

FUTURE NEWS

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The Need for Clear Discernment

Selected Messages, book 2, 16

Never, never was there a time when the truth suffered more from being misrepresented, belittled, demerited through the perverse disputings of men than in these last days. Men have brought themselves in with their heterogeneous mass of heresies which they represent as oracles for the people. The people are charmed with some strange new thing, and are not wise in experience to discern the character of ideas that men may frame up as something. But to call it something of great consequence and tie it to the oracles of God, does not make it truth. Oh, how this rebukes the low standard of piety in the churches.

Men who want to present something original will conjure up things new and strange, and without consideration will step forward on these unstable theories, that have been woven together as a precious theory, and present it as a life and death question.

As we near the time when principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places will be brought into warfare against the truth, when the deceiving power of Satan will be so great that if it were possible he will deceive the very elect, we must have our discernment sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may know the spirit that is of God, that we may not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Human effort must combine with divine power, that we may be able to accomplish the closing work for this time.

Christ uses the wind as a symbol of the Spirit of God. As the wind bloweth whither it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so it is with the Spirit of God. We do not know through whom it will be manifested.

But I speak not my own words when I say that God's Spirit will pass by those who have had their day of test and opportunity, but who have not distinguished the voice of God or appreciated the movings of His Spirit. Then thousands in the eleventh hour will see and acknowledge the truth.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed" Amos 9:13.

These conversions to truth will be made with a rapidity that will surprise the church, and God's name alone will be glorified.

Future for America mails a monthly newsletter, produces prophetic DVDs and audio CDs, and works with a variety of prophecy schools throughout each year.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The ministry of *Future for America* is to proclaim the final warning message of Revelation 14 as identified by the prophecies of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The end-time fulfillment of Bible prophecy is no longer future—for it is taking place before our eyes. The historic, prophetic understanding of Seventh-day Adventism is now present truth. We are the final generation. Our emphasis is on the prophetic word including all the counsel of God's Word. To know what lies ahead is useless if we do not possess the experience to stand during these solemn times. Through obedience to God's law, and faith in the promises of God's Word, we are to receive that experience.

Coupled with the prophetic message, *Future for America* emphasizes all aspects of the medical missionary work. The "entering wedge"—medical missionary work—must be practiced by those who are to finish God's work in these final hours.

During this time period, country living becomes more essential with each passing moment. *Future for America* upholds and promotes this end-time truth. God's people must prepare for the coming storm, and that preparation includes the experience of learning how to survive in a simple fashion, away from the great centers of population.

Future for America

is a self-supporting 501c3 nonprofit corporation.

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The cost to produce and mail this newsletter each month is \$4. This publication is sent out free of charge.

Your donations are greatly appreciated.

20/20 VISION CAMPMEETING

Southern California

June 9-16, 2013

Lodge - Three or More

2nd Floor \$431.70

3rd Floor \$463.20

R.V. - \$365.00

Recreational Vehicles must be self-contained.

Restrooms nearby.

Rustic Cabins - Bunk beds, twin beds, heaters, electricity. Bath/showers nearby.

Bring linens.

Large - \$258.00

Small - \$289.50

Contact Maria Sankey at (661) 821-2153 or
camp@pathofthejust.org

The west coast camp meeting is back by popular demand! The 20/20 Vision Campmeeting will be in the beautiful mountains of Southern California June 9-16, 2013, at well-known Camp Cedar Falls in Angelus Oaks. Our guest speakers will be *Advent Times'* Errol Scott from Great Britain, Pastor Anthony Chornes of *IHBS Ministries* and Andre Knight, M.M.E. of *Messengers of the Covenant*. Plus, *Path of the Just's* own Darrio Taylor, Jamal Sankey, Manuel Carrasco, and Kevin Howard.

Information & Accommodations

The following prices include 7 nights, 20 meals, and study materials (if any). Ages 2-3 deduct \$20 per stay. Ages 1 and under stay free. Reservation deadline is Thursday, May 9, 2013. Payments made after May 9 will incur a late payment fee of 10% of total camp cost. We are operating on a first come, first served basis. Reserve your spot with a non-refundable \$50.00 deposit for each individual in your party — 1 & under are FREE. According to Camp Cedar Falls policy, no refunds will be issued due to cancellations made after Tuesday, April 9, 2013 (60 days prior to camp). If flying, please plan to arrive in Ontario, CA at Ontario International Airport (ONT) on the morning of Sunday, June 9, 2013 and plan to depart on the evening of Sunday, June 16, 2013. Shuttle service is arranged for these days, so please contact us with your flight itinerary ASAP. Shuttle service provided for Ontario Int. Airport ONLY. Round-trip transportation fee of \$25.00 is due at pickup.

Lodge - Double Occupancy

2nd Floor \$478.50

3rd Floor \$510.00

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

We hope that the Lord is leading you in your individual work for Him. We are carrying on with the format that began in the January 2013 *Future News* edition which involves taking a variety of emails, articles, and dialogues then compiling them in hopes they will be a spiritual blessing to you in your studies. We encourage your feedback on these subjects. Our contact information is located on page 2 of this publication. May your final days of winter be full of new insights on Jesus and His saving power. *Future for America*

The Wild Man of Genesis 16

Winston Churchill on Islam

Unbelievable, but the speech below was written in 1899! (Check Wikipedia - The River War) I am sending the attached short speech from Winston Churchill, delivered by him in 1899 when he was a young soldier and journalist. It probably sets out the current views of many, but expressed in the wonderful Churchillian turn of phrase and use of the English language, of which he was a master. Sir Winston Churchill was, without doubt, one of the greatest men of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

He was a brave young soldier, a brilliant journalist, an extraordinary politician and statesman, a great war leader and Prime Minister, to whom the Western world must be forever in his debt. He was a prophet in his own time. He died on January 24, 1965, at the grand old age of 90 and, after a lifetime of service to his country, and was accorded a State funeral.

