

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for
the old paths, where is the good way, and
walk therein, and ye shall find rest for
your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that
fear him; and he will show them his
covenant. Psalm 25:14

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Opossum mother with joeys riding on her back. Opossums are intelligent and curious creatures, the only marsupial found in North America. “He hath made every thing beautiful in his time” (Eccl. 3:11).



Fundamental Pillars — Systematic Knowledge of Truth: How the Fundamentals of Our Faith Tie Together

By Jean-Christophe Bolotte

Our opening passage is found in Psalm 119:160, where we read in the King James Version:

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

This verse establishes one of the greatest principles of biblical interpretation. As Christians, and especially as English people, we are familiar with the King James Version, which is, in fact, the best version we should use as our basic Bible, which is translated from the correct manuscript. It says: “Thy word is true from the beginning.” From the very beginning God’s word is true.

While this translation expresses a true thought, the rendering adopted by the Revised Standard Version more accurately reflects the emphasis of the Hebrew text. In fact, we are told in the RSV: “The **sum** of thy word is truth, and every one of thy righteous ordinances endures forever.”

The verse begins with the Hebrew word *rush*, which means head, chief, sum, totality, and the context also strongly favors the meaning of sum, the whole, or totality. So, the sum of God’s word is truth. This principle immediately raises an important question.

If the truth is found in the sum of God’s Word, why do sincere Christians so often arrive at contradictory conclusions while reading the same Bible? More often, it is because of the absence of biblical organization. Many believers know numerous verses, but have never learned how those verses relate to one another. They understand individual doctrines but fail to perceive the harmonious structure that unites those doctrines into one coherent revelation. This is precisely why the subject of systematic knowledge is so vital for us today.

Before examining the biblical method itself, it is helpful to understand the meaning of the word *system*. In the *Webster’s Dictionary* of 1828, we are told that *system* is “an assemblage of things adjusted into a regular whole, or a whole plan or scheme consisting of many parts connected in such a manner as to create a chain of mutual dependencies, or a regular union of principles, or part forming one entire thing. Thus, we say a *system* of logic, a *system* of philosophy, a *system* of government, a *system* of principles, the solar *system*, the Copernican *system*, a *system* of divinity, a *system* of law, a *system* of morality, a *system* of husbandry, and a *system* of botany or of chemistry.”

This definition deserves careful attention because it perfectly describes the kind of unity we repeatedly observe in God’s works. A system is not merely a connection of independent elements gathered together in the same place. Rather, it is an organized whole whose different parts are connected, mutually dependent, and working together toward a common purpose.

The Solar System

The universe itself provides a remarkable illustration of this principle throughout the solar system. Our solar system is not simply a group of planets floating throughout space. It is a perfectly ordered system centered upon the Sun. Every planet follows its own orbits according to laws established by the Creator. Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune each possess unique

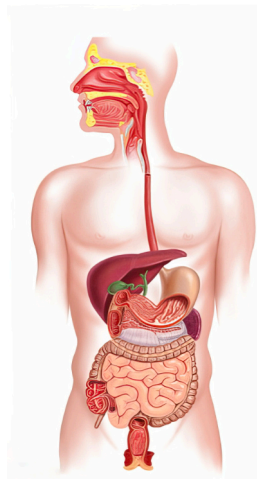


characteristics; yet, each occupies a precise place within the greater system.

The Earth cannot be fully understood apart from its relationship with the Sun. Its seasons, its climate, the length of its year, the alternation of day and night, and even the conditions necessary for life all depend upon the relationship. Every member of our solar system contributes to the harmony of the whole, and the significance of each becomes clearer as the entire system is understood.

The systems in the human body

The same principle appears with the human body throughout the digestive system. Digestion is not accomplished by one organ working independently but by an entire system whose members cooperate continuously.



Human digestion system

The mouth receives the food. The teeth reduce it into small pieces. Saliva begins digestion. The esophagus transports it into the stomach. The stomach continues the digestive process, and the small intestine absorbs nutrients. The liver produces bile. The gallbladder stores and releases that bile. The pancreas contributes digestive enzymes, and the large intestine completes the process before elimination.

Every organ performs its own work; yet, none performs the work of all the others. The stomach cannot replace the liver or the pancreas, and the intestines cannot replace the stomach. Only when every organ functions in harmony does the entire system accomplish its purpose.

The digestive system is only one among many systems that God has placed within the human body. Alongside it, we find the circulatory system, the lymphatic system, the respiratory system, the integumentary system, the endocrine system, the urinary system, the excretory system, the musculoskeletal system, the nervous system, the immune system, and the reproductive system. Each possesses its own organization and function, and yet all these systems cooperate for the life of the entire body.

Our Creator has, therefore, written the principle of systematic organization into both the heavens above us and in our own bodies. These illustrations prepare us to understand the scriptures in a new light.

If God has organized the universe according to the harmonious systems and if he has organized the human body according to harmonious systems, should we expect his written revelation to be less orderly than his creation? Cer-

tainly not. The Bible is not a random collection of religious writings. It is a perfectly organized revelation whose doctrines are connected in exactly the same way that the organs of the body and that the planets of the solar system are connected.

I'd like to now propose to you a sketch (page 4) of the way the twenty-eight principles of the 1889 Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventism are connected. This is the systematic knowledge of truth for our time. All the twenty-eight principles can be divided into eight sections. You have first the divinity, then the new life, the prophecies, the sanctuary and God's law, the Christian life, the experience of salvation in Christ Jesus, the church and its mission, and the events of the last days.

The divinity reveals himself through the new life. The new life is understood through prophecy. Prophecy leads to the sanctuary and God's law. The sanctuary and God's law shape the Christian life. The Christian life is made possible through the experience of salvation in Christ, and the experience of salvation in Christ is made through the church and its mission.

Systematic Knowledge of Truth based on the 1889 Fundamental Principles

1) Divinity

- 1) God
- 2) Jesus Christ, the Son of God

2) New Life

- 3) The Holy Scriptures
- 4) Baptism
- 5) The New Birth

3) Prophecies

- 6) Prophecy
- 7) Prophetic Chains
- 8) The Mockers of the Last Days

4) The Sanctuary and God's Law

- 9) The Purification of the Sanctuary
- 10) The Heavenly Sanctuary
- 11) God's Unchanging Law
- 12) The Sabbath
- 13) The Prophesied Reformation of the Sabbath

5) The Christian Lifestyle

- 14) A Chosen People
- 15) Christian Dress
- 16) Financial Obligations

6) The Experience of Salvation in Jesus Christ

- 17) Conversion
- 18) Justification and Grace in Christ

7) The Church and Its Mission

- 19) Spiritual Gifts
- 20) The Three Angels' Messages
- 21) The Investigative Judgment

8) The Events of the Last Days

- 22) The Place of the Dead
- 23) The State of the Dead
- 24) The Two Resurrections
- 25) The Change
- 26) The Millennium
- 27) The Third Coming
- 28) The New Heavens and the New Earth

So, as Christians saved by Christ, we will have a mission, and we will perform the mLORDission under Christ's authority. The church and its mission prepare the world for the events of the last days, and the events of the last days culminate in the eternal vindication of the divinity and his plan of redemption.

If you remove or change one doctrine from its biblical relationships, the harmony of the entire system begins to disappear.

Five fundamental apostasies

Here are the five fundamental apostasies in Seventh-day Adventism regarding this systematic knowledge of truth, the principles of the truth.

Historic Seventh-day Adventists believe that there is one God, the Father, that Jesus is his Son, and that there is the Holy Spirit who is the omnipresence of the divinity. And consistently, God, who is personally in the heavenly sanctuary with Jesus, is omnipresent through the Holy Spirit. So, God and Jesus are personal beings in heaven physically, but they are omnipresent through the ministry of the office of the Holy Spirit.

The heavenly sanctuary is literally composed of a holy place and a most holy place, and the Father and the Son left

the first, the holy place, and moved to the most holy place in 1844. Once you believe in that, then you can have a correct understanding of the dual atonement—the first part is the atonement on the cross for the forgiveness of sins, and the second part is in the most holy place, the literal one, when we get atonement for our purification, our cleansing.

We also have the man of sin who is identified as the papacy, the religious system which changed up all these truths and brought in confusion. In fact, in Seventh-day Adventism, they made a change regarding the first point, the divinity. God is now no more a personal being but is a composition of different persons, and without those persons, there is no God anymore, but this has an implication.

If God is no longer a personal being, then you have destroyed God, and God is not anymore in a particular place but, instead, is everywhere. This is why they say today that God is everywhere. This denies the existence of a personal God and is, therefore, atheism. An atheist believes that God does not exist, and this is what the doctrine of the Trinity does. When you believe in the Trinity doctrine, you believe that God does not physically exist. Atheism is, in fact, the denying of the Father and the Son, and John wrote against that.

Now, when God is not anymore in a particular place, he is everywhere, but if he is everywhere, do we need a literal sanctuary composed of holy place and mostly place? No, because this is a system. When you change one, everyone is changed. So that is why in the Fundamental Principles and in all the books that explain those principles of 1980, they say there is no literal holy place and most holy place.

