



the
REFORMATION
herald

Vol. 61, No. 3

SURVIVING
in the **COVID Era**

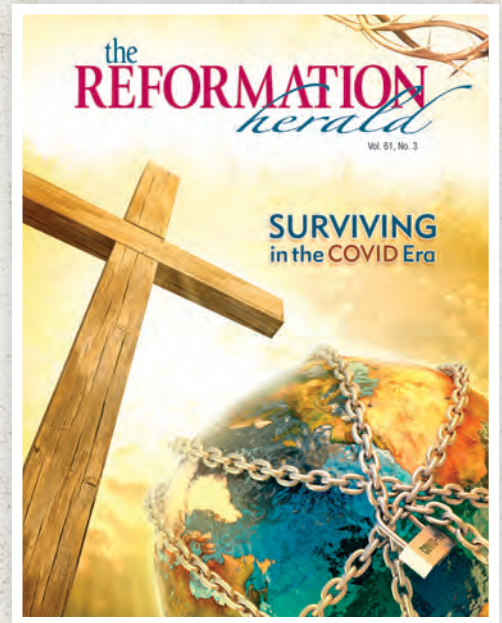
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Volume 61, Number 3

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“Would to God the lessons given us, as we view the cross of Christ and see the signs fulfilling which bring us near to the judgment, might be so impressed upon our hearts as to render us more humble, more self-denying, more kind to one another, less self-caring, less critical, and more willing to bear one another's burdens than we are today.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 18.



Have you ever thought of distributing The Reformation Herald among those you meet or already know? More and more, this magazine is being designed to answer the real spiritual hunger of people in today's society, tapping into the exact train of thought being triggered by current events. As Bible prophecy unfolds before our eyes, why not keep some of these magazines on hand in a large ziplock bag, ready to share with honest, thinking people who fear God and are eager to know what in the world is going on?

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“The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold.”—Education, p. 57.

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GOOD-BYE,



FREEDOM!

Dear fellow believer, we are confronted with the most aggressive cultural revolution ever encountered in the leading nations of the free world. Today it is becoming more and more vivid that to be a Christian is unsafe and even dangerous on this fallen planet. Christianity is the key element being removed from our way of life. The heritage of the American forefathers is being overturned. The cherished memories of their accomplishments in behalf of all humanity are being replaced with something sinister that has nothing to do with the true history of a highly influential nation that quickly rose to worldwide prominence—a nation that was founded by Christian people and based upon Christian principles.

“God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?”¹

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche became one of the youngest university

professors of the University of Basel, around the year 1869. He was only 24 years old when academia recognized his supposed “genius.” Then, in 1879, Nietzsche was forced to resign. We cannot know exactly what seeds he was sowing in his mind, but the Bible tells us without a doubt that all sow what they reap; cause produces effect. One of the earliest evidences of Nietzsche’s rhetoric against a “non-existent” God is found in 1862 in his essay, *Faith and History*—declarations that eventually escalated into the vitriolic language mentioned above, and producing the inevitable consequence of affecting the philosopher’s health for life. In 1889, at age 44, Nietzsche experienced an irreversible mental breakdown and he later died in the year 1900, without any drop of sanity or capability to express regrets or remorse over his past life.

Yet his words, “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him” sadly remained. His influence injected into the generations that followed are echoed and reflected today in the behavior of many on American streets as well as elsewhere throughout the world. Regardless of intellectual level, financial status, or skin color, the whole human race is marching towards ultimate self-destruction. The greed for power animates the “shadow” of many people from both the religious

and political spectrum with the desire to control human behavior and even the human mind itself. We look around us and see “fear” as the daily ingredient served to the masses by the media. In today’s world, probably one in three may say, “I’m hungry,” one in two, “I’m thirsty,” but it is likely that nearly all of us would say, “I’m worried.”

Our streets are a spectacle of violence and lawlessness. Dear reader, the spirit of unrest seen in almost every country of the world reflects the words of Jesus fulfilling in our generation. The Lord bemoaned, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Luke 13:34, 35).

I hope and pray that the articles prepared for the reader of this issue of *The Reformation Herald* will bring the best awareness possible for our spiritual life in order to be ready for the perfect storm that is looming on the horizon. *R*

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¹ Nietzsche: *The Gay Science*, section 125, “The Madman” Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, “The Joyful Pursuit of Knowledge and Understanding.”



BY Paul Chapman

CRISIS, CALAMITIES — AND THE SECOND COMING

THE COVID-19 CRISIS

A woman calls out for help from the balcony of her tenth-floor apartment. No help will come. Downstairs, the building entrance has been welded shut. In the same city, a man stumbles and falls unconscious in the street, dying. A young couple passes over to where he lays, takes a quick look, and walks on. Another young man is dragged, kicking and screaming, into a waiting van—his body temperature is deemed too high. These were the disturbing images that confronted us, as stories of the greatest pandemic in our lifetime hit the airwaves and internet video channels in the early weeks of 2020. Within a few short weeks of us viewing those disturbing images from Wuhan, governments across the globe closed their borders, halted travel, and banned the operation of high-risk businesses due to public health concerns. In a matter of a few short days, our freedom of movement and assembly was taken, almost without

a word of protest. The experience has been surreal, to say the least.

It has been three months [at the time of this writing] since the government put restrictions in place in my country of residence. As I write this, the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be determined. So far, 400,000 people have died worldwide. Millions more have lost their jobs or have closed their businesses. Australia and the USA have gone into recession. The World Bank has forecast the worst global recession in 80 years. In the best-case scenario, the global economy will contract twice as much as it did in the 2009 global financial crisis.¹ According to some economists, recovery will be measured in years rather than months. To make matters worse, there is fear that a second wave of COVID-19 is impending, as early as this fall.² All this has left some wondering, what is coming next?

As worrying as it has been, the COVID-19 pandemic has not been the first of its kind nor will it be the

last. But this should not be a cause for anxiety and despair. For the Bible believer, while the heart goes out in compassion for every life affected by this pandemic, at the same time, such calamities inspire hope that a better world is imminent. I can say that with certainty, for I have faith in the words of Jesus Christ, “there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (Matthew 24:7).

Jesus uttered these prophetic words almost 2000 years ago. He had just declared that the temple in Jerusalem, the glory of the Jewish nation, would become rubble. His words had doomed it to a destruction that would leave not one stone upon another. His twelve disciples, concerned and yet intrigued, asked Him a three-part question concerning the words that He had just uttered: “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3). In response, Jesus outlined a fearful series of events, the last of which

would transpire just before his second coming. He declared, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matthew 24:32, 33).

What things are we to see that will assure us that the second coming of Christ is near? What are the signs that we are living in "the last days" of this world as we know it?

