not that there is a prince and great man fallen this day in Israel?

He described A.G. Minchin as "always a Christian gentleman; quiet, dignified, with a touch of humor. As a leader without partiality, he had his trial seasons -- not always understood, nor did he always understand. But he realized that it does not matter what happens *To* us, no matter how bewildering and painful it may be at the time... But what matters is what happens *IN* us... One wonders why some are taken and others left.

"The Christian who manifests patience and cheerfulness under bereavement and suffering, who meets death itself with the peace and calmness of an unwavering faith, may accomplish for the Gospel more than he could have effected by a long life of faithful labor." A.H. used Ellen White's words from *Acts of the Apostles*, p.465.

His message stressed what he himself valued and pondered. The character description was so similar to A.H.'s own, it was as if he foretold his own obituary! Was he already preparing for death?

The Gypsy woman eyed the children with searching gaze.. "I can see that the tall girl with the braids will grow to be very efficient. The boy will be a doctor, for sure...And the little one ...You have been warned!

In January 1949, Albert and Nellie's younger daughter, Heather --now Heather Veitch-- returned to New Zealand aboard the S.S.Monowai. Her husband, Bill Veitch, a scientist, was newly appointed to the Sanitarium Health Food laboratory at Cooranbong after some years in New Zealand. With them came their son, Dalton, two-and-a-half years old, a long-legged boy who resembled his mother. They moved into a Sanitarium Company house across the swing bridge at Cooranbong, not far from the laboratory and college.

"I know you will be happy to have one of our children near, Mother dear," exclaimed A.H. who felt pleasure himself at the Veitch family's arrival. With Clarice and Frank Breen in soul-winning evangelism in Victoria, and Athol and Kathleen Piper in America, now preparing for a medical career, how nice to have Heather in New South Wales!

Nellie beamed. "Every little boy needs a Grandma! You know, if I search I might find that old book about the mice which our children loved. Or the one about the rabbits." She smiled at the thought of playing an imaginative game with Dalton like his mother had played, such as having a rabbit meal of salad in two hands.

Albert slipped his arm about his wife's shoulder in a loving gesture. It all sounded good, to him.

Heather unpacked her belongings in the red brick house near the swing bridge. She put her recipe book in the kitchen with its recipes carefully set out in neat script: *Potato Soup; Noodle Cutlets with Tomatoes*. As she flicked through the pages, thinking of Bill and Dalton's supper, she noticed the spelling. Should that be *Tomato*, she wondered. She tried so hard to spell well and Daddy had taught her to be a perfectionist.

She peeled potatoes for the soup, noticing the birds outside from her kitchen window. That glossy magpie -- she would like to draw it. Now where had she put her art folder? Oh yes, over there, after she had returned from the bush yesterday with Dalton. She had sketched a *Caladenia Dilatata*.

While the potatoes cooked she carefully unpacked the crystal bowls. None had broken, she was pleased to notice. She remembered how Mother had shaken her head at them when they came as a wedding gift. They were beautiful but just too luxurious and expensive! "We didn't give or receive presents like that in my day," she told Heather. "Puritan plainness and simplicity were our guidelines. Times seem to be changing. It worries me."

Dear little Mother; she had definite views, but how she loved her children!

Tiny crystal jelly dishes -- she would put them beside the crystal bowls. They could be used for nuts or dried fruit. So she arranged some dried apricots and cashew nuts for supper.

As she fixed the soup, she gazed out the window again. How nice it was to live near the creek, close to the bush; to have a wonderful husband and a gorgeous son whom she now heard stirring from his afternoon nap. Smiling and serene, Heather went to Dalton.

Life is strangely tangled at times. One day, bright sunshine; the next, storm clouds rolling up from the south...

"Doctor McLaren, I can't stop vomiting. I've been like it for a few weeks. No, I'm not pregnant. At least, I don't think so, though it would be nice! An examination?"

"Yes, there is a mole on my back -- it's been there as long as I can remember. Gets in the way of shoulder straps and sometimes becomes irritated. Have it removed? Of course."

Life is strangely tangled, indeed, at times. Today, the truth: the irritated mole has turned cancerous. Tomorrow? Not many tomorrows.

"I want you to talk as if I'm healed," Heather told her loved ones. "But if the Lord calls me, Mother, please look after Dalton... Just a plain white coffin; a simple funeral." She kept smiling, following her father's example, to their faces, anyway. Who knows what the heart does when alone?

