

our firm
FOUNDATION

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 2 ■ FEBRUARY 2017

THE IMMUTABLE LAW OF GOD ■ CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS ■ THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH
THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES ■ THE NON-IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL ■ THE SANCTUARY



An interesting question was recently brought to my attention: Does God have unconditional love for His people here on this earth? How this question is answered can leave us with different understandings of salvation. If your answer to this question includes that no matter what you do God will save you when He, through Jesus Christ, returns the second time, you will be misled and possibly even be lost because you think you will be saved in your sins because of His great love.

I think I have unconditional love for my children no matter what they do, but I would not approve of acts by them that would be wrong according to God's standards. I would encourage them to know and keep God's 10 Commandments.

God, through Ellen White, has some strong counsel for each of us that helps to answer this question:

"As was Enoch's must be their holiness of character who shall be redeemed from among men at the Lord's second coming". 8T 331.

"We can never see our Lord in peace, unless our souls are spotless. We must bear the perfect image of Christ. Every thought must be brought into subjection to the will of Christ. As expressed by the great apostle, we must "come into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." We shall never attain to this condition without earnest effort. We must strive daily against outward evil and inward sin, if we would reach the perfection of Christian character." RH, May 30, 1882.

God's unconditional love is working on our characters even now to encourage us to get the sin out of our lives so that we will be safe to be saved. If He allows any of us to enter Heaven

and the new earth with one iota of sinfulness still in us, we could have a repeat of what happened to this world when Adam and Eve fell. He will still love us, but in great sorrow He will have to keep us from the earth made new and any continuation of life therein.

We have a choice now, and that is to help us realize the destructive force of sin in such a way that it will never return to our lives. He has given us the 10 Commandments to know exactly what sin is and thereby know what we must avoid.

"When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for

us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them

to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us." 2T 355.

I do believe God loves each of us unconditionally, but for the protection of the whole universe whom He also loves, sin cannot be allowed to arise a second time. Therefore, in His great love for each of us He seeks to help us to overcome through Jesus and be safe to be saved.

When the Lord comes...
those who are unjust,
unsanctified, and filthy
will remain so forever.

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Our Mission: It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days remaining for this world are few, and we must work quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world. —Editor

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For the **HOUR** of **HIS JUDGMENT** is **COME!**

BY JERRY O'DONNELL

Go Out into the Highways and Hedges and Compel!

“Blessed [is] he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one [consent] began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel [them] to come in, that my house may be filled.

For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper” (Luke 14:15-24).

And yet so many Adventists sit around waiting for something big to happen. “Oh, I’ll tell people of the coming events once we start seeing martial law coming in.” “Oh, I’ll tell people of the coming events when we actually have a full economic meltdown.” “Oh, I’ll get serious about what it means to be an Adventist when congress starts talking about Sunday closings.” And “Oh”, and “Oh”, and “Oh” it goes.

We are told now is the time to go. “The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress





and malign their former brethren and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us. The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges.” 5T 463.2

Do keep in mind that the use of “conservative” is not equal to those that are named such today who feel called to defend the doctrines. These conservatives were unwilling to walk in the light and have a change of heart, in other words, they are unconverted yet members of the church. It is like those that say, “I’m sticking with Sunday because that’s how I was taught, and my parents, and their parents”, etc.

“My brother, my sister, ponder these things, I beseech you. You have each a work to do. Your unfaithfulness and neglect are registered against you in the Ledger of Heaven. You have diminished your powers and lessened your capabilities. You lack the experience and efficiency which you might have had. But before it is forever too late, I urge you to arouse. Delay no longer. The day is almost spent. The westering sun is about sinking forever from your sight. Yet while the blood of Christ is pleading, you may find pardon. Summon every energy of the soul, employ the

few remaining hours in earnest labor for God and for your fellow men.” 5T 463.3

How Important is the Word “is”?

The word “is” is found in Revelation 14:7, which says, “the hour of his judgment is come”. It means that it was not here prior, nor will it be in the future; it is happening now. It may sound like a simple explanation, but it is a significant one. It affects much theology.

If the judgment was not prior to a certain date (which most Adventists understand to be October 22, 1844), that means the theology of going to either Heaven or Hell upon death is wrong. Prior to 1844, no such judging was taking place. And since no such judging took place, that means this is yet another death blow to the concept of a soul or spirit floating off, being judged, and going to their appointed destination.

Now let us address the theology that teaches the judgment of the future when Jesus comes, everyone lines up, and is judged one by one. Of course, that also contradicts the theory of going to Heaven or Hell right away because if judgment is in the future and God already placed people in Heaven or Hell, is He going to make a trade for all the mistakes made without judging involved since it is supposedly future judging? That is nothing but nonsense. But a future judgment takes the pressure off current judgment because at some point, while alive, our name will come up in Heaven, and we will not know that our probation is personally closed.

So hopefully, we see the significance of that little word “is” because it addresses two great false theories.



What is “for” There For?

Just why is the word “for” part of the phrase. “For” gives us a reason. Why are we to “Fear God”? Why are we to “Give glory to Him”? It is for the fact that the hour of His judgment is come.

Hopefully, no Christian believes that if we suddenly begin to obey all of the rules just because it is time, that God would grant us entrance into Heaven. At the same time, it is a call to wake us up from our worldly ways and put on true godliness that is from the heart.

“God wants heart-work. The unselfish purpose, the pure, elevated principle, the high and holy motive, he will accept. His grace and power will work with these efforts. All who realize that it is the work of God to prepare a people for his coming, will find in their disinterested efforts opportunities where they can do tract and missionary work.” GW92 332.3

That word “disinterested” does not mean we do not have an interest in the souls we are trying to reach, but rather we have all the interest in reaching those souls, not being interested in worldly distractions. In other words, we are disinterested in sports, TV, movies, celebrities, attractions while focusing our means and efforts upon saving souls. The wrong attitude cannot be developed by a selfish attitude saying to ourselves, “Oh, the hour is here. I better get right with God!” That is pure selfishness.

Jesus said, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 19:19). Do you? Do you



love your neighbor as yourself? Do you love the thought of yourself going to Heaven? Well, you should love the same for your neighbor, too, and do all that one humanly can do to help them get there, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

When Did That Hour Begin?

Space does not permit me to give the full 2300 day prophecy in detail, so here is a synopsis to encourage further studying. In Daniel 8:14, there is a prophecy of 2,300 days before the sanctuary is cleansed. This is equivalent to the feast day known as Atonement in which the people were judged and the sanctuary was cleansed. The beginning date corresponds with Daniel 9:24-27 in which 490 of the first days are given to the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and anoint the Messiah, who would cause the sacrificial system to cease after 3½ days. Using the day for a year principle (Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4:6), that turns out to be 2,300 years, 490 years, and 3½ years respectively. Now the starting point is “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:25).

In trying to “[be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope” (1 Peter 3:15), we may get challenged by the fact that there were three decrees given: Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes (Ezra 6:14). So which one do we use? To answer with, “Well, the dates work out best with Artaxerxes” is a very sandy foundation. We want rock



foundation. The truth of the matter is, under Cyrus and Darius, the restoration of Jerusalem was not completed. The work was started and then trailed off. It is only under the command of Artaxerxes that it is started and finished and, yes, the Messiah was baptized (anointed) right on time in the autumn of 27 AD, exactly 483 years after the decree given in 457 B.C. And for those doing math, do not forget that there was no zero year. So 457 B.C. plus 27 AD may appear to be 484 years, but one must take a year out for the lack of a zero year. On top of that, Jesus caused the sacrificial system to cease from Heaven's perspective exactly 3½ years in the Spring of 31 AD. And finally Stephen is stoned, closing the 490 years that were cut off from the 2300 year prophecy and given to the Jews, which then sent the gospel to the Gentile world in 34 A.D. So 3 times is the beginning date confirmed making the Autumn of 1844 the completion of the 2,300 day/year prophecy.

So What Does "His Judgment Is Come" Mean?