On YouTube there was a pastor who was a teacher in the pastoral seminary and was even the head of a conference in

5 Fundamental Apostasies in Seventh-Day Adventism

Fundamental Principles of 1889 Historical Church: https://www.asih1889.fr/croyances Archive: https://egw writings.org/read?panels=p931.2 	Fundamental Principles of 1980 Modern Church: https://adventiste.org/nos-croyances 
God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, the Holy Spirit ¹	The Trinity (God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
God, who is personally in the heavenly sanctuary with Jesus, is omnipresent through the Holy Spirit ²	God is everywhere (This denies the existence of a personal God and is therefore atheism)
The heavenly sanctuary is literally composed of a Holy Place and a Most Holy Place ³	The heavenly sanctuary literally has no Holy Place and no Most Holy Place
Atonement: 1) on the cross; 2) in the Most Holy Place ³	Atonement on the cross alone
The man of sin is the papacy ⁴	The man of sin is no longer identified

France who said that there is no literal sanctuary composed of holy place and most holy place. God is everywhere. So the sanctuary is everywhere with God, and they never disfellowshipped him because the Fundamental Principle says so.

Once you cancel the literal sanctuary, there is no full atonement, only on the cross. They continue to believe that there is that atonement, and all this is due to the man of sin. They embrace all the teachings of the man of sin regarding God and regarding the sanctuary. They cease to identify the papacy as being the man of sin.

So we see that everything is connected, and it is due to a lack of systematic knowledge that this apostasy has arrived in Seventh-day Adventism, but let me tell you this apostasy is not finished because if you are really systematic, what is the next step?

The next step

God is everywhere, according to them, but the Bible tells us that Jesus went back to see his father, but his father is everywhere. So Jesus goes back everywhere, but if Jesus is everywhere, does he need to come back again? No. And I tell you, there are Seventh-day Adventists who do not believe that Jesus will come back again. I tell you this, and this apostasy will move forward. You will see that, and this is why we need to understand.

The foundation of systematic knowledge

Now we are going to talk about the foundation of systematic knowledge. Before teaching us how to study systematically, the scripture first teaches us where systematic knowledge begins.

We are told in Deuteronomy 29 verse 29:

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.

This verse establishes one of the most important principles of biblical knowledge of theology. Moses divides all knowledge into two distinct categories. On the one end are the secret things which belongs exclusively to God. On the other end are the things that have been revealed, which God has entrusted to his people.

This distinction immediately protects us from two opposite dangers that have repeatedly harmed the church throughout history. The first danger is speculation. Human beings naturally desire to know what God has not chosen to reveal.

Whenever theology attempts to answer questions with supposed knowledge which has not been revealed and which God has left unanswered, that theology has inevitably moved beyond the authority of scripture.

The opposite danger is neglect. Some believers conclude that because certain things remain hidden the Bible itself cannot be fully understood. While some matters belong exclusively to God, everything necessary for faith and obedience has already been revealed. The existence of unrevealed things should, therefore, make us humble, while the existence of revealed things should make us diligent students of scripture.

The final words of the verse reveal the practical purpose of revelation. Moses declared that the things God has revealed belong to us that we may do all the words of the law. Knowledge is, therefore, never presented as an end in itself. God does not reveal truth merely to satisfy intellectual curiosity. He reveals truth so that it may transform life.

Having established the source and the limits of true knowledge, Solomon then explained the spirit in which that knowledge must be thought.

In Proverbs 2:1–2, 5, we read:

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding . . . Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

This remarkable passage describes the pursuit of divine knowledge as the search for hidden treasure (v. 4). Solomon does not portray biblical understanding as something obtained casually or accidentally. He describes a deliberate process requiring desire, perseverance, humility, and diligent efforts. Such language leaves no room for spiritual laziness.

This passage also reveals that biblical learning rests upon three inseparable pillars—knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. These terms are closely related in the Bible; yet, they are not identical.

Knowledge answers the question: What has God revealed? It gathers the facts of revelation. It learns the doctrines, the historical events, the prophecies, the commandments, and the promises recorded in scripture. Without knowledge, there can be no systematic knowledge or theology because there would be no matter from which to build.

Understanding answers a different question: How do these revealed truths relate to one another? Two students may possess exactly the same information but reach completely different conclusions. One sees only isolated verses, while the other perceives the relationships that unite those verses into one harmonious revelation.

Understanding recognizes patterns, distinctions, causes, consequences, and connections. It sees not merely the individual stones but the architecture of the building. 

Wisdom answers yet another question: How should this revealed truth govern my life? Wisdom transforms knowledge into practice. It directs the will. It shapes character. It governs decisions.

Knowledge without wisdom, my friends, often produces pride, while wisdom without knowledge lacks a solid foundation. God, therefore, joins these gifts together so that truth may influence both the mind and the life.

Notice also the order given by Solomon in his reasoning. The search begins with humble receptivity. The student does not approach scripture seeking confirmation of a previously formed opinion. Instead, he approaches God's word ready to receive whatever God has revealed. This humility is indispensable for systematic knowledge. Pride seeks verses that support its own conclusion, while humility seeks the conclusions that arise naturally from the raw testimony of scripture.

God has revealed his truth and calls us to seek it diligently, and by what method does scripture teach us to discover that harmony? The Bible itself answers that question by revealing its own principles of interpretation, and it is to those principles that we now turn. The Bible does not merely reveal truth. It also teaches us how that truth is to be discovered.

Principles of interpretation

Throughout history, many theological errors have arisen not because scripture was incomplete—we have had the whole Bible for years—but because God's method of studying scripture was neglected. If truth is found in the sum of God's words, then God must also provide a method by which that sum may be understood, and Isaiah 28 verses 9 and 10 reveal that method with remarkable clarity:

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? . . . For precept must be upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: (Isaiah 28: 9, 10)

These words have often been quoted, but they deserve much closer attention. Isaiah is not merely describing repetition. He is describing God's own educational method. Divine truth is ordinarily not revealed in one complete statement or in one isolated passage. Instead, God distributes his instructions throughout the scriptures so that the diligent student must gather the different parts and allow them to explain one another.

One passage introduces a principle. Another develops it. Another illustrates it historically. Another applies it spiritually, and another reveals its prophetic significance. Only when these individual testimonies are assembled does the complete doctrine emerge.

The method mentioned by Isaiah, the prophet, also protects us against one of the greatest dangers in theology, that of building an entire doctrine upon a single verse. Every passage must be understood in the light of every other relevant passage. Systematic knowledge, therefore, grows progressively exactly as Isaiah describes—precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. This naturally leads us to another important principle illustrated during one of the greatest revivals in Israel history.

In Nehemiah 8 verse 8, we are told:

So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

This verse describes the ministry of Israel and the Levites after the return from Babylon. The people had regained possession of the scriptures, but possessing the sacred writings was not enough. They needed to understand them correctly. The inspired record, therefore, describes three successive actions that together form a model for every faithful Bible teacher.

The first is that they read the word of God. The authority rested entirely upon the inspired text rather than upon human opinion. Genuine biblical teaching always begins with scripture itself. No tradition, creed, or theological system possessed authority independent of the written word.

Second, they gave the sense. Reading alone is not always sufficient. Words must be explained according to their context, grammar, historical setting, and intended meaning. The goal is not to impose our ideas upon scriptures but to discover the meaning that God has placed within it.

And third, they cause the people to understand. This final step is often overlooked. Biblical teaching is successful only when the hearer truly understands the message. Information may be transmitted without being understood. Understanding occurs when the different parts of revelation become connected within the mind. A person who merely memorizes verses possesses information. A person who perceives the relation between those verses possesses understanding.

First Corinthians chapter 2 verse 13 reveals the central principle that governs the entire process:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Although this statement is brief, it expresses one of the greatest principles of biblical interpretation—divine truth is explained by divine truth.

Because the Holy Spirit inspired every part of the Bible, one inspired passage will never contradict another; instead,

each contributes something necessary to the complete revelation, and whenever we encounter a difficult passage, we should not rush to conclusions based upon that text alone. Instead, we should gather every other passage that speaks upon the same subject and allow the combined testimony of Scripture to guide our understanding. The clearer passages illuminates the more difficult ones, and throughout the Bible one inspired writer complements another. Do you know why? They all speak under the guidance of the same Spirit. Amen.

The greatest demonstration of this principle is found in the teaching ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. In Luke 24, verse 27, we are told about him:

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.

This remarkable scene took place on the road to Emmaus after Christ's resurrection. Their problem was not that they lacked Scripture. No. Their problem was that they had not yet understood how the different portions of Scripture fit together.

Notice carefully how Jesus corrected them. He did not simply declare that they should believe because he said so. No. Neither did he settle the matter by quoting one decisive prophecy. No. Instead, he led them throughout the Scriptures themselves, beginning with Moses and continuing throughout all the prophets. He assembled the biblical evidence until the harmony of God's plan became unmistakable. And this is systematic knowledge in practice, my friend.

Christ himself interpreted scripture by comparing scripture. He demonstrated that truth is discovered not by isolating passages but by allowing the entire revelation to testify together. Later that same day Christ expanded this lesson even further. In verses 44 and 45, we read:

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. (Luke 24:44-45)

Here Jesus refers to the three great divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures, the law, the prophets, and the Psalms, representing the entire Old Testament.

