

our firm

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 2 ■ FEBRUARY 2018

FOUNDATION

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



In some of the cities of the United States, many murders were committed in the year 2017. Recently, as I listened to the New Year news casts, I was sad to hear of the number of murders committed in cities like Chicago and New York. I have also been sad to learn of the floods, tornadoes and fires happening in other parts of the country. I pray that Jesus will soon be coming.

Ellen White, in *Last Day Events*, page 22, written first in 1890 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 102, states: "The picture which Inspiration has given of the antediluvian world represents too truly the condition to which modern society is fast hastening." She goes on to say on page 23: "The terrible reports we hear of murders and robberies, of railway accidents and deeds of violence, tell the story that the end of all things is at hand. Now, just now, we need to be preparing for the Lord's second coming."

We all have heard these modern day news reports, and yet, the Lord hasn't come. I believe He is waiting on His people to get the seventh-day Sabbath message to a larger number of people, as well as the overcoming of sin message. He does not want people to perish, but He knows that people must be safe to be saved so that the world will not fall back into the evil it has been in, and thus be a lost world once more.

Brothers and sisters, God is definitely waiting for us. It has to be a difficult thing to love the way God loves and yet have to destroy so many people at His second coming because of their continual sins. Are you holding back in abandoning any secret sins? Are you asking God for forgiveness for sins you have committed? Do you see yourself ready for the second coming if it should occur today or tomorrow? If not, why not?

Ellen White's statements are numerous in

regard to the second coming. I would like to share just a few, all found in *Last Day Events*.

"Gluttony and intemperance lie at the foundation of the great moral depravity in our world. Satan is aware of this and he is constantly tempting men and women to indulge the taste at the expense of health and even life itself. Eating, drinking, and dressing are made the aim of life with the world. Just such a state of things existed before the Flood. And this state of dissipation is one of the marked evidences of the soon close of this earth's history." – Letter 34, 1875. {LDE 22, 23}

"We know that the Lord is coming very soon. The world is fast becoming as it was in the days of Noah. It is given over to selfish indulgence. Eating and drinking are carried to excess. Men are drinking the poisonous liquor that makes them mad. – Letter 308, 1907. {LDE 23}

"We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ. . . . Why has not God given us this knowledge? – Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. We are not to live upon time excitement. . . . You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years. – RH March 22, 1892. {LDE 33}

"The Lord has wisely concealed this from us that we may always be in a state of expectancy and preparation for the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven." Letter 28, 1897.

"The exact time of the second coming of the Son of man is God's mystery." – DA 633 (1898) {LDE 33}

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A 'Sick Benefit' Society and True Life Insurance



E. J. WAGGONER

"I have, been reading PRESENT TRUTH for several years, and I am glad to see that of late you have been inviting questions from those in difficulty; therefore I take the liberty to write and ask you what the Bible teaches that Christians should do with reference to Life Insurance, Fire Insurance, 'Sick Benefit' Clubs, and Trades Unions."

The matter of Trades Unions was perhaps sufficiently dwelt upon a fortnight ago, before your question was received; but I am very glad that you have opened up the subject of Life Insurance and of the so-called benevolent societies in general, which are all, in principle, insurance companies. The Christian's duty with respect to them is very clear, although very many follow the custom of the world, without a thought! so to the inconsistency of their course.

Let us first consider the matter from the lowest point of view, that of economy. How many people

there are who pay into these societies more than they ever draw out even if they meet with reverses, and thousands pay in the course of years large sums, for which they never realise anything whatever. Where is the gain in such cases?

You may say they are providing for

a possible contingency. Then the business is really of the nature of a lottery. It is a species of gambling, in which the players hope to get something for nothing; for if people did not expect to *get* from any of these various forms of insurance more





help others who are in need?" Most certainly; but every man ought to be the distributor of his own liberality, and not to put his means into the hands of somebody else, to be applied without any reference to his judgment as to the necessity of the case. No one will claim, however, that any feeling of generosity prompts him to join any "benevolent" association or to engage in insurance. People do it with their own personal profit in view, so that it is idle to defend the system on the ground of benevolence.

than they invest, they would not have anything whatever to do with them.

Put the managers of the business on one side and those who are "insured" on the other, and you will readily see that both parties cannot make a profit, as in ordinary buying and selling. A merchant sells goods on which he makes a profit, but he gives to every customer an equivalent for his money, and so all are equitably dealt with. But it is not so in insurance of any kind. Here the company has nothing with which to meet a loss, except the sums paid in as premiums by those insured. Therefore the people insured must pay their own losses. No company starts in with a fortune which it is desirous of distributing to persons in distress. So the insured pay their own losses, in addition to supporting the insurance companies, which, as everybody knows, always do well for themselves. If, therefore, one wishes to lay up something to provide against a possible future loss, it would be a matter of economy for him to put the money in a savings bank. Then, barring accidents, he will have his money at his own disposal, instead of not getting any of it again.

"But ought we not to be willing to

Don't you think it is a strange sort of benevolence, that gives only to those who have first given something, possibly an amount equal to or greater than the sum received? But the case is even worse, for it often happens that those who have paid in large sums can get nothing whatever in return. If they have not paid up their premium or their dues in full, it is the same as though they had paid nothing. All that they have paid in is lost, if they have failed to meet the last payment before their reverse.

The inherent and obvious selfishness of all these societies is sufficient reason why every Christian should keep clear of them. There is no society in existence that would





followers can evidently have nothing to do with any such thing.

"Shouldn't we provide for the future?" you ask. Yes, most certainly; and the Bible tells us how. "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in ascertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. 6:19.

accept people who are already ill. That is to say, there is no really benevolent association, that looks out for poor, afflicted people, and gives to them freely of its own funds. In all these societies which are called "charitable", from Free Masons and Odd Follows down, no one is accepted as a member, who is not in apparent good health, and who has not some visible means of self-support. Life Insurance companies subject every applicant to a severe medical examination, and if he has any ailment, he is rejected. This is to guard as much as possible against the probability of having to be put to any expense on anybody's account. So it is self-evident that they are wholly selfish and mercenary in their object.

Now Christianity is just the opposite of all this. The followers of Christ are to *seek out* "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind," (Luke xiv. 13), and care for them, "hoping for nothing again." Love "seeketh not her own;" but in all these societies each person is actuated solely by the desire to get something for nothing, and that something, if he gets it, quite often comes from those who are more needy than he. Nothing that savours of selfishness has any connection with Christianity, and therefore Christ's true

If you say that this charge is only to the rich, then read the words of Christ to a certain rich man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me." Matt. 19:21. When he had sold all, and given all to the poor, he would no longer be rich; and then he could be a follower of Christ.

Here is Christ's instruction to everybody: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; and lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matt.



6:20. I do not find anywhere in the Bible any instruction to the effect that we must “provide for a rainy day”; but I do read: “Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.”