One meaning is that God's courtroom trial is underway. Beginning with those who have been "appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27), eventually judgment will pass to the living.

It is stated that it is like a courtroom for "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment [was] white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne [was like] the fiery

flame, [and] his wheels [as] burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9-10). The books include that of remembrance (Malachi 3:16), as well as, the book of life (Revelation 20:12) for "the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12). This describes an investigation.

As in any courtroom an investigation eventually comes to an end, a verdict is rendered. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11). This is then followed by the sentencing phase in which a good sentence or bad sentence is a type of reward and, Jesus says, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

Although our works cannot add to salvation, our works give evidence of our relationship for "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17).

Think of it this way. If a man during courting time reveals, "I like your hair long, pulled back in a ponytail. I detest pasta. I don't like walking near water", what would the reaction be if on the next encounter, her hair has been chopped, she suggests going to a pasta restaurant, and afterwards suggests a walk along the river? He would probably say, "This relationship does not seem to be compatible." She might react and say, "But I don't understand. The last gentleman liked all these things." As you may laugh, our works ought to depart from the old relationship



with the devil and reveal a different set of works revealing our love of God.

We are Now Under Judgment

Another meaning of God's 'judgment hour is come' is for preparing His people to go forth to prepare His people. Now that might sound confusing, but it is not. Where are most of God's people? In other denominations. That is why Jesus said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd" (John 10:16). But they do not know that they need to come out of Babylon into God's one fold. Who is going to tell them? Yes, it is the Seventh-day Adventists, but is it just any Seventh-day Adventist? No. It is only those that have allowed for Heaven to "have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Revelation 7:3).

So during this judgment hour, God is preparing a final people in the church, known as the 144,000, who "were not defiled with women" (Revelation 14:4), which represents fallen churches. Therefore, these are those that are not in other denominations nor are they Seventh-day Adventists who are believing their doctrines known as the cheap grace, playing down of our doctrines, and overall are chiseling away at our core beliefs.

Now the fact that "judgment must begin at the house of God" (1

Peter 4:17) means we are under the judging eye now.

If Jesus were to return in about a year, two, five, or possibly ten years, fifteen tops, and the fact that when Sunday law comes in, probation for the church is closed, does that not present the seriousness of the potential that our names could be coming up in Heaven even now?



"We know not how soon our probation may close. How dare those who know the truth live in unpreparedness, not ready to meet their Lord? How dare they remain sinful and defiled? Why

are they not afraid? Why do they not realize their peril? The weakness of the church is due to its unbelieving, unconverted, unsanctified members. The Lord would work mightily for his people if they would put off the works of darkness, and be clothed with his righteousness. He calls upon every one who names the name of Christ to depart from all iniquity, to be 'not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.'" RH, February 18, 1904 par. 16

The Purifying of God's Church is in Progress

Once probation closes for the church, He will "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). "The great issue so near at hand will weed out those whom God has not appointed and He will have a pure, true, sanctified ministry prepared for the latter rain . . ." {3SM 385.3} And that issue, according to the compilers, states that it is Sunday Law. Some suspect that it is the persecution. That may be true, however, may it also be known that many Adventists do not really believe in Sunday as the Mark of the Beast anymore. Even our own president at the General Conference addressed the ASI convention last year stating that the Mark of the Beast is keeping any day different than Sabbath. No sir, "Sunday is the mark of the beast." RH, April 6, 1911 par. 23

So those that are giving up the idea of a



universal Sunday law are basically already, spiritually speaking, going out of the church. If their probation is already closing, the purifying of God's church, then, is in progress. When the crisis hits, we are not going to see the lost Adventists leave like a balloon floating here and another there. It is going to be like rats leaving a sinking ship. That is because the Holy Spirit of conviction in the area of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8) and the guiding "into all truth" (John 16:13) will have already been removed from them.

From there, in regards to the rest of the world, "The judgment of the dead has been going on, and soon the judgment will begin upon the living, and every case will be decided. It will be known whose names are retained upon the book of life, and whose are blotted out. Every day the angels of God keep a record of the transactions of men, and these records stand open to the eyes of angels, and Christ, and God. Those who have manifested true repentance for sin, and by living faith in Christ are obedient to God's commandments, will have their names retained in the book of life, and they will be confessed before the Father and before the holy angels. Jesus will say, 'They are mine; I have purchased them with my own blood.'" ST, June 2, 1890 par. 4

Let Us Not Compare Ourselves With Others

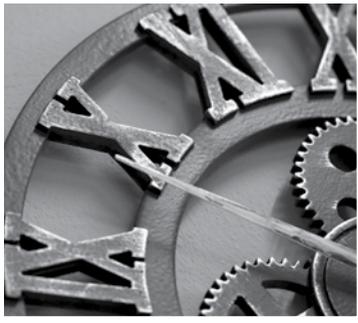
"Today, in the spirit and power of Elias



and of John the Baptist, messengers of God's appointment are calling the attention of a judgment-bound world to the solemn events soon to take place in connection with the closing hours of probation and the appearance of Christ Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. Soon every man is to be judged for the deeds done in the body. The hour of God's judgment has come, and upon the members of His church on earth rests the solemn responsibility of giving warning to those who are standing as it were on the very brink of eternal ruin. To every human being in the wide world who will give heed must be made plain the principles at stake in the great controversy being waged, principles upon which hang the destinies of all mankind." PK 716.1

And once all have had opportunity to know the truth, the verdict is stated, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11), a portion of the sentencing follows, "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and [upon] them which worshipped his image" (Revelation 16:2), and then all receive one reward or another for Jesus says, "I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

The role we have right now in this judgment



hour is to make sure we are right with God personally despite family, friends, church members, etc. Who knows, in the area in which you live, you may

be the only true Seventh-day Adventist. Let us not compare ourselves with others or wait upon others but compare ourselves with Jesus and by His grace make “your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Then, even now, ought we to go forth and be the witnesses we ought to be.

What is the Meaning of the Word “Witness”?

Even the word witness is not fully understood by many. Remember, the judgment hour is like a courtroom scene, where “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22), reviewing the books of evidence, but “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). As long as we stay in close relationship with our Advocate, our Counsel, our Attorney, confide only in Him, abide in His Word, do all that He commands, He will “present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24). Then we are to be His witnesses. We are to help bring evidence to the trials of everybody else in the world. Is that in the form of telling God what their sins are? No, of course not. We are to take the “gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6). “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). As we go forth with the gospel and people accept it

and are saved, we are presenting evidence for their salvation. When people slam the door shut, believe their ministers’ lies, and overall reject truth, we are presenting evidence into the courtroom that condemns them.

This is Why Preaching is Involved

The notion that all we have to do is reflect Jesus is a lie in that such is only part of the work. Yes, no use in preaching it because our witness in the courtroom will become suspect otherwise. It is like the authorities gaining evidence by not following the rules. But when we go forth living and preaching the truth, then when our witness for or against is mentioned in the courtroom as the records are reviewed, God will be able to say, spiritually speaking, “You say that you didn’t know the truth. Well, I sent Bob to your house and you didn’t have time for him. Sally came a year later and you heard she was a Seventh-day Adventist, which created prejudice in your heart, and you told her that you don’t want to hear anything from a cult. You received at least fourteen invitations to evangelistic meetings through the mail, radio ads, and even TV. ‘And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil’ (John 3:19).”

So, are you part of the judgment hour, going from place to place looking for souls to be won, coming across many who reject it, but persevering in your own area “Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God” (2 Peter 3:12)?





His Way With Thee

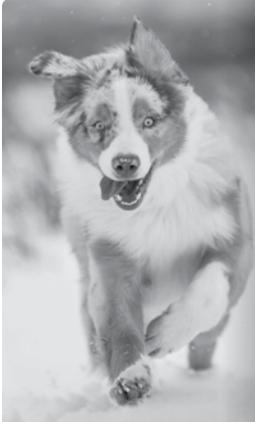
Would you live for Jesus, and be always pure and good?
Would you walk with Him within the narrow road?
Would you have Him bear your burden, carry all your load?
Let Him have His way with thee.