Here is the speech:

“How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries, improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live.

“A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement, the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men.

“Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it.

“No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step, and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it had vainly struggled, the civilization of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilization of ancient Rome.” *The River War*, first edition, vol. II, 250.

Benzion Netanyahu on Islam

“The bible (*sic*) finds no worse image than this of the man from the desert. And why? Because he has no respect for any law.

Because in the desert he can do as he pleases. The tendency towards conflict is in the essence of the Arab. He is an enemy by essence. His personality won't allow him any compromise or agreement. It doesn't matter what kind of resistance he will meet, what price he will pay. His existence is one of perpetuate war.” April 3, 2009 interview in the Israeli daily, *Maariv*.

Proverbs 22:1

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

Hello Again Bronwyn,

I recall Brother Jeff speaking about the 12 sons of Ishmael found in Gen 25:13 and how the meaning of their names strung together describes the role of Islam throughout history. Unfortunately, I can't remember where it is that he says the definitions and puts them together. I've looked them up in my concordance but I am having trouble stringing them together in a logical manner. Do you know what I'm speaking about? If so, could you please share it with me if you have it?

I hope the prophecy school is making much progress. I hope to attend as soon as possible!
J.P.

The Antediluvian Children

Genesis 5

Adam: Man

Seth: Appointed.

Enos: Wretched, mortal, frail, feeble.

Cainan: Lamenting, fixed, a nest.

Mahalaleel: Blessed of God, praise or strength of God.

Jared: Will come or descend.

Enoch: Teaching, train.

Methuselah: His death will bring.

Lamech: Weary.

Noah: Rest.

Man was appointed mortal, frail and wretched, fixed in this world and lamenting his condition. But the blessed of God promised to descend teaching that His death would bring rest to the weary.

The Children of Israel

Revelation 7

Juda: Let God be praised, celebrated.

Reuban: Behold a son.

Gad: Good fortune, to press or crowd together.

Aser: Happy, to be honest.

Nephtalim: My wrestling.

Manassess: Making to forget.

Simeon: Answering of prayer, hearing.

Levi: Joined, to unite.

Issachar: A reward.

Zabulon: Exalted or habitation.

Joseph: To add.

Benjamin: Son of my right hand.

God will be celebrated and praised by the 144,000 as they behold the Son and press together in honesty. They will wrestle in prayer with God, who will then forget their sins, and hearing God's Word they will come into unity and receive the reward of the Holy Spirit living within their habitation while exalting Christ as they are added to the redeemed and sit down with Christ at God's right hand.

The Children of the East

Genesis 25:12–18

1. NEBAJOTH: H5032—Feminine plural from H5107; fruitfulnesses; Nebajoth, a son of Ishmael, and the country settled by him H5107: A primitive root; to germinate, that is, (figuratively) to (causatively make) flourish; also (of words), to utter: - bring forth (fruit), make cheerful, increase. An Arabian tribe. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 757.

Genesis 17:20; Genesis 16:10

2. KEDAR: H6938—From H6937; dusky (of the skin or the tent); Kedar, a son of Ishmael; also (collectively) bedawin. H6937: to be ashy, that is, dark colored; by implication to mourn (in sackcloth or sordid garments): be black (-ish), be (make) dark (-en), X heavily, (cause to) mourn. An Arabian tribe. Famous warriors, Isaiah 21:16, 17. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 620.

3. ADBEEL: H110—Probably from H109 (in the sense of chastisement) and H410; disciplined of God; Adbeel, a son of Ishmael. H109: to languish: grieve. H410: H352; strength; as adjective mighty; especially the Almighty (but used also of any deity): - God (god), X goodly, X great, idol, might (-y one), power, strong. Compare names in “-el.” An Arabian tribe. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 17.

4. MIBSAM: H4017—From the same as H1314; fragrant; Mibsam, the name of an Ishmaelite and of an Israelite: H1314: From the same as H1313; fragrance; by implication spicery; also the balsam plant: - smell, spice, sweet (odour). H1313: From an unused root meaning to be fragrant; the balsam plant: spice. An Arabian tribe. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 712.

5. MISHMA: H4927—The same as H4926; Mishma, the name of a son of Ishmael, and of an Israelite. H4926: From H8085; a report: hearing. H8085: A primitive root; to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc.; causatively to tell, etc.): - X attentively, call (gather) together, X carefully, X certainly, consent, consider, be content, declare, X diligently, discern, give ear, (cause to, let, make to) hear (-ken, tell), X

indeed, listen, make (a) noise, (be) obedient, obey, perceive, (make a) proclaim (-ation), publish, regard, report, shew (forth), (make a) sound, X surely, tell, understand, whosoever [heareth], witness. An Arabian tribe. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 724.

6. DUMAH: H1746—The same as H1745; a tribe and region of Arabia. H1745: From an unused root meaning to be dumb; silence; figuratively death: silence. H1820: A primitive root; to be dumb or silent; hence to fail or perish; transitively to destroy: cease, be cut down (off), destroy, be brought to silence, be undone, X utterly. An Arabian tribe. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 280.

7. MASSA: H4854—The same as H4853; burden; Massa, a son of Ishmael. H4853: From H5375; a burden; specifically tribute, or (abstractly) portage; figuratively an utterance, chiefly a doom, especially singing; mental, desire: - burden, carry away, prophecy, X they set, song, tribute. An Arabian tribe, KJV translators rendered it “prophecy,” a meaning which massa has in the sense of prophecy being a pronouncement or an oracle. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 691.

8. HADAR: H2316—Another form for H2315; chamber; Chadar, an Ishmaelite H2315: From H2314; an apartment (usually literally) : ([bed] inner) chamber, innermost (-ward) part, parlour, + south, X within. H2314: A primitive root; properly to inclose (as a room), that is, (by analogy) to beset (as in a siege): enter a privy chamber. Sharp or pointed. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 429.