The societies under consideration, therefore, belong to heathenism, not to Christianity. “For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall he added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Matt. 6: 31-34. How can laying up money for the future, no matter in what way, be reconciled with these scriptures? It is the Lord’s work, and not ours, to provide for the future, even as He alone can provide for to-day.

The whole teaching of the Gospel is *trust in God day by day*. “The just shall live by faith.” We live moment by moment, just as we breathe. And do not forget that those who by faith are just are to live, and not to die. In the giving of the manna, God gave His people a lesson for all time. None were to



lay up anything for the next day; and those who gathered more than they needed were to divide with those who had not been able to go out to gather, or who were less active. Thus it came to pass that “he that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack.” 2 Cor. 8:14, 15; Ex. 16:16-18. So can we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” If we have enough for to-day, we are not to worry about the future. He who gives us strength for to-day’s need, will furnish strength wherewith to gather to-morrow’s supply.

Note the expression in 1 Tim. 6:18, “willing to communicate.” That is, willing to have things in common, as the early disciples did.

Instead of joining a society to secure themselves a support for the future, none of them “said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own.” Acts 4:32. God has specially charged Himself with the care of the poor, as the Bible everywhere testifies; and “it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men.”

Well, we might talk a long time over this matter, but I will refer you to only one more portion of Scripture. It is the fifty eighth chapter of Isaiah. Read the whole of it, and you will see that instead of planning to get something



out of somebody else, for nothing, God's people are to be associated with Him in caring for the poor and the outcasts. Here is the Lord's own "sick benefit" society.

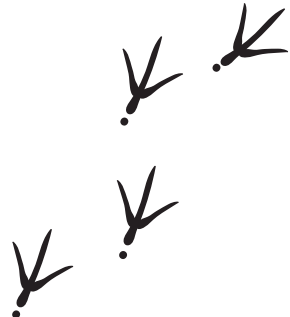
"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward. . . . If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

This is a "sick benefit" society worth joining; for instead of providing for one when sick, it promises to keep him in health. *This is life insurance indeed.* The Christian is not to make any plans for illness, because God promises to take sickness away from those who serve Him. Ex. 23:25. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him



alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth;" and if by any means he falls ill, "the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing," and will turn all his bed in his sickness. Ps. 41:1-3. A life insurance which assures one to all eternity is incomparably better than any system which offers only a paltry sum of money, and that *after* one is dead. Does some one say that he wants something present and practical? Well, this is practical enough; for if God can keep us alive and support us in eternity, He certainly can do it a few years. *This is a practical test of whether or not we believe the religion we profess.* Then "trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

December 13, 1900,
Present Truth Articles, UK 790.5



DESPAIR OF THE LOST

REBEKAH SMITH

Of our strength we are shorn by indulgence in sin ;
Where Jesus has reigned, now there's no room within ;
A host of his murderers dwell in the heart ;
Rejected, though grieved, he's obliged to depart.

As he goes who can know he will ever return?
That the blessing is lost we may soon have to learn,
With a wail of despair, a lamentable cry,
We may soon see ourselves forever passed by.

Too late! oh, too late! now my soul must be lost;
Though redemption was offered at infinite cost;
Though help has been laid on one mighty to save;
To self and the world I the preference gave.

Could the hope of salvation be given once more,
Would we not turn our backs on our Lord, as before?
Would not the same spirit still bear the same fruit?
And the Lord still to us our transgressions impute?

Oh! poor fallen man, rushing on to despair,
With high hopes all anchored in earth's fatal snare,
To be swept away soon, with the refuge of lies,
While the soul in deep anguish the second death dies.



EXCERPTS FROM **THE MANGER IN BETHLEHEM TO THE BAPTISM IN JORDAN WHEN HEROD REIGNED**

ALFRED EDERSHEIM

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

The Walls and the Bazaars

Hitherto we have only spoken of the first, or old wall, which was fortified by sixty towers. The second wall, which had only fourteen towers, began at some point in the northern wall at the Gate Gennath, whence it ran north, and then east, so as to enclose Acra and the Suburb. It terminated at Fort Antonia. Beyond, and all around this second wall stretched, as already noticed, the new, as yet unenclosed suburb Bezetha, rising towards the north-east. But these changes were as nothing compared with those within the city itself. First and foremost was the great transformation in the Temple itself, which, from a small building, little larger than an ordinary church, in the time of Solomon, had become that great and glorious House which excited the admiration of the foreigner, and kindled the enthusiasm of every son of Israel.

At the time of Christ it had been already forty-six years in building, and workmen were still, and for a long time, engaged on it. But what a heterogeneous crowd thronged its porches and courts! Hellenists; scattered

wanderers from the most distant parts of the earth – east, west, north, and south; Galileans, quick of temper and uncouth of Jewish speech; Judeans and Jerusalemites; white-robed Priests and Levites; Temple officials; broad-phylacteried, wide-fringed Pharisees, and courtly, ironical Sadducees; and, in the outer court, curious Gentiles! Some had come to worship; others to pay vows, or bring

offerings, or to seek purification; some to meet friends, and discourse on religious subjects in those colonnaded porches, which ran round the Sanctuary; or else to have their questions answered, or their causes heard and decided, by the smaller Sanhedrin

of twenty-three, that sat in the entering of the gate or by the Great Sanhedrin. The latter no longer occupied the Hall of Hewn Stones, Gazith, but met in some chamber attached to those 'shops,' or booths, on the Temple Mount, which belonged to the High-Priestly family of Ananias, and where such profitable trade was driven by those who, in their cupidity and covetousness, were worthy successors of the sons of Eli.

In the Court of the Gentiles (or in its porches)





sat the official money-changers, who for a fixed discount changed all foreign coins into those of the Sanctuary. Here also was that great mart for sacrificial animals, and all that was requisite for offerings. How the simple, earnest country people, who came to pay vows, or bring offerings for purifying, must have wondered, and felt oppressed in that atmosphere of strangely blended religious rigorism and utter worldliness; and how they must have been taxed, imposed upon, and treated with utmost curtness, nay, rudeness, by those who laughed at their boorishness, and despised them as cursed, ignorant country people, little better than heathens, or, for that matter, than brute beasts.

Here also there lay about a crowd of noisy beggars, unsightly from disease, and clamorous for help. And close by passed the luxurious scion of the High-Priestly families; the proud, intensely self-conscious Teacher of the Law, respectfully followed by his disciples; and the quick-witted, subtle Scribe. These were men who, on Sabbaths and feast-days, would come out on the Temple-terrace to teach the people, or condescend to answer their questions; who in the Synagogues would hold their puzzled hearers spell-bound by their traditional lore and subtle argumentation, or tickle the fancy of the entranced multitude, that thronged every available space, by their ingenious frivolities, their marvellous legends,

or their clever sayings; but who would, if occasion required, quell an opponent by well-poised questions, or crush him beneath the sheer weight of authority. Yet others were there who, despite the utterly lowering influence which the frivolities of the prevalent religion, and the elaborate trifling of its endless observances, must have exercised on the moral and religious feelings of all – perhaps, because of them – turned aside, and looked back with loving gaze to the spiritual promises of the past, and forward with longing expectancy to the near ‘consolation of Israel’, waiting for it in prayerful fellowship, and with bright, heaven-granted gleams of its dawning light amidst the encircling gloom.