Would you have Him make you free, and follow at His call?
Would you know the peace that comes by giving all?
Would you have Him save you, so that you need never fall?
Let Him have His way with thee.

Would you in His kingdom find a place of constant rest?
Would you prove Him true in providential test?
Would you in His service labor always at your best?
Let Him have His way with thee.

His pow'r can make you what you ought to be;
His blood can cleanse your heart and make you free;
His love can fill your soul, and you will see
'Twas best for Him to have His way with thee.

–Cyrus S. Nusbaum



HOMeward BOUND!

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE

My brother, my sister, I urge you to prepare for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Day by day cast the love of the world out of your hearts. Understand by experience what it means to have fellowship with Christ. Prepare for the judgment, that when Christ shall come, to be admired in all them that believe, you may be among those who will meet Him in peace. In that day the redeemed will shine forth in the glory of the Father and the Son. The angels, touching their golden harps, will welcome the King and His trophies of victory – those who have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. A song of triumph will peal forth, filling all heaven. Christ has conquered. He enters the heavenly courts, accompanied by His redeemed ones, the witnesses that His mission of suffering and sacrifice has not been in vain.



The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that heaven is open to those who wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who reflect His image to behold and share with Him His glory.



There are homes for the pilgrims of earth

There are robes for the righteous, with crowns of glory and palms of victory. All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall

see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying. As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. In the home of the redeemed there will be no tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Isaiah 33:24. One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on.

We are still amidst the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness and behold Him who died for the sins of the world. He has opened the gates of paradise to all who receive and believe on Him. To them He gives power to become the sons and daughters of God. Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Hebrews 10:37. Blessed are

those servants who, when their Lord comes, shall be found watching.

We are homeward bound

He who loved us so much as to die for us hath builded for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest. There will be no sadness in the city

of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment.

Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer's glory in the kingdom of God.

Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase

It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Verses 35-37. Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7, 8.



THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

THUS SAITH THE LORD

HE STILL SPEAKS

BY EMMANUEL MACHAKAIRE



“Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.” Psalm 119:128

Do you know your Bible enough to answer certain words of truth to anyone? When Jesus was tempted by the devil himself, Jesus answered each time, “It is written” (Matt 4:1-11). This statement, declaring powerful dependence on God’s holy words occurs 80 times in the Bible. The title of this study, “Thus saith the Lord,” occurs 413 times in the Bible. What does the Bible say? “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.” Amos 8:11-13

Our world exalts compromise, political correctness, and vague confusion. Everyone

has a right to his own opinion – there is no truth. Consider talk shows, panel discussions, chat rooms, open forums, free debates, sharing, committees, classrooms, etc. They say let us agree to disagree and honor our differences. These are the answers they give when religious disagreements arise on scriptural matters.

We are Bible Christians, which means we follow the Bible’s record of Jesus Christ and His teachings. Our religion is simple – it is nothing more and nothing less than following Jesus Christ according to the Bible. We believe God wrote the Bible to reveal Himself, His Son Jesus Christ, the truth about the universe and His religion, and everything we need to know to live successful lives in this world and the world to come.

We do not base our Christianity on tradition, history, creeds, commentaries, popular opinions, a national religion, denominational dictates, personal preferences, almanac distinctions, our culture, or anything else. We cannot call ourselves Christians without establishing the authority of the Bible, for it is in the Bible we learn about the man Jesus Christ and the form of religion that





we observe. Apart from the Bible we have no true knowledge of Jesus Christ or understanding of the proper worship of God, for we are truly bound by this written revelation from God for all we know and do in a religious way.

We can, and should, put our faith to the test, for the vast majority of the human race have spent their lives believing numerous lies on many subjects. Putting our religion to the test is not only wise, but the Bible commands it.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

1 Thessalonians 5:21. We must sink the shaft deep in the mine of truth of the Bible. “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts 17:11

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1 “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” Revelation 2:2

The Bible is the written record of what God has declared on all subjects. “The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may do all the words of this law.” Deut. 29:29.

We are to esteem every Biblical precept regarding every subject to be absolutely correct

and right. Scripture is inspired by God to make the man of God perfect in all ways. “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

The prophets and apostles who wrote were moved by God’s Spirit. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1: 19-21.

Without the Bible as our Creator and Saviour’s revealed will, we are hopelessly lost forever. The Bible is absolutely and dogmatically the only source of truth in the world. Statements or opinions contradicting Scripture prove darkness. “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, [even] the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing



nothing..." 1 Timothy 6:3-4. Paul's spiritual opinion of men is "Let God be true, but every man a liar" "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." Romans 3:4.

God mocks scholars and ridicules their wisdom. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where [is] the wise? where [is] the scribe? where [is] the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1 Corinthians 1:19-20. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." 1 Corinthians 3:19-20. "Thus saith the Lord" mentioned (413 times) in the Bible and "It is written" mentioned (80 times) declare this great dogmatism. We must build our lives and thoughts on what God has spoken in the Bible. Thus you may choose to build your faith on the rock of scripture or the on the sand of human wisdom.

Thus someone said, "If God said it; I believe it; that settles it." This is the perfect life of faith and a poor man with a Bible is far superior to a rich man with educated conceit. "The rich man [is] wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out." Proverbs 28:11.

The Bible is a great gift we should esteem highly and not be ashamed of at all. It was the great treasure of Israel and the early Christians as well as the reformers. We should be prepared to



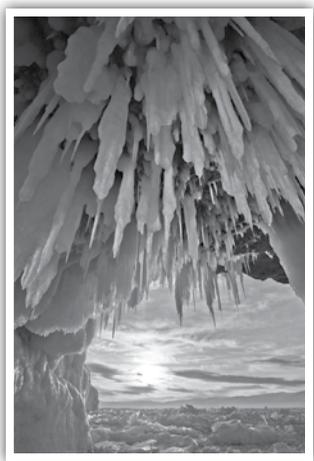
give its truths to the world regardless of the wisdom of the world. We should oppose any attempt to compromise or dilute Bible authority. We must be willing to preach the inspired scriptures in order to correct the perilous times apostasy on subjects such as creation, abortion,

homosexuality, alcoholism, diet, the Sabbath, baptism, marriage, death, spirituality, the second coming of Jesus and many more other topics.

The Lord's philosophy is the rule of the Christian's life. The entire being is imbued with the life-giving principles of heaven. The Bible is the channel through which to communicate the divine principles of truth to the world. Artificial lights may appear, claiming to come from heaven, but they cannot shine forth as the star of holiness, the Bible, the star of heavenly brightness, to guide the feet of the Christian into the city of our God. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my feet." Psalm 119:105.

"We all need a guide through the many strait places in life as much as the sailor needs a pilot over the sandy bar or up the rocky river, and where is this guide to be found? We point you . . . to the Bible. God, has given us His Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Its teachings have a vital bearing on our prosperity in all the relations of life.

The Bible is the great standard of right and wrong, clearly defining sin and holiness. Its living principles, running through our lives like threads of gold, are our only safeguard in trial and temptation. The Bible is a chart, showing us the waymarks of truth. Those who are acquainted with this chart will be enabled to tread with certainty in the path of duty,



wherever they may be called to go. When faith in God's Word is lost, the soul has no guide, no safeguard." FLB 7.2-4

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

"To this cause may in great degree be attributed the widespread iniquity in our world today. When the Word of God is set aside, its power to restrain the evil passions of the natural heart is rejected. When the claims and teachings of the men conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's Word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A "Thus saith the Lord" is not to be set aside for a "Thus saith the church" or a "Thus saith the state." The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.

"When God's Word is made the man of our counsel, when we search the Scriptures for light, heavenly angels come near to impress the mind and to enlighten the understanding, so that it can be truly said, "Thus saith the Lord."