9. TEMA: H8485—a son of Ishmael, and the region settled by him: A locality in Arabia. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 1068.

10. JETUR: H3195—Probably from the same as H2905; encircled (that is, inclosed); Jetur, a son of Ishmael. H2905: From an unused root meaning to range in a regular manner; a row; hence a wall: row. An ancestor of an Ishmalite tribe. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 575.

11. NAPHISH: H5305—From H5314; refreshed; Naphish, a son of Ishmael, and his posterity. H5314: A primitive root; to breathe; passively, to be breathed upon, that is, (figuratively) refreshed (as if by a current of air) : - (be) refresh selves (-ed). Wealth. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 753.

12. KEDEMAH: H6929—From H6923; precedence; Kedemah, a son of Ishmael. H6923: A primitive root; to project (one self), that is, precede; hence to anticipate, hasten, meet (usually for help): come (go, [flee]) before, + disappoint, meet, prevent. Toward the east. The children of the east. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 620.

Prophetically the descendants of Ishmael are a fruitful dark-skinned people that are renowned as warriors but are grieved historically and prophetically on August 11, 1840 and thereafter on September 11, 2001. They are called the children of the east in biblical history. They originated from Arabia where the fragrant spices employed in the Hebrew sanctuary services are grown. The word “assassins” is derived from Islamic history and represents death that is brought about in silence. In the time of the Crusades Islam enclosed, encircled and besieged Catholic Europe, but their subsequent restraints mark the arrival of the refreshing of 1840 through 1844 and on 9/11 2001 through the Sunday law crisis. Jeff Pippenger

August 11, 1840

Hi Jeff,

I do the web site, www.webelievesda.org. I get lots of spam and sometimes someone that is real. This guy responded to P.N.'s article titled: A Test on Advent History. His name is R.H. and I responded back. I wanted to know if I responded correctly. Thanks, Glenn

Hi P.N.,

I noticed on your website that you speak of Litch's prediction regarding the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1840. Have you tried to reconcile this prediction with evidence from historical sources? I understand that the Convention of London occurred around that date, but historians today essentially show the fall of the Ottoman Empire occurred around 81 years after the predicted date. God bless. R.H.

Hi R.H.,

Mrs. White said that the event perfectly fulfilled the prediction. So if you don't believe it then Mrs. White is a false prophet. I choose to believe her! God Bless, Glenn

Hi Glenn,

I think I understand your position: you believe Ellen White, yet simple logic dictates that, since the fall of the Ottoman Empire is a historical event, it should be easy to confirm the date using independent sources. Else anyone can claim anything; much like Harold Camping did last year. I will shortly post a quote from Ellen white on her view about herself as a historian. R.H.

Dear R.H.,

Some years back, a friend of mine was in England, and went to a large public library. His purpose was to see if there were any newspapers or anything dating back to the 1840's and the Ottoman Empire. He told the librarian what he was looking for and she found it actually quite fast! He saw with his own eyes that yes, it was as our pioneers reported it, as well as Uriah Smith. Think about it brother. How could this not happen and be the catalyst that let the world see that the Adventists of the day

had the year-day principle correct? This one event empowered the movement. The Catholic Church has for years been removing history from libraries making it harder to research the past. But we have a prophet that does not lie. She said the event perfectly fulfilled the prediction. Case closed brother! Glenn

Thanks Glenn,

But not so easy brother. You're referring to the *Morning Chronicle*, a London newspaper. Don't forget that the historians have also had access to these newspapers. They are after all public sources. Yet, they have failed to concur with Litch's position. As is clear from the archives of history, the Empire fell about 80 years later. Here are some well-known dates around the Empire at the time:

1. In June 1840, the entire Ottoman navy defected.
2. The Convention of London was signed on 15 July 1840.
3. In September 1840, the European powers eventually moved from diplomatic means to military action
4. After the Royal Navy and the Austrian Navy first blockaded the Nile delta coastline, they moved east to shell Sidon and Beirut on 11 September 1840.
5. France switched sides and aligned against Muhammad Ali in October 1840.
6. Muhammad Ali finally accepted the terms of the Convention on 27 November 1840.
7. When on August 11, 1840, the Ottoman Empire accepted guarantees from the Great Powers, it was interpreted as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy and Litch's interpretation thereof.
8. Litch slowly abandoned the historicist view of prophecy, in favor of futurism. He attended the Prophetic Conference held at the Church of Holy Trinity, in New York City, Oct. 30–Nov. 1, 1878.

Finally, it is worth being aware of EGW's own view, for what it's worth, of her take on history:

Letter from W.C. White to S.N. Haskell,

circa 1912. (<http://www.whiteestate.org/vault/Haskell.html>)

The first line says: Regarding Mother's writings, she has never wished our brethren to treat them as authority on history. When *Great Controversy* was first written, she often times gave a partial description of some scene presented to her, and when Sister Davis made inquiry regarding time and place, Mother referred her to what was already written in the books of Elder Smith and in secular histories. R.H.

Brother R.H.,

If you want to re-write history that is your choice. If I cannot believe a simple statement that Mrs. White made when she said, the event perfectly fulfilled the prediction then what do I have to stand on? May I ask you then, what is the second woe? What was the first woe?

Where it says in your link, "Mother never thought that the readers would take it as an authority on historical dates..." I have to tell myself that this is not the prophet speaking. Mrs. White was fully capable to tell us exactly what she wanted to say. God was at liberty to tell us through her what He wanted and He did.

