

# The Literal Week

by Ellen White

from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 9, p. 111-116.

**L**ike the Sabbath, the week originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God Himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, God rested, and He then blessed this day and set it apart as a day of rest for man.

In the law given from Sinai, God recognized the week, and the facts upon which it is based. After giving the command,

## **Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,

and specifying what shall be done on the six days, and what shall not be done on the seventh, He states the reason for thus observing the week, by pointing back to His own example:

<sup>11</sup> For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

This reason appears beautiful and forcible when we understand the days of creation to be literal. The first six days of each week are given to man for labor, because God employed the same period of the first week in the work of creation. On the seventh day man is to refrain from labor, in commemoration of the Creator's rest.

But the assumption that the events of the first week required thousands upon thousands of years, strikes directly at the foundation of the fourth commandment. It represents the Creator as commanding men to observe the week of literal days in commemoration of vast, indefinite periods.

This is unlike His method of dealing with His creatures. It makes indefinite and obscure that which He has made very plain. It is infidelity in its most insidious and hence most dangerous form; its real character is so disguised that it is held and taught by many who profess to believe the Bible.

**Psalm 33**

<sup>6</sup> By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

<sup>9</sup> For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

The Bible recognizes no long ages in which the earth was slowly evolved from chaos. Of each successive day of creation, the sacred record declares that it consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed. At the close of each day is given the result of the Creator's work. The statement is made at the close of the first week's record,

**Genesis 2**

<sup>4</sup> These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created.

But this does not convey the idea that the days of creation were other than literal days. Each day was called a generation, because that in it God generated, or produced, some new portion of His work.

Geologists claim to find evidence from the earth itself that it is very much older than the Mosaic record teaches. Bones of men and animals, as well as instruments of warfare, petrified trees, etc., much larger than any that now exist, or that have existed for thousands of years, have been discovered, and from this it is inferred that the earth was populated long before the time brought to view in the record of creation, and by a race of beings vastly superior in size to any men now living.

Such reasoning has led many professed Bible believers to adopt the position that the days of creation were vast, indefi-

nite periods. But apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Those who reason so confidently upon its discoveries have no adequate conception of the size of men, animals, and trees before the Flood, or of the great changes which then took place.

Relics found in the earth do give evidence of conditions differing in many respects from the present, but the time when these conditions existed can be learned only from the Inspired Record. In the history of the Flood, inspiration has explained that which geology alone could never fathom. In the days of Noah, men, animals, and trees, many times larger than now exist, were buried, and thus preserved as an evidence to later generations that the antediluvians perished by a flood.

God designed that the discovery of these things should establish faith in inspired history; but men, with their vain reasoning, fall into the same error as did the people before the Flood—the things which God gave them as a benefit, they turn into a curse by making a wrong use of them.

It is one of Satan's devices to lead the people to accept the fables of infidelity; for he can thus obscure the law of God, in itself very plain, and embolden men to rebel against the divine government. His efforts are especially directed against the fourth commandment, because it so clearly points to the living God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth.

There is a constant effort made to explain the work of creation as the result of natural causes; and human reasoning is accepted even by professed Christians, in opposition to plain Scripture facts.

There are many who oppose the investigation of the prophecies, especially those of Daniel and the Revelation, declaring them to be so obscure that we cannot understand them; yet these very persons eagerly receive the suppositions of geologists, in contradiction of the Mosaic record. But if that

which God has revealed is so difficult to understand, how inconsistent it is to accept mere suppositions in regard to that which He has not revealed!

**Deuteronomy 29**

<sup>29</sup> The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.

Just how God accomplished the work of creation He has never revealed to men; human science cannot search out the secrets of the Most High. His creative power is as incomprehensible as His existence.

God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in both science and art; but when professedly scientific men treat upon these subjects from a merely human point of view, they will assuredly come to wrong conclusions.

It may be innocent to speculate beyond what God's word has revealed, if our theories do not contradict facts found in the Scriptures; but those who leave the word of God, and seek to account for His created works upon scientific principles, are drifting without chart or compass upon an unknown ocean.

The greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to trace the relations of science and revelation. Because the Creator and His works are so far beyond their comprehension that they are unable to explain them by natural laws, they regard Bible history as unreliable.

Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments, will be led to go a step further, and doubt the existence of God; and then, having lost their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity.