This statement is extraordinary because it is declared that these writings were composed over many centuries by numerous inspired authors; nevertheless, they build one united testimony concerning himself. And this is precisely what systematic knowledge enables us to perceive, my friend. The Bible is not a collection of unrelated books but

one harmonious revelation centered upon Jesus Christ. Amen.

The final statement deserves special attention. We are told that he then opened their understanding. The disciples already possessed the sacred Scriptures, right? They had heard them read in the synagogue throughout their lives. Their lack was not access to scripture but the ability to perceive its unity.

Christ did not give them new revelation, new writing. He opened their minds to understand the revelation they already possessed. This distinction remains just as important today, my friend. Many believers have read the Bible for years yet still struggle to see the relationships that unite its doctrine into one coherent system. Systematic knowledge is not simply reading more verses. It is learning to perceive the divine harmony that God has woven throughout the whole of his word.

In John 16 verse 13, Jesus says:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit would not consist in giving a different message or establishing a new standard of truth. Rather, his work would be to lead believers into a fuller understanding of the revelation that God has already given and would complete through the inspired apostles.

One word deserves particular attention here when we are told that he will guide. You know, a guide does not create the road, but he leads travelers along a road that already exists. Neither does he choose the destination. In exactly the same manner, the Holy Spirit of Jesus does not invent new doctrines or contradict previous revelation. He leads sincere students into the truth that God has already revealed in his words. His ministry is, therefore, inseparable from the Scriptures themselves.

This observation protects us from two opposite errors that have repeatedly appeared throughout Christian history. The first error is intellectualism. Some imagine that careful study alone is sufficient to understand divine truth. They master biblical languages, historical backgrounds, and theological system, and yet neglect their dependence upon the Spirit of Christ. Such knowledge may produce impressive scholarships, but it cannot, by itself, produce spiritual discernment. The Bible is not merely an ancient document to be analyzed. It is the living word of God, and only the Spirit who inspired it can fully open its meaning to the human heart.

The opposite error is mysticism. Others suppose that the Holy Spirit guides independently of the Scriptures, making

diligent study almost unnecessary. They rely primarily upon impressions, emotions, or subjective experiences, while giving comparatively little attention to the careful examination of the written words. This approach is equally dangerous because it separates the Spirit from the very revelation that he inspired. Throughout the Scriptures, the Spirit and the word always work together. The Spirit never leads a believer away from the Bible. He always leads the believer deeper into it.

This harmony between divine illumination and careful study is one of the great characteristics of systematic knowledge. God does not ask us to choose between prayer and study, nor between spiritual dependence and disciplined investigation. He joins them together.

We pray because we recognize our dependence upon the Spirit of Christ. We study diligently because we recognize the authority of the Scriptures. Prayer without study easily becomes subjective. Study without prayer easily becomes merely academic. Together, they produce the kind of understanding that Christ promised to his disciples.

It is also significant, my friend, that Jesus says the Spirit will guide believers into all the truth. The expression does not suggest that every individual will immediately understand every doctrine with perfect clarity; rather, it indicates completeness. The Holy Spirit does not guide us into isolated fragments of truth while leaving the reminder disconnected. His purpose is to help us perceive the harmony of God's complete revelation.

This perfectly agrees with the principle established at the beginning of our study that the sum of God's words is truth. The Spirit leads us toward that sum, my friend, helping us understand how the various parts of the Scriptures unite to form one coherent testimony.

This truth also encourages humility. No matter how long we have studied the Scriptures, we remain dependent upon the divine teacher. Every generation must return to the Bible with the same prayerful spirit, asking the Holy Spirit to illuminate the written word. At the same time, this dependence does not excuse intellectual laziness. The Spirit guides those who search, compare, meditate, and obey. His ministry never replaces diligent study. It makes diligent study fruitful.

A complete, coherent body of doctrine

Having established that the Spirit of Christ is the divine guide into all revealed truth, we are now prepared to consider how this guidance enables the believer to construct a complete and coherent body of doctrine.

Our first example is found in Acts 17 verse 11:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scripture daily, whether those things

were so.

The believers in Berea have rightly become an example for every serious student of Scripture. Luke does not praise them merely because they listen respectfully to Paul's preaching. Neither does he praise them because they accepted everything immediately. Their nobility consisted in maintaining two attitudes that are often difficult to preserve simultaneously. They possessed genuine openness toward new light, and they also possessed an wavering loyalty to the authority of the Scriptures. They welcomed Paul's message with eagerness, but they refused to accept it without careful examination. Every argument, every explanation, and every conclusion was tested by the written word of God.

Act 20 verse 27 reveals the objective toward which such study is directed:

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Paul spoke these words while addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus. As he reviewed his ministry among them, he did not measure its success merely by the number of sermons he had preached or the number of converts he had baptized. Instead, he declared that he had faithfully proclaimed all the counsel of God. This expression deserves careful attention.

The word translated *counsel* refers to God's purpose, plan, or design. Paul understood that the Scriptures present one unified purpose extending from creation to the restoration of all things, and, in fact, it started before creation of this earth. We know that every doctrine contributes to that purpose. Every prophecy advances it. Every historical event illustrates it. Every commandment protects it, and every promises encourages it.

To preach only a selected portion of God's revelation would, therefore, have been to leave believers with an incomplete understanding of God's plan. Second Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 and 17 explain why such completeness is possible:

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.

Paul emphasizes the expression of all the Scriptures. Every inspired writing contributes something necessary to God's complete revelation—historical narratives, poetry, prophecy, wisdom literature, the Gospels, apostolic letters, and apocalyptic visions all possess a divinely appointed place.

Some passages are easier to understand than others. Some doctrines occupy a more central position within the plan of redemption than others. Nevertheless, every inspired por-

tion of scripture contributes something essential to the complete body of revealed truth and notice also the purpose for which scripture has been given. Paul does not merely say that it informs the believer or enlarges his knowledge. He says that it equips the man of God and makes him complete.

Completeness is one of the defining characteristics of every genuine system. A machine lacking essential parts cannot function properly. A body missing vital organs cannot remain healthy. Likewise, a theology that neglects portions of scripture can never represent the fullness of God's revelation. God intends his people to be equipped through the entire Bible rather than through carefully selected portions of it.

Having emphasized the completeness of scripture, Paul next introduces another concept that is especially important for our subject. In 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 13, he said:

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

The expression *form of sound words* deserves a close examination. The word for *form* in Greek means also pattern. So a form or pattern is not simply a collection of unrelated pieces. It is an organized model according to which those pieces are arranged. An architect follows a blueprint. A tailor follows a pattern. A craftsman works according to a design. In each case, the pattern determines how the individual parts fit together to produce the finished work.

Paul applies this same principle to doctrines. Sound teaching possesses a pattern. It possesses order. It possesses internal harmony. The truths of scripture are, therefore, not merely accumulated. They are organized according to the design established by God himself. Preserving sound doctrine means more than preserving individual verses. It means preserving the biblical relationships that unite those verses into one harmonious revelation.

Paul concludes this section with a practical exhortation concerning the handling of scripture itself. In 2 Timothy 2 verse 15, he said:

Study to shew thyself a proven to God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The same principles govern the study of God's words. To rightly divide the word of truth is to interpret every passage according to its proper context, purpose, and relationship to the rest of scripture. It means distinguishing what God distinguishes, connecting what God connects, and refusing to confuse doctrines that scripture carefully keeps in their proper places.

Such work requires diligence, patience, humility, and constant dependence upon the Holy Spirit of Jesus. It also requires submission to the authority of the entire Bible

rather than allowing personal preference or inherited tradition to determine our conclusions.

Once such a system has been discovered, what effect should it have upon the believer? Scripture answers that true systematic knowledge never remains merely intellectual. It must transform the life, deepen spiritual maturity, and produce practical obedience. It is to assimilate the truth which Paul writes in Colossians 1:9 and 10:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Paul's prayers reveal the true purpose of biblical knowledge. He does not merely ask that believers should possess information about the will of God. He prays that they should be filled with the knowledge of his will. The expression suggests something that permeates the entire person.

Just as water fills every part of a vessel, God's truth is to fill the mind, shape the conscience, direct the judgment, govern the affections, and influence every decision of daily life, and equally significant is the purpose that follows.

Believers are to be filled with the knowledge of God's will, so that they may walk worthy of the Lord. Theology is therefore never an end in itself. Every doctrine ultimately seeks to produce a life that honors God. Correct knowledge should produce correct living. A growing understanding of scripture should produce increasing faithfulness, increasing humility, increasing love, increasing holiness, and increasing usefulness in God's service.

The next passage develops this principle by contrasting spiritual infancy with spiritual maturity. Hebrews 5 verses 12 and 14 say:

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have made that one teach you again which be the first principle of the oracle of God . . . But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The writer to the Hebrews expressed deep concern because many believers had ceased to grow. Enough time had passed for them to become teachers of others, yet they still required instruction in the elementary principle of God's word. Their difficulty was not that they lacked access to scripture. Their difficulty was that they failed to mature through continued practice and assimilation of what they had already learned.