Clarice stayed with her sister at the Sanitarium, sometimes coaxing Heather to drink a cup of cold milk or to eat a louquat. Their mother cared for Dalton, and Clarice's two daughters.

November brought heat and humidity. "If only it would rain!" sighed Heather. "It would be so much cooler for you and Mummy and the children." The sisters prayed for cooling showers.

They came, lightly at first, then streaming down after a thunderstorm, bringing cool relief to Heather's room. The sisters smiled at each other, then asked for a breeze.

It too, came, gently pervading Heather's room, stirring the curtains lightly, ruffling her pillow and hair. It was as if the angels were present, using their white wings for fans.

Life is strangely tangled at times, the way, shadowy. Now the pillows are piled high behind Heather for comfort, but her feet are icy cold. She has asked the Lord for either healing on the Sabbath, or to be taken. She knew Him well enough to make that request.

Now she calls for Bill... love of her life; her sweetheart, the tall and gallant knight that came riding to claim her as wife. She does not want to leave him, nor their child. But she breathes less and less...

Now the air is perfumed by pink carnations, tribute from a school friend, mingling with the gentle fragrance of pink and white camellias like she held on her wedding day, slim and beautiful beneath her flowing veil. There are white lilies and masses of other flowers. Heather was greatly loved by many.

To A.H.Piper she was all joy. He says, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Oh

sing praises unto the Lord!" He is calm. Let Satan launch his attacks. His defeat is sure!

Heather rests at "God's Acre", the Cooranbong cemetery. A simple stone says:

In Loving Memory of
 OLIVE HEATHER VEITCH,
 beloved wife of Will R. Veitch,
 Mother of Dalton and devoted
 daughter of Pastor and Mrs A.H.Piper,
 whose fragrant life came to a close
 on November 5, 1949, aged 29.
"Their works do follow Them."

When the Australasian Union Conference changed its organizational structure to become the Australasian Inter Union Conference, late in the 1940's, it is recognized that A.H.Piper acted in a diplomatic, intermediary role between senior church leaders of differing points of view. Those persons involved greatly appreciated him as a conciliatory, senior statesman.

It is remembered that Pastor W.G.Turner, president, made a statement of this nature: "We did one of our ministers a great wrong. We can never make amends but I want to move that Pastor A.H. Piper be a member of the first executive committee of the Australasian Inter-Union Conference."

Full vindication!

Thus ended the three trials of Albert Henry Piper during the 1940's.

CHAPTER 13. CALLED TO THE HIGHEST SERVICE

In 1950, A.H. Piper officially retired at the age of seventy-five years. He and Nellie lived, now, in a timber house near Heather and Bill's former home at Cooranbong. From the windows of their front room they could view the creek with gum trees that stood like noble sentinels along the bank. They heard the swish of boats that passed, the chatter of children who crossed the swing bridge on their way to school and the screech of sulphur-crested cockatoos that soared overhead. From across the creek they could smell Weet-Bix baking in the Sanitarium Health Food Factory.

They called their house CLATHEA, a name made from the beginning letters of their children's names. It was synonymous with fullness of joy.

A.H. had never been mechanically minded and was all thumbs with tools, but he had enjoyed gardening ever since he had gardened for Mary Piper at Petone. So, in retirement, he set about caring for his Cooranbong garden with the diligence that characterised him. When they visited, his two grand-daughters from Victoria counted the fruit trees, all twenty-six of them. There were apple trees, persimmon, orange, fig and plum. The children watched him plant and hoe rows of lettuce, cauliflowers and root vegetables. They helped to pick sweet peas, forget-me-nots and other flowers that coloured his garden. "Keep the girls busy, Clarice," her mother admonished her. "Narelle can set the table for lunch, and I could use another pair of hands at preparing the salad." Work before pleasure persisted, Nellie's own version of Duty before Inclination.

During 1950, A.H. conducted many evening worships for the students at Avondale College. It was not far to go -- just a walk across the high swing bridge, along the road to the Sanitarium Health Food Factory and then right turn to the chapel or dormitories.

Now a new generation heard of Ellen White, mission stories, or the parable of grapes: "Young men, the hush of the grapes is spoiled by handling. They become shiny and brassy..."

Gwen Booth told Mary, her room-mate, A.H.Piper's words at the dinner table, "Eat slowly. It should be a meal hour, not a meal minute!"