Descending from the Temple into the city, there was more than enlargement, due to the increased population. Altogether, Jerusalem covered, at its greatest, about 300 acres. As of old there were still the same narrow streets in the business quarters; but in close contiguity to bazaars and shops rose stately mansions of wealthy merchants, and palaces of princes. And what a change in the aspect of these streets, in the character of those shops, and, above all, in the appearance of the restless Eastern crowd that surged to and fro! Outside their shops in the streets, or at least in sight of the passers, and within reach of their talk, was the shoemaker hammering his sandals, the tailor plying his needle, the carpenter, or





the worker in iron and brass. Those who were less busy, or more enterprising, passed along, wearing some emblem of their trade: the dyer, variously coloured threads; the carpenter, a rule; the writer, a reed behind his ear; the tailor, with a needle prominently stuck in his dress. In the side streets the less attractive occupations of the butcher, the wool-comber, or the flaxspinner were pursued: the elegant workmanship of the goldsmith and jeweller; the various *articles de luxe*, that adorned the houses of the rich; the work of the designer, the moulder, or the artificer in iron or brass. In these streets and lanes everything might be purchased: the production of Palestine, or imported from foreign lands – nay, the rarest articles from the remotest parts. Exquisitely shaped, curiously designed and jewelled cups, rings and other workmanship of precious metals; glass, silks, fine linen, woollen stuffs, purple, and costly hangings; essences, ointments, and perfumes, as precious as gold; articles of food and drink from foreign lands – in short, what India, Persia, Arabia, Media, Egypt, Italy, Greece, and even the far-off lands of the Gentiles yielded, might be had in these bazaars.

Ancient Jewish writings enable us to identify no fewer than 118 different articles of import from foreign lands, covering more than even modern luxury has devised. Articles of

luxury, especially from abroad, fetched indeed enormous prices; and a lady might spend 36*l.* on a cloak; 16 silk would be paid by its weight in gold; purple wool at 3*l.* 5*s.* the pound, or, if double-dyed, at almost ten times that amount; while the price of the best balsam and nard was most exorbitant. On the other hand, the cost of common living was very low. In the bazaars you might get a complete suit for your slave for eighteen or nineteen shillings, and a tolerable outfit for yourself from 3*l.* to 6*l.* For the same sum you might purchase an ass, an ox, or a cow, and, for little more, a horse. A calf might be had for less than fifteen shillings, a goat for five or six. Sheep were dearer, and fetched from four to fifteen or sixteen shillings, while a lamb might sometimes be had as low as two pence. No wonder living and labour were so cheap. Corn of all kinds, fruit, wine, and oil, cost very little. Meat was about a penny a pound; a man might get himself a small, of course unfurnished, lodging for about sixpence a week. A day labourer was paid about 7*d.* a day, though skilled labour would fetch a good deal more. Indeed, the great Hillel was popularly supposed to have supported his family on less than twopence a day, while property to the amount of about 6*l.*, or trade with 2*l.* or 3*l.* of goods, was supposed to exclude a person from charity, or a claim on what was left in the corners of fields and the gleaners.



THE FOUR ANGELS' MESSAGES (TOPIC 13)

If Any Man Worship... The Same Shall...

JERRY O'DONNELL

Shall What???

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand," all of which was covered individually in prior messages, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:10-11).

Brimstone?

This word triggers a lesson Jesus once gave us in a warning. "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed [them] all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:29-30), and then added, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32).

Why remember Lot's wife? "Although so greatly favored in being called out from the wicked

city, she felt that she was severely dealt with, because the wealth that it had taken years to accumulate must be left to destruction. Instead of thankfully accepting deliverance, she presumptuously looked back to desire the life of those who had rejected the divine warning. Her sin showed her to be unworthy of life, for the preservation of which she felt so little gratitude." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 161.

Do you feel greatly favored to have been enlightened with the truth with its high expectations? But at the same time, are you feeling also that those expectations are a bit severe? Do you find yourself frequently looking back at the life you left and missing it in one form or another be it friends or family? Do you day dream of the potential life you could have had if you remained worldly, be it a better paying job, different house, etc.? Be careful. There just might be a bit of Lot's wife in you.



How does it apply to the third angel's message?

It ties in two ways to the third angel's message: personally and regarding a test of loving our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as

thyselves" (Matthew 19:19). So, do you want to suffer the wrath of God? Do you want to suffer the fire and brimstone? I would hope not. But that same feeling should be for our neighbors as well. If we are not exerting the God-given abilities to try and save others, then we do not truly love our neighbors as ourselves. And if there is anything holding us back from a complete surrender, like Lot's wife, we may not be a pillar of salt, but we will suffer the fire and brimstone.

Do you want to "drink of the wine of the wrath of God" or have your neighbor suffer it?

First, let us find out what the "wrath of God" really is. This is the easiest definition in the Bible for those that simply think that the wrath of God is the mere fact that God will finally have enough of all of the sinning and just lose His cool. John said, "I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:1). So the wrath of God is more than anger; it is a calculated series of plagues.

Please note that those plagues are "poured out without mixture". Right now, we do not get what we truly deserve. God does not strike everyone with lightning bolts when we sin. He gives us plenty of time to come to repentance; in fact, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). But when the plagues are poured out, there will not be a drop of grace found in them. "The cup of his indignation" will be full.

The plagues are not used to convert

anyone. All cases will be decided by then for "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).

Do you want to be "tormented with fire and brimstone" or have your neighbor suffer it?

So on top of receiving the seven last plagues, hell fire is the future of such souls. Our relationship with Jesus ought not be one of fear, but He does lay it out plainly that such is the future of all unrepentant sinners. And to imagine our neighbors suffering, as well as family members, is just unthinkable for the true Christian.

"If we neglect these opportunities, the time will come when there will be spoken to us by those we have not warned, words of reproach and bitterness: 'You knew of these terrible judgments that were coming. We were associated together, but you did not tell us.

Why did you not warn us, that we might have escaped?' May God help us that we may not have upon our garments, because of our neglect, the blood of souls!" *The Review and Herald*, August 15, 1907





that is, the devil.’
[Hebrews 2:14.]
Lucifer’s desire for
self-exaltation had
led him to say, ‘I
will exalt my throne
above the stars of
God. . . . I will be
like the Most High.’
God declares, ‘I
will bring thee to
ashes upon the

Who Is the Audience?