These persons have lost the simplicity of faith. There should be a settled belief in the divine authority of God's Holy

Word. The Bible is not to be tested by men's ideas of science. Human knowledge is an unreliable guide. Skeptics who read the Bible for the sake of caviling, may, through an imperfect comprehension of either science or revelation, claim to find contradictions between them; but rightly understood, they are in perfect harmony.

Moses wrote under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and a correct theory of geology will never claim discoveries that cannot be reconciled with his statements. All truth, whether in nature or in revelation, is consistent with itself in all its manifestations.

In the word of God many queries are raised that the most profound scholars can never answer. Attention is called to these subjects to show us how much there is, even among the common things of everyday life, that finite minds, with all their boasted wisdom, can never fully understand.

Yet men of science think that they can comprehend the wisdom of God, that which He has done or can do. The idea largely prevails that He is restricted by His own laws.

Men either deny or ignore His existence, or think to explain everything, even the operation of His Spirit upon the human heart; and they no longer reverence His name or fear His power. They do not believe in the supernatural, not understanding God's laws or His infinite power to work His will through them.

As commonly used, the term "laws of nature" comprises what men have been able to discover with regard to the laws that govern the physical world; but how limited is their knowledge, and how vast the field in which the Creator can work in harmony with His own laws and yet wholly beyond the comprehension of finite beings!

Many teach that matter possesses vital power—that certain properties are imparted to matter, and it is then left to act

through its own inherent energy; and that the operations of nature are conducted in harmony with fixed laws, with which God Himself cannot interfere. This is false science, and is not sustained by the word of God.

Nature is the servant of her Creator. God does not annul His laws or work contrary to them, but He is continually using them as His instruments. Nature testifies of an intelligence, a presence, an active energy, that works in and through her laws. There is in nature the continual working of the Father and the Son. Christ says,

**John 5**

<sup>17</sup> My Father works hitherto, and I work.

The Levites, in their hymn recorded by Nehemiah, sang,

**Nehemiah 9**

<sup>6</sup> You, even You, are Lord alone; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things therein,...and You preserve them all.

As regards this world, God's work of creation is completed.  
For

**Hebrews 4**

<sup>3</sup> ...the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

But His energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of His creation. It is not because the mechanism that has once been set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats and breath follows breath; but every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom

**Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> ...we live, and move, and have our being.

It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion around the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. He

### **Isaiah 40**

<sup>26</sup> ...brings out their host by number: He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one fails.

It is through His power that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom. He

### **Psalms 147**

<sup>8</sup> ...makes grass to grow upon the mountains,  
and by Him the valleys are made fruitful.

### **Psalms 104**

<sup>20</sup> ...all the beasts of the forest...  
<sup>21</sup> ...seek their meat from God.

Every living creature, from the smallest insect up to man, is daily dependent upon His providential care. In the beautiful words of the psalmist,

### **Psalms 104**

<sup>27</sup> These wait all upon You; that You may give them their meat in due season.  
<sup>28</sup> That You give them they gather: You open Your hand, they are filled with good.

His word controls the elements; He covers the heavens with clouds and prepares rain for the earth.

### **Psalms 147**

<sup>16</sup> He gives snow like wool: He scatters the hoarfrost like ashes.

### **Jeremiah 10**

<sup>13</sup> When He utters His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightnings with rain, and brings forth the wind out of His treasures.

God is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with His works; all true education leads to obedience to His government. Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars high, and explores new depths; but she brings

nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation.

Ignorance may seek to support false views of God by appeals to science, but the book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. We are thus led to adore the Creator and to have an intelligent trust in His word.

No finite mind can fully comprehend the existence, the power, the wisdom, or the works of the Infinite One. Says the sacred writer:

**Job 11**

<sup>7</sup> Can you by searching find out God? can you find out the Almighty unto perfection?

<sup>8</sup> It is as high as heaven; what can you do? deeper than hell; what can you know?

<sup>9</sup> The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

The mightiest intellects of earth cannot comprehend God. Men may be ever searching, ever learning, and still there is an infinity beyond.

Yet the works of creation testify of God's power and greatness.

**Psalms 19**

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.

Those who take the written word as their counselor will find in science an aid to understand God.

**Romans 1**

<sup>20</sup> The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.