Across Bethel Hall roomed Gwen and Mary's friend, Flora. She reported that A.H. had complimented her on her posture, saying she "went across campus like a ship in full sail."

Rex Moe told them that he had been cutting roses in the garden when A.H. passed, saying, "'Young man, she will love you for that. That is a very fine gesture!"

"Cute," pronounced some of the students.

"Old-fashioned," declared others. "Positively Victorian."

But they listened politely. And many of them remembered and assimilated his sayings that were mini-philosophies for living: "Trust God in shadow and sunshine"; "Every word of doubt you utter is inviting Satan's temptations"; "When in doubt, don't."

In his spare time he collected material for the Ellen G.White Estate. He and Nellie also arranged for a large picture to be donated by them to the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital. The hospital chaplain, Pastor R.Price, told them that the faculty were delighted with it as a work of art and planned to hang it in a prominent place. Why did they do this? In memory of Heather, perhaps.

In 1954 a young minister and his wife heard from their Conference president, Pastor David Sibley, that Pastor A.H.Piper would be in their parish for a series of meetings called, "Living in the Home of God's Prophet."

Where will he stay"? Mary asked her husband. "With us?" Her voice expressed doubts.

"Well, a visiting minister usually stays with the local Pastor. And we do know him a little, from '49-50 when he took meetings at the college. We can hardly expect him to go to a motel."

"But what about furniture for the spare room? There's only one narrow bed and one chair!"

When A. H. Piper arrived at 15 Oldley Street, Tamworth, he told John and Mary he would be delighted to stay with them, and meant it. He reminded them that he had known John's family for many years, that his brother, Reginald, had retired in the New Zealand town where John's mother lived, and that Harold Piper had baptized several of John's relatives. He also remembered an occasion when Mary had invited him to sit with her and her friends at a social evening when he sat alone; that her mother had attended school at Epuni Hamlet, a class or so behind his sister, Mabel.

As for the bare bedroom, "Just like the old days, or better! Simple yet attractive. A man can sleep well when there is love at home and no debts."

Mary worried about her cooking. Would it be good enough?

"Ah, the salivary glands are working," he commented as the aroma of nutmeat roast and wholemeal bread emanated from the oven. Then he ate with enjoyment, always remembering it was "a meal hour, not a meal minute!"; making a time of good conversation and fellowship. He could not be tempted to second helpings and chose fruit before icecream.

Early every morning he took a cold bath before going for a brisk walk around the park opposite. He arrived for breakfast pink-cheeked, aglow with health and vitality, looking forward to the day of visitation and preaching that lay ahead.

Sister Duggan appreciated the way A.H. talked with her non-Adventist husband and brother out in the lucerne field, and with her, in the milking shed. Although his black suit and homburg hat seemed out of place, his genuine interest lit her day, as it did with others.

Little Sister Frame, an elderly widow renowned for being crotchety, though with a heart of gold, would not dream of missing a single meeting. She insisted that John, her young minister, call for her every night in his Ford Prefect. An Elder and his wife who lived out of town, Brother and Sister Lindbeck of Tintenhill, travelled in to every meeting

with their teenagers. Owen Felstead and her mother that looked like walking death, filled their pews. "Wouldn't miss it for anything!" the old lady affirmed. So did Tom Nash and his family, war-widowed Mrs Greenwell and her son, Eric, the Stubbs family and the Kables, the Troods and the Keenes and ...

"Living in the Home of the Prophet," attracted them all. A.H. Piper stood before them as a living link with the Spirit of Prophecy.

He described the little prayer room at Sunnyside and his upstairs room with the dormer window. Almost underneath lay Mrs White's bedroom.

"One morning I went downstairs for worship and breakfast. Mrs White greeted me, speaking in her lilting way, 'Good morning, Albert.'

"I replied, Good morning, Mother.

" ' And how are you today, Albert? Did you sleep well?'

" Yes, thank you, although early this morning a bright light woke me up. "

" ' Oh, what time was that?'

"At three o'clock. I checked my watch. "

Then A.H. reported that Ellen White told him, "That was when the angel came."

In his sermons he frequently quoted passages from *The Desire of Ages* which Ellen White wrote while in Australia, even editing the manuscript while A.H. lived at Sunnyside. He also quoted memorized parts from the closing chapters of *The Great Controversy*, urging his hearers to give the book earnest attention. And he continually upheld Christ as Saviour. He told how, as a young man, he threw his boater in the air, exclaiming, "Jesus has forgiven my sins. Hallelujah!"