CONFLICT

One sign would be the lack of lasting peace. Jesus said that before the end of the world, there would continue to be "wars and rumours of wars," "for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew 24:6, 7). Of all the devastation wreaked by war since Jesus uttered those words, 1900 to 2000 have been the most blood-stained years on record. Twenty-two million died in "the war to end all wars," with a further 23 million wounded.³ World War II claimed 55 million lives. War-related deaths between 1945 and 2000 claimed 41 million lives.⁴ These are estimates of deaths resulting when "nations" rise "against nations." It does not account for all the terrible internal conflicts that have transpired in the first two decades of this new century. According to some estimates, there has not been one day of genuine peace since the end of World War I. Since 2000, the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and the fight against 'terror' continue to confirm the words of Jesus, "there shall be wars and rumors of wars."

Can we expect universal peace? The apostle John, in a prophecy concerning the last days, declared that, rather than being at peace, "the nations would be angry" (Revelation 11:18). Over the past 20 years or so, China has been stealthily establishing itself as an economic superpower. Its rise has led to the current trade war with the USA. The unilateral decisions taken by the USA against China have riled many of the allies of the USA, most

notably those in Europe. China itself has riled its neighbors by the flexing of its military muscle in the South China sea. Concerns of an eventual outbreak of hostilities are not unwarranted. Revelation 16 indicates that the battle for global domination will involve the "kings of the east and of the whole world." If the "kings of the east" are a reference to the Asian nations, most notably, China, it is hard to see how the current crisis will end peacefully. For certain, the diplomats of the world will do their best to maintain peace and avoid international conflict, but we should not be surprised if conflict does break out. For Jesus has said that wars would continue right to the end, the last one involving every nation of the globe.

Despite the strife and contention throughout the world, we should not be troubled by it. Jesus said, "In the world, ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Only Jesus can bring lasting peace to our world. But that peace begins by each person making their peace with Him. Only then can we be at peace with each other.

Sadly, this world will never experience universal peace. They will declare peace. But prophecy indicates it will end in "sudden destruction" (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

FAMINE

The second sign Jesus gave is often a consequence of the first—famines. During the 20th century, famines caused the death of more than 70 million people. Over half of these died in the three great Chinese famines of 1928–30, 1942–43, and 1958–61, the latter being responsible for over 30 million deaths.⁵ Today, famines in Europe and America appear to have been consigned to history. But it should be a sobering thought that globally "millions of people have died in famines in every decade since at least the 1920s.

Famine is not a matter for historians," concluded the UK Institute of Development Studies. "It is yet to be defeated."⁶

The East African drought of 2011 was devastating. The famine it caused claimed in three months 29,000 children under the age of five. In Somalia, 285,000 people perished. Of these, 133,000 were children under the age of 5.⁷ Today, Africa continues to be the continent at the highest risk of famine. According to World Vision, 257 million people in Africa are experiencing hunger right now. As a result of crop failures, soaring food prices, drought, and cyclones, 41 million people are food insecure, with 9 million needing food immediately.⁸

The two leading causes of famine have been droughts and conflicts in a working paper published by the UK Institute of Development Studies. Poor government policy and, to a lesser extent, natural disasters have also been contributing factors.⁹ As long as these continue, famines will continue.

To help end famine on the African continent, Europe and America are sharing the technological advances that attributed most to their own apparent resilience to famine. However, these advances in agricultural production and the supply and distribution of goods to trade for food are heavily reliant on fossil fuels. Those fuel resources will not last forever. Without sustainable energy resources, Europe and America cannot sustain their current agricultural methods. This concern has led some experts to speculate of a near-future global food crisis.

PESTILENCE

Not only would famines continue, but, according to Jesus, "pestilences" also. History has proven His words true. Virulent epidemics of cholera, malaria, measles, typhus, and other diseases often accompany famines.¹⁰ However, pestilences do not confine themselves to times of famine. In 2009, the swine flu, a strain of the influenza A virus, caused between 151,000 and 575,000 deaths.¹¹ The top five pestilences

causing death every year are lower respiratory infections (including pneumonia and influenza), HIV/AIDS, diarrheal diseases (cholera, botulism, E. coli, etc.), tuberculosis, and malaria. In 2017 alone, influenza and pneumonia were responsible for 3.1 million deaths, tuberculosis for 1.3 million deaths, HIV/AIDS for 1 million deaths, and malaria for 439,000 deaths. While there has been a decrease in tuberculosis mortality rates since 2000, malaria mortality rates have stalled since 2014, and HIV is on the rise in Europe.¹²

Since the beginning of the HIV epidemic, that virus has infected 75 million people. About 32 million of these have died. Today, HIV infects 37 million people, with 2 million new cases every year. It remains the number one cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa.¹³

The Bible indicates that pestilences will also spread beyond the human species. Through Hosea, the Lord declared, “The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away” (Hosea 4:1–3).

LOSS OF WILDLIFE

Over the past decade, mass deaths of animals, birds, and fish, some in their millions, have occurred in multiple countries. In 2019, during three months in Brazil,

500 million bees died from pesticide poisoning, threatening the country’s entire agricultural industry.¹⁴ In April this year, bees were dropping dead in their millions all over Spain, leading to concerns of a nation-wide food shortage. Farmers were blaming the deaths on the pesticides sprayed everywhere in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁵ The 2019 bushfires in Australia over four months killed off an estimated 1 billion animals.¹⁶ Just in February this year, in New Zealand, 3,500 birds were found dead in the Coromandel waterways, evidently due to an outbreak of botulism.¹⁷

These pestilences and related disasters are said by some to be natural die-offs. Others say they are due to pollution, and others hold these to be an indication of God’s judgment. While many of these remain a mystery, we can be sure of one thing—they were prophesied to happen.

HEAVY RUMBLINGS

Jesus also declared that there would be “earthquakes in divers places.” While we’ve always had earthquakes, records confirm that of the ten deadliest earthquakes since 1900, three of them occurred in the past 15 years: Pakistan in 2005 with the loss of 73,000 lives; China in 2008 with the loss of 87,000 lives; and Haiti in 2010 with the loss of a staggering 222,570 lives.¹⁸

SOCIAL UPHEAVAL

Apart from wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, the Bible speaks of tremendous social problems as a sign of the end. In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote, “This know also, that in the



last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1–4).

No one would question the perilous times in which we are living. The increasing violent crime, the civil unrest, the rampant narcissism of the me-generation, the breakdown of the family unit, the redefining of the Biblical model for marriage and families, the massacres at the hands of crazed gunmen, and the proliferation of illicit drugs are just some of the prevailing conditions that would precede the second coming of Christ.