"The Word of God is a channel of communication with the living God. He who feeds upon the Word will become fruitful in all good works. He . . . will be the discoverer of rich mines of truth which he must work to find the hidden treasure. When [he is] surrounded with temptations, the Holy Spirit will bring to his mind the very words with which to meet the



temptation at the very moment when they are most needed, and he can use them effectually.

"We must be better acquainted with our Bibles. We might close the door to many temptations, if we would commit to memory passages of Scripture. Let us hedge up the way to Satan's temptations with "It is written." We shall meet with conflicts to test our faith and courage, but they will make us strong if we conquer through the grace Jesus is willing to give." FLB 8.4-5

God still speaks to us through His word. It is not yet too late to pay heed to His word. Mercy still lingers. Will you, in this day, heed the words of invitation and mercy? Will you know the things which belong unto your salvation? The gracious invitation is still sounding. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies.

In the eyes of the world we may be politically correct or socially correct but that does not make us correct in the eyes of God. We need to be scripturally correct. God always speaks loud enough through His word for a willing ear to hear.

We are God's little children, and we ask Him to help us to live, not to please ourselves and to have our own way, but to please and glorify Him. The Word of God is to be our teacher. It is the voice of God speaking to our hearts. The Bible and the Bible alone must now be laid up in the heart of every Christian. It must be cherished and regarded as the voice of God. For "Thus saith the Lord", "...Hold fast that which is good" For there is power in God's word and through it alone; He still speaks. Amen.



EXCERPTS FROM
**SKETCHES OF JEWISH SOCIAL LIFE
TRAVELLING IN PALESTINE - ROADS**

ALFRED EDERSHEIM

Alfred Edersheim, 7 March 1825 – 16 March 1889,
was a Jewish convert to Christianity and a Biblical scholar.

It was the very busiest road in Palestine, on which the publican Levi Matthew sat at the receipt of “custom,” when our Lord called him to the fellowship of the Gospel, and he then made that great feast to which he invited his fellow-publicans, that they also might see and hear Him in Whom he had found life and peace ([Luke 5:29](#)). For, it was the only truly international road of all those which passed through Palestine; indeed, it formed one of the great highways of the world’s commerce. At the time of which we write, it may be said, in general, that six main arteries of commerce and intercourse traversed the country, the chief objective points being Caesarea, the military, and Jerusalem, the religious capital.

First, there was the southern road, which led from Jerusalem, by Bethlehem, to Hebron, and thence westwards to Gaza, and eastwards into Arabia, whence also a direct road went northwards to Damascus. It is by this road we imagine St. Paul to have travelled, when retiring into the solitudes of Arabia, immediately after his conversion ([Galatians 1:17,18](#)). The road to Hebron must have been much frequented by priestly and other pilgrims to the city, and by it the father of the Baptist and the parents of Jesus would pass.

Secondly, there was the old highway along the sea-shore from Egypt up to Tyre, whence a straight, but not so much frequented, road struck, by Caesarea Philippi, to Damascus. But the sea-shore road itself, which successively touched Gaza, Ascalon, Jamnia, Lydda, Diospolis, and finally Caesarea and Ptolemais, was probably the most important military highway in the land, connecting the capital with the seat of the Roman procurator at Caesarea, and keeping the sea-board and its harbours free for communication. This road branched off for Jerusalem at Lydda, where it bifurcated, leading either by Beth-horon or by Emmaus, which was the longer way. It was probably by this road that the Roman escort hurried off St. Paul ([Acts 23:31](#)), the mounted soldiers leaving him at Antipatris, about twenty Roman miles from

Lydda, and altogether from Jerusalem about fifty-two Roman miles (the Roman mile being 1,618 yards, the English mile 1,760).

Thus the distance to Caesarea, still left to be traversed next morning by the cavalry would be about twenty-six Roman miles, or, the whole way, seventy-eight Roman miles from Jerusalem. This rate of travelling, though rapid, cannot be regarded as excessive, since an ordinary day’s journey is computed in the



Talmud (*Pes* 93b) as high as forty Roman miles.

A **third** road led from Jerusalem, by Beth-horon and Lydda, to Joppa, whence it continued close by the sea-shore to Caesarea. This was the road which Peter and his companions would take



when summoned to go and preach the gospel to Cornelius (Acts 10:23,24). It was at Lydda, thirty-two Roman miles from Jerusalem, that Aeneas was miraculously healed, and “nigh” to it – within a few miles – was Joppa, where the raising of Tabitha, Dorcas, “the gazelle” (Acts 9:32-43), took place.

Of the **fourth** great highway, which led from Galilee to Jerusalem, straight through Samaria, branching at Sichem eastwards to Damascus, and westwards to Caesarea, it is needless to say much, since, although much shorter, it was, if possible, eschewed by Jewish travellers; though, both in going to (Luke 9:53,17:11), and returning from Jerusalem (John 4:4,43), the Lord Jesus passed that way. The road from Jerusalem straight northwards also branched off at *Gophna*, whence it led across to Diospolis, and so on to Caesarea.

But ordinarily, Jewish travellers would, rather than pass through Samaria, face the danger of robbers which awaited them (Luke 10:30) along the **fifth** great highway (comp. Luke 19:1,28; Matthew 20:17,29), that led from Jerusalem, by Bethany, to Jericho. Here the Jordan was forded, and the road led to Gilead, and thence either southwards, or else north to Peraea, whence the traveller could make his way into Galilee. It will be observed that all these roads, whether

commercial or military, were, so to speak, Judaeian, and radiated from or to Jerusalem.

But the **sixth** and great road, which passed through Galilee, was not at all primarily Jewish, but connected the East with the West – Damascus with Rome. From Damascus it led across the Jordan to Capernaum, Tiberias, and Nain (where it fell in with a direct road from Samaria), to Nazareth, and thence to Ptolemais. Thus, from its position, Nazareth was on the world’s great highway. What was spoken there might equally re-echo throughout Palestine, and be carried to the remotest lands of the East and of the West.

It need scarcely be said, that the roads which we have thus traced are only those along the principal lines of communication. But a large number of secondary roads also traversed the country in all directions. Indeed, from earliest times much attention seems to have been given to facility of intercourse throughout the land. Even in the days of Moses we read of “the king’s highway” (Numbers 20:17,19,21:22). In Hebrew we have, besides the two general terms (*derech* and *orach*), three expressions which respectively indicate a trodden or beaten-down path (*nathiv*, from *nathav*, to tread down), a made or cast-up road (*messillah*, from *salal*, to cast up), and “the king’s highway” – the latter,



evidently for national purposes, and kept up at the public expense. In the time of the kings (for example, 1 Kings 12:18), and even earlier, there were regular carriage roads, although we can scarcely credit the statement of Josephus (*Antiq*,

viii,7,4) that Solomon had caused the principal roads to be paved with black stone – probably basalt. Toll was apparently levied in the time of Ezra ([Ezra 4:13,20](#)); but the clergy were exempt from this as from all other taxation (7:24).

The roads to the cities of refuge required to be always kept in good order ([Deuteronomy 19:3](#)). According to the Talmud they were to be forty-eight feet wide, and provided with bridges, and with sign-posts where roads diverged.

Passing to later times, the Romans, as might have been expected, paid great attention to the modes of communication through the country. The military roads were paved, and provided with milestones. But the country roads were chiefly bridle-paths. The Talmud distinguishes between public and private roads. The former must be twenty-four, the latter six feet wide. It is added that, for the king's highway, and for the road taken by funerals, there is no measure. Roads were annually repaired in spring, preparatory for going up to the great feasts. To prevent the possibility of danger, no subterranean structure, however protected, was allowed under a public road. Overhanging branches of trees had to be cut down, so as to allow a man on a camel to pass. A similar rule



applied to balconies and projections; nor were these permitted to darken a street. Any one allowing things to accumulate on the road, or dropping them from a cart, had to make good what damage might be incurred by travellers.