Today, people quote James White as if he were inspired because he was married to the prophet. Does not work for me. Glenn

Dear R.H.,

I have thought all day today about what you have written. I will not quote SOP as I am sure you are well versed. There are many ways to document that the event, as it was predicted, empowered the Millerite Movement in 1840. This empowerment happened because the world at large witnessed the fulfillment of a prediction. They, those outside of the movement, verified themselves that Josiah Litch actually hit pay dirt to the day. This showed the validity of the year-day principle. If you cannot verify this today, it makes no difference. The fact of the matter is that hundreds and thousands of people outside this movement were able to see, of their own accord, this prediction fulfilled. All that has been written on this subject could not

have been written about something that did not really happen! You are wrong. You have woven together a series of statements that are false. I have received the kind of factual evidence that you say does not exist. I doubt it would change your view of this topic. As Jesus said they will not believe even if someone rises from the dead. The angels restrained Islam or the Mohammedan's in 1840.

You talk about simple logic. Again, just because you claim that you cannot confirm this historical event is no conclusion that it did not happen. The numbers are against you. The evidence is not with you.

In your statement of Ellen's own view you are not quoting her! You are quoting hear-say. *The Great Controversy* is a book we hold up as highly accurate, brother. Let me ask you a question. Are you a Seventh-day Adventist? Or do you pretend to be one in here? A real Member of the Remnant church is just like the beginning. He or she believes what the pioneers believed and taught. Do you? Glenn

Hi Glenn,

Thanks for your thoughtful response. Please have a close look at the link: <http://www.whiteestate.org/vault/Haskell.html>.

In particular, see: http://www.whiteestate.org/vault/EGW_Approval.jpg.

Your prophet has indeed spoken in this case. I shall bother you no more. God Bless, R.H.

Brother Glenn,

I agree with your points, but your problem is allowing R.H. to frame the discussion. By framing the discussion he places a perspective upon history that exceeds what is demanded of and by the prophecy. You are also allowing him to teach error without countering him upon it, so he begins to establish a falsehood as truth based upon repetition.

His claim about prophecy is incorrect when he says, "Have you tried to reconcile this prediction with evidence from historical

sources. I understand that the Convention of London occurred around that date, but historians today essentially show that fall of the Ottoman Empire occurred around 81 years after the predicted date,” and again, “simple logic dictates that, since the fall of the Ottoman Empire is a historical event, it should be easy to confirm the date using independent sources. Else anyone can claim anything; much like Harold Camping did last year. I will shortly post a quote from Ellen White on her view about herself as a historian.”

The issue in her statement in *The Great Controversy* is about inspiration, not history. Inspiration always overrides history. If there is no history to uphold inspiration, then the historical evidence has not yet been recognized. In reconciling her endorsement of Josiah Litch’s prediction of Revelation 9:14-15 we must include the multitude of times that she emphasizes that “we have no new message,” and, that “we are to make the messages of 1840 to 1844 forcible now,” and that, “the messages we received in 1841, 1842, and 1843 are to now be studied and proclaimed.” There are several (not a few) places where she upholds this fact in many different ways.

Therefore to try and undermine her statement in *The Great Controversy* concerning Litch’s prediction by historical evidence is misdirection. Seems to me that you are dealing with someone employing the “art of debate” and therefore should not make assumptions about his honesty or not, for to employ the “art of debate” in connection with the study of God’s word is to place the human above the divine.

The brother knowingly or unknowingly is employing the technique of “framing the discussion.” Twice he states that there is no

historical evidence in support of 1840. This is patently false. It’s false and every time he makes that claim you should oppose it for it is not true and your silence provides an assumption for anyone that might read your dialogue that you are a little willing to consider the idea that there is no historical evidence available to uphold the prophetic claim of 1840. There is plenty of history to uphold that claim, but not only does he claim there is none, you by your silence assent to the fact.

But he is also simultaneously misdirecting the subject in one other way. His is insisting that his definition of the fall of the Ottoman Empire is the definition that has been marked by God’s prophetic word as the fulfillment of that prophecy. He defines what history is to mark the end of the prophecy.

The prophecy began when the last Emperor of Eastern Rome in Constantinople died and the heir apparent for his throne was so intimidated by the four great sultans that then existed in his supposed kingdom, that before accepting the vacated throne he first asked permission of those four sultans. This is the history that marks the beginning of the prophecy and therefore this is the history that defines what the fulfillment of that prophecy will be. Therefore we are not looking for what the historians might define as the fall of the Ottoman Empire, but we are looking for the point in time when the Ottoman Empire surrendered its sovereignty into the hands of four powers. This history was fulfilled on August 11, 1840 and there is abundant evidence to this fact.

So this brother uses misdirection in terms of framing the discussion in an incorrect fashion that then allows him to insist you prove the points that he raises, which are not the points

that have been identified by inspiration as the points of history that would take place in the fulfillment of the prophecy. As he is doing this he then employs another technique of debate when he then undermines your credibility by associating you with a known false interpreter of prophecy. After this he seeks to undermine the prophecy by interjecting that even Litch abandoned his prophetic interpretation. This also has nothing to do with the validity of August 11, 1840 as the fulfillment of Revelation 9:14-15, but it does demonstrate that this person is throwing any handful of mud in hopes that some of it will stick to the wall.

Of course, when I respond so directly to the brethren offering these types of weak and unfounded prophetic arguments, then I generally get confronted with my un-Christ-like character for being so direct. So if you had been this direct with the guy he may have already delivered the “guilt card” to you, by emphasizing your unwillingness to hear a brother out over their genuine understanding of whatever subject they wish to discuss. But even that argument does not square with the fact that we have been told not to spend time in long discussion concerning prophecies that have already been made plain. If this guy wants to argue with what Sister White so clearly and repeatedly endorses, then you are in rebellion for continuing on in a discussion with him.