A CRISIS OF CAPITAL

Another sign that we are in the last days is the great struggle between the rich and the poor. The apostle James pronounced a woe on the “rich”—not for being productive, but because they “heaped treasure together for the last days” at the expense of the poor (James 5:1–8). This rebuke could not apply more than to the rich of our generation. The extreme disparity between the world’s wealthiest and

Jesus outlined a fearful series of events, the last of which would transpire just before His second coming.



the world's poorest is a terrible phenomenon today. Despite the 2011 "Occupy Wall Street" protests highlighting the income inequality in the USA and around the world, the economic disparity continues to rise. The 2019 Global Wealth Report reveals the level of disparity. According to the report, 1% of the world's population owns 44% of the global wealth. Those in this wealth tier have a net worth in USD of at least \$1 million. Those whose net worth is at least \$110,000 fall into the top 10% of global wealth owners. This tier collectively holds 82% of the world's wealth. In contrast, 56% of the population holds a meager 1.8% of the global wealth. People in this tier own less than \$10,000 each, most of them far less.¹⁹ To highlight the disparity, even more, Oxfam reported in 2019 that the combined fortunes of the world's 26 wealthiest individuals reached \$1.4 trillion in 2018—the same amount as the total wealth of the 3.8 billion poorest people on earth. Hence the appeal, aptly put by one journalist to the ultra-wealthy, to "aim their great wealth and energies toward the world's urgent challenges: extreme poverty, needless disease, illiteracy, and environmental devastation."²⁰ This call for action is even more relevant, given the current COVID-19 pandemic. The World Bank estimates that the forecasted global recession this year "may push 70

million to 100 million people into extreme poverty."²¹

Despite the oppressive economic conditions of the last days, the apostle James encourages us not to give up in despair, but rather "to be patient unto the coming of the Lord." He reminds us that just as the farmer "waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain," so we should also be "patient" and focus on keeping ourselves ready, "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:7, 8).

A CRISIS OF RELIGION

The apostle Peter, under prophetic inspiration, gives us a further sign of the last days, one that would take place in the religious world. Scoffers. He wrote, "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? Where is the promise of his coming? (2 Peter 3:3, 4).

Now there have always been scoffers of religion, ever since the days of Cain and Abel. But what is different about the scoffers of the last days? Evidently, they are religious people. They have a regard for "the fathers of the faith"—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the other

patriarchs of Scripture. Hebrews 11 tells us that the "fathers" looked for a "better country, a heavenly" one, but died without realizing the fulfillment of the promise. Since their falling asleep in death, nothing has changed. "All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." So the scoffers say. But have they? From the creation of this world, and everything that has happened to it? Have all things continued as they were from the beginning? If you know your Bible history, you will have to answer, No.

What the scoffers fail to believe, what "they willingly are ignorant of," as Peter puts it in verse 5, is the fact of the greatest calamity this world has ever seen or will ever see until the second coming of Christ. Peter describes it this way: "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:5, 6). Due to the continuous evil practiced by the earth's inhabitants almost 4,500 years ago, the world perished in a universal flood. All flesh died, except for eight souls and the animals that were with them in the ark.

The scoffers of the "last days" deny this event, even though they profess belief in the Scriptures. How can they possibly do that? The answer is born out in what has been

Christ's faithful followers will be those who fulfill the ten commandments. The apostle John, looking down to the time just before the second coming of Jesus, sees such a group of people."

happening in the Christian world for the past 200 years.

Since the early 1800's many professed Christians have accepted the idea that the earth is billions of years old. However, this notion contradicts the plainest reading of the Bible. Rather than take the Bible as it reads, Biblical scholars have proposed many theories to harmonize the contradiction. One of the most prevalent views being taught in seminaries today is the Framework Hypothesis. It was developed in 1924 and popularized in the 1950s in the United States and Europe.²² In this view, the creation story of Genesis is merely a poem and not a historical account of our origins. Those professed Christians who hold this view do not believe the Biblical record of a literal six-day creation, nor of the earth being only about 6000 years old. They postulate that the creation might well have happened over thousands of years, with evolution being a mechanism. They further propose that the greatest hydraulic cataclysm that this world has ever seen was just a couple of local rivers overflowing. In their view, the localized flood story became the stuff of legend, and the legend became this fantastic Biblical story of a worldwide flood.

This view has laid the foundation for the last-day scoffers about which the apostle Peter writes. They deny the universal flood as well as the literal six-day creation. We should not then be surprised when we meet these ideas in the lecture halls of Christian universities and educational institutions.

In a 2002 letter to the editor of the Australian Presbyterian, a prominent Presbyterian minister represented the view when he wrote, "I would be aghast if orthodox Pres-

byterians were required to endorse the populist argument for a global Flood in [your] May issue."²³

The apostle Paul adds further details to the decay of Christianity as a sign of the "last days." He wrote to Timothy that people would be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3:4, 5). Religion would become a form without true love for God. In Jesus' words, "the love of many would wax (or grow) cold." The reason for this, according to Jesus, would be the terrible evil that would abound in the world just before His return (Matthew 24:12). Who can deny the abounding evil present in the world today—the crime; the social injustice; the needless pain and suffering inflicted by people upon other people; riots and racism; the oppression of minorities; and the neglect of the poor, the homeless and the afflicted. People of faith are growing tired. Rather than exercise their faith in making a difference, the vast majority become indifferent to the abounding iniquity. Jesus' words indicate that things will not get better but worse. When it comes to faith, there will be very little of it around at His second coming:

"Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8, last part).

He will. But sadly, it won't be manifested by many.

A FAITHFUL FEW

True "faith works by love." And according to the words of the apostle Paul, "love is the fulfilling of the law," not the breaking of it. The law the Apostle Paul refers to is evident in the commandments it embodies:

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8–10).

Consequently, Christ's faithful followers will be those who fulfill the ten commandments. The apostle John, looking down to the time just before the second coming of Jesus, sees such a group of people. He describes them in this way, "Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

These believers are commandments keepers. They are the fruit of the preaching of the "everlasting gospel" (referenced in verse 6) for the last days. This preaching will be in fulfillment of one of the last signs Jesus gave that would mark the nearness of the end.