According Revelation 14:10, these things happen “in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” It is not like the Lamb is lacking in effort for He “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). It is not like the Father is lacking in effort, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:17). And it is not like the angels are lacking in effort, for “In all ages, God has wrought through holy angels for the succor and deliverance of his people” *The Great Controversy* (1888), page 631.

So when the Bible says that the lost will suffer fire and brimstone in the presence of the Lamb and angels, it is going to be with tears. The Lamb may even say, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” (Isaiah 5:4)

“The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour’s expiring cry, ‘It is finished,’ the death-knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that ‘through death he might destroy him that had the power of death,

earth, . . . and never shalt thou be any more.’ [Isaiah 14:13, 14; Ezekiel 28:18, 19.] When ‘the day cometh that shall burn as an oven,’ ‘all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.’ [Malachi 4:1.]” GC88 503.

“The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate his love and establish his honor before a universe of beings who delight to do his will, and in whose heart is his law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the Word of God, ‘Affliction shall not rise up the second time.’ [Nahum 1:9.] The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.” GC88 504.

But Wait!

The Bible says, “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Revelation 14:11). Is this not an eternal burning hell?



Many an unstudied Adventist have been tripped up on this verse. How can their smoke ascend up “for ever and ever” and yet we are told that the eventually the lost “went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Revelation 20:9)?

“Devoured” surely does not equate to “for ever and ever”. That is true if one does not realize that such a phrase is relative and not necessarily eternal in amount of time. It is like the word tall. Seven foot is tall for a human, but short for a tree. Forty degrees may be cold to us humans, but it would be summer weather for a polar bear.

In the human language, we describe any unpleasant experience as a period lasting “forever”, when in reality, we are not still suffering it nor is it expected to continue throughout eternity. Now that may sound like some fancy writing and suggestion for interpretation, but is that really what the Bible teaches? To answer this, let us turn to the Bible use of the phrase “for ever”.

How long did Samuel the prophet serve in the temple? According to his mother, “But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, [I will not go up] until the child be

weaned, and [then] I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever” (1 Samuel 1:22). In reality, “Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there” (1 Samuel 1:28). So in this case, “for ever” meant a life time.

How long was Jonah in the belly of the fish? According to Jonah, “I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars [was] about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God” (Jonah 2:6). But in reality, “Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:17).

How long shall God last? “The LORD [is] King for ever and ever” (Psalms 10:16). Oh, oh.

There is that relative phrase that appears to not be eternal, and it is applied to God. What is the reality of it then? “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, [be] honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Timothy 1:17). So in this case, “for ever” does mean eternal.

Let us try one more. “Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong [thy] days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever” (Deuteronomy 4:40). Depending upon how you read the verse, one could see that “for ever” is applied to the part of the earth that God gave to the Israelites and shall inhabit such “for ever”, but that is not true. They lost the land several times. Or, one could read it as, “Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, ... for ever.” Taking it



to mean it as the responsibility of the people to keep the statutes and commandments forever, just how long shall we keep them? Isaiah answers this by getting a glimpse of eternity where, "It shall come to pass, [that] from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 66:23).

Since the Sabbath, the fourth commandment will be kept throughout eternity, one can quickly accept that the other nine will be kept as well. And that is an intelligent acceptance not just an assumption because "there shall be no more death" so that means for all eternity everyone will obey the command, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). Seeing "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:30), which is another way of saying that there will be no sexual interaction, that means everyone will obey the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).

That means then when the lost are having their smoke rise up "for ever and ever", it is until they are all burned up.

"Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. All are punished 'according to their deeds.' The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch,—Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and Heaven and earth,

beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah." *The Great Controversy* (1888), page 673.

Let us hear the conclusion of the matter

The bottom line is that we ought to be serious about ridding ourselves of every attachment. If one cannot wait for the next episode of a movie or TV program to be released, ask yourself, "Will that program really matter if the second coming were to happen today?" We sit there wasting precious hours watching sports, celebrities, even politics, when we could be utilizing the time for the betterment of our own souls through the studying of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy as well as getting out there and doing our all to seek and save the lost.

Have we been so convinced that God will save who He will save, is a form of predestination? Have we exhausted our efforts on family and friends thinking we have done our duty when there are strangers in the neighborhood that have not received a crumb of light that we have?

"Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage" (Matthew 22:9).



FROM GOD'S BACK YARD

REEN SWINDLE

"July 2 we arrived in Christiana. We were met at the station by friends, and taken to the rooms which had been prepared for us in a part of the old office building formerly used as a meeting-hall. These rooms were fitted up very comfortably, and were made attractive by a variety of house plants."

RH, October 19, 1886

There is not much prettier in a home than a nice arrangement of houseplants. There is something about bringing some of the outdoors indoors that is very refreshing, and pleasing to the sight. Placing some greenery here and there throughout the home adds beauty to each room, making it feel friendly and inviting. At different stages in our lives – our births, subsequent birthdays, graduations, weddings, illnesses, all the way to our funerals – plants play an important role. In almost any work setting, the atmosphere can be improved, productivity can be increased, simply by adding plants and flowers.

For those of us who spend a great deal of

time indoors, especially in colder climates where the doors and windows must remain closed for the most part a few months at a time, it is beneficial to keep our indoor air supply as clean and fresh as we can make it. Houseplants can actually help us do that.

In the mid 1900s as space travel progressed it became evident that air quality in a spacecraft was a major issue during occupancy by its crew, as well as in other related enclosed facilities; so in 1980, NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center, after performing many experiments, discovered that houseplants could remove volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) from sealed test chambers. Twelve common houseplants were evaluated in their study in their ability to remove formaldehyde, among other chemicals, from the air in the test chambers. Since many critics complained that the results of the studies would not apply in real world settings, NASA developed a small Biohome which was built using plastics and other synthetic materials used in modern home construction having high VOC emissions with which to further test their theories.

During the summer of 1989 a student actually lived in the Biohome where plants were used to alleviate 'sick building syndrome', and had zero complaints about the air he had to breathe. The ability of



houseplants to improve indoor air quality is now proven and accepted scientific fact. To date, well over 50 varieties of houseplants (Boston fern being #1) have been tested for their ability to remove various toxic gases from the air we breathe in enclosed areas. Since formaldehyde is the most commonly found toxin in our home, work, and shopping spaces, the ability to remove this substance became the standard for rating the effectiveness of the plants. An internet source provides this data: "The EPA estimates an average 800 cubic foot (23 cubic meter) room contains roughly 1,800 micro-grams of formaldehyde. Formaldehyde can cause symptoms ranging from nausea and headaches to dizziness, skin irritation, and shortness of breath. It is estimated that common Boston ferns can remove a full 1,800 micro-grams of formaldehyde from the air per hour. This means that placing the plants in a room can virtually eliminate formaldehyde that may be introduced through off-gassing."