Indeed, in towns and their neighbourhood the police regulations were even more strict; and such ordinances occur as for the removal within thirty days of rotten trees or dangerous walls; not to pour out water on the road; not to throw



out anything on the street, nor to leave about building materials, or broken glass, or thorns, along with other regulations for the public safety and health.

Along such roads passed the travellers; few at first, and mostly pilgrims, but gradually growing in number, as commerce and social or political intercourse increased. Journeys were performed on foot, upon asses, or in carriages ([Acts 8:28](#)), of which three kinds are mentioned – the round carriage, perhaps like our gig; the elongated, like a bed; and the cart, chiefly for the transport of goods. It will be understood that in those days travelling was neither comfortable nor easy. Generally, people journeyed in company, of which the festive bands going to Jerusalem are a well-known instance. If otherwise, one would prepare for a journey almost as for a change of residence, and provide tent, victuals, and all that was needful by the way. It was otherwise with the travelling hawker, who was welcomed as a friend in every district through which he passed, who carried the news of the day, exchanged the products of one for those of another district, and produced the latest articles of commerce or of luxury. Letters were only conveyed by special messengers, or through travellers.

WORDS OF THE PIONEERS



Rome a Persecutor

In conversing with well-lead and dextrous Roman Catholics, I find them disposed to deny that their church has ever been a persecuting power. They endeavor to hide the church behind the civil governments of those countries which were under its influence and control. Say they, The church did not put men to death; it only decided on points of faith, deciding what was heretical; it was the civil power, which for its own safety and preservation executed heretics, as persons endangering the peace and well being of the sate.

It is well to have historic facts at hand to meet such bold assertions and sophistical arguments. The following from the History of the Reformation, vol. iii, p. 374, is to the point:

“The year after the accession of Charles VIII, son of Louis XI, a sickly and timid child, Innocent VIII, had assumed the pontifical tiara, 1484. He had seven or eight sons by different mothers: and hence, according to an epigram of the times, Rome unanimously saluted him with the name of father.

“There was at that time on all the slopes of the Dauphinese Alps, and along the banks of the Durance, a new growth of the old Waldensian opinions. ‘The roots,’ says an old chronicler, ‘were continually putting forth new shoots in every

direction! Bold men called the Roman church the church of devils, and maintained that it was as edifying to pray in a stable as in a church.

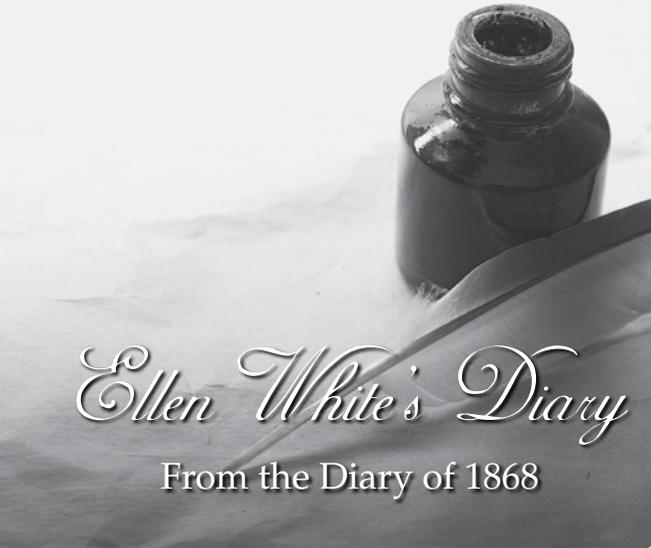
“The priests, the Bishops, and the Roman legates uttered a cry of alarm, and on the 5th kalends of May--the 27th of April, 1487, Innocent VIII, the father of the Romans, issued a bull against these humble Christians. ‘To arms,’ said the pontiff, ‘and trample these heretics under foot as venomous serpents!’



“At the approach of the legate, followed by an army of eighteen thousand men, and a number of volunteers who wished to share the spoils of the Waldenses, the latter abandoned their houses and took refuge in the mountains, caverns, and clefts of the rocks, as the birds flee for shelter when the storm begins to lower. Not a valley, nor a wood, nor a lock escaped their persecutors; every where in this part of the Alps,

and particularly on the Italian side, these poor disciples of Christ were hunted down like beasts of prey. At last the Pope’s satellites were worn out; their strength was exhausted, their feet could no longer scale the steep retreats of the ‘heretics,’ and their arms refused to strike.”

r. f. c. November 21, 1865, UrSe, ARSH 194.3



Ellen White's Diary

From the Diary of 1868

Bucksbridge, N.Y., Wednesday, Jan. 1, 1868.

We . . . rode upon a rough road through pastures and over a body of water on our way to take the cars at St. Albans. . . . We were in season for the cars that were due at six A.M. In the cars we suffered with heat. Arrived at Brother Hilliard's at one o'clock P.M. We were very weary, yet consented to meet with the few believers in this place.

Rochester, N.Y., Thursday, Jan. 9, 1868.

Rode into Rochester. . . . Went on board the cars to rest in the sleeping car.

Friday, Jan. 10, 1868. Awoke in the morning on board the sleeping car. Found the train behind time about two hours. It had been a keen, cold, night and the train had to move very slowly for safety of passengers. Took our breakfast about eight o'clock. Changed from sleeping car to one ahead. The sleeping car was pronounced unsafe. We were delayed two hours on the track by a broken-down car ahead. Missed connection at Detroit. Waited there two hours. Had a weary ride until midnight. . . . Found friend with team waiting for us.

Friday, Jan. 24, 1868. Prepared to go to Wright. We found it very unpleasant traveling. A cold wind was blowing directly in our faces. At noon stopped at Lappinville. Found ourselves in mean quarters; there was a woman with a pipe

in her mouth, and a young man smoking a cigar. He said . . . he had learned the habit and could not give it up now although he knew it was hurtful. . . . We ate our plain hygienic food with good relish, but were treated with incivility by the inmates of the house. They showed themselves strangers to true politeness. We found no good hay for the horses, no oats, no water. . . . They charged us fifty cents for sitting before their fire and being annoyed with the scent of tobacco. I was glad to go out again in the air.

Monday, January 27, 1868. Arose at four o'clock. Left the comfortable home of Brother Root about five o'clock. . . . Rode five miles to Brother Buck's. Ate our breakfast with them. Brother Buck gave each of us a five-dollar bill. We thank him for his liberal gift. . . . Made no further stop until we passed through Greenville. Received our mail and passed on to our home. Found no help. Prepared our own dinner. We felt glad to find Willie not sick. We left him with a bad cold. Brother Corliss had taken good care of everything, and we prize him much.

[Greenville,] Tuesday, Jan. 28, 1868. Brother Corliss helped me prepare breakfast. Everything we touched was frozen. All things in our cellar were frozen. We prepared frozen turnips and potatoes. After prayers Brother Corliss went into the woods . . . to get wood. . . . I baked eight pans of gems, swept rooms, washed dishes, helped Willie put snow in boiler, which requires many tubsful. We have no well water or cistern. . . . Got dinner for Willie and me. Just as we got through my husband and Brother Andrews drove up.





Had had no dinner. I started cooking again. Soon got them something to eat. Nearly all day has thus been spent – not a line written. I feel sad about this. Am exceedingly weary.

[Alma] Sunday, Feb. 9, 1868. My husband spoke. . . . The children made so much noise my brain is tired. . . . I spoke at one for nearly two hours upon temperance. Brother Andrews spoke in the evening.

Monday, Feb. 17, 1868. They told me it was expected that I should address the people in the evening. . . . I had told Brother Andrews that he would have to speak, but he was afraid the people would be disappointed. I arose in great weakness, spoke from these words, “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36, 37). . . . The people seemed to receive the word. . . .

Afterwards I learned that Brother Andrews had selected this text to speak from if he addressed the people. We said not a word to one another, yet our minds were led in the same direction.

Thursday, Feb. 20, 1868. Packed our things to start on our journey to Vassar. Had a meeting in the morning. . . . Fifteen were buried with Christ in baptism. We rejoiced at the sight.