WORLDWIDE PREACHING

Jesus affirmed, "the 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). This movement is symbolized in Revelation 14:6 as an angel flying "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." John is writing here of a worldwide movement that takes the gospel message to every inhab-

itable quarter of the globe. Dear reader, this is happening today. Of the 193 recognized countries, there is not one nation on earth that does not contain Christian adherents. However, the Joshua Project estimates there are 17,425 people groups within the countries of the world today. These are groups in which no significant barrier to understanding the gospel would exist between people within that group. Of these, 7,410 are yet to be reached with the good news of Jesus Christ and His soon coming. That is about 3.2 billion people.²⁴ Before Jesus returns, they will hear the gospel message. But that message will have a significant emphasis. John writes in Revelation 14:7 that the “everlasting gospel” to be preached in these last days will be a call to “worship him that made the heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Recognition of God as the Creator will be the heart of the message.

RECOGNIZING OUR CREATOR

Despite the terrible calamities we see in nature, there is still a God of nature who cares for His creation. He who made all things is to be loved and worshipped as the Creator of all things. Sadly, most of the Christian world has forgotten the day that God set aside to worship Him on. In Isaiah 58:13, He calls it “my holy day” — the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, commonly called Saturday. It is the only day in Scripture that God has blessed and sanctified as a day of rest to remember Him as our Creator (Genesis 2:3). The Sabbath is also a reminder of our deliverance from the bondage of sin through our loving Creator’s power (Deuteronomy 5:15). Today, He is inviting you to enter the Sabbath “rest,” a rest that can only come from accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, the one who has delivered you from sin by His creative power. Only then can you truly “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” for the Creator, by His redeeming grace, will have made you holy (Exodus 20:8–11; Hebrews

4:9). This is the gospel message that must go to all the world for a witness, and then shall the end come.

SECURE IN THE CONFLAGRATION

In concluding His reply to His disciples’ question, Jesus declared, “As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37).

The debauchery and evil that preceded the destruction of our world by water would again be a precursor to the destruction of our world when Jesus returns. How will this destruction take place?

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:7). Just as the waters held above and beneath the earth burst forth in destruction in Noah’s day, the fiery elements beneath the earth and above it are being held in check by divine power until that day when they shall burst forth in destruction. Sadly, most will be unprepared. “For the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

Dear reader, we are very near to the end. “All these things” that Jesus and his prophets said would transpire before the end are happening right now. This gives me confidence that Jesus is coming back very soon. But why does He delay? Despite what the scoffers may say, “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.” Instead, He is exercising His divine patience with us all, the godly and the ungodly alike. He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2

Peter 3:9). The perpetration of evil in this world, the calamities, and the conflicts grieve His heart. But soon, very soon, He will bring all this to an end. What should you then do to be ready? Come to Jesus in true repentance. Confess your sins, surrender your life to Him, and accept His forgiveness. In doing so, regardless of what happens in our world, you will always be ready to meet the Lord in peace. Amen. *R*

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BY Walter Lukic

FROM BOASTFUL ATHEISM TO BLIND RELIGION

PART 1 OF 3

THE COSMIC WAR TRANSFERRED TO THE EARTH

From ancient times until now, rarely has a literary work been produced—whether based on a true story or on the author’s imagination—that did not somehow feature positive and negative characters, a protagonist and an antagonist, or at least a foil. Cinematography also has not escaped this fundamental pattern of character distinction: In almost every Hollywood production the screenplay writers introduce to the viewers an assortment of “good guys” and “bad guys,” heroes and villains. This pattern seems to be so pervasive in human society that we feel justified in proposing that no society known to us has ever existed without some sort of character differentiation. To be sure, the “good” characters are not perfect; they are still human beings with some weaknesses and frailties. Yet, the authors, historians, artists, screenplay writers, and the rest of humans seem to be unable to think about men and women without placing them somewhere on the scale of morally approving or disapproving conduct.

In this article we will propose a broader thesis: The existence of good and evil in this world and the conflict between the intelligent beings representing either good or

evil predates the existence of the planet earth and of the human race. By means of divine revelation contained in the Bible, we are informed that the highest created being—an angel by the name of Lucifer (later known as Satan)—started a war in heaven by becoming envious of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. We further learn that Satan and his angels lost the “Star War” and were thrown down to the planet earth, the only place in the universe where they succeeded in planting their rebellion.

The first humans, Adam and Eve, trusted the fallen angel, Satan, more than they trusted God. Satan’s offer to Eve seemed irresistible: Eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and assume the divine prerogative of defining moral truth. By mistrusting God and by her desire to become God-like, not in character but in power, Eve sinned and became, like Satan, a fallen being. Through Eve, Satan shrewdly brought about the downfall of Adam. From the moment the first humans discovered and experienced evil, there has been no peace on planet earth, but instead, an unrelenting war between the followers of God and the followers of the archdeceiver. In that war the humans who have sided with Satan and his rebellion have persecuted and killed those who have

pledged their allegiance to God and His government. Chapter 4 of Genesis informs us that the first conflict took place between two brothers—Cain and Abel, and that the issue in dispute was the true worship of God. Because God accepted Abel’s animal sacrifice and rejected Cain’s offering consisting of the produce of the land, Cain became angry and killed his brother, Abel.

THE DARK FORCE PENDULUM

The plotline of human history and of the great controversy between the followers of Christ and the followers of Satan, is somewhat complex and twisted. And here is the reason: There is no genuine and lasting unity among the forces of Satan. Humans motivated and guided by selfish ambition and pride can never achieve the true bonding of hearts and minds—neither permanent unity of action, nor universal peace. Only on some rare occasions when coerced by a major external force (a powerful world ruler) or when attempting to defy a divine ordinance (building the tower of Babel), has the faithless human society achieved for a short period of time some semblance of unity and common purpose.

This lack of unity on the side of the dark force should not, how-



ever, lead us to a belief that the war between good and evil has ever diminished in its intensity. To the contrary, it only increases as the world history moves to its consummation. Although the human actors within Satan's army are generally in discord due to their various ideologies and interests, the polar opposites within that force arise and enter the world stage and then gradually wane just as the phases of the moon or the seasons in a year. These players only replace each other—they never relent. Thus, the war against God and His true followers never ceases.

This curious phenomenon might be illustrated by the swinging motion of a pendulum. A pendulum is a weight suspended from a pivot so that it can swing back and forth under the influence of gravity. Like a pendulum that never rests at its equilibrium position due to the gravitational force, so Satan's antag-

onistic force never leaves his army in a resting position. It rather makes the dark force oscillate in various amplitudes from one extreme position to another. Let us explore briefly this puzzling historic pattern and discover two things: Where is the pendulum right now and in which direction is it moving?