Some sources of formaldehyde in our homes might surprise you: permanent press clothing, paper towels and facial tissues, flame retardant fabrics used in upholstery, rugs, carpet, even children's night clothes. The very materials used in home construction are high in formaldehyde emissions: plywood, particle board, paneling, imitation wood floor coverings, adhesives, and many more.

You might wonder if all these toxic fumes might actually damage or kill the plants. The answer is no; as a matter of fact, some of the plants actually *increased* their ability to absorb more toxins when exposed to more, which was especially so with the Peace Lily.

There is one piece of vital cautionary information I did not find in any of the world's research material, as helpful as it was, but found in the writings of our pioneers. As much as we love plants in our homes, this warning should be heeded: "It is very unhealthy to sleep in rooms in which are several house plants, or which are surrounded by, or



immediately adjacent to, dense foliage. Vegetation absorbs carbon during the day, and throws off oxygen, but in the night this process is reversed, and it absorbs oxygen and throws off carbonic-acid gas. 1868 JNL, HBH 156. Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines carbonic: "CARBONIC, a. Pertaining to carbon, or obtained from it. The carbonic acid is a saturated combination of carbon and oxygen. It has been called fixed air, aerial acid, mephitic gas, and cretaceous acid, or



acid of chalk. It is found, in some places, in a state of gas; it exists in the atmosphere, and is disengaged from fermenting liquors, and from decomposing vegetable and animal substances. It is heavier than common air, and subsides into low places, vaults and wells." The word "mephitic" in this definition means quite simply "destructive to life". Clearly, this is not something we want to be inhaling at night when our bodies are in healing mode, especially in enclosed quarters.

"Trees and flowers and grass! Do they breathe, too?"



"Yes, they breathe too. Their leaves are to them what our lungs are to us, and the tiny little pores or holes in the leaves are their noses. Put a plant or flower into a jar without air and it will soon wither and die. But plants and trees do not live on the same part of the air that we and the animals do. When we breathe the air out it is very different from what it was when we drew it in. When you wash your hands you dirty and spoil the water in which you wash them; just so when our lungs cleanse our blood with the fresh air, they spoil and really poison the air so that it is not fit for us or the animals to breathe again. But how wise God is! He has made the trees and plants so that they need that very poison that we breathe out, and we need what they breathe out. So they use the poison up and put into the air the very thing that it needs to make it all clean and pure for us to use again."

September 7, 1893 EJW, PTUK 365

WORDS OF THE PIONEERS



Fulfill the Law of Christ

“BEAR ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Thus it is seen that the law of Christ is self-sacrifice to serve others; the spending of self to help others.

And so it is written in another place: “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” And again: “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.”

And this because “even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” Rom. 15:1-3.

Again: this law is expressed thus: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves.” Phil. 2:3. When each esteems the other better than himself, it becomes a pleasure to serve the other: it is more of a pleasure to serve the other, by helping him, than it is to serve self.

And that all may know for certain that this is precisely the law of Christ, and that the observance of it is therefore the keeping of all the law of God,—yea, even the keeping of all the law and the prophets,—Jesus himself spoke for all mankind this law of

Christ. And here are the words: “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” Matt. 7:12.

Notice, it is not, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do” that to yourself. Nor is it to have them do that to you; but it is “do ye even so to them.”

Certainly it is true that without the mind of Christ no man can fulfill the law of Christ. Then wherever there is a lack of fulfilling the law of Christ, a lack of esteeming others better than ourselves, a lack of looking on the things of others, it is evident that the cause of the failure is in not having the mind of Christ. And the remedy is to receive and to retain the mind of Christ.

If this law of Christ were fulfilled daily by individuals, by the managers of our Conferences and our institutions, the loud

cry of the Third Angel’s Message would shortly fill the earth, the gospel of the kingdom would speedily be preached to all the world, and very soon the end would come. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

October 23, 1900 ATJ,
ARSH 552



KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

ELLEN G. WHITE

How many families are spoiled by the envious feelings they cherish toward their neighbours! Vanity and pride possess them. They greatly desire to excel their neighbours in appearance, in dress, in furniture. These ambitious desires lead to grave results: the atmosphere of the home is contaminated by them.

A desire to excel in virtue of character, a desire to follow in the footsteps of the Saviour, copying closely the pattern left by Him, is praiseworthy. Strenuous effort to excel in devotion, in the cultivation of home religion and piety, that the fear of the Lord may circulate through every room in the home, is a worthy ambition, wholly approved by God. This is true missionary work, and it extends beyond the home; for light shines from you to those who see your good works.

It is perfectly consistent, and in accordance with the word of God, to hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ; but a restless, unholy ambition to outshine others in dress and furniture, horses and carriages, has ruined many a once cheerful, happy home. The children of such a family catch the spirit of their parents, and seek to imitate the rich and fashionable.

Many parents act as if it were a great privilege to be able to introduce their children into so-called “good society”. To do this, their resources are taxed to the utmost. Money and

time are laid on the altar of Mammon until the expenditure far exceed the income. Still further to keep up appearances, money is borrowed. Daily such parents practise deceit, that they may lead people to think them worthy to be members of what is falsely called “good society.” The children of the family

understand the programme; they understand that they must seek to be what they are not, – they must act a deceptive part, in order to be counted worthy of good society.

Everything wherewith such a family could bless the poor and needy, and make themselves comfortable and happy, is laid on the altar of unholy ambition. They ape the rich, who very often have become rich through deceit and robbery, by grinding down the poor, and keeping back the wages of the needy. But often they only secure for their children the company of the vain, frivolous, and unprincipled. In this Satan acts his part, and the children

become anything but good, elevated, and ennobled. In the effort to keep up appearances, every purpose is tainted. The members of such a family may be professing Christians, but their piety is gone. That they may be thought by the world to be what they are not, they sacrifice peace of mind on the shrine of ambition. Truth and righteousness are sacrificed to keep up appearances. This road, which they may think leads upward, leads downward to perdition.



Truth, benevolence, kindness, and love are the graces that dwell in the Christian home. But Satan is constantly inventing interests and excitements to occupy the time and consume the money that should be used for better purposes, – to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and advance the cause of God. Parents, purify the atmosphere of your homes. Let not the home life be of such a character that all influences for good in the training of your children, are counteracted because you are a slave to the world. Can you not see, on



every side, the corrupting influences that are being used to pollute the young? Bring into your home the simplicity of correct Christian practices. Give your children instruction in purity and true modesty, that they may not be hurt by the contagion of immorality and irreligion. Make home radiant with the precious rays of the Sun of Righteousness. If pure religion is seen in your lives, it will captivate the hearts of your children.