To illustrate this condition, the writer compares spiritual growth with physical nourishment. Infants require milk because their digestive systems are not yet prepared for strong

food. There is nothing wrong with milk at the beginning of life. The problem arises when maturity never develops. An adult who remains permanently dependent upon infant food has failed to grow as nature intended, and the same principle governs spiritual life, my friend. Every believer begins by learning the foundational truths of scripture. These elementary principles are indispensable, but they are not intended to remain the limits of Christian understanding.

God calls his people to progress beyond the first lesson into a mature comprehension of his entire revelation. Such a maturity is not measured by the number of years spent in the church, no, but by the degree to which God's truth has been assimilated into the life.

One expression of this passage that deserves attention is of being mature, "those by reason of their senses discerned good and evil." So this is what the mature people are doing. Spiritual discernment is not acquired merely by hearing more sermons or reading more books. It is developed through use. Truth becomes clearer as it's continually practiced. Every act of obedience strengthens spiritual perception. Every faithful application of scripture trains the conscience to distinguish more accurately between truth and error, righteousness and sin. Systematic knowledge, therefore, becomes increasingly practical. It shapes the believers' judgments until biblical principle become the natural guide for every decision.

The three angels' messages

In the book of Revelation, we see a supreme biblical illustration of systematic knowledge. I have preached the three angels' messages around the French-speaking field. In Africa I have given seminars about this, and I tell you, when you preach this message, you find principles of our fundamentals of 1889. They are in that message. If you study carefully, you will find it.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice . . . (Revelation 14:6, 7)

So, he doesn't tremble. He's speaking clear and loud. He's addressing the issue.

Fear God . . . (Revelation 14:7). Fear means to obey, to cease to sin and obey, but who are we to obey? God.

In the Greek, it does not just say God, but the Greek says *the* God, and when you study the Greek expression, *ho theos*, you will find that it is referring to the Father, to God the Father. So we have a call here to come back to the worship of the true God and give glory to him. We need to glorify God in our spirituality and in our health but also in the church. There is a church-organization need to glorify God.

There are three levels—a personal or spiritual level, a physical level, and, collectively, a church organization level.

For the hour of his judgment is come (Revelation 14:7)—here we are talking about the investigative judgment, Daniel 8:14. We are told that the sanctuary will be justified, and we know that God's way is in the sanctuary.

Worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Revelation 14:7) is a clear reference to the Sabbath of the seventh day, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

So, the first angel's message contains all the gospel, all the truth. Those who accept this message are on the good way, but, sadly, God sent another proclamation:

And there followed another angel, saying Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (Revelation 14:8)

Babylon here is not the literal Babylon. We are talking about here a church. You have also the mother of harlots, which means that she has daughters. At that time, the Roman Catholic Church was already fallen, so it is her daughters, the Protestant churches, who refuse the first angel's message, who are concerned by it, and who have the wine of the wrath of fornication, her wrong teachings that she gave to the world.

And then you continue with the third angel's message:

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast, and his image . . . (Revelation 14:9)

The beast here is the one that came out of the sea and represents the papacy. His image represents what your government is going to do in few years with the Sunday law. The seal of God is contained in the fourth commandment, and the mark of the beast is in the forehead of those people who accept that theology. Those others who receive the mark in the hand are those who comply with the Sunday law but do not believe it. They comply just so they can eat and drink.

When you study verses 10 and 11, you have a perspective of the state of the dead, the resurrection, and I tell you, if you study carefully this message, you will find all our principles woven into this message.

The results of systematic knowledge

What are the results of systematic knowledge? Second Peter 3, verses 15–18 says:

. . . Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him, have written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which how some things hard

to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

And verse 18 says:

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Peter's words deserve careful attention because they describe one of the greatest dangers facing every student of scripture. Referring to the writing of Paul, Peter openly acknowledges that certain passages are difficult to understand. This admission is important. Inspiration never suggests that every biblical passage is equally simple. Some subjects require careful study, patient comparison, and spiritual discernment.

The existence of difficult passages, however, is not in itself the danger. The danger lies in the attitude of those who approach them improperly. We now look at a passage in Ephesians 4, a passage which shows the positive side of this same truth.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. (Ephesians 4:11-14)

To make it short, I'd like to share with you this quotation that will conclude this message:

More thought should be given to the things of God, and less to temporal matters. The world-loving professor, if he will exercise his mind in that direction, may become as familiar with the word of God as he now is with worldly business. "Search the Scriptures," said Christ; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me." The Christian is required to be diligent in searching the Scriptures, to read over and over again the truths of God's word. Willful ignorance on this subject endangers the Christian life and character. It blinds the understanding and corrupts the noblest powers. It is this that brings confusion into our lives. Our people need to understand the oracles of God; they need to have a systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth, which will fit them for what is coming upon the earth and prevent them from being carried about by every wind of doctrine. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 273.2)

"It is this that brings confusion into our lives." Did you notice that? What brings confusion in our lives? But the gem is at the end of the paragraph. Our ministers need to have systematic knowledge, and our people, she said, need to understand the oracles of God. They need to have a systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth, for the people to get a systematic knowledge. It means that the ministers who teach them must have a systematic knowledge because they are the ones who are supposed to unify the people. It tells us about the training and education the body of ministers should have so that the people can have this knowledge. She continues to say that the systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth on the part of God's people will fit them for what is coming upon the earth and prevent them from being carried about by every wind of doctrines.

And now you understand why the title of this message is "Systematic Knowledge of Truth: Our Fitness to End Time Events," my friends. God does not intend that only the minister should have a systematic knowledge of the Bible. No.

We are not in your home. We are not with you when you are watching YouTube, and when you are reading things. You will have to face that after, and sometimes it can be too late because some people will have spent so much time consuming things that they are unable to discern. So, we need to be trained and have a systematic knowledge of the truth, my friends.

Let us never be satisfied with knowing isolated verses, favorite doctrines, or familiar prophecies. Let us become diligent students of the entire word of God, allowing every passage to occupy its proper place within the magnificent harmony of divine revelation.

Let us seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit of Jesus each time we open scriptures, asking him to lead us into all the truth. Then our faith will rest not upon selected texts or human opinion but upon the complete testimony of God's word, and we shall possess the systematic knowledge of principles of revealed truth that God has given to prepare his people for the glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Jean-Christophe Bolotte



For Such a Time as This

By Todd Brown

(The following message is an edited version of the keynote address for the 2026 1889 HSDA camp meeting held at Fall Creek Falls State Park in Tennessee, July 28–August 2.)

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? (Esther 4:14)

God places his people in strategic moments of history for the accomplishment of his purposes. There was Noah, for the rescue of God's people from the flood; Moses, for the deliverance of his people from Egypt; and Joshua, for the conquest of the promised land of Canaan. We could name many more, like Esther, for the salvation of God's people in her day.

Brothers and sisters, it is no accident that we are living in this period of earth's history, and God has a purpose for each one of us to fulfill as well! This may look different for every one of us, but I believe the common denominator is found in 2 Peter 3:11–12. Peter asks:

... what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (2 Peter 3:11)

But he goes on to state:

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God ... (2 Peter 3:12)

The Greek word translated *hasting* carries the idea of eagerly desiring or promoting or helping to forward. Peter's connecting verse 12, with holy living, suggests that the church's spiritual condition is linked to God's final work on earth, thus connecting believers with the hastening of Christ's return. So, what does that look like for us?

Before we go there, I want to go back in history a little over one hundred fifty years. In the years during and following the Civil War, America undertook one of the greatest engineering projects of its time—the transcontinental railroad. Two crews, totaling some twenty to twenty-five thousand workers, over a six-year span worked toward each other from opposite directions.

One crew from the Central Pacific Railroad started in Sacramento, California, and moved east over the Sierra Nevada mountains. The other crew from the Union Pacific Railroad started in Omaha, Nebraska, and moved west, and technically there was a third crew that tackled the crossing of the Missouri River from Council Bluff, Iowa, to reach Nebraska. Day after day workers blasted mountains, bridged

canyons, and laid track in the effort to construct a railroad that would connect the East with the West.

The crew working from the west side never knew how progress was coming on the east side, and vice versa. In fact, most never saw what the other workers were doing. They never saw what was going on in other locations. They never even saw the completed project. They simply did their part. Then on May 10, 1869, at Promontory Summit, Utah, the final golden spike was driven and the railroad was complete. An amazing feat for the time. Every blast of dynamite, every shovel of dirt moved, every swing of the hammer helped bring that day closer.



The meeting at Promontory Summit, Utah

As Christians, we often think of the Second Coming as merely something we wait for; yet, we just read where Peter speaks of “looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.” You see, God invites his people to participate in the work that prepares the world for Christ's return. Like those railroad workers, we may not see the entire picture. We do not see who, what, or where God's work is going forward, but every act of faithfulness on our part helps advance God's purpose, and that brings us back to that all important question: Why has God placed us in this generation?

I believe the answer may be found in Mordecai's challenge to Esther found in our opening text:

Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? (Esther 4:14)

Perhaps we, too, have come to the kingdom for such a time! Jesus tells us in Luke 19:

Occupy till I come. (Luke 19:13)

So, what exactly does that look like? I believe that is a great question. There are seven points I would like for us to consider, and I am sure there are others that could be mentioned!