THE APOCALYPTIC BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: DANIEL AND REVELATION

For the students of world history and its ultimate direction, the most interesting, most challenging, but also the most rewarding books in the Bible are the books of Daniel and Revelation. In these two books God reveals to humanity the entire course of world history in the form of prophecy. Here we find the inspired prophecies foretelling the future from the time a prophetic revelation was given to the record-

ing prophet until the end of the world. We call this type of prophetic utterance an apocalyptic prophecy because of its broad sweep of time, its focus on the cataclysmic events culminating in the second coming of Christ, and its unconditional nature (what was prophesied will surely come to pass). In this article we will not be able to offer even a cursory survey of the content of these two amazing books. Our focus will rather be on some apocalyptic prophecies that depict the evil forces in their pendulum-like historic movements as they oppose God and His people.

Every student of the apocalyptic prophecies must understand and apply some basic rules of interpretation in order to understand the meaning of the symbolic or figurative language employed by the prophet. One of the most important principles of biblical interpretation is the principle that the Bible interprets itself. Various figures of speech, including metaphors, similes, imagery, types, parallels, allegories, and analogies are used as teaching tools.

In 2 Peter 1:19–21 we read: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise

This curious phenomenon might be illustrated by the swinging motion of a pendulum.”

Sackcloth in the Old Testament was worn by individuals who were showing repentance. Therefore, these two witnesses preach for repentance—and their message will not be popular.

in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

In verse 20 particularly, we find support for the principle that the Bible interprets itself. This means that somewhere within the pages of the sacred Scripture the symbols, the time periods, and the geographic or personal names employed in symbolic texts are explained or defined. It is our task to search them out and place them together as a meaningful whole.

When we apply this fundamental principle together with some other principles of Bible interpretation, we can fruitfully explore the cryptic language of the apocalyptic prophecies and discover the existence and the work of Satan’s chief agents through whom he strives for world supremacy.

THE TWO DARK FORCES (BEASTS) OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The two most successful but ideologically opposed forces employed by Satan, particularly in the end time, are depicted in chapters 11 and 13 of Revelation, respectively. Although these two world superpowers derive their authority and deadly force from the same evil source, the human agents carrying out the principles and policies of these two powers are not the same. Consequently, these two powers can be and have been in a deadly struggle for world supremacy. Yet they both have one thing in common: They are opposed to God, His Word, and His people.

Let us introduce now these two

dark forces that are represented in the book of Revelation as the “beasts.” We find their description in chapter 11 of Revelation. In the text that we are about to explore, one force (beast) is introduced implicitly and the other one explicitly. It is beyond the scope of this article to provide a more complete interpretation of the relevant parts of this chapter. We will limit ourselves to presenting the basic meaning of the key verses and direct the reader to other sources for a more detailed exposition.

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt

them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will” (Revelation 11:3–6).

THE SUPREMACY OF THE FIRST EVIL FORCE: TWO WITNESSES, THE APOSTASY, AND DIVINE JUDGMENTS

These four verses cover a long period of time during which the first dark force ruled the world supremely. This period precedes the ascendance of the second evil force that will be introduced in verse 7.



During a long period extending over of 1,260 prophetic days or 1,260 actual years, God will empower His two witnesses to prophesy or to bear faithful witness, yet dressed in sackcloth.

What is the meaning of these cryptic words? Here is a brief interpretation. Much of the language in Revelation is borrowed and adapted from the Old Testament. A day in an apocalyptic prophecy stands for a calendar year of 360 days. Scriptural support for the principle that one year is represented by one prophetic day (year-day principle) is found in Numbers 14:34 and in Ezekiel 4:5, 6. Who are the two mysterious witnesses? We propose that God's two witnesses signify primarily the scriptural witness in the Old and New Testaments. The two witnesses are represented also as the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before God. This language is employed in the book of Zechariah 4:2, 3, although Zechariah saw only one lampstand and his two witnesses were evidently Joshua and Zerubbabel.

How do we know that the two witnesses in Revelation 11 represent the Scripture consisting of the Old and New Testaments? The word "witness" in the New Testament is derived from the Greek verb *martyreo* which means to be a witness or to bear witness. From this comes our word *martyr*, a person who in life and death testifies to or bears witness to his or her faith in God.

In John 5:39 (RSV) Jesus said of the Old Testament scriptures: "it is they that bear witness to me." In His prophetic speech on the Mount of Olives, Christ said: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations, and then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14). Christ obviously referred in this place to the New Testament.

John says in Revelation 11 that the two witnesses were "olive trees" and "lampstands." In biblical times the oil of the olive was used as the primary fuel for lamps. How do we apply this symbolism to the Bible? In Psalm 119 verses 105 and 130 say respectively: "Thy word is a lamp

unto my feet, and a light unto my path. . . . The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

By putting together the available scriptural evidence we can see clearly that the "two witnesses" which are the "two olive trees and the two candlesticks [lampstands]" refer to the Holy Scriptures consisting of the Old and New Testaments. These two scriptural witnesses bear witness to Jesus Christ and serve to God's people by providing spiritual light represented by the two olive trees (olive oil) that supply fuel to the lampstands.

We are also told that these two witnesses will prophecy for 1,260 days/years "clothed in sackcloth." Sackcloth in the Old Testament was worn by individuals who were showing repentance (Jonah 3:6-9; Daniel 9:3). Therefore, these two witnesses preach for repentance and their message will not be popular, since those who heard their message would be in "torment," as we will see in Revelation 11:10.

Revelation 11:5, 6 use the imagery of the historic events involving two great spiritual and national leaders—Elijah and Moses. Elijah brought heavenly "fire" to consume military units commissioned to execute him, and further, he also did "shut heaven" so that there was no rain for three and a half years (1 Kings 17; Luke 4:25; 2 Kings 1). Moses was an instrument in God's hands endowed with a power "over waters to turn them into blood," effectively bringing one "plague" after another upon Egypt. We also recall that Moses and Elijah appeared together with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8).

We conclude that Elijah and Moses, representing the Old Testament witness, stand here for the retributive judgments executed by the word of God upon the rebellious world during the 1,260-year reign of the first dark force. We will identify this force as an apostate Christian church which exercised control over the political leaders in the Dark Ages from A.D. 538 until 1798. We may ask a question: How do these two witnesses—the Old and New

Testaments—have power to send plagues? The answer to this question is found in Revelation 22:18: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Tampering with the word of God either by distorting or opposing it by adding to it or taking away from it, will surely be visited by the plagues threatened upon the apostate worshipers as recorded in the book of Revelation. Whoever rejects the message of love written in the Holy Scriptures will be deprived of the protection of the loving God and will bring upon themselves the terrible plagues.