“The Lord wishes all to understand his providential dealings now, just now, in the time in which we live. There must be no long discussions, no presenting of new theories in regard to prophecies that God has already made plain. The great work from which the mind should not be diverted is the consideration of our personal standing in the sight of God. Are

our feet on the Rock of Ages? Are we hiding ourselves in the only Refuge? The storm is coming, relentless in its fury. Are we prepared to meet it? Are we one with Christ as he is one with the Father? Are we heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ? Are we working in co-partnership with the Saviour?” *Review and Herald*, November 27, 1900.

I am pretty sure B.C. has the historical data on August 11, 1840 at his fingertips if you do not. I am going to also forward this to Sister P.N. Jeff

The Refreshing and 9/11

Dear Jeff Pippenger,

There are several statements by Mrs. White where she clearly connects the latter rain with Revelation 18:1, when the towers of New York came down. But I’m having trouble finding statements that delineate that 9/11 marks the beginning of the judgment of the righteous living. She does comment on the “times of refreshing” and the blotting out of sin, but this is quite vague and doesn’t directly prove that we are now living in the judgment of the righteous living. I believe the righteous living are now being judged, but I would like to have clearer evidence for it. Could you please point me in the right direction? Regards, Z.D.

Brother Z.D.,

Acts 3:19-20 states:

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; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.

These verses were fulfilled at Pentecost, but their primary fulfillment is at the latter rain, which in *The Great Controversy*, 611 Sister White informs us is also the refreshing. Therefore the perfect fulfillment of Acts 3:19-20 is in the latter rain or refreshing time period

at the end of the world.

In order for you and me to “repent” we must be alive.

The verses are referring to the time when men that are alive are called to repent, in order to have their sins blotted out. (The blotting out of sins is the final action of the investigative judgment, other than Christ changing His garments and placing the sins upon the scapegoat.) But in terms of men’s salvation the final action of Christ is when He is blotting out my sins, or blotting out my name, depending on my choices.

Acts 3:19-20 is primarily pointing forward to the time when living men send their sins into judgment to be blotted out and in order for them to do this they must be alive.

This time begins when Jesus Christ is sent. The angel of Revelation 18 marks the arrival of the latter rain and has been pre-figured by the angel of Revelation 10 that descended when Islam was restrained on August 11, 1840 just as Islam was restrained immediately after 9/11. Sister White informs us the angel of Revelation 10 is no less a personage than Jesus Christ, so the angel of Revelation 18 is no less a personage than Jesus Christ. Therefore on 9/11 Jesus Christ was sent to mark that the time of blotting out of sins for living human beings had arrived. Jeff

Thank you Jeff Pippenger for your explanation.

You stated that, “the perfect fulfillment of Acts 3:19-20 is in the latter rain.” I’m assuming that the “latter rain” only falls at the end of the world? So in the Scriptures and in the Testimonies of God’s Spirit, does the term, “latter rain” exclusively refer to the time period from 9/11 to the Second Coming? Or has it fallen before our time and finds its perfect fulfillment in our day?

Apropos the blotting out of sins, are the cases of all the righteous first approved, and then later their sins blotted out in the refreshing, latter rain time period at the end of the world? Or how is the blotting out of sins accomplished in the “times of refreshing” to which Peter refers? Regards, Z.D.

Brother Z.D.,

Because of time I find it difficult to answer you correctly, in the sense of providing ample support from inspiration to uphold what I say.

There is a latter rain every year in Palestine, so it depends on what you are defining the latter rain as. The early rain for the Christian church was at Pentecost in 31AD and the latter rain is when the angel of Revelation 18 descends. Yet the early rain for Adventism was the Midnight Cry in the summer of 1844, and the latter rain for Adventism is when the angel of Revelation 18 descends. You and I both need an early and latter rain experience. So in terms of your question, it is a bit broader than your question suggests.

The latter rain falls in the spring and summer time of earth’s history in order to bring about the final ripening of the fruit. In the summer the fruit is ripe and we are told that the harvest, the summer and the end of the world are all various symbols of the end of the world. Therefore, just before the Sunday law crisis hits in the USA, you are in the spring sprinkling of the early rain just before the latter rain (for the latter rain comes in a two-step process); but once the Sunday law arrives you have entered the summer of earth’s history, the harvest time and the end of the world.

The latter rain I am referring to began with the descent of the angel of Revelation 18 eleven years ago today. There are many types of the latter rain in the Scriptures. I will give a few that can be soundly proven if given more time:

the animals getting on the ark, fire coming down out of heaven in the story of Elijah, the plagues of Egypt, the giving of the law on Sinai, the Triumphal Entry, the Midnight Cry. These and many other biblical histories typify the latter rain.

We have been informed that every individual will be judged in order. The order has been specified as beginning with the ancient men whom stood as guardians of the temple. There is more to say about this, but I won't here do so; but you and I are judged individually and when judgment has been passed, the blood of Christ is used to blot out the record of your sins, thus retaining your name in the book of life. It seems like it is a simultaneous action. Sister White informs us that while Christ is removing our sins from the records in heaven we are to enter into a personal purification process that parallels Christ's work in the record books. If you and I are living up to all the conditions of the gospel (and there are conditions to salvation), and Christ determines that you or I would rather die than commit another sin, He will then accomplish His work in the books, while also placing His seal upon your forehead, thus demonstrating among several other things that your character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

Wished I had more time, but I don't. Hope this helps. Jeff

Thank you for taking the time to reply.

Since 9/11 marked the beginning of the sprinkling of the latter rain, and the Loud Cry when the National Sunday Law arrives in the US marks the full outpouring, shouldn't we identify August 11, 1840, as the date when Christ began dropping the former rain leading up to the plentiful shower at the August 12-17, Exeter Camp Meeting in 1844, which sparked the Midnight Cry? After all, the angel of Revelation

10:1 prefigures the angel of Revelation 18:1, and August 11, 1840 is an identical waymark to September 11, 2001. Therefore they should both signal the commencement of the sprinkling of the former rain before the Midnight Cry, and the latter rain before the Loud Cry respectively.