Point 1: Finishing the gospel work

In Matthew 24, Jesus gave a remarkable sign of the end:

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)

Notice that Jesus does not simply say the gospel will be preached. He adds “then shall the end come.”

Likewise, Matthew 28 states:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . . (Matthew 28:19)

Acts 1:8:

. . . Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

You see, God’s final work is missionary in nature. Are we as Adventist doing our part? One of the stronger statements Mrs. White ever made is quoted in multiple places, like *Early Writings*:

Had Adventists after the great disappointment in 1844 held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. (Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 299)

Wow! I am sure many of us are familiar with this statement, but are we going to let this happen again?

By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 633)

Reading on:

Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory. (Ibid.)

Now, this does not mean we humans determine the date; rather, God has chosen to accomplish part of his final work through human instruments like us. As Esther was placed in the palace for a mission, so we, too, have been placed in this final generation for a mission. The question becomes: Am I helping fulfill my part of Matthew 24’s commission of sharing the gospel?

Point 2: Developing Christlike character

In an earlier passage from Peter, we read:

. . . What manner of persons ought ye to be . . . (2 Peter 3:11)?

The preparation of the world includes the preparation of God’s people. The New Testament repeatedly connects readiness for Christ’s return with character:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

. . . Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13)

God’s goal is not merely forgiven sinners but transformed saints. In *Christ Object Lessons* we read another one of Mrs. White’s more famous statement on this subject:

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. (Ellen White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69)

What is this statement saying? She is not teaching sinless perfection through human effort. The context is the growth of Christ’s life within the believer by his Spirit. The greatest witness is not merely a message preached but a life transformed. Reading on, the next paragraph states:

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ibid.)

The final generation is to demonstrate before the universe what God’s grace can accomplish in fallen humanity.

So, we must ask ourselves: Is Christ reproducing his patience in me? His kindness? His humility? His purity? His love, even for my enemies? The greatest evidence for Christianity is not argument but character. This brings us to our next point.

Point 3: Seeking revival and the latter rain

We read in Luke where Jesus commanded his followers:

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

Even before the early church’s mission was completed, it received power! We see this at Pentecost:

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . . (Acts 2:4)

In the very next chapter, Peter tells us of some of the prerequisites for receiving the Spirit:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. (Acts 3:19)

This former rain experience will be complimented with the latter-rain outpouring of God's Spirit in our day! Are we ready? Do we see our need? We read in *Selected Messages*:

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121)

And from *Testimonies to Ministers*:

The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. (Ellen White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 506)

The latter rain is not emotional excitement. It is a deeper experience with Christ, resulting in power for service attained through daily prayer, Bible study, confession, humbling the heart before God, and corporate revival among believers. This is the heart work we need because the work of God cannot be finished by human effort alone. This prepares us for our next point.

Point 4: Living a life of holiness

Peter directly links holiness and hastening the day of God. Again,

... what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God ... (2 Peter 3:11, 12)

The apostle John tells us:

... when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (1 John 3:2, 3)

The apostle Paul writes:

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

The Christian life is preparation for eternity. In *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 4, we read:

Every act of life, however unimportant, has its influence in forming the character. A good character is more precious than worldly possessions, and the work of forming it is the noblest in which men can engage. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 657; 1881)

Preparation for Christ's coming is not a one-time experience. It is not a one-and-done event but a daily walk. We must have surrender of self, integrity in business, purity in thought, faithfulness in the family life, and obedience to God's commandments.

Preparation for Christ's return is not simply having prophetic knowledge. It involves every choice in life which either prepares us for his coming or distracts us from it. When God has started this work in us, we move on to our next point.

Point 5: Having unity among God's people

Now please consider, what is the context of this next passage?

And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. (Genesis 11:6)

The tower of Babel! Here God himself is telling us of the power of unified efforts, even when they are working at cross purposes to his plan. In short, there is power in unity. What, then, if our efforts are unified under God? Matthew 19:26 states:

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26)

But that is not all. Jesus prayed for us to have this kind of unity:

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that thy also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (John 17:21)

Unity is intended to be evidence for the truth of the gospel. We saw this in the early church with the former rain:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (Acts 2:1)

And the results were remarkable:

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)

Working together with God, there were about three thousand people baptized in one day! Reading on, we see:

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; (Acts 2:42-44)

Then verse 47:

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2:47)

It did not stop with three thousand that first day, for the Lord added to the church daily. The gospel is spreading. A few chapters later, speaking of these believers, we read:

... These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also. (Acts 17:6)

With Christian unity, the early church changed the world because they were joined in purpose, and that is why one of Satan's most determined and successful tactics is to divide

and conquer. Haven't we seen this in the "Truth about God" movement? Mrs. White tells us:

The secret of our success in the work of God will be found in the harmonious working of our people. (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, December 2, 1890, par 13)

Disunity weakens, but unity strengthens.

Point 6: Earnestly praying for Christ's return

We are told that "prayer is the key in the hand of faith that unlocks heaven's storehouse" (Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, page 94.2), and, you know, we pray for a lot of things. We just touched on it—thanksgiving and praise, the salvation of family and friends, the sick, our church, our missionaries and evangelistic efforts, and the list goes on, and these are good things. God wants us to come to him with everything, but what about Christ's return? Do you remember when Christ's disciples asked him to teach them to pray?

... Our Father which art in heaven ... (Matthew 6:9)

Jesus goes on to tell them they should pray:

... Thy kingdom come. ... (Matthew 6:10)

In John's benediction, as he closes Revelation, we read:

... Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:20)

The early apostolic church lived with this expectation. Many of the reformers lived with this expectation. In the early 1800's the Advent people lived with this expectation. What about us? You know, a church that loses its anticipation of Christ's coming loses much of its evangelistic urgency.

We, as Adventists, should be foremost in sharing this hope. So, we need to pray specifically for opportunities to witness for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for revival in the church, and for Christ's kingdom to come. This is a simple but potent point.

Point 7: Reflecting God's character before the universe

This is one of the deepest themes in Scripture and in the writings of Mrs. White.

... For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. (1 Corinthians 4:9)

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (Ephesians 3:10)

It is seen in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14! We, his church, are part of God's answer to Satan's accusations. Mrs. White wrote that God's character has been misrepresented by Satan and that God's people are called to reveal his true character:

The last rays of merciful light, the last message of

mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love." (White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415)

You see, the final proclamation is not merely doctrinal accuracy. The truth about God is important, but there is more. It is a revelation of Jesus Christ. What is that? Part of that message is God's love revealed through transformed lives. Sinners changed into saints! It is not just other worlds and angels that are watching. Every one of us should be asking ourselves: What picture of God do people see through me? Do my spouse and my parents, my children, my friends see Jesus in me? Do my actions make God attractive or unattractive? Does my life reveal God's love? So, we see the consistent testimony of Scripture is that Christ's coming is hastened when God's people proclaim the gospel to the world, when they develop Christlike characters, when they experience genuine revival, when they live holy lives, when they mature and maintain Christian unity, when they pray for Christ's return, and when they reveal God's love before the universe.

In the early 1700's, a small group of religious refugees from Moravia found protection on the estate of a young German nobleman, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Some time around 1727 this group of believers started a prayer band where different ones would take a turn praying for one hour each. This prayer watch lasted for over one hundred years without interruption.

That prayer movement by this group of Moravians started the engine behind one of history's greatest missionary movements. They crossed oceans, endured hardship, and sacrificed comfort because they wanted one thing above all else. They wanted Jesus to receive the reward of his sacrifice, the salvation of every lost soul.

One story tells of two Moravian missionaries, Johann Leonhard Dober and David Nitschmann, who in 1732 sailed away to carry the gospel to enslaved people on the island of Saint Thomas in the Dutch West Indies, which is now part of the Virgin Islands of the United States. Some accounts state that Johann and David were even willing to be sold into slavery so as to gain access to the slaves on Saint Thomas. As the ship pulled away from the dock, loved ones watching from shore cried out: "May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of his suffering!"

This is really the question before us today. Not merely do we believe Jesus is coming, but, will the Lamb receive the reward of his suffering through our efforts?

Esther had her moment. The transcontinental railroad workers had theirs. The Moravians had theirs. Now God has entrusted a moment to us. The gospel is closer to completion than ever before. The return of Jesus is nearer than ever before, and perhaps, just perhaps, we have come to the kingdom for such a time as this!

... the Spirit and the bride say, Come. (Revelation

22:17)

And when the church fully joins the Spirit in that work, God's mission will be finished and Christ will return.

One thought that I believe ties many of these themes together is Jesus' parable of the talents in Matthew 25.

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of the thy lord. (Matthew 25:21)

These servants were not commended for accurately predicting when their master would return, but, rather, they were commended for faithfully carrying out the work entrusted to them during his absence. In that sense, readiness for the Second Coming is not passive anticipation but active cooperation with Christ.

We read this statement at the beginning. Let me share it again now:

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." (White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69)

So, just as God placed Esther in a strategic moment of history to accomplish his purpose then, God has placed us in this generation for a divine purpose now, and that is to cooperate with him in preparing the world for the return of Jesus Christ. Will you dedicate yourself anew to God's final mission? Will you ask God to fill you with his Spirit? Will you commit yourself to sharing Christ, revealing his character, and helping prepare a people for his soon return?