Since the first months of 2020, the entire world has been reeling from the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Millions have been infected by this human coronavirus and hundreds of thousands have died. The larger part of the world has been under a massive lockdown which seriously disrupted the world economy and affected almost every aspect of individual and community life. This pandemic, however, pales in comparison with the plagues that afflicted the world in the Middle Ages. From the Plague of Justinian (A.D. 541) to the bubonic plague known as the Black Death (1347), and some other plagues that ravaged Europe and the Mediterranean Basin, historians estimate that between one third to over one half of the European population perished. But infectious diseases were not the only plague during the Middle Ages. The Great Famine of 1315-1317 caused the death of untold millions in most of Europe over an extended number of years and had a major impact on the economic growth and prosperity enjoyed until that time.

THE EMERGENCE AND REIGN OF THE SECOND DARK FORCE (BEAST)

It is amazing to discover the accuracy with which the book of Revelation anticipates and plots world history. The very next verses in Revelation 11 introduce the second

dark force that will play a decisive role in world affairs at the time of the end.

Revelation 11:7, 8 says: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

The second beast introduced here appears on the world scene at about the same time when the two witnesses we spoke about shall have finished their testimony. We have learned that these two witnesses prophesied clothed in sackcloth for a period of 1,260 days or years. That period of suppression of the Holy Scriptures and of their testimony ended in 1798 when the political arm of the dominant Christian church became incapacitated. In February of 1798, the French revolutionary army had taken captive the head of the Roman hierarchical church, the pope Pius VI, thereby terminating the temporal power of the church. We will speak more of this event later when we identify the same power as the sea beast of Revelation 13.

You may wonder by now who is the "beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit"? This new evil power appears to be different from the dark force we just encountered in Revelation 11:3–6, which ruled the world for 1,260 days or 42 months, as recorded in Revelation 13:5. Since the first beast we have just surveyed sustained a mortal wound at the end of 1,260 years (Revelation 13:3), that beast cannot at the same time ascend from the bottomless pit or abyss. Referring to the new entity, Revelation 11:7 uses the Greek word *therion* which means a wild, ferocious animal, or a beast. As we have learned from Daniel 7:17, a beast in the apocalyptic prophecies stands for a kingdom, a state vested with military force. Therefore, we need to identify another major dark force that will appear on the world stage sometime at the end of the 18th century.

As we will see in the following verses of Revelation 11, the second

dark force will exhibit extraordinary hostility toward the two witnesses that are identified as the Holy Scriptures. We have no doubts, therefore, that this new beast or political force was an agent of Satan that he used to destroy the Bible, its divine truths, and its witness to Christ. A bottomless pit or an abyss stands in the Bible for the abode of the fallen angels, the demons (see Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Bottomless pit is mentioned also in association with the fifth trumpet (Revelation 9:1–11) as a place from which come out smoke, demonic locusts, and horsemen, that torment men for a period of five prophetic months. This demonic horde is under the command of a king—the angel of the bottomless pit who is no other than Satan himself. From this abyss, Satan sends out his agents to harass, persecute and destroy God's saints, or those who dwell in heaven. Interestingly, Satan himself will be chained to this abyss during the millennium (Revelation 20:1, 2).

Without any hesitation we identify in the beast of Revelation 11:7 that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit as Revolutionary France. It is truly a fascinating experience to unlock the symbolic code of the apocalyptic prophecy and then to discover how that prophecy finds its fulfillment in the actual historic events. No other event in the modern history of the Western world has had such a dramatic, profound, and lasting effect on the course of the Western Civilization—and ultimately the history of the world—as did the French Revolution. More than any other single factor, it changed the world by giving birth to the spirit of modern nationalism, modern universal conscription, and establishment of large national armies. The French Revolution, spreading over a period of ten years (1789 to 1799), introduced to France democracy, citizens' equality before the law, abolished the privileges of nobility, made an end to royal dictatorship by "divine right."

At the same time, the French Revolution served as an inspiration and a catalyst for a series of political and social movements that

pushed the continental Europe and the regions beyond into a sea of revolutionary activities. Professor R.R. Palmer of Princeton University, a respected specialist in the period, summarizing the essence of the entire revolutionary period made this historical generalization: "It is argued that this whole civilization was swept in the last four decades of the eighteenth century by a single revolutionary movement, which manifested itself in different ways and with varying success in different countries, yet in all of them showed similar objectives and principles. . . . All of these agitations, upheavals, intrigues, and conspiracies were part of one great movement." It is noteworthy that Professor Palmer a few pages later made another statement confirming the validity of the biblical prophecy. Quoting from a work of a contemporary Polish revolutionary, Kollontay, he says: "The Polish revolutionary, Kollontay, in a book written after the failure of Kosciusko's uprising, declared that the whole period since 1750 was like an 'earthquake,' which had given 'a new aspect and a new importance to democracy.'" (Ibid., p. 17). In Revelation 11:13 John described the events of the revolutionary times with these words: "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell. . . ."

We will revisit this text and say more about its meaning in the second part of this article. We will explore the course of the French Revolution and its deadly combat with the two witnesses in the city "which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt." More light will be shed on the longstanding power struggle between the revolutionary movements sharing the worldview of the French Revolution and the dark force of the apostate Christianity. As this great battle unfolds before our eyes, we will indicate the current position of the dark force pendulum and the direction in which it is moving. *R*

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IS NOW THE TIME TO LEAVE THE CITIES?

... IT MAY NOT GET ANY EASIER!

Dwelling for the first 20 years of life within the city limits of Washington, D.C., I became familiar with many of the nice advantages of urban living—and the disadvantages as well. At that time, the nation’s capital of the USA had a population of about 700,000. Beyond were quiet suburbs and, further out, some farmland.

Today, the urban sprawl of the Washington metropolitan area has expanded to over 6.2 million inhabitants. But that’s not nearly as large as many other metropolitan areas such as Tokyo with over 32 million, followed by Seoul, Mexico City, New York City, Mumbai, Jakarta, São Paulo, and Delhi, each with well over 18 million.

HAVE RECENT EVENTS MADE CITY LIVING MORE PERILOUS?

Let’s consider a few factors that have impacted urban life in the past few years—and even months:

1. Higher risk of COVID-19 and other physical and mental/emotional maladies

“Those who live in cities may be forced into more confined spaces with strangers, thereby increasing their exposure to germs in the course of feeding themselves and their families. In fact, this is a major reason why New York City became the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak—the sheer number of people packed into several square miles made the virus easier to spread.”¹

“Density is a factor in this pandemic, as it has been in previous ones. The very same clustering of people that makes our great cities more innovative and productive also makes them, and us, vulnerable to infectious disease. . . .