After sending you my previous e-mail, I found a couple of statements connecting the judgment of the righteous living and Acts 3:19. As you stated, Mrs. White plainly declares that the "times of refreshing" refer to the latter rain in (*The Great Controversy*, 611). She also applies Acts 3:19 specifically to the end of the world:

"The glorious promise is unto us who live in the last days: '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; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.'" *Signs of the Times*, November 16, 1891.

In the following long quote, she intimates that the righteous first receive "pardon written against their names in the books of Heaven" before the "closing work of the Judgment" in which "their sins are blotted out" during the times of refreshing:

"Thus was presented to the prophet's vision the opening of the investigative Judgment. The coming of Christ here described is not his second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of days in Heaven to receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, which will be given him at the close of his mediatorial work. It is this coming, and not his second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days, in 1844. Attended by a cloud of heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies, and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of his ministration in behalf of man, - to perform the work of investigative

Judgment, and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.

“The dead were judged,’ says John, ‘out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’ (Revelation 20:12.) Angels of God have kept a faithful record of the lives of all, and they are to be judged according to their deeds. In view of this Judgment, Peter exhorted the men of Israel: ‘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; and he shall send Jesus,’ ‘whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.’ (Acts 3:19-21.)

“The lives of all who have believed on Jesus pass in solemn review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate examines the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. From age to age, all who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon written against their names in the books of Heaven, and in the closing work of Judgment their sins are blotted out, and they themselves are accounted worthy of eternal life.” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol.4, 309.

Notice in the last paragraph that, our “Advocate examines the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living.” At the end of the paragraph, she writes that, “the closing work of the Judgment” is when “sins are blotted out.” This, we know from Acts 3:19, is accomplished during the “times of refreshing” or the latter rain which began falling on 9/11.

In the statement below (which I’m sure you’ve read before) she asserts that the blotting out of sin is accomplished only after the cases of believers have been investigated:

“The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the

dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated. But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out ‘when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ.’ Acts 3:19, 20.” *The Great Controversy*, 485.

So we can claim that the Investigative Judgment - for both the dead and the living - has an “investigation” period followed by a “blotting out of sin” phase. The latter begins “when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” - 9/11. The succeeding passages provide two more witnesses to substantiate this assertion:

“Our true position, and the only one in which there is any safety, is that of repentance and confession of sins before God. Feeling that we are sinners, we shall have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is able to pardon transgression, and impute unto us righteousness. When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, then the sins of the repentant soul who received the grace of Christ and has overcome through the blood of the Lamb, will be removed from the records of heaven, and will be placed upon Satan, the scapegoat, the originator of sin, and be remembered no more against him forever. The sins of the overcomers will be blotted out of the books of record, but their names will be retained on the book of life.” *Signs of the Times*, May, 16, 1895.

“Confess your sins to God, and he will never betray your trust. Although we are sinners, he will pardon abundantly. ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ He marks our contrition of soul; and our sins will go beforehand to judgment; and when the times of refreshing shall come, they will be blotted out by the blood of the Lamb, and our names will be retained in the Lamb’s book of life.” *The Review and Herald*, May 7, 1889.

From this evidence, it is clear that 9/11 marked the beginning of the judgment of the righteous living, and also when Christ began, through His blood, cleansing the heavenly sanctuary by erasing the sins of the righteous from the records of Heaven. Believers, both dead and alive, are now having their sins blotted out, provided that they are entitled to the benefits of Christ's atonement. So the injunction to repent and be converted in Acts 3:19 applies most forcibly to those believers who are alive.

Perhaps you already know all this. But am I reading this correctly? Z.D.

The Latter Rain

Hey Jeff,

I'm listening to the Eatonville series and you said that you thought that the verse, "Having a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof," meant that the power they were denying was the latter rain. But then you found that you were wrong because Ellen G. White said that they were denying the obedience. Well, after searching a bit I came across this verse in *The Great Controversy* and I don't think you were wrong initially. "The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God, still in Babylon, will be called upon to separate from her communion." *The Great Controversy*, 390. The Three Angel's Message encapsulates the latter rain, loud cry message, so if that's the case I don't think your initial analysis was wrong on 2 Timothy 3:5. God bless! E.P.

Brother E.P.,

Cool. I still thought it meant latter rain power, but recognize that obedience was the primary

application, but then we know that only those that are obedient to the early rain will receive the latter rain, so they are connected. Jeff

Hi Jeff,

Trusting you made it home safely. I enjoyed your fellowship this past weekend. I came across some quotes and I have a question in regards to your presentation of the "Judgment of the Living" beginning on 9-11. In searching the Spirit of Prophecy for light on this subject I found this following quote: "Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For more than sixty years this work has been in progress. Soon -none know how soon- it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition, 'Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.' 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' *The Gospel Herald*, August 1, 1910.

It also appears that if any date would be the one for the Judgment of the Living it would be the National Sunday Law. Here is the quote that seems to prove this prior statement:

"The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided... (Rev. 13:11-17 quoted.) This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed." *Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 976.

What is your thought on these truths that I have found? J.L.

Dear J.L.,

Your first quote does not say that we will never know that it has started, but that none could predict how soon it would start, or how much time before it began. She has statements

where she says, “Who knows if the judgment of the living has not already began?” She does not say we will not know once it begins, but that we could not know in advance.

“What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. **When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.**

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God--candidates for heaven. Go forward, my brethren and sisters. I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 216.

Concerning your second quote; God’s people are sealed at the Sunday law, not before. The very quote you are citing states this very fact: “the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes.”