"Amen!" declared Brother Stubbs, while Sister Frame frowned at such an extrovert response. However, at her own gate she confided to her minister, " It was a good message! Now don't you forget to come for me tomorrow evening."

At the Eraring camp in 1954, A.H. asked Mary to play for the six a.m. prayer meeting.

He instructed her to start playing the piano promptly at six a.m. He chose the hymn, "There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God."

Mary knew that when he said "promptly", he meant exactly that. So, right to the minute, as sunrise spread its golden-orange glow across Lake Eraring and the camp-site by the shore, A.H. Piper's signature tune heralded the time of prayer, his special meeting.

During 1955 A.H. conducted the Week of Prayer at the Tamworth Church. As he had on the previous visit, he brought with him offerings for Mary's larder: cans of nutmeat -- seconds from the factory -- soybeans, and some navel oranges from his trees. John and Mary welcomed him this time, knowing that he brought blessing into their home and was a most loveable man. Why, he even sent gifts for their birthdays! She also enjoyed his talks with her, of poets and poetry, of the early days of his ministry, and of Heather whom she had known and admired.

Again he visited the home of every church member and interested person. He also made a cash donation to their church building fund.

Back at home he put his arms around Nellie, saying, "Mother, it's good to be home again. You know, sometimes I feel my strength waning."

His busy days continued, however. Now he had a new project as he walked all about Cooranbong village, collecting for the Avondale church building fund.

The gardening continued. He smiled broadly when the local Junior farmer group voted him a "Perfect garden." ("What big beetroot, Mr Piper.")

In August 1955, A.H. experienced a strange sensation in his abdomen. Early November he commented, "I've still got that feeling. I don't know if my doctor TELLS!"

Then it was camp-time at Eraring again and his morning prayer meeting. Again the hymn reaffirmed at six a. m. promptly, "There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God." Crowds attended, drawn by the spirit of the hour.

Down at the laundry some of the women commented to each other, "A.H. Piper been to visit you at your tent this year? Hasn't been to us, either. Not like him, is it!"

"Well, he came to our caravan but it's quite near his tent, behind the camp store. Clarice is with them this year. A.H. didn't look well, I thought."

"You've got to remember he's in his eighties. And none of the other ministers visit everyone at camp-meeting!"

"It's not camp-meeting without a visit from A.H. I can tell him things I can't tell my minister at home. Always has a prayer in our tent with us."

"Did you hear about the year he smelt fish in Nell's tent? Didn't say anything but he knew, and she felt terrible. He's a strict vegetarian, you know. Usually looks so well!"

"Or the time he saw me in a dress with a beaded bodice. I felt sort of sinful wearing it anyway, and when he looked at me with sad, disappointed eyes, I just had to go and unstitch the beads. . . I don't think we'll have him next year. A shame, for he's a saint!"

As they washed and ironed, missing a meeting to do so, they received a blessing, anyway, just by focussing on the silver-haired patriarch.

Mary noted his shuffle, contrasting it to his usual erect walk. She appreciated it when he made a special effort to visit her tent, to give a gift to her new baby daughter and to congratulate and advise John about his sermon in the big tent on the previous evening.

The final Sabbath arrived. Many campers filled the tent as Pastor A.H. Piper delivered his final message and heard his appeal in the words of Ellen White:

Each morning consecrate yourselves and your children to God
for that day. Make no calculation for months or years; these
are not yours. One brief day is given you... (1)

Earnestly he spoke. Earnestly they responded.

(1) Ellen White, *Testimonies*, Vol. VII, p. 44

He returned to CLATHEA weary, yet heartened by fellowship with Christian believers and especially with so many spiritual sons and daughters, many of them ordained ministers and their wives. Douglas Jenkins was one such son, since 1949 a minister in the Sydney area, happily married to the Miss Steed he had met at Avondale, back in 1939. Preachers, teachers, doctors, nurses, secretaries, effective laypersons... A.H. had such spiritual sons and daughters in Australia, New Zealand and throughout the Pacific Islands, all called to life's highest service -- living witnesses for God.

He wrote to Laurence who was briefly in Sydney for meetings :

Thanks very much for meeting Clarice and the girls on arrival... We met them at Dora Creek and took them to their tent next to our own...I am completely resting at home as I felt that I needed it, not being just as well as I would like...