“The density that transmits the virus is when people are crammed together in multifamily, multi-generational households or in factories or frontline service work in close physical proximity to one another or the public. Such density is why the earlier 1918 flu pandemic ravaged the working-class neighborhoods of industrial centers of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.”²

“Compared to rural residents, researchers have found that urbanites are 21 percent more likely to have

anxiety disorders and 39 percent more likely to have mood disorders. A 2017 meta-analysis also found that rates of the following mental health conditions were higher among those living in urban areas:

- PTSD [Post-traumatic stress disorder]
- anger management
- generalized anxiety disorder

“The same was true for more serious psychological disorders like schizophrenia and paranoia. . . .

“The constant stimulation of city life can propel the body into a stressful state, known as the fight-or-flight response. That can make us more vulnerable to mental health concerns, such as depression, anxiety, and substance use. This might help explain why 19.1 percent of Americans live with an anxiety disorder, while 6.7 percent have depression.

“City living can also chip away at your psychological immune system, which can be precarious for those with a family history of mental illness. According to psychologists, this environmental stress can increase their risk of developing a psychiatric condition, such as anxiety, depression, or bipolar disorder. . . .



“What’s more, young adults, especially millennials, often feel burnout—a stressful state of mental and physical exhaustion that can squeeze the joy out of life. . . .

“Not only can city life affect our mental well-being, it can also affect our physical health as well. A 2017 study suggests too much exposure to air pollution and city noise may cause damage to a person’s cardiovascular health.

“It seems traffic noise may interfere with sleep quality and cause cortisol, the stress hormone, to spike. Over time, elevated levels of this hormone can increase a person’s risk for developing cardiovascular disease. . . .

“Crowded city life can also make us more prone to contracting viruses, especially during cold and flu season. Studies have also found that people living in urban areas often eat too much processed and fast food, which puts them at greater risk for weight gain, high blood pressure, and diabetes.”³

2. Risks to the food supply chain

It stands to reason that the longer the supply chain, the more complicated the process of farm-to-table becomes.

According to an article in *Time* magazine, May 8, 2020, “The COVID-19 pandemic is profoundly disrupting the global food supply at nearly every level. Those problems, and the economic destruction caused by the virus, could have a devastating impact on the ability of people across the world to access

and afford food. At least 265 million people are at risk of going hungry in 2020, according to an estimate made by the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) in April—almost twice as many as in 2019. This is despite the fact that experts agree there should be enough food to feed the world this year. . . .

“‘The issue is more about food supply disruption rather than food shortages,’ Julie Howard, a senior adviser on global food security at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) tells TIME.”⁴

3. The threat of violence

This year has reminded us that under the legitimate banner of freedom of expression, angry people begin to express themselves in illegitimate and even violent ways, particularly when emboldened by a crowd. As of this writing, torching, looting, robbing, defacing, and/or seizing historic buildings and both public and private property, as well as the injuring and even murdering of innocent bystanders have become rampant in many large cities.

“New York City shootings have surged by more than 358% in mid-June when compared with the same time period from 2019, the violence erupting alongside the NYPD’s disbanding of anti-crime units, numerous sources reported.

“Across the five boroughs of New York, 74 people were wounded in the 55 shootings, a significant increase from the 12 shootings in 2019, NBC 4 reports.”⁵

This horrifying scene depicts just a small portion of the rampant lawlessness recently taking place in several dozen major cities—violent incidents that would have been unimaginable just a short time before.

Do we belong with or near such a crowd of people? Is such an environment safe? Is such an attitude wholesome? The followers of Christ are “to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:1, 2).

But when a mob gets riled up, calm reason quickly disintegrates and the Spirit of Jesus is grieved. That’s why we are warned, “**Make no friendship with an angry man;** and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul” (Proverbs 22:24, 25). [Emphasis added.]

Even when things may not be ideal in society, keeping in mind the way Christ handled matters is the Christian’s only safe model of behavior:

“The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. **Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses,** nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. **He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to**

the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart."⁶

This is why the prophecy about the Anointed One was that "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street" (Isaiah 42:2).

In the time of Jesus, many of the very ones who had been healed and blessed by His ministry evidently caught a strange fever at Golgotha. Apparently without thinking, in the passion of the moment, these suddenly joined in the perverse chorus that was yelling, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Such is the mentality of a mob.

WHY DO MANY STAY IN THE CITIES?

Let's face it: Career options and wages usually tend to be a lot more attractive in areas with more inhabitants. So, the enticing lure of urban life is strong, typically offering plentiful possibilities for prestigious positions and possessions. Yet, often at what expense?

"The pursuit of pleasure and amusement centers in the cities. Many parents who choose a city home for their children, thinking to give them greater advantages, meet with disappointment, and too late repent their terrible mistake. The cities of today are fast becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah. The many holidays encourage idleness. The exciting sports—theatergoing, horse racing, gambling, liquor-drinking, and reveling—stimulate every passion to intense activity. The youth are swept away by the popular current. Those who learn to love amusement for its own sake open the door to a flood of temptations. They give themselves up to social gaiety and thoughtless mirth, and their intercourse with pleasure lovers has an intoxicating effect upon the mind. They are led on from one form of dissipation to another, until they lose both the desire and the capacity for a life of usefulness. Their religious aspirations are chilled; their spiritual life is darkened. All the nobler faculties of the soul, all

that link man with the spiritual world, are debased."⁷

"Send the children to schools located in the city, where every phase of temptation is waiting to attract and demoralize them, and the work of character building is tenfold harder for both parents and children."⁸

"BUT I CAN'T NEGLECT MY CHILDREN'S FUTURE!"

True. But both for ourselves and for our children, "an expensive dwelling, elaborate furnishings, display, luxury, and ease, do not furnish the conditions essential to a happy, useful life. Jesus came to this earth to accomplish the greatest work ever accomplished among men. He came as God's ambassador, to show us how to live so as to secure life's best results. What were the conditions chosen by the infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and patient, glad service; the hour of study at His mother's side, with the open scroll of Scripture; the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries of nature; the study of creation and providence; and the soul's communion with God—these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus.

"So with the great majority of the best and noblest men of all ages. Read the history of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, of Moses, David,


and Elisha. Study the lives of men of later times who have most worthily filled positions of trust and responsibility, the men whose influence has been most effective for the world's uplifting.

"How many of these were reared in country homes. They knew little of luxury. They did not spend their youth in amusement. Many were forced to struggle with poverty and hardship. They early learned to work, and their active life in the open air gave vigor and elasticity to all their faculties. Forced to depend upon their own resources, they learned to combat difficulties and to surmount obstacles, and they gained courage and perseverance. They learned the lessons of self-reliance and self-control. Sheltered in a great degree from evil associations, they were satisfied with natural pleasures and wholesome companionships. They were simple in their tastes and temperate in their habits. They were governed by principle, and they grew up pure and strong and true. When called to their lifework, they brought to it physical and mental power, buoyancy of spirit, ability to plan and execute, and steadfastness in resisting evil, that made them a positive power for good in the world.