The image of the beast test is the second of three tests. The third test is where we are sealed, and that is the Sunday law test. It is at this third test that probation closes and the image of the

beast is a test that precedes the Sunday law test. How many tests did the Millerites have? Three. How many tests did Christ have? Three. How many tests did ancient Israel have in the time of Christ? Three. See *Early Writings*, 259. We also have three tests. The second is the image of the beast and this is the test we must pass before probation closes at the Sunday law, and this is the test by which our eternal destiny is decided, for if we fail this test we are unprepared for the Sunday test. Jeff

Lessons from the Potter

By Heather del Rosal

About fourteen or fifteen years ago God began teaching me the story of the potter and the clay. I was in college at the time, studying art, and I got my first understanding when I took a couple of pottery classes. The process of working with clay was challenging yet interesting to me, but at that point I didn’t think much about the spiritual applications. About two years ago while working at a boarding academy, God reminded me of my clay-working knowledge and coaxed me to share it in a series of morning worships for the students. That caused me to connect the practical understanding with some of the spiritual lessons. And just months ago God began to show me that I still had not learned all there is to know about the potter and the clay. God connected the potter story with the present truth message. So, in this article I want to share what God has been teaching me.

Where do we find the story of the potter? Jeremiah 18:1-4.

“The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down

to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

I see a progression in these verses: **Clay > Vessel > Marred > Made Again**

This demonstrates the need of the people to be re-formed, and therefore, Jeremiah's was the message of **reformation**.

There is another prophet parallel to Jeremiah. Both Jeremiah (began ministry around 626 BC) and Ezekiel (began ministry around 592 BC) were two of the last prophets to Judah, beginning 40 years and 6 years, respectively, before Jerusalem was destroyed. The tribes of Israel had already been scattered, and these prophets were commissioned by God to give the final warning message to the remaining two tribes of Judah.

Ezekiel's message is the counterpart to Jeremiah. We find it in Ezekiel 37: 1-10.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. (Verses 3-6 omitted) So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into

them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

The progression in these verses is similar to that of the potter's vessel. It is implied that there was once a body, or a vessel, which we know comes from the dust (clay) of the earth (Gen. 2:7). Here is the progression: **Clay > Vessel (flesh/man) > Dead and Dry > Lived Again**

This demonstrates the need of the people to be revived to life, and therefore, Ezekiel's was the message of **revival**.

So, both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were sent to a people marred with rebellion, and in a spiritually dead and dry condition. The message was that God's people needed to be revived and reformed. Does that sound familiar? Do we, like them, need revival and reformation? Look at how Ellen White, by inspiration, applies both of these messages to us and makes it present truth for our time.

"I lay down my pen and lift up my soul in prayer, that the Lord would **breathe upon his backslidden people, which are as dry bones, that they may live**. The end is near, stealing upon us so stealthily, so imperceptibly, so noiselessly, like the muffled tread of the thief in the night to surprise the sleepers off guard and unready. May the Lord grant to bring his Holy Spirit upon hearts that are now at ease, that they may no longer sleep as do others, but watch and be sober. Who will **consent** even now after wasting much of his lifetime, to **give his will** as clay into the hands of the potter, and **co-operate with God** in becoming in his hands molded a vessel unto honor? O, how must the clay be in the hands of the potter, how **susceptible to receive divine impressions**, standing in the bright beams of righteousness. No earthly, no selfish motives

should be suffered to live, for if you give them place, you cannot be hewn into the divine image. The spirit of truth sanctifies the soul.

“When the greatness of this work is comprehended, it will bring even the thoughts into **captivity to Christ**. This is beyond our private comprehension, but thus it will be. Then is it wisdom on our part to put dependence on our own works? We must **let God work** for us. Is there any excellency that appears in our characters or our conduct? Does it originate with finite human beings? No; **it is all from God, the great center of expression of the power of the potter over the clay.**” *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 4, 1893.

So, Sister White here ties the reform and revival to us today.

In this article I want to discuss the reform aspect, emphasizing three main points regarding the reform message with relation to the story of the potter and the clay:

1. Potter’s (Reform) process is foremost about submission to God’s plan, (“Daily” removed).
2. Potter’s (Reform) process is all about development and testing of character.
3. Potter’s steps ALL keep in mind the final goal: a vessel unto honor that can withstand the fire of test trial and refinement of character and be fit for heaven.

1. Submission – The First Step to Reform

In the previous quote there are quite a few words that suggest submission: Consent, give his will, co-operate with, susceptible to receive, captivity to, and let God work.

Did you know that there is a woe pronounced on the clay if it refuses to submit? Isaiah 45:9 says,

“Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say

to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?”

“The Potter cannot mold and fashion unto honor that which has never been placed in His hands. The Christian life is one of daily surrender, submission and continual overcoming. Every day fresh victories will be gained. Self must be lost sight of, and the love of God must be constantly cultivated. Thus we grow up into Christ. Thus the life is fashioned according to the divine model.

“Every child of God is to do his very best to uplift the standard of truth. He is to work in God’s order. If self is exalted, Christ is not magnified. In His Word God compares Himself to a potter, and His people to the clay. His work is to mold and fashion them after His own similitude. The lesson they are to learn is the lesson of submission. Self is not to be made prominent. If due attention is given to the divine instruction, if self is surrendered to the divine will, the hand of the Potter will produce a shapely vessel.” *Bible Commentary*, book 4, 1154.

I know that God has been doing a work of reform in my life. Many examples come to mind of how God has been teaching me the lesson of submission. One example is related to my shyness. When I was younger, I was extremely shy and socially insecure. When God first began seriously working with me to overcome it, I saw that He was placing me in situations where I couldn’t easily back out. Whenever I was required to be up front in my college classes I knew I had to choose both to refuse and get a bad grade, or to willingly face my fear and do my best. Neither option was a comfort to me. I did not want to confront my fears! I did not know how! But God taught me one step at a time through His word, through

providences and experiences, assuring me that if I was willing and submissive, He would help. I had to develop trust in God to help me through, and little by little He has rewarded my submission and trust.