The Bible Echo, October 24, 1898

True Benevolence

One morning a wealthy businessman and an attorney were walking along a country road in Korea when they saw a boy pulling a plow which was steered by an old man. The amused attorney took a picture of the scene with his little pocket camera. Later he showed the picture to a missionary in the next village.

"Yes," said the missionary, "it seems a very strange way to plow a field, but I happen to know the boy and old man well. They are very poor. However, when the little church was built here in the village, they wanted to contribute something. They had no money. They had not grain to spare and winter was coming on, so they sold their ox and gave the money to the church building fund, and now, minus the valuable animal, they have to pull the plow themselves."



For a moment there was silence. Then the attorney said, "What a stupendous sacrifice! But why did you allow it?"

"They did not feel that way about it," replied the missionary. "They regarded it as a great joy that they had an ox to give to the Lord's work."



"Time is money, and many are wasting precious time which might be used in useful labor, working with their hands the thing that is good. The Lord will never say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," to the man who has not taxed the physical powers which have been lent him of God as precious talents by which to gather means, wherewith the needy may be supplied, and offerings may be made to God.

"The rich are not to feel that they can be content in giving of their money merely. They have talents of ability, and they are to study to show themselves approved unto God, to be earnest spiritual agents in educating and training their children for fields of usefulness. Parents and children are not to regard themselves as their own, and feel that they can dispose of their time and property as shall please themselves. They are God's purchased possession, and the Lord calls for the profit of

their physical powers, which are to be employed in bringing a revenue to the treasury of the Lord.

"Were the thousand channels of selfishness cut off that now exist, and the means directed in the right channel, there would be a large revenue flowing into the treasury. Many purchase idols with money that should go to the house of God. No one can practice real benevolence without practicing genuine self-denial. Self-denial and the cross lie directly in the path of every Christian who is truly following Christ. Jesus says: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Will every soul consider the fact that Christian discipleship includes self-denial, self-sacrifice, even to the laying down of life itself, if need be, for the sake of Him who has given His life for the life of the world?

"Christians who view Christ upon the cross, are bound by their obligation to God because of the infinite gift of His Son, to withhold nothing which they possess, however dear it may be to them. If they possess anything that can be employed to draw any soul, no matter how rich, or no matter how poor, to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, they are to use it freely for this purpose. The Lord employs human agents to be coworkers with Him in the salvation of sinners."

CS 288, 289

True Benevolence



William Miller Feb 15, 1782-1849

William Miller had a strong religious background, but he became attached to the wrong "crowd". His friends set aside the Bible and had vague ideas about God and

His personality. When Miller was thirty-four years of age he became dissatisfied with his views. The Holy Spirit impressed his heart, and he turned to the study of the Word of God. He found in Christ the answer to all his needs. His study led him to the great prophecies that pointed to the first and to the second advent of our Lord.

The time prophecies interested him, particularly the prophecies of Daniel and The Revelation.

In the year 1818, as a result of his study of the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9, he came to the conclusion that Christ would come some time



in the year 1843 or 1844. He hesitated until 1831 before he began to announce his findings. From his first public service we may mark the beginnings of the

Advent movement in North America. In the months and years that followed, roughly 100,000 persons came to believe in the imminence of Christ's second coming.

Following the great disappointment of 1844, Miller lived for several years. He fell asleep in Christ in 1849. A small chapel stands near his home in Low Hampton, New York, built by

Miller before he died. In spite of his misunderstanding of the event that was to transpire in 1844, God used

him to awaken the world to the nearness of the end and to prepare sinners for the time of judgment.

—Adventist
Pioneer Library



WOMEN, LOOK HERE!

DR. DIO LEWIS

Here is additional information concerning the connection between cold feet and congestion that we touched on last month. Ed.

If it were justifiable to use hard words at all, the writer hereof would think it excusable when he hears women complaining of all the ills conceivable, and sees them go into the streets, or out to walk with only thin shoes and thin cotton stockings on their feet, and knows they have no adequate protection for their limbs. But that is not the worst feature. It is far worse to see them send their children out equally exposed. It is murder in the first degree. We happen to know some women who have recovered health by learning how to make themselves comfortable – how to clothe their persons so as to keep the temperature of all parts of the body uniform. And we have known scores of poor women who went prematurely to their last rest because they never learned the comfort of being warmly clad. There are plenty of inhuman mothers left, who will sacrifice a child's health in order that she may "look pretty", or look as well as somebody else's child does. There are very few days pass that we do not see illustrations of this criminal vanity that not only make our heart ache, but bitter words come into our mouth. Feeling thus, we want the women who read the Rural to carefully peruse the following from the pen of Dr. Dio Lewis: It is sound common sense. It is truth.

"During the damp and cold season deficient dress of the feet and legs is a fruitful source of disease. The head, throat, and liver are perhaps the most frequent



sufferers. The legs and feet are far from the central part of the body. They are not in great mass like the trunk, but extended and enveloped by the atmosphere. Besides, they are near the damp, cold earth. For these and other reasons, they require extra covering. If we would secure the highest physiological conditions, we must give our extremities more dress than the body. We men wear upon our legs, in the coldest season, but two thicknesses of cloth. The body has at least six. Women put on them four thicknesses under the shawl, which with its various doublings, furnishes several more – then, over all, thick, padded furs: while the legs have one thickness of cotton under a balloon.

"They constantly come to me about their headache, palpitation of the heart, and congestion of the liver. Yesterday one said to me, 'All my blood is in my head and chest. My head and chest go bumpety-bump, and my heart goes bumpety-bump.' I asked, 'How are your feet?' 'Chunks of ice,' she replied. I said to her, 'If you so dress your legs and feet that the blood can't get down into them, where can it go? It

can't go out visiting. It must stay in the system somewhere. Of course the chest and head must have an excessive quantity. So they go bumpety-bump, and so they must go, until you dress your legs and feet, in such a way that they shall get their share of blood. In the coldest season of the year I leave Boston for a bit of a tour before the lyceum – going as far as Philadelphia, and riding



much in the night without an overcoat; but I give my legs two or three times their usual dress. During the coldest weather, men may wear, in addition to their usual drawers, a pair of chamois-skin drawers

with great advantage. When we ride in a sleigh, or the cars, where do we suffer? In our legs, of course. Give me warm legs and feet, and I'll hardly thank you for an overcoat.'

"My dear madam, have you a headache, a sore throat, palpitation of the heart, congestion of the liver, or indigestion? Wear one, two, or three pairs of warm woolen stockings, and thick, warm shoes, with more or less reduction in the amount of dress about your body, and you will obtain the same relief permanently that you would derive temporarily from a warm foot-bath.

"I must not forget to say that a thin layer of India-rubber cemented upon the boot-soul will do much to keep the bottoms of our feet dry and warm."