"Better than any other inheritance of wealth you can give to your children will be the gift of a healthy body, a sound mind, and a noble character."⁹

Time with our children is the best investment we can offer them. Many young people who are now addicted to devices and question-





To ‘replenish the earth’ means to spread out healthfully and intelligently utilize the vast resources of the planet—not stack up in piles on top of each other.

able acquaintances would be refreshed and renewed to experience precious moments with their parents for whose companionship they may be starved, often due to the hectic pace of city life. The restoration of the family (see Malachi 4:5, 6) begins with self-denial on the part of the parents, not the children. Our children cannot be expected to conjure up a degree of responsive love and attention **toward** us that they have not been provided with **by** us.

WHAT WAS GOD’S ORIGINAL PLAN—AND HOW HAS IT BEEN REJECTED BY THE MASSES?

We read in Genesis 2:8, that “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” Country living in tune with creation was always the ideal environment for our spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. The human race was clearly directed to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). To replenish the earth means to spread out healthfully and intelligently utilize the vast resources of the planet—not stack up in piles on top of each other.

In stark opposition to this wise plan, the first city was built by Cain—the first murderer on earth (see Genesis 4:17).

Another renowned city from early human history was built on the plain of Shinar, where, after the great flood, rebellious men thought to “outsmart” their Creator by try-

ing to build a city and tower that would be higher than the clouds in case another flood might come to destroy the earth. Yet in Genesis 9:15, the Heavenly Father had assuredly promised not to destroy the earth with another flood. But those who devised this project believed neither His promises nor His warnings.

What were the details behind that city built on the plain of Shinar? We read in Genesis 11:4, “They said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” The ego thrill of trying to make a name for themselves and perpetuate their defiant philosophy was speedily halted when their communication network was divinely jammed up and their project arrested. “So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel” (Genesis 11:8, 9).

Likewise, in our day, the same spirit that prompted the tower of Babel prevails in modern culture. Prophecy tells us that spiritual “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Revelation 18:2).

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife

and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:12–14).

WILL IT SOON BECOME MORE DIFFICULT TO LEAVE THE CITIES?

Under the COVID-19 lockdown triggering a mass exodus from the large cities of India, the syndicated news outlet Bloomberg reported that “in small groups and large crowds, through inner-city lanes and down interstate highways, hundreds of thousands of India’s poorest are slowly making a desperate journey on foot back to their villages in a mass exodus. . . .

“When there is nothing left to eat, what should we stay here and do?” [Neha] Kashyap said, her eyes welling up with tears. ‘The government says stay where you are. Tell us what will we eat? How will we feed our children? How will we pay our rent? We have to try and get away.’ . . .

“If she didn’t get her family on one of the buses [leaving the city of Delhi], Kashyap’s only option was to keep walking toward her hometown some 530 kilometers away—longer than the distance between London and Paris.

“Whatever little our parents have, they will keep us alive—we have to go no matter what,’ she said. ‘Let me tell you one thing: More people will die of hunger than from this disease.’ ”¹⁰

Nearly 115 years ago, the American writer Ellen G. White foresaw:



“Erelong there will be such strife and confusion in the cities that those who wish to leave them will not be able. We must be preparing for these issues.”¹¹

HOW SOON IS SOON?

Jesus gave clear warnings with regard to both the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the final events at the close of earth’s history in a twofold prophecy: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes” (Matthew 24:15–18).

In A.D. 70

“When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, judgment was to follow so quickly that those who would escape must make no delay. He who chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down through his house into the street; but he must speed his way from roof to roof until he reach the city wall, and be saved ‘so as by fire.’ Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to re-

turn for the outer garment laid aside while they should be toiling in the heat of the day. **They must not hesitate a moment**, lest they be involved in the general destruction.”¹²

Not a single Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem because the believers had taken heed to the words of Jesus and fled as soon as they saw the Roman banners.

IN THE APPROACHING CRISIS

“It is no time now for God’s people to be fixing their affections or laying up their treasure in the world. The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly.”¹³

So, we see here three steps:

1. At the Sunday decree, to flee the large cities, never to return. (If you still have a house there to sell at that time, it will be too late. You can’t even run back for your clothes, much less begin to put a house on the market.)
2. Leaving the smaller towns.
3. Secluded places among the mountains. (With modern thermal imaging, plus whatever other technology is likely in place by then, only the intervention of the Omnipotent One is able to shelter His persecuted children on the planet when the crisis escalates to such a level. “He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure” (Isaiah 33:16). See also Psalms 31:19, 20; 91:1–10; *Early Writings*, p. 56; and *Maranatha*, p. 270.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE THRUST INTO PRISON FOR SHARING THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL IN THE CITIES AND THEREFORE CANNOT ESCAPE?

“The Lord knows all about His faithful servants who for His sake are lying in prison or who are banished to lonely islands. He comforts them with His own presence. When for the truth’s sake the believer stands at the bar of unrighteous tribunals, Christ stands by his side. All the reproaches that fall upon him, fall upon Christ. Christ is condemned over again in the person of His disciple. When one is incarcerated in prison walls, Christ ravishes the heart with His love.”¹⁴

IS THERE HOPE FOR ME?

“To parents who are living in the cities, the Lord is sending the warning cry, Gather your children into your own houses; gather them away from those who are disregarding the commandments of God, who are teaching and practising evil. Get out of the cities as fast as possible. Parents can secure small homes in the country, with land for cultivation, where the children will not be surrounded with the corrupting influences of city life. **God will help His people to find such homes outside the cities.**”¹⁵ That means you. That means me. What a mighty Saviour we serve! Amen! *R*

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IMMUNITY ON THE MICROSCOPIC LEVEL



THE MICROSCOPIC BATTLE

When I was 12 years old, one summer afternoon my biology teacher proposed an experiment that would transform my goals and entire perception of the world for the rest of my life. For the first time, I was introduced to an instrument known as the microscope.

Our assignment was to add a pinch of wildflowers to a cup of water. After two days, we used a pipette to drop a sample of that water onto a glass slide. The result was fascinating! Before my very eyes, that tiny drop of water, through the lens of a microscope, became an amazing world with tiny beings exploding with life as I had never seen before, and of which I had known nothing. Some of the beings were called paramecia, others eukaryotes, still others amoebas. In that one little drop I found an existing universe of many living unicellular organisms,

which spend all their existence in a single cell.

In the coming days, I also saw cells which did not exist solitarily but rather were organized in groups of cells, collaborated in an organized fashion to take on a