What is the purpose of submission? At first I didn't fully understand the purpose of submitting. I knew it was good for me to learn and grow, and to overcome shyness. But I didn't thoroughly consider that God wanted to make me more in similitude to Himself, or to make me into a vessel that would be fitted for greater use. The purpose of submission is:

2. Character Development – To Stand Test and Trial

Through the story of the potter we learn that the heart of the reform message is about character development, and character is often developed through trial. As you read the following quote about the potter's process of creating a vessel, ask yourself if any of these steps are not a trial for the clay.

“The potter takes the clay in his hands, and molds and fashions it according to his own will. He **kneads** it and **works** it. He **tears** it apart and then **presses** it together. He **wets** it and then **dries** it. He **lets it lie** for a while without touching it. When it is perfectly pliable, he continues the work of making from it a vessel. He **forms** it into shape, and on the wheel **trims** and **polishes** it. He **dries** it in the sun and **bakes** it in the oven. Thus it becomes a vessel unto honor, fit for his use. So the great Master desires to mold and fashion us. And as the clay is in the hands of the potter, so we are to be in His hands. We are not to try to do the work of the potter. Our part is to yield ourselves to the molding of the Master worker.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, 33.

Here is how God works in his people through trials:

“A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and the Lord of hosts has set His hand to this work. This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness... The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven. The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering... He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril...

“It is in mercy that the Lord reveals to men their hidden defects. He would have them critically examine the complicated emotions and motives of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong, and modify their dispositions and refine their manners. God would have His servants become acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them, so that they may be purified. The trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory... The fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine.” *My Life Today*, 92.

Trials are difficult, and often we don't quite know how to relate or react to them. But 1 Peter 4:12,13 gives us some good counsel.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

Here is further encouragement,

“Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. In every affliction God has a purpose to work out for our good. Every blow that destroys an idol, every providence that weakens our hold upon earth and fastens our affections more firmly upon God, is a blessing... The very trial that taxes our faith the most severely and makes it seem as though God had forsaken us is to lead us more closely to Him, that we may lay all our burdens at the feet of Christ and experience the peace which He will give us in exchange... God loves and cares for the feeblest of His creatures, and we cannot dishonor Him more than by doubting His love to us. O let us cultivate that living faith that will trust Him in the hour of darkness and trial!” *My Life Today*, 93.

As I look back at some of the trials God has brought me through, I can now see that God has always been preparing me for greater usefulness in His work. God has had to reform my thinking patterns in order for me to have victory over my fears. I have had to trust more in His strong arm of help. It is not easy to confront and overcome fears, and I still struggle with some shyness, but I can say with confidence that God is faithful to help if we will submit and allow Him to teach us through the trials that come to us.

As the previous quote says, trials are to lead us closer to Christ. I feel thankful that God has taken away much of my shyness, and that He has given me joy in sharing the testimony of victory. Even though change is not welcome to our naturally selfish hearts, we are admonished to accept the reform of the potter in our lives. Daily self-exaltation must be replaced by daily conversion.

“We need the converting power of God every day. Old habits of precision, of moving in a certain groove, will have to be changed; old customs and habits, that have long been cherished and idolized, will have to be broken up. Men will have to experience a daily conversion, in order that they may be working agents, who can be molded and fashioned as clay is molded and fashioned by the hands of the potter...” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, 9.

I know by experience that if we submit and faithfully allow God to reform our characters, we will meet the goal of the Master Potter.

3. Potter's Goal – A Vessel Unto Honor

The Master Potter's goal is to make you a vessel unto honor, fit for use, that can survive the fires of affliction, and one day be accepted into heaven. Every step in the process of the potter is important to prepare the clay for the fire, and at every step the potter is reminded of this final goal. A kiln fire can be more than 2300° F (Note: in your home oven most food is cooked at around 350° F. Make that seven times hotter and you have kiln temperatures!) So, if one step of preparing the clay was skipped or done poorly, the vessel may not come out with the intended usefulness and strength. Or it may not even survive.

A good potter cannot just set the vessel in the kiln, turn on the heat, and walk away. He must

carefully monitor the fire and conditions in the kiln as he slowly brings the temperature to its peak (usually about an 18 hour process), in order to prevent too great a shock to the clay vessels. The vessels literally become red hot and extremely vulnerable!

Organic matter, if not previously removed from the clay will dissipate in the heat. For us, this means that God, our Potter, is very near to us during our fiery trials, because He desires to bring us safely through the fire. He desires that the “wood, hay, and stubble” of poor character will not exist in us. Learning about

the potter’s process and goal is to learn of the Potter’s love for the work, dedication, long-suffering, thoughtfulness, and attention to detail. He must be faithful and dedicated at every moment or the vessel may not survive to be a useful vessel.

The failure rate in the kiln can be high. In one of my pottery textbooks I found this quote:

“Clay processes take a great deal of technical expertise before control is assured. Often, whatever you have made - and spent a lot of time on - ends up in a shambles in the kiln. Air bubbles in the clay are likely to cause explosions in the fire. If construction is incorrect, the work may break or fall over. Even in industrial ceramics, there is a high failure rate, especially with porcelain. At Lennox China, the ‘recovery rate’ is about 50 percent; only half of what goes into the kiln can be sold as first rate quality.” *The Craft and Art of Clay*, 16.

Even though the outlook of a high failure rate can seem discouraging from the human standpoint, we have a great promise from God who is our faithful Potter. John 6:39-40 says,

“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Christ is willing to do the often long and tedious work of reform in our lives, because He doesn’t want to lose a single one of us! So here is my appeal to you today,

“The third angel’s message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. Today you are to give yourselves to God, that he may make of you vessels unto honor, and meet for his service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil-surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord-fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit...”
The Review and Herald, March 22, 1892.

Testimonies for the Church by Ellen G. White

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