Clarice noted her father "completely resting." She took him to Sydney to the Sanitarium.

"Come back after Christmas," they were advised. So they returned home to spend Christmas quietly. Her father accepted with pleasure the reading lamp with a frosted glass shade that Clarice gave him. Most of the time he stayed in bed. A.H. in bed? He must be ill!

At Christmas they remembered distant members of the family-- Dalton and Bill Veitch; Athol, Kathleen and family, far away at Loma Linda University; Albert Junlor, who, following his first wife's death, had married a fine Adventist Christian. Happy in Christ again, they had a son, Albert III, and a daughter, Dorothy. (1) Down in Victoria, Frank Breden prepared for camp-meeting there. Initiator of the Student prayer groups at Avondale, prior to Len Minchin's ministry in 1939, and president of the 1940 class, he was an excellent husband to Clarice; a gentleman not unlike her father.

(1) Both children later trained at the Sydney Sanitarium and did mission service.

Over in New Zealand were Laurence and Owen, for Laurence was now New Zealand Manager of the Health Food Work.

A.H. spoke of Mary Piper, his mother, who had died in 1943 during his time of trial, in her ninety-third year. He blessed her memory, remembering her prayers for him. Now she slept until the resurrection morning...

January 1, 1956

The bells ring in a new year. For some, it is a time of hope and holiday.

At CLATHEA, however, A.H. organizes his top drawer and personal papers before returning to bed to put his feet up. Clarice tempts him with a morsel of mock fish.

In a quiet moment he confides to his daughter, "I'm just trusting in the merits of Jesus." Later he says, "I don't want to die before little Mummy. She needs someone to look after her."

January 7, 1956

A.H. Piper is admitted to the Sydney Sanitarium, concerned about leaving his zinnias that need weeding. By the third day he is in a coma.

Anointing follows, administered by the President and Secretary of the Inter Union Conference. A.H. comes out of the coma to speak clearly and lucidly of his love for Jesus. He also prays. Then he falls into deep, calm sleep.

Nellie sleeps on a couch in his hospital room. Clarice and Laurence take turns to be with him.

JANUARY 18th, 1956

A north-easterly wind whipped waves about the inter-island steamer and rippled a man's hair as he strode onto deck. In the half-light he watched as the vessel left open sea behind, and gradually turning, began to plough a channel between cliffs toward port, through the long harbour.

"Daddy, can you hear me? Athol is on the telephone from America. He wants to talk to you."

There is the smell of death in Athol's nostrils as he says, "I love you, Father!" In the Bacteriology Building a lecture drones on. But Athol's heart is not there.

"Athol, my boy! I love you, too. God bless you, Son."

"Why am I here?" Albert asked himself. Then his eyes followed the path of a dove-grey sea bird. The gull's flight blurred with memories... fragments of this and that... a tennis racket...; a voice, "I can see that you will preach...; a blood-stained Bible...; a blue-flowering creeper...; a letter that challenged him to prove himself a man... and in waves of glorious harmony, growing to crescendo, an anthem of the cathedral choir...

Disturbing the music, a crew member in white lingered by.

"O'Mornin, Sir. Soon be in port, Sir."

"His pulse is weak... won't be long...Nothing more we can do...he has no pain..."

"We're all here, Daddy. We love you so much!"

"Don't leave me, Nellie -- most wonderful woman in the world!"

The vessel inched towards the dock. Albert found himself straining to catch sight of a familiar face on shore or to recognise a voice. Then he shrugged, smiling at his misapprehension; suddenly conscious that he was now quite on his own.

Alone? But no! When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee. On the final journey I hold my father's hand!

"Oh bless the Lord!" His hands lift up in submission to Him who holds the keys of life, death and resurrection.

"Oh bless the Lord!" It is the final benediction of Albert Henry Piper, 1875-1956, called to the highest service.

It would not be a hard thing to wake up one morning
to the sound of bird-song in scarce-stirring willow trees,
waves lapping, oars splashing, chains running slowly,
and faint voices, calling across the harbour;
to embark at dawn, following the old forefathers,
to put forth at daybreak for some lovelier still
undiscovered shore. (1)

(1) Mary Ursula Bethel, "The Long Harbour," *Collected Poems*, Caxton Press, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1950.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A. A TRIBUTE BY L.C.NADEN, FIELD SECRETARY OF THE AUSTRALASIAN DIVISION OF SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS, September 14, 1971.