[Vassar, Mich.,] Sunday, Feb. 23, 1868. My husband spoke in the morning. . . . I did not attend meeting. Wrote a part of the time and cooked gems and pudding for dinner. When the people returned they were overjoyed to hear the

subject on Sabbath made so plain. They all said they never heard the like before. . . .

I spoke in afternoon. . . . I had great freedom. There was a crowded house.

Monday, Feb. 24, 1868. Had a meeting through the day. Brother Andrews went ten miles to Watrousville to attend a funeral. . . .

One poor woman came to hear me speak, but was too late. Had been out of health and dared not venture out in the cold. I tried to comfort her the best I could. Several wanted me to encourage them; told me their troubles. . . . I did not know what to do. Oh, how glad I was to get a little rest and peace! It is so difficult to remain calm with everything going on – some talking all at one time.

[St. Charles, Mich.,] Tuesday, Feb 25, 1868. It was a very pleasant day for traveling. . . . Arrived at Brother Griggs’s about two o’clock. Took dinner between two and three. Was hungry; enjoyed the food. Wrote fifteen pages of testimony for church at Washington, New Hampshire.

Wednesday, Feb. 26, 1868. Arose early. . . . Wrote fifteen pages, enclosed in an envelope and sent to the office; for Washington, forty-four pages. Put on my cloak and hat and walked a short distance to Brother Guilford’s. Found people gathered together in two rooms. I spoke to them about one hour from these words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” All seemed interested.... Took dinner and about two we stepped into the sleigh and were on our way back to Tuscola.



MS. 13, 1868

THE LEPROSY OF SIN

BY LOIS STORTI

leprosy (-rəsi) noun

A contagious skin disease, causing serious and permanent damage to the body, including loss of fingers, nose etc. Leprosy was the scourge of the ancient world. Nothing evoked more fear, more dread, or more revulsion than the sight of these walking dead. That is what a leper was called, a walking dead man. The smell of his decaying flesh would announce his coming long before the tattered scraps of his clothing would be seen, or his raspy “Unclean! Unclean!” announcement he was required to declare, could be heard. The stumbling shuffle of toeless feet, the wandering of sightless eyes

and the moan of a cheekless mouth, all pointed to Leprosy, this unseen attacker that slowly destroyed human bodies, and made the individual an untouchable to society.

“The great Jewish culture scholar, Edersheim,

says the disease which we today call leprosy generally begins with pain in certain areas of the body. Numbness follows. Soon the skin in such spots loses its original color. It gets to be thick, glossy, and scaly. ... As the sickness progresses, the thickened spots become dirty sores and ulcers due to poor blood supply.

The skin, especially around the eyes and ears, begins to bunch, with deep furrows between the swellings, so that the face of the afflicted individual begins to resemble that of a lion. Fingers drop off or are absorbed; toes are affected similarly. His throat becomes hoarse, and you can now not only see, feel, and smell the leper, but you can hear his rasping voice. And if you stay with him for some time, you can even imagine a peculiar taste in your mouth, probably due to the odor.

“Leprosy is a vivid and graphic physical picture of the spiritual defilement of sin. Sin is ugly, loathsome, incurable, and contaminating; it separates men from God and makes them outcasts. The instructions given to the priests in Leviticus 13 help us understand the nature of sin: Sin is inside us, deeper than the skin (Leviticus 13:3); sin also spreads (Leviticus 13:8); sin always defiles and isolates (Leviticus 13:45-46); and just as leprous garments are fit only for the fire (Leviticus 13:52-57), so those who die clothed in sin will have that fate.

But then came Jesus [Mark 1:40-45]. When the untouchable is touched by Jesus (cf. Leviticus 13:42), “Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.”” -Touched by Jesus

Mark 1:40-45 King James Version (KJV)

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.



42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

Luke 17:11-19 King James Version (KJV)

11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

As we can see, like leprosy, sin can be an incurable disease that leads to spiritual corruption and possibly



eternal death. We can see the contagious nature of sin when we choose the company of friends who are choosing to do the wrong thing (i.e. drink, smoke, drugs, bad language, etc.). Soon we find ourselves doing the same kinds of things as they are. We become like the leper, isolated. The leper was isolated from family and community, and with sin, we become separated from God and from the family of God. Like the physical ravages of leprosy, we become spiritually ravaged.

The good news is that there is a cure for the leprosy of sin, and that cure is Jesus Christ. He is our only hope for cleansing and wholeness. We don't need to take any special drugs or go through surgery to remove the leprosy of sin. All we need to do, like the lepers in the stories of the Bible, is go to Jesus and fall on our faces with a repentant spirit and confess our sins to the "Great Physician" asking for forgiveness and with faith knowing that we will be healed. Hallelujah! Not only are we forgiven and cleansed of our spiritual leprosy, but we can have eternal life with our Lord and Savior. There is a cure for the leprosy of sin and Jesus is waiting for each one of us to come to Him for that cure!!

Water As a Drink

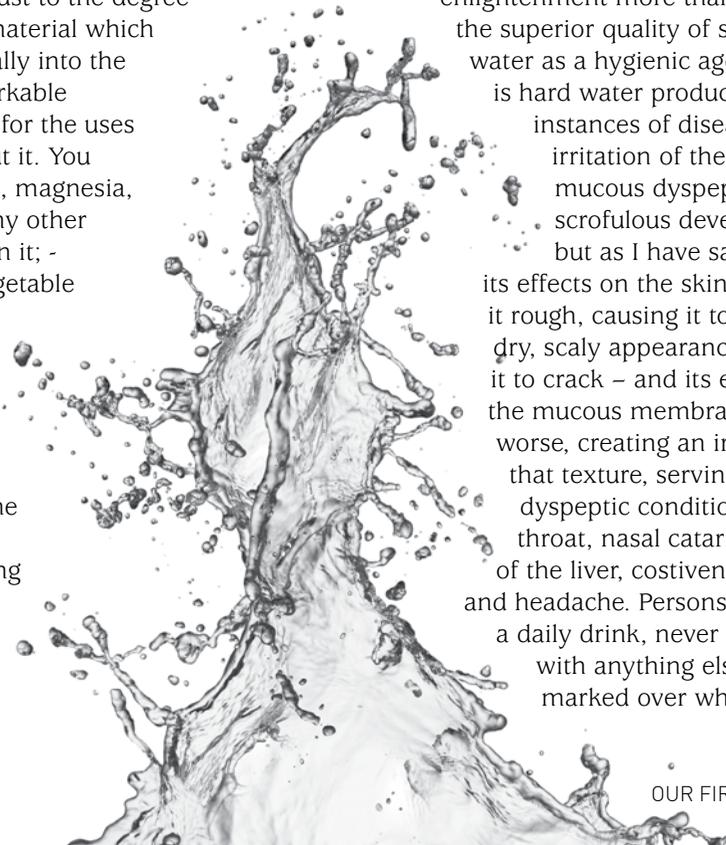
BY JAMES WHITE

It is not only for its effects upon the skin and indirectly upon the organs lying immediately subjacent to the skin, that water should be pure and soft; but, if possible, its effects upon the internal structure of the body, when taken as a drink, render it more imperatively necessary that pure and soft water should be used. Eighty per cent of the human creature is made up of water. Thus, if you take a person weighing a hundred pounds, and place him where all the fluids in his body shall be removed, and you have left the actual dry material of which he is composed, he will be reduced in weight to twenty pounds. Now, for all this organic use, this great life-sustaining purpose, nothing but pure water will serve. Just to the degree that there is in it any material which does not enter essentially into the formation of this remarkable substance, is it spoiled for the uses to which we wish to put it. You can have no lime, soda, magnesia, arsenic, sulphur, nor any other medicinal substances in it; - nor the essences of vegetable substances, without rendering it unfit for the purposes for which it is intended in the great constructive policy of Nature; as applied to the human body.