January 30, 1866 UrSe, ARSH 70

THE OUT-DOOR CHRISTIAN

The Boston Transcript tells us of a "pastor who was in the habit of picking the large stones from the roads as he walked, and teaching his flock to do the same." We love that habit of mind - that giving of an airing to the religion of the closet; and we coincide also in the still further remark of our bright contemporary: "Give us the man who, in city or suburbs clears a path, sprinkles sand or ashes on the ice, drains off the standing water in front of his premises, turns out in his sleigh for pedestrians, or keeps to the far side or middle of the road, to save walkers from the dust, is careful not to compel foot passengers to go into the mud to let his horse have the driest track, and steers clear of curb-stones that people may not be sprinkled by the splashing of hoofs or the rolling of wheels through mud-puddles - give us this man, and you give us a gentleman in the true sense; nay more, a Christian - in little things."

August 7, 1860 UrSe, ARSH 91



N.Y. / REGION ANDY NEWMAN, DEC. 25, 2017

Cash Might Be King, But They Don't Care



A patron tries to pay with cash at the West 40th Street location of Dos Toros Taqueria, only to learn that only credit or debit cards are accepted. Credit Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times The other day at Dig Inn, a just-opened lunch spot on Broadway and 38th Street in Midtown Manhattan, Shania Bryant committed a consumer faux pas. She placed her order for chicken and brown rice and yams, and when she got to the register, she held out a \$50 bill.

"Sorry," the cashier told her. "We don't take cash." Not, "We don't take \$50s." No cash. Period.

"What?" Ms. Bryant asked.

The cashier patiently explained. Credit and debit cards were fine, as was the easy-to-download Dig Inn phone app. But the almighty dollar was powerless.

"I've never experienced that before," said Ms. Bryant, 20, an assistant to a designer. "I guess we're in new times."

But wait, how is this even allowed? Doesn't the dollar bill say it's "legal tender for all debts, public and private"? The Federal Reserve's website says that notwithstanding that language, there is no federal law compelling a business "to accept currency or coins as payment for goods or services."

Visa recently offered select merchants a \$10,000 reward to switch away from cash transactions.

And who is at the head of Visa? None other than the pope's right-hand man, Al Kelly.

FORBES BRENDAN DOHERTY

Al Kelly, born and raised in Crestwood, N.Y., graduated from Iona Prep in 1976 and went on to Iona College, where he graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's and an MBA with Honors. His first position out of college was at PepsiCo where he worked in Strategic and Financial Planning. Then from 1985 to 1987, he went to the White House, where he led the Information Processing functions for eight of the agencies that comprise the Executive Office of the President.

From there he joined American Express' Strategic Planning department and rose through the company over the course of 23 years, ultimately becoming president and leading the day-to-day global operations. Today, he is the Chief Executive Officer of Visa, a global payments technology company which operates in 210 countries and territories.



Al Kelly and Holy See



Danny DeVito and Cardinal Peter Turkson welcome the Vatican's next generation of social entrepreneurs

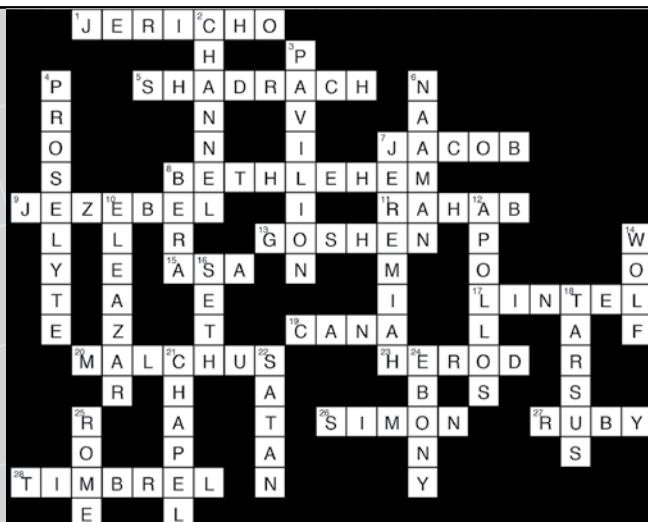
Al is a member of the Board of Directors of MetLife, Inc. and Visa, Inc., the Board of Trustees of New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Boston College, and St. Joseph's Seminary and College. He is a member of the Archdiocese of New York's Finance Council, the Council on Foreign Relations and has served for the past 25 years as a chairman of the Wall Street Charity Golf Classic, which supports the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. He was a 13-year trustee of Iona College, where he also chaired its Development Committee.

END-TIME PERSPECTIVE: With the Vatican in charge of the world's finances, it is obvious that this scenario cannot be far off:

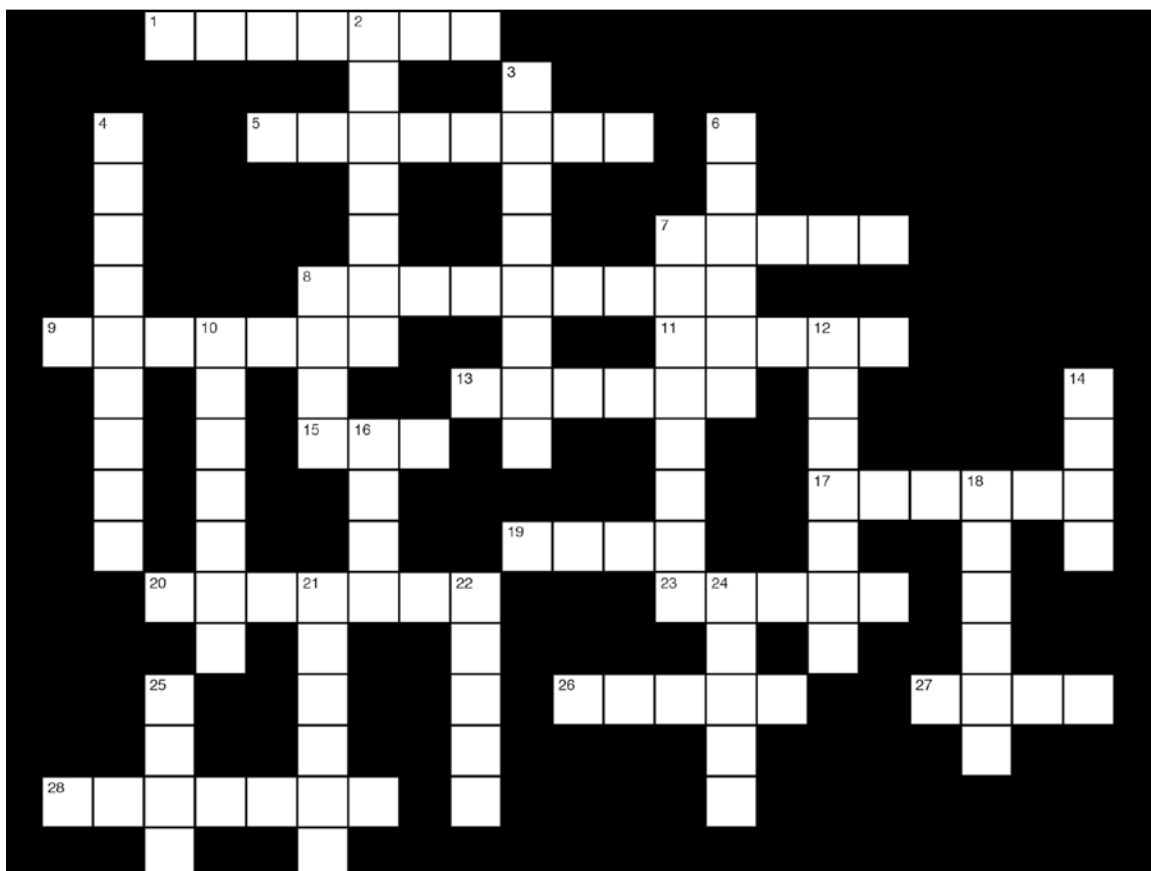
"The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save him that hath the mark of the beast. We came near having this realized in California a short time since, but this was only the threatening of the blowing of the four winds. As yet they are held by the four angels. We are not just ready. There is a work yet to be done, and then the angels will be bidden to let go, that the four winds may blow upon the earth. – 5T 152 (1882). LDE 148.3.