"Whenever I think of Pastor A.H.Piper, even today, fifteen years after his passing, I think of the Spirit of Prophecy. To me he was the Australasian link with the Spirit of Prophecy. He had good reason to know Sister White and measure her worth, for he had the rare privilege of living in her home at "Sunnyside", Avondale, for some time. From this close contact with her, he saw at close hand God's Spirit directing her in her ministry to the remnant.

No other person, with the exception of her grandson, Elder Arthur White, has brought such conviction home to me concerning God's leading in our midst through the ministry of Ellen G. White as did Pastor Piper.

He was a talented, dedicated, happy, courageous man; he was a wise administrator and never failed to remind the brethren of the wisdom there is in keeping to the "blue print" as laid down by the Spirit of Prophecy in connection with the various lines of activity within the remnant church.

Appendix B. A TRIBUTE FROM DR W. G. C. MURDOCH, ANDREWS UNIVERSITY, FORMER PRINCIPAL OF AVONDALE COLLEGE, August 21, 1980.

Elder Piper was one of our strongest administrators in the Australasian Division. He held many positions...He wrote voluminously in the *Australasian Record*, for a period of about fifty years...

I consider his greatest contribution his lectures on the life and work of Ellen White...

He gave five of these lectures at Avondale around the late 40's. He lived at "Sunnyside" and had many talks with Ellen White.

Elder Piper had a very keen, incisive and logical mind. He chose his words with great care and could pool together diverse viewpoints and sum them up in one masterful conclusion. While not educated as a lawyer, he had a legal mind and could present a flawless, logical argument. His sermons were well organized and his words were chosen with great care and delivered in beautiful diction.

As a wise administrator, as a careful instructor and as an engaging writer, A.H.Piper was seldom equalled in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Australasian field.

Appendix C. A TRIBUTE BY PASTOR ROBERT H. PARR, August 31, 1971, THEN EDITOR OF THE *AUSTRALASIAN RECORD*. In 1985, president of the Greater Sydney Conference.

He was one of the great "greats" when I was just a boy, and when I arrived at college he was installed as principal. The two years I was there were the two years when he guided the college's destinies. As a principal...we were inclined to smile at some of his rather Victorian ideas. Nevertheless, I think it can be fairly said that the students respected him and many loved him.

I do not know anyone who was so thoroughly convinced of the Spirit of Prophecy through Sister White as he was. In his retirement he went from conference to conference giving a series of talks entitled "Living in the Home of the Prophet" and this was generally his own reminiscences of Mrs E.G.White.

My own impression of him is that he was a kindly man, absolutely dedicated, and a

man to whom no sacrifice was too great to make for the cause he loved so much. My memory of him is a very happy one -- possibly because, when I was but a small boy, he treated me as a person and even made me feel important, bless him!

Appendix D. AN ARTICLE BY A.H.PIPER IN THE *UNION CONFERENCE RECORD*,
May 1, 1902.

The readers of the *Record* are familiar with the persecution our native brethren have endured on account of the Sabbath, and of the experience of Pastor E.H.Gates who visited the mission and baptized twenty of them. They were tested by the threat to deprive them of their homes and land, and then they were fined and ordered to work on the road for twenty-eight days. Still they were firm.

About this time the writer and wife arrived from Australia to relieve Dr Caldwell who, with his family, were beginning to suffer because of a protracted stay in the tropics. We tried to get land on which to build a meeting house, but were baffled by the chiefs who own the land. Our next move was to clear a piece of land for the purpose of building a church on a section that was placed at our disposal for twelve months by a white man. Immediately we started, all our native brethren and sisters were again called upon to work on the roads. We did not go on with the building on account of the shortness of time that the land was promised us. We made up our minds to wait and pray, and in the meantime met in the deacon's house for worship each Sabbath and two mornings in the week. After thirteen months' waiting, we got the piece of land we wanted in the beginning. This happened a week ago. We thank the Lord for it and take courage and go on.

During the year 1901, all the old workers left the field, thus leaving the writer and his wife alone. However, we expect help from Australia in the person of Sister

E. Gooding, and then plan to open an industrial school on a small scale. Beyond a visit now and then on the part of our workers, nothing has been done in the other islands.