This proposition being correct, we only need to go one step further to demolish entirely

the popular belief in the virtues of medicinal springs. And this can be done easily enough whenever the occasion for doing it shall be appropriate. But my purpose at this time is to state my objections, not against the use of waters which are usually termed medicinal but against the use of waters which are not so considered, but are generally regarded as fit for use in the common purposes to which water is put as a drink, and in the preparations of our food. In other words, I wish to call your attention to the unfitness of all waters which are simply hard, for use as a drink, and for the purposes of cookery.

On no single point is there need of enlightenment more than on this, of the superior quality of soft over hard water as a hygienic agent. Not only is hard water productive in many instances of diseased kidneys, irritation of the bladder, mucous dyspepsia, and scrofulous development, but as I have said before, its effects on the skin are to leave it rough, causing it to put on a dry, scaly appearance, making it to crack - and its effects on the mucous membrane are even worse, creating an irritation of that texture, serving to introduce dyspeptic conditions, sore throat, nasal catarrh, inactivity of the liver, costiveness, piles, and headache. Persons using it as a daily drink, never mingling it with anything else, would be marked over whole districts





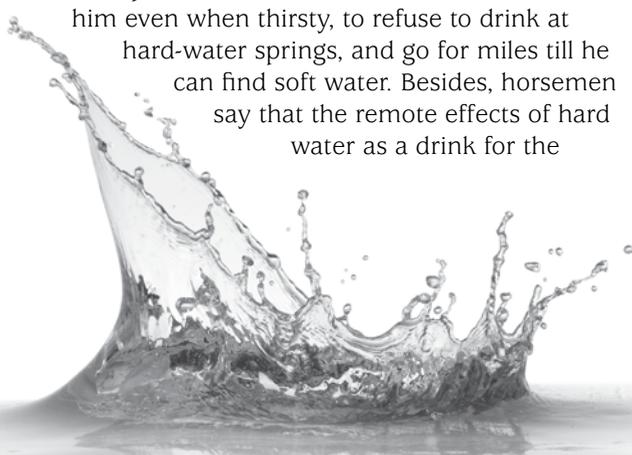
of country by habitual constipation, by dry skin, by shrivelled muscle, and are therefore, as if by instinct, led to avoid its use, unless modified by articles such as milk, sugar, tea, coffee, and alcoholic mixtures. I have known persons taking hygienic treatment for constipation of the bowels, whom physicians had utterly failed to cure by any hydropathic appliance, and have been compelled to resort to medicines, immediately relieved on the use of pure soft water as a drink. But this is only half its value. Its power as a solvent, as well as a tonic, its gentle and invigorating effect on free mucous surfaces, thus indirectly securing the health of all the senses, whose niceties of action depend on the health of the mucous tissue, are evidences of its advantage as a hygienic agent.

We who are so artificially educated in all that pertains to the nicety of perception by the special senses, know very little of the instinctive dislike which the unperverted taste would show toward hard water as a drink. The animals might teach us on this point. Horsemen, who study the natural conditions of their horses, and seek to preserve their health, are very particular in procuring soft water for them to drink, they having been taught that the taste of the horse is so perfect and nice in this matter, as to cause him even when thirsty, to refuse to drink at hard-water springs, and go for miles till he can find soft water. Besides, horsemen say that the remote effects of hard water as a drink for the

horse, are, that instead of a glossy, sleek appearance of the hair which the horse shows when in the habit of drinking soft water, there arises a staring, dry, and apparently half-deadened condition of the hair and skin, making the grooming of the animal doubly difficult.

I am satisfied that right views and a practical reformation on this point on the part of the people, would do much toward introducing them to better conditions of health, even though other things should remain as at present. And I should advise every family who may read this lecture, and who use hard water either for drink or for culinary purposes, to take measures immediately to supply themselves with soft water in abundant quantities; and if it can only be obtained by being caught in reservoirs as it falls from the clouds, to filter it before it is used. Filtered rain-water is perfectly unobjectionable as a drink; and an expenditure of from five to twenty dollars in the purchase of a filter, would secure to any family in this land the means of purifying all the water they might need for drink and for cooking purposes.”

1865 JW, HHTL 124



I will praise Thee, for I am
fearfully and wonderfully made.

Ps.139:14.

The CDC's New Quarantine Rule Could Violate Civil Liberties

By Ed Yong

DEC. 30, 2016 – The proposed regulation could be used to detain people without due process, or examine them without informed consent.

On August 15th, with little fanfare, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) took steps to improve its ability to deal with infectious outbreaks. The agency proposed a new rule that would expand its powers to screen, test, and quarantine people traveling into or within the United States, in the event of a crisis like the historic Ebola outbreak of 2014.

...the CDC could screen people at airports and other transport hubs, apprehend those they suspect of being ill for three days, and potentially quarantine or isolate them pending a medical review.

It is *already* authorized to detain people suspected of carrying diseases like plague, Ebola, and (somewhat improbably) smallpox. But the new rule does away with a formal list. It extends the same powers to any “quarantinable communicable disease,” and uses wider range of symptoms (from a list that federal agents can update as the need arises) for defining “ill” people.

For a start, the rule is sparse when it comes to due process. It allows the CDC to detain travelers indefinitely before deciding whether to quarantine them, saying only that the agency “doesn’t expect” such apprehensions to last for



AFOLABI SOTUNDE / REUTERS

A man has his temperature taken using an infrared digital laser thermometer at Abuja.

more than 72 hours. It doesn’t make provisions for legal counsel if people can’t afford a lawyer themselves.

It allows the CDC to detain travelers indefinitely before deciding whether to quarantine them, saying only that the agency “doesn’t expect” such apprehensions to last for more than 72 hours. It doesn’t make provisions for legal counsel if people can’t afford a lawyer themselves.

The rule also gives the CDC ultimate authority to carry out medical tests and treatments, stating that “the individual’s consent shall not be considered as a prerequisite to the exercise of any authority.” That’s medically unethical, says Hodge, since informed consent has been a bedrock of medicine for decades. “If you don’t get it, you could have additional quarantine, but you don’t get to force informed consent on people.”

END-TIME PERSPECTIVE: “You can never exclude God from any matter in which the rights of His people are involved. The hand of God is spread as a shield over all His creatures. No man can wound your rights without smiting that hand; you can wound no man’s rights without smiting it. That hand holds the sword of justice. Beware how you deal with men.” OHC



Two Talking Dolls Made By the Company, Genesis Toys, May Be Eavesdropping on Your Family

DEC. 6, 2016 – A coalition of international consumer watchdog groups filed a complaint to the Federal Trade Commission. The complaint alleges that the dolls My Friend Cayla and i-Que Intelligent Robot, which use speech-recognition software to have conversations with kids, are using this technology to record their personal information. The coalition also claims this is happening without parents’ knowledge or consent and is potentially violating laws that protect children’s privacy.

END-TIME PERSPECTIVE: Sister White warns us of even sharing intimate details of our lives with friends or close associates. (“By so doing the shield which should guard the privacy and sacredness of every family is broken down and Satan leads on to take a course to injure and ruin the cause of God and one another. MR 17, 1263.) How much more careful should we be these days when private information is being gathered by strangers to use against us.



The Self-Marriage Journey

Self-marriage is a rite-of-passage for those choosing to become “engaged” with all aspects of themselves, firstly, and then commit to the continued self-engagement process even while in intimate relationship with others.

Self-marriage is the (optional) end result of

a one-year process of true engagement and union with the Self, with the ultimate goal being complete intimacy with ones’ self.

This process is an ‘journey of honouring’ that anyone can undertake, regardless of their age, current relationship status, or religion.