"For such a time as this!"

May God use us to help hasten the day when we will see Jesus face to face!



Brother Todd Brown sharing at the camp meeting

The Word I Live By

By Brian Thomas

Every person lives by a word, whether that word is of the world or whether that word is of God. Before we came to Christ, the words of the world enthralled our minds and captured our imaginations. They spoke to us of principles that are contrary to God's design to transform us and to something of its kind that we might live lives contrary to the principles of God's government. I would like to ask you a simple question today: "What word are you living by?"

I am not talking merely about spoken words, but I am talking about principles that are derived through our meditation upon the spoken words that we have heard throughout the course of our lives. These principles were developing long before we ever came to Christ, as the world had already begun discipling us and training us to develop moral principles that seem right in the world's own eyes. It taught us that honor and authority are akin to riches, that love is physical and carnal, and that vengeance belongs to ourselves.

These principles ultimately became the way we thought, and they influence the way we react in any given situation and ultimately influence the way we live. They became programmed responses to our environment, to the situations that we are surrounded by.

When I was in the United States Army, there were principles we were taught through constant repetition. These are called cadences. The drill sergeant would yell out, "What makes the green grass grow?" Every soldier would respond in unison, yelling, "Blood, blood, bright red blood." This was a principle that was being taught to the soldiers. It was a principle of death. It was a cadence designed to encourage us to believe that life could only spring forth from the death of the enemy.

I am not saying this to criticize the military, but I am using it to illustrate a biblical principle. Whatever words are continually spoken into our lives will eventually become the principles by which we think, respond, and live by.

We certainly absorbed these principles before we ever knew Christ, but when Christ calls us out of the world, he does not only forgive us of our sins, he begins teaching us a new word, a new way of thinking and living. This is what I believe John chapter 15 is referring to. Every kingdom operates by principles. In John chapter 15 verse 1, Jesus begins to instruct us by saying, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

Notice in this verse that Jesus says he is the *true* vine, so by implication he is teaching us that there is at least another

vine, a false vine, which produce after their own kind. Remember that every kingdom teaches principles.

The kingdom of this world has principles, and the flesh has principles, and they contrast with principles of the kingdom of God. The question is not are you living by principles. It is actually by whose principles are you living.

The principles that are taught to you by the world are all about self. Protect yourself and get even for your own sake to satisfy your own desire for vengeance. Promote yourself and gain prominence to become more successful, to gain substantial finances, or to mean something to yourself and to the world. Follow your heart and take care of yourself first.

As far as getting even, you can see quite plainly that Christ is teaching principles contrary, completely contrary, to this idea of eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth when he says:

⁴⁴ . . . Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:44, 45)

You can clearly see the contrast between worldly principles and the principles of life that Christ is teaching us to produce good fruit. Every principle eventually bears fruit and that brings us back to the vine. In John chapter 15 verse 2, Christ illustrates how he gives us new principles through his word:

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (John 15:2)

This is the Father purging us, and he is doing it through the process that is spoken of in the very next verse:

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. (John 15:3)

Verses like these help us to understand sanctification and the process by which we are renewed. We read in John 17:17:

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Jesus did not say that you are cleaned through miracles, emotions, religious activity, and multiple ceremonies. He did not say any of that. He said you are clean through his word. The word cleanses us, corrects us, teaches us, renews our minds, and replaces our old thoughts with the new ones that are compatible with the principles of heaven because they are the principles of heaven. And these principles are necessary to produce heaven itself.

Think about that. Without these beautiful principles of selflessness, heaven would not be what it is. The disciples

had the wonderful opportunity to spend about three years with heaven on earth, walking with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The principles that Jesus brought with him we have in his word. Just as Jesus taught the disciples daily with his spoken word in every parable, sermon, correction, or conversation, replacing their earthly thinking with the heavenly thinking, so may we receive the same blessing as we receive his written word.

Even Christ's miracles were purposed to point people to what he was teaching. Those *miracles* revealed who he was and opened the door for people to receive his words. In John's Gospel they are called *signs*¹ because they point beyond themselves to the truth, Christ himself, and the words and the principles that he was revealing to those who live upon the earth.

Paul was taught the gospel directly by Christ (Galatians 1:11, 12), and so he taught what Christ revealed to him. In Romans, we read:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2)

Christ is transforming us by the renewing of our mind, and James illustrates this just as well, and he does it quite beautifully.

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)

So, the word is not merely heard, it is received and engrafted. The word is implanted and becomes a part of us. Just as a branch is grafted into a living tree, and the life begins flowing across that union between that branch and the tree, so the word of God becomes engrafted into the believer and the life of Christ begins flowing through to him. Ultimately the word that you receive becomes the word you live by.

Continuing in John 15, we read:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. (John 15:4)

In John chapter 15:7 we see a parallel. Jesus says:

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:7)

So, when he says in 15:7 "and my words abide in you," Christ is paralleling what he meant in 15:4. And he makes it

1. In John 20:30 we read that "many other *signs* truly did Jesus." The Greek word for *signs* is from σημεῖον (*sēmeion*). It is also translated *miracle(s)* thirteen times in the book of John: John 2:11, 23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 26; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37.

explicitly clear that in John 15:7 when he says “ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you” it is in response to the fact in 15:4 that “a branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine.”

Here Christ is making it explicitly clear that *abiding in him* is parallel to *having his words dwelling in you* continually.

The word *abide* is actually from the Greek word μένω (*menō*) which means “to remain in the same place over a period of time—‘to remain, to stay’” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1, p. 728).

Jesus does not only say *abide in me*, he says his *words are to abide in us*. This is the process of sanctification. He also said:

²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (Matthew 7:24–25)

Without Christ these words would not be in you, but now you have Christ’s thoughts in you with his principles, and they begin replacing your old ones. Now when temptation comes, when trouble arises, and the old man tries to surface and respond to those situations, it is no longer the old man responding because you have been abiding in Christ continually so much so that when those things happen it is no longer you that responds, but it is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) that responds instead.

When this wonderful transformation is taking place, however far along you may be, you do not any longer have to search for the verse to respond to the situation that you are confronted with because the verse, the words, become a part of you, they become *engrafted*, they become your instinct. This does not happen overnight; it is the work of a lifetime, and the Father is patiently pruning season after season, year after year, and little by little the principles of Christ eventually replace the principles of the world, and your old man becomes quieter and quieter, and the voice of Christ becomes clearer and clearer until his word becomes the word that you live by.

In conclusion, Christ says “herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8).

The Father is eternally glorified through this process, through this transformation that he provides through his son Jesus Christ. God is ever working to prune us as his branches that we might manufacture the fruit of the Spirit. We just have to stay connected to the vine, and the Father

will continue to work with us. God is an ever faithful husbandman, and we can be transformed into the likeness of his Son through his tender loving care. We do not manufacture the character of Christ; instead, we abide in, receive, hear-ken, meditate, and obey his word. We allow his word to become engrafted into our hearts, and over a lifetime his principles become our principles, and his life becomes visible in our life.

So I ask again: “What word are you living by?” Remember, the word that you continually receive will become the word you continually mediate on and live by. Those words and their teachings will be the principles of your life and will become your habits, and those habits will become your character. Your character will be revealed and demonstrate the words that you have lived by

Dear reader, let me assure you that it is not blood that makes the green grass grow, but it is the word of God!

¹⁰ For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: ¹¹ So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10–11)

My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: (Deuteronomy 32:2)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Colossians 3:16)

May “the word of Christ dwell in you richly” which will help you to avoid those things which can cause the mind to become corrupt and will help you rely wholly on Christ to overcome the iniquities which can so easily overtake you and me. May we be careful to guard our hearts and our minds with the word of God. I hope to see you in heaven, and may God bless you and keep you.



Brian Thomas

[Martin] Luther's Domestic Character

"We must make a great difference," said Luther, speaking of the Holy Scriptures, "between the word of God, and the word of a man. A man's word is a little sound, which flieth into the air, and soon vanisheth; but the word of God is greater than heaven and earth;—yea, greater than death and hell; for it is the power of God, and remaineth everlastingly; therefore we ought diligently to learn God's word, and we must certainly know and believe, that God himself speaketh with us."

"David saw the same and believed; for he saith, 'God hath spoken in his holiness, therefore I am glad,' &c. We," said Luther, "should also be glad thereof; but such joy and gladness is, oftentimes, thoroughly powdered and peppered unto us, which David well found, and endured many trials and temptations about the murder and adultery which he committed." "I ween," said Luther, "it was thoroughly well-powdered and peppered for his tooth, when he was coursed and hunted from one place to another, to the end he might walk and remain in God's fear; therefore, in the second psalm, he saith, 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.'"

"I," said Luther, "would fain see one that could make these two agree together, to be joyful, and to be afraid. I cannot behave myself in that manner towards God; but my little son, John, can show himself so towards me; for when I sit in my study, and write or do something else, then my boy sings me a song, and when he will be too loud, then I check him a little; yet, nevertheless, he singeth on, but with a more mild and a softer tone, and somewhat with fear and reverence. Even so will God likewise have us to do; that we should always rejoice in Him, yet with fear and reverence."

Epitaph of Magdalena, Martin Luther's daughter, who died anno 1542, aged 14 years, written by the father himself.