For a long time the natives in Aitutaki have been asking for help, and we believe that the Lord would have us help them. We are about to begin to train one of our native brethren as a worker, and I believe that he will become a useful man. As soon as I can leave this island for a time, I intend visiting other islands. Owing to the irregular shipping, one never knows when he leaves Rarotonga the time when he will be able to return. This makes it rather perplexing when the field is undermanned.

Respecting the call from Aitutaki, we believe that a married couple should be sent there. One of them should have a thorough knowledge of nursing, as the natives of this island have no medical help whatever, and are in a bad state physically, as well as spiritually.

We are anxious that when the work of the Third Angel's message is finished, there may be some of the Cook Islanders ... by the grace of God, eternally saved. Our one desire is to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that we may be fit vessels to disseminate the last rays of light that are shining to enlighten and save a perishing world.

Appendix E. CABLE FROM DR ATHOL PIPER AT THE TIME OF HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

Our hearts are with you all Love and sorrow Isaiah 51 Courage in the Lord.

Appendix F. COPIES OF PAGES FROM THE ENROLMENT REGISTER AT THE AVONDALE SCHOOL FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS IN ITS FIRST YEAR, 1897-98. (Attached)

Note the names of A.H.Piper, H.Newcombe and the two daughters of W.C.White.

Appendix G. OBITUARY OF NELLIE PIPER, *Australasian Record*,

September 3, 1973.

PIPER. A princess in Israel has fallen. Sister Nellie Piper peacefully went to rest at the Charles Harrison Home, Cooranbong, New South Wales, on Sabbath evening, June 29, 1973. She was better known as Sister A.H. Piper, and many throughout this Division will mourn her passing.

To sorrowing loved ones and the many friends gathered at Avondale's sacred acre, Pastor L.C. Naden very feelingly told of his love and high regard for this grand family. His message of comfort and hope of a grand reunion soon to take place was also presented some years ago when her husband, Pastor A.H. Piper, and daughter, Heather (Mrs W.R. Veitch) and Pastor H.E. Piper were laid to rest nearby.

Pastor W.G. Turner prepared a life sketch which was presented by the writer, revealing that Nellie Kreutzberg was born in London on April 20, 1882. Coming to Australia early in life, she began to keep the true Sabbath, but was sent from home for doing so. In 1902 she joined the first class of nursing at the Sydney Sanitarium, and worked as a nurse until she married Albert Piper on September 17, 1913.

She faithfully served the Lord with her husband while he led out as...Conference president, Division secretary, and Bible teacher and president of the Australasian Missionary College. Left to mourn her passing are: daughter, Clarice (Mrs F. Breaden of Cooranbong), son, Dr Athol Piper of Canada, and step-son, Brother L.A. Piper of Wahroonga. There were nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Pastor H.J. Halliday, one-time fellow administrator, assisted in the service. We commend to the bereaved the assurance that the power of the resurrection will soon be demonstrated in all its grand glory.

W.G. Ferris.

Appendix H. LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE.

- Piper family, 1900, before A.H. and Hettie went to Rarotonga.
- Pastor A.H. Piper, pioneer missionary to the Pacific Islands.
- Pastor A.H. Piper and his sons, 1912.
- Pastor A.H. Piper and family in 1913.
- The Piper home at the Darling Range School, Western Australia.
- Nurse Nellie Kreutzberg, 1903
- Nellie Kreutzberg, aged 13 years.
- Three Piper brothers during the 1920's.
- "Second Family" -- Athol, Clarice and Heather in 1927.
- Pastor Piper, Secretary of the Australasian Inter-Union Conference in 1929.
- A.H. Piper on Solomon Islands visitation in the 1930's.
- Pastor A.H. Piper and Rata Malia of Fiji.
- Pastor Piper with his "first family" as adults.
- Pastors W.A. Spicer and A.H. Piper as camp-meeting delegates in 1931.
- Piper family, 1936.
- New Zealand students whose lives were touched by the Avondale revival, 1939.
- Marriage of Heather and Bill Veitch.
- A.H. Piper's grandson, Dalton.
- Extended family, 1942.
- Pastor and Mrs A.H. Piper, 1946.
- A.H. Piper, eighty years of age.
- Laurence and Gwen Piper, 1980
- Maybelle and George Sterling, first missionaries to Aitutaki

*WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FOR THE FUTURE
EXCEPT AS WE SHALL FORGET
THE WAY THE LORD HAS LED US,
AND HIS TEACHING IN OUR PAST HISTORY. (1)*

(1) Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, p.196.