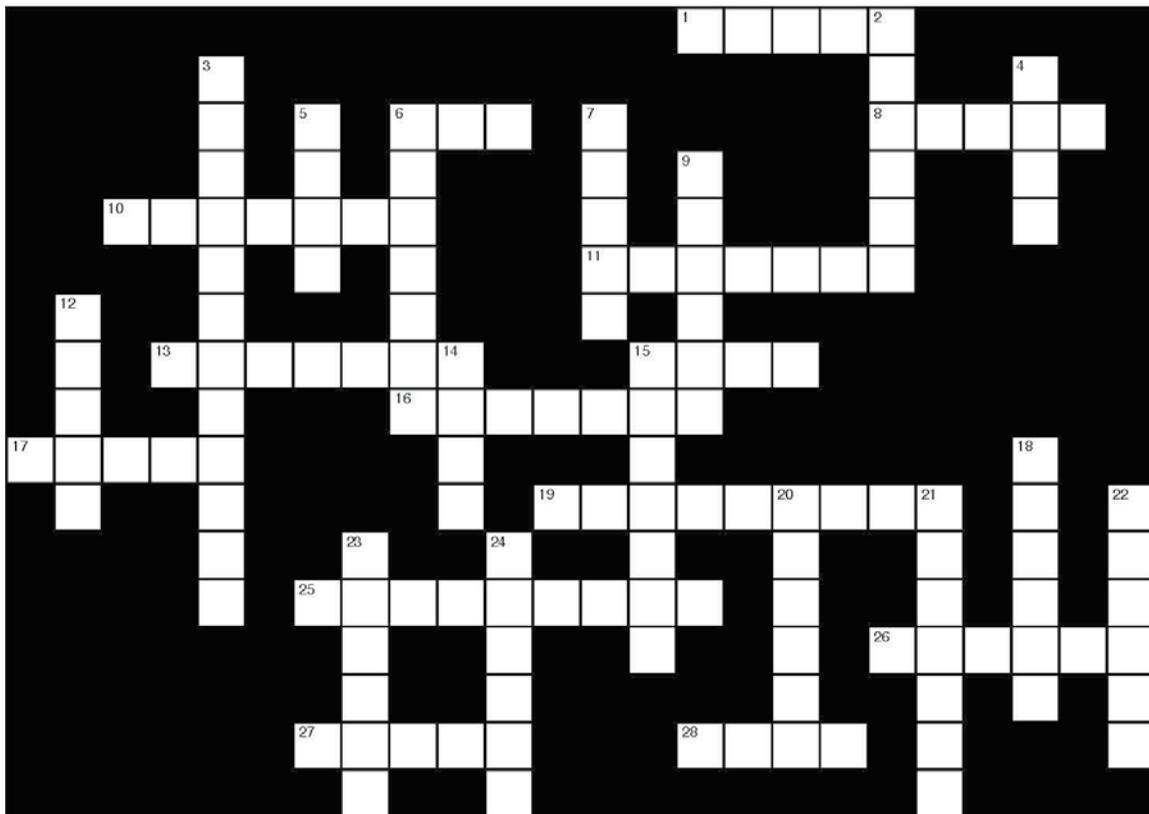
Being engaged with ones’ self means an investment of time, focus and energy on getting to know the authentic ‘you,’ discovering all the intimate details of who you are, and supporting yourself in becoming the *greatest expression of your fullest potential*.

Committing to this process is an act of dedication and devotion to Self, sourced from a place of self-love.

Are you ready to commit to you?

END-TIME PERSPECTIVE: I really thought Satan had done about all the damage he could do to the sanctity of marriage till I ran across this article. This covers a whole other range of sin – not only diminishing the marriage between man and woman, but esteeming self to a whole new level. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,...” 2 Tim. 3:1,2. But don’t worry – if you find that you are incompatible with yourself you can receive counseling – for a price, of course. And if it still doesn’t work out with yourself – you guessed it – you can always divorce yourself. Also for a price.

CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. This Old Testament measure of length was 2 spans.
6. Jesus' characterization of Herod Antipas: "Go and tell that _____."
8. One of the products in making Egyptians' garments.
10. The scrolls were found by a _____ shepherd.
11. The "apple" of the Bible.
13. A big cat that roamed the Holy Land in ancient times.
15. A tree associated with Jericho and with Israel's kings.
16. The second son of David and Bathsheba.
17. What famous person followed as a successor to the first king?
19. The wife of Uriah the Hittite.
25. The earliest-known system of writing.
26. _____ neither sow nor reap ... and yet God feeds them.
27. The half sister that Amnon, David's firstborn, son raped.

28. This animal had a reputation as a plunderer of flocks.

DOWN

2. An Old testament weight which was a little over 75 pounds.
3. A span was 3 _____.
4. "As if a man fled from a lion, and a _____ met him."
5. Who was Israel's first king?
6. A handbreadth was 4 _____.
7. A tree mentioned no fewer than 70 times in the Bible.
9. The river that runs from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee.
12. He was struck dead by God when he touched the arc.
14. At Jesus' baptism Matthew said the Spirit of God descended like a _____.
15. The scrolls found at the Dead Sea were found in _____ jars.
18. Who anointed Saul?
20. He smothered King Benhadad in his

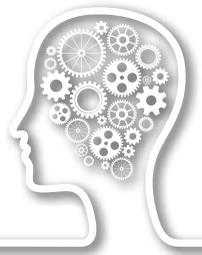
- sickbed to obtain the throne.
21. David's third son.
22. He was anointed to complete the work of Elijah.
23. The most spectacular modern-day Biblical find was at _____.
24. John the Baptist called the Pharisees and Sadducees a brood of _____.



FROM READERS' DIGEST "ATLAS OF THE BIBLE"

Something to think about

BY REEN SWINDLE, ASSISTANT EDITOR



As I am writing this, we have been experiencing some severe storms in our area of the southeast U.S. – hail, torrential rains, high winds, even tornadoes. There has been much loss of property and life. Sometimes there is little or no time to prepare for these weather-related storms, even when warnings are sounded. Gathering your family and a few precious or valuable items from your home that you might wish to preserve can be hectic when you have to act in a hurry. Even when we think we are prepared for storms, in hindsight while looking at all the devastation we often say, “If I had only...”

Many times when we have these periods of heavy rainfall we hear people joking about building an ark, referring to the flood in Noah’s day. The trouble is, we don’t seem to consider the reality of the whole story of that flood. Were those people prepared? They should have been! They had been warned for 120 years prior to the event. Yet only eight survived. I am not sure of the population of the earth at that time – some have calculated that number to be well into the billions – but I ask you to think of your own town. What if, many years in advance, all of you had been warned of a major forthcoming event that was going to wipe out just your area. Can you even conceive of only EIGHT residents of your town actually taking the warning seriously enough to be saved? That is hard to imagine, isn’t it?

There is a storm coming. It is bigger than any tornado, hurricane or typhoon, real or imagined, that has ever occurred. And we have been warned, and are continually *being* warned, about it. How many will survive this storm? Not many – oh, more than eight, but still not many, comparatively speaking. Why? Because just as the people in Noah’s day refused

to believe the warnings, we are the same in our unbelief. Actually, we are probably worse because we have accepted, even if in micro amounts, more of the teachings of evolution and we believe, in our arrogance, we are smarter than people “back then”.

So have you heard on the evening news about this storm that is coming? Yes, but you have to interpret the information properly. The storm is the events surrounding the coming of Jesus. Many people believe He is going to come and peacefully swoop us up into heaven before anything bad really happens so they don’t associate His coming with anything resembling a storm. Let’s check this out in His Word: Read – “... nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” Matt. 24:7. Are we not seeing more of all these now? Then we are told in verse 8 that all of this is “just the beginning of sorrows”. If all these events are “just the beginning”, then how much worse is it going to get? Well, verse 9 tells us: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.” The word “afflicted” in this verse means “persecuted”. Have you heard of Christians being persecuted recently? It is happening all over the world and it is coming to us soon.

So now when you hear the evening news you might construe it differently and see the warnings of the pending storm. Events are intensifying in the world which tells us the storm is actually upon us. Don’t be fooled by those promising peace; they are precursors of the storm – “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh ...”



*He giveth snow like wool:
he scattereth the
hoarfrost like ashes.*

PSALMS 147:16



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