"In the last great conflict in the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers they will be forbidden to buy or sell." – DA 121, 122 (1898). LDE 148.4.

ANSWERS FROM
 CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD
 PUBLISHED ON PAGE 30
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 OUR FIRM FOUNDATION



CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD



ACROSS

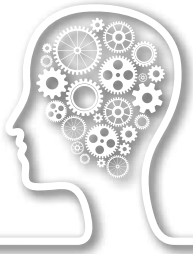
1. A fenced city in the midst of a vast grove of palm trees in the plain of Jordan.
5. The Chaldean name given to Hananiah in Babylon.
7. The second born of the twin sons of Isaac by Rebekah.
8. A city in the "hill country" of Judah originally called Ephrath.
9. A wife of Ahab, the king of Israel.
11. The self-willed younger daughter of Laban and one of Jacob's wives.
13. A district in Egypt where Jacob and his family settled and remained until the Exodus.
15. The third king of Judah, son of Abijah.
17. The head-piece of a door that was to be marked with the blood of the paschal lamb.
19. A town of Galilee, near Capernaum.
20. The personal servant or slave of the high priest, Caiaphas.
23. The founder of the city of Tiberias.
26. Another name for Peter.
27. One of the stones in the high priest's breast plate.
28. A small drum or tambourine.

DOWN

2. The bed of the sea or of a river.
3. A tent or tabernacle or enclosure.
4. A word used for "stranger" in the LXX; a sojourner in the land.
6. He was cured of leprosy by dipping seven times in the Jordan.
7. One of the "greater prophets" of the Old Testament, son of Hilkiah.
8. King of Sodom at the time of the invasion of the four kings under Chedorlaomer.
10. The third son of Aaron.
12. He was instructed by Aquila and Priscilla in "the way of God".
14. A word frequently referred to in scripture as an emblem of treachery and cruelty.
16. The third son of Adam and Eve.
18. The chief city of Cilicia, noted for its wealth and schools of learning.
21. A holy place or sanctuary.
22. The dragon, or the old serpent.
24. A black hardwood brought by the merchants from India to Tyre.
25. The most celebrated city in the world at the time of Christ.

Something to think about

BY REEN SWINDLE, ASSISTANT EDITOR



The business of greeting cards is extremely lucrative. So, just how much does Hallmark make from selling cards? According to the company, they can't say. "Hallmark is a privately held company so we don't release sales data," Kristi Ernsting, public relations spokeswoman for Hallmark told *Mic*. "But we do share an estimate for the number of Valentine's Day cards exchanged each year: 131 million."

According to the National Retail Federation, Americans will spend an average of \$146.84 on Valentine's Day this year, with total sales expected to reach \$19.7 billion, *TIME* reports.

Do those statistics alarm you? This might alarm you, too:

Who was the original Valentine? What does the name Valentine mean? Valentine comes from the Latin *Valentinus*, which is a derivative of *valens* – "to be strong, powerful, mighty". The Bible tells us of a man with a similar title: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a *mighty one* in the earth. He was a *mighty hunter* before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the *mighty hunter* before the Lord." Gen. 10:8,9. Nimrod was said to have hunted with bow and arrow.

The title *Baal* means "lord" or "master", and is mentioned throughout the Bible as the god of pagans. God warned His people not to worship or even tolerate the ways of Baal (Nimrod). In ancient Chaldean (the language of the Babylonians), *bal*, which is similar to *Baal*, meant, "heart", which is where the Valentine heart symbol originated.

How about the name *Cupid*? It comes from the Latin verb *cupere*, meaning "to desire". Cupid was the son of Venus, Roman goddess of beauty and love. Also known as Eros in ancient Greece, this cherubic being was the son of Aphrodite. According to myth, he was responsible for impregnating numerous goddesses and mortals. Cupid was a child-like archer (remember, Nimrod was a skilled archer). Mythology describes Cupid as having both a cruel and happy personality. He

would use his invisible arrows, tipped with gold, to strike unsuspecting men and women, causing them to fall madly in love. He did not do this for their benefit, but to drive them crazy with intense passion, to make their lives miserable, and to laugh at the results. Doesn't that sound just like Satan's tactics?

Here is how God commands His people concerning pagan customs and traditions: "Learn not the way of the heathen...For the customs of the people are vain" Jer. 10:2,3. Also notice Christ's words in Matt. 15:9: "...in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Christians must understand that God hates any customs, practices and traditions that are rooted in paganism, and calls them "abominable": "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwelt, shall you not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, shall you not do: neither shall you walk in their ordinances." Lev. 18:3. God demanded the Israelites not to defile themselves with the pagan practices and customs of surrounding nations, "Therefore shall you keep Mine ordinance, that you commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that you defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God." verse 30.

At an online Q & A site concerning Adventism, the question was asked: "Do Seventh-day Adventists recognize Valentine's Day?" Their answer is: "Celebrating Saint Valentines Day is a matter of choice for individual Seventh-day Adventists. The church neither condones nor discourages against the celebration of the day. In fact, Christians are to love everyday, so in essence every day is like Valentines Day...in spirit." Well, they are partially correct – We do have a choice – we can choose pagan practices, or not. As for the "in spirit" part of the answer, again, partially correct. But what spirit? That is something to think about.

*This earth is the place of
preparation for heaven.
The time spent here is the
Christian's winter.*

HEAVEN 60

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