"Dormio cum Sanctis hic Magdalena, Lutheri

Filia, et hoc strato tecta quiesco meo.

Filia mortis eram, peccati semine nata,

Sanguine sed vivo, Christe, redempta tuo."

Translation (Added by A. Stump)

*"I sleep with the Saints here, Magdalena, Luther's daughter,
and rest, covered by this, my own sheet.*

*I was a daughter of death, born of the seed of sin,
but by your blood, O Christ, I am redeemed."*

"When I hear that a good and godly man is dead," said Luther, "then am I affrighted, and fear that God hateth the



world, who taketh away the upright and good, to the end He may fall upon and punish the evil and wicked. Although I die, it maketh no great matter, for I am in the Pope's curse and excommunication; I am his devil,—therefore he hateth and persecuteth me. At Coburg I went about, and sought me out a place for my burial. I thought to have been laid in the chancel under the cross; but now I am of another mind. I know I have not long to live; for my head is like a knife from which the steel is wholly whetted away, and is become merely iron; the iron will cut no more, even so it is with my head. Now, loving Lord God, I hope my hour is not far; God help, and give me a happy hour; I desire to live no longer."

As on a time, Luther's wife anointed his feet, by reason of some pain which he felt, he said unto her, "In former times, Kate, the wives were anointed by their husbands, but now thou anointest me: for this Latin word *uxor*, a wife, is derived from anointing, *ab ungendo*; for, as the Heathen saw that many rubs, lets, and hinderances, were in the state of matrimony, they marked it thus; and, as if to prevent such mishaps, they used to anoint both the legs of the new married woman."

"I have oftentimes noted," said Luther, "when women do receive the doctrine of the Gospel, they are far more fervent in faith, they hold on it more fast and steady than men do, as we see in the loving Magdalene, who was more hearty and bold than Peter." (Taken from *Luther's Table Talk: Or, Some Choice Fragments from the Familiar Discourse of the Godly, Learned Man, and Famous Champion of God's Truth*, Rees Longman, et. al., pp. 30–32)



Parenting God's Way

Morning and Evening Worship

By Ellen White

Fathers and mothers, each morning and evening gather your children around you, and in humble supplication lift the heart to God for help. Your dear ones are exposed to temptation. Daily annoyances beset the path of young and old. Those who would live patient, loving, cheerful lives must pray. Only by receiving constant help from God can we gain the victory over self.

If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. Infidelity and skepticism prevail. Iniquity abounds. Corruption flows in the vital currents of the soul, and rebellion against God breaks out in the life. Enslaved by sin, the moral powers are under the tyranny of Satan. The soul is made the sport of his temptations; and unless some mighty arm is stretched out to rescue him, man goes where the arch-rebel leads the way.

And yet, in this time of fearful peril, some who profess to be Christians have no family worship. They do not honor God in the home; they do not teach their children to love and fear Him. Many have separated themselves so far from Him that they feel under condemnation in approaching Him. They cannot “come boldly unto the throne of grace,” “lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” Hebrews 4:16; 1 Timothy 2:8. They have not a living connection with God. Theirs is a form of godliness without the power.

The idea that prayer is not essential is one of Satan's most successful devices to ruin souls. Prayer is communion with God, the Fountain of wisdom, the Source of strength, and peace, and happiness. Jesus prayed to the Father “with strong crying and tears.” Paul exhorts believers to “pray without ceasing,” in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, making known their requests to God. “Pray one for another,” James says. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Hebrews 5:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:16.

By sincere, earnest prayer parents should make a hedge about their children. They should pray with full faith that God will abide with them and that holy angels will guard them and their children from Satan's cruel power.

In every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to

gather their children about them before the fast is broken, to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and to ask Him for His help and guidance and watch-care during the day! How fitting, also, when evening comes, for parents and children to gather once more before Him and thank Him for the blessings of the day that is past!

Each morning consecrate yourselves and your children to God for that day. Make no calculation for months or years; these are not yours. One brief day is given you. As if it were your last on earth, work during its hours for the Master. Lay all your plans before God, to be carried out or given up, as His providence shall indicate. Accept His plans instead of your own, even though their acceptance requires the abandonment of cherished projects. Thus the life will be molded more and more after the divine example; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7.

The father, or, in his absence, the mother, should conduct the worship, selecting a portion of Scripture that is interesting and easily understood. The service should be short. When a long chapter is read and a long prayer offered, the service is made wearisome, and at its close a sense of relief is felt. God is dishonored when the hour of worship is made dry and irksome, when it is so tedious, so lacking in interest, that the children dread it

Fathers and mothers, make the hour of worship intensely interesting. There is no reason why this hour should not be the most pleasant and enjoyable of the day. A little thought given to preparation for it will enable you to make it full of interest and profit. From time to time let the service be varied. Questions may be asked on the portion of Scripture read, and a few earnest, timely remarks may be made. A song of praise may be sung. The prayer offered should be short and pointed. In simple, earnest words let the one who leads in prayer praise God for His goodness and ask Him for help. As circumstances permit, let the children join in the reading and the prayer.

Eternity alone will reveal the good with which such seasons of worship are fraught. (Ellen White, *Counsels for the Church*, pp. 151.5–153.2)

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Youth's Corner—Mountain Hollow Memories

Settin' Hens and Biddies

By Grace Cox

Sister Grace Cox grew up in what is now called Smyrna Valley and is writing letters to my granddaughter, Gillian, telling her about her growing up while weaving spiritual lessons into them. This is the fourth of a series of letters we know will bless you. Pastor Allen Stump

Dear Gillian,

I told you about the geese and their goslings last time. Now I'll share some memories of hens and their biddy babies. Often one of our hens would decide she needed to raise a brood of babies, so she would start to "set." When she did, her feathers fluffed out, making her look a lot bigger than she was, and she would go around clucking. Sometimes, my mom didn't want the hen to go into setting mode. She would pick up the hen, carry her to the creek, and dip her under the cold water in the wash tub that sat in the creek with an iron pipe running fresh water into it all the time. Getting dunked was supposed to cause the hen to stop setting. I'm not sure it ever did. The hen didn't like that! Maybe you've heard the expression, "Mad as a wet settin' hen." Well, that's where it comes from.

But sometimes a hen would go off somewhere and build her own nest, lay her own eggs, and then sit on them for the twenty-one days it took for them to hatch. My mom would miss her from the flock and knew that she was off somewhere doing that. So, she would go in search, maybe try to follow the hen when she came to barnyard to eat then go back to her nest. My mom would break up the nest, if she found it, and sometimes, put the eggs and the hen in one of the nests that my father had built, up off the ground, on the back of the chicken house or on our paling fence. And there the hen could finish hatching her chicks. I loved to watch every day to see if the chicks had hatched. But sometimes Mom got rid of the eggs and then the hen gave up and quit trying to raise a family right then.

Sometimes, though, my parents ordered baby chicks. They knew about when the shipment would arrive at the Wolf Pen post office, which was two miles from our house in the hollow. So my father would walk to the post office every day to check, because those baby chicks needed to be fed and watered right away once they arrived. (No phones existed in that area then, so he couldn't call and ask.) He built a coop for them with slats wide enough apart for the biddies to go in and out. My mom had trays for the food and water inside the coops so only the biddies could get to it. I think she made the food with cornmeal and water mixed into a slurry that the babies could eat. A setting hen would adopt

them, and they would follow her around. She clucked to them continually, and they peeped in reply. She often sat down, clucking and fluffing her feathers, and they knew to get under her. Then the babies would poke their little heads out to look around.

When the biddies got too big to fit through the slats, they were ready to follow Mama Hen and forage for grass and bugs just like the big chickens. But if they got scared, they could run and hide under Mama Hen. Did God make them that way, to be an object lesson for us, to teach us that we can run to Him and hide in Him when we get scared? In Luke 13:34, Jesus, speaking to the people of His day, said, "... how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." How sad that the people wouldn't run to Him and be saved!



I loved to follow Mama Hen and her biddies around. Those cute little yellow, fluffy balls on legs, chirping so sweetly, were my delight. Mama hens didn't object like the mama geese did, so I didn't get flogged. But one day, to my horror, a hawk swooped down and grabbed one of the biddies and flew off with it! Oh my. What a tragedy. And another day, when I was probably three or four, I was following them around, and one of the biddies got crushed under my foot. My little heart broke and dissolved into tears over what I'd done. I learned that I must not follow them so closely and to watch carefully where I stepped.

Life as a Girl of the Hollow can be sad at times. Things happen that we can't control, and it's just part of country living. It makes us sad—it still does when something bad happens where I live. So we cry, and then we get over it, and

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1889 HSDA Camp Meeting Report

By Allen Stump

The 1889 HSDA camp meeting for 2026 was held July 28–August 2 at the Piney Creek Campground of Fall Creek Falls State Park near Spencer, Tennessee.

The theme of the camp meeting was “For Such a Time as This.” This was by far the largest camp gathering the 1889 HSDA church has had. The Tuesday evening meeting, instead of being attended by only a few of the early campers, was almost full, and seating needed to be added for the services the next day.

The weather forecast had been for very hot, humid weather, but many were praying for relief so that the meetings could be appreciated better without the stress of the summer heat. God provided in two ways. Firstly, the weather was about ten degrees lower than the forecast made the week before. Secondly, Brother Joshua Brown and his wife, Stephanie, brought in several air conditioning units and with the help of Brother Roy Araya and others installed them in the kitchen area and in the main meeting hall. This made a substantial difference in the comfort level.

The meetings and special music were outstanding. Brother Jean-Christophe Bolotte from France was the main evening speaker with timely messages, and there were three baptisms on the beautiful Sabbath afternoon.

The ladies did their usual great job in the kitchen, providing not only healthy but also very palatable food. We will be publishing a few of the favorite recipes in *Old Paths*. We have also prepared a new camp cookbook for this year that you may receive upon request.

Most of the meetings were all live streamed, and the recordings have been posted at the church's YouTube website at <https://www.youtube.com/@1889HSDAUSA> or scan the QR code:



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life goes on. It can be difficult having a soft heart, but I wouldn't want a hard heart, would you? I'd rather hurt when critters hurt than not care because I know my Father in heaven is sad, too, when it happens. Jesus told us that not a sparrow falls but what our Father notices. (See Matthew 10:29.) So He cries with us, and it's good to know that He understands how we feel and that He cares. Just remember, when something breaks your heart, you can talk to God and Jesus about it, and they will understand just how you feel.

With love in Jesus,

Miss Grace

Who was once The Girl of the Hollow



Old Paths

Vegan Lentil Loaf

Gluten-free

- 1 T flax meal *
- 2 ½ T water to mix with the flax
- 2 C dry lentils which have been cooked
- 2 C cooked brown rice
- 3 T olive oil
- 2 medium onions, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 t salt, divided
- 1 T Bragg's Liquid Aminos or your substitute
- 2 t mock poultry seasoning, or use sage, Italian seasoning, or other herbs of your choice
- 2 T nutritional yeast
- ¼ C ketchup or other sauce as topping

Instructions

1. Cook rice according to package directions.
2. Make a flax egg by mixing 1 T of flax meal with 2 ½ T of water and set aside for at least 5 minutes.
3. Boil lentils in 2 quarts of water for 18 minutes or until soft, then drain.
4. While the lentils are cooking, dice 2 onions and sauté in the olive oil over low heat.
5. Sprinkle the onions with ½ t salt, 2 t mock poultry seasoning, and 2 cloves minced garlic. Continue to sauté over low heat for 10–12 minutes until translucent.
6. Add 2 C cooked rice, cooked lentils, sautéed onions, 2 T nutritional yeast, 1 T coconut aminos, ½ t salt, and flax egg. Mix thoroughly.
7. Bake in a sprayed 8 x 11 inch casserole at 350° F for 50 minutes. Remove the casserole out and spread ketchup on the top of the loaf and bake for another 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and add another layer of ketchup if you wish.
8. If using a loaf pan, bake the loaf in a sprayed pan for 60 minutes and cool 15 minutes before removing the loaf from pan. Add ketchup or other sauce on the top and slice.



*If you do not have flax meal, the recipe will still work but will not hold together as well.



Marriage Morsel

By Ellen White

Husbands to Be Considerate—Husbands should be careful, attentive, constant, faithful, and compassionate. They should manifest love and sympathy. If they fulfill the words of Christ, their love will not be of a base, earthly, sensual character that will lead to the destruction of their own bodies and bring upon their wives debility and disease. They will not indulge in the gratification of base passions, while ringing in the ears of their wives that they must be subject to the husband in everything. When the husband has the nobility of character, purity of heart, elevation of mind that every true Christian must possess, it will be made manifest in the marriage relation. If he has the mind of Christ, he will not be a destroyer of the body, but will be full of tender love, seeking to reach the highest standard in Christ.

When Doubts Creep In—No man can truly love his wife when she will patiently submit to become his slave and minister to his depraved passions. In her passive submission she loses the value she once possessed in his eyes. He sees her dragged down from everything elevating to a low level, and soon he suspects that she will as tamely submit to be degraded by another as by himself. He doubts her constancy and purity, tires of her, and seeks new objects to arouse and intensify his hellish passions. The law of God is not regarded. These men are worse than brutes; they are demons in human form. They are unacquainted with the elevating, ennobling principles of true, sanctified love.

The wife also becomes jealous of the husband and suspects that if opportunity should offer, he would just as readily pay his addresses to another as to her. She sees that he is not controlled by conscience or the fear of God; all these sanctified barriers are broken down by lustful passions; all that is Godlike in the husband is made the servant of low, brutish lust.

The Problem of Unreasonable Demands—The matter now to be settled is: Shall the wife feel bound to yield implic-

itly to the demands of her husband when she sees that nothing but base passions control him, and when her reason and judgment are convinced that she does it to the injury of her body, which God has enjoined upon her to possess in sanctification and honor, to preserve as a living sacrifice to God?

It is not pure, holy love which leads the wife to gratify the animal propensities of her husband at the expense of health and life. If she possesses true love and wisdom, she will seek to divert his mind from the gratification of lustful passions to high and spiritual themes by dwelling upon interesting spiritual subjects. It may be necessary to humbly and affectionately urge, even at the risk of his displeasure, that she cannot debase her body by yielding to sexual excess. She should, in a tender, kind manner, remind him that God has the first and highest claim upon her entire being, and that she cannot disregard this claim, for she will be held accountable in the great day of God....

If she will elevate her affections, and in sanctification and honor preserve her refined, womanly dignity, woman can do



God intended that marriage should be wholesome, with respect being shown to all facets of the sacred relationship.

much by her judicious influence to sanctify her husband, and thus fulfill her high mission. In so doing she can save both her husband and herself, thus performing a double work. In this matter, so delicate and so difficult to manage, much wisdom and patience are necessary, as well as moral courage and fortitude. Strength and grace can

be found in prayer. Sincere love is to be the ruling principle of the heart. Love to God and love to the husband can alone be the right ground of action....

When the wife yields her body and mind to the control of her husband, being passive to his will in all things, sacrificing her conscience, her dignity, and even her identity, she loses the opportunity of exerting that mighty influence for good which she should possess to elevate her husband. She could soften his stern nature, and her sanctifying influence could be exerted in a manner to refine and purify, leading him to strive earnestly to govern his passions and be more spiritually minded, that they might be partakers together of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. The power of influence can be great to lead the mind to high and noble themes, above the low,

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Work Bee and Retreat for Daniel Mesa

Pastor Daniel Mesa is converting part of his barn at Summerville, Georgia, to a place for ministry and retreats.

To help with this, a work bee is planned Sunday, October 4 through Thursday afternoon, October 8. Then starting that evening there will be a spiritual retreat until Sunday morning, ending at 10:00 a.m.

Scope of the work bee

The following hope to be accomplished: hang and finish drywall and install kitchen cabinets, flooring, tile, and doors.

Exactly what will be done will depend on the number of people and their skills; however, no experience or skills are necessary. Sister Winnie McCrillis and other sisters will be preparing meals for the workers!

For accommodations, there is a camper on site that sleeps eight for people who would like to share, or you can bring your own tent or camper, but there are no camper hook-ups. *Revelation with Daniel* is also offering to pay for middle-class hotel rooms that are about a ten-minute drive away. Please let us know you are coming, so we can plan properly



Part of the work area needing some TLC

for food, work, and accommodations. To register for the work bee, please contact Brother Rob Chisum at 704-363-1697.

Spiritual retreat

The theme of the retreat is “Preparing for the Harvest” and will begin 7:00 p.m. on October 8 and will end October 11 at 10 a.m.

There will be times of reflection, workshops, and nature walks. There will be Sabbath services with Sabbath school and a message by Pastor Mesa.

For more details and to register for the retreat, please contact Sister Damaris Rivera at 407-449-0839.

“Marriage Morsel” continued from page 23

sensual indulgences for which the heart unrenewed by grace naturally seeks. If the wife feels that in order to please her husband she must come down to his standard, when animal passion is the principal basis of his love and controls his actions, she displeases God; for she fails to exert a sanctifying influence upon her husband. If she feels that she must submit to his animal passions without a word of remonstrance, she does not understand her duty to him nor to her God.

Our Bodies a Purchased Possession—The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words “flesh” or “fleshly” or “carnal lusts” embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. All animal propensities are to be subjected to the higher powers of the soul. The love of God must reign supreme; Christ must occupy an undivided throne. Our bodies are to be regarded as His purchased possession. The members of the body are to become the instruments of righteousness. (*The Adventist Home*, pp. 125.1–127.2)



Online Virtual Service Schedule

We provide on-site and virtual services. All times are EST or EDT, depending on the time of the year.

Sabbath: Sabbath School—9:10 a.m. Worship Service—11:00 a.m.

Monday: Story Hour—7:00 p.m.

Wednesday: Prayer Meeting—7:00 p.m.

Thursday: History/Theology Study—7:00 p.m.

Zoom Room Information: ID—613 212 7443. Passcode—916919. Phone—1-646-931-3860, enter conference ID 613 212 7443, followed by the # symbol when prompted, and press the # symbol again.

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Editor Allen Stump—editor@smyrna.org

Associate Editor Onycha Holt—onycha@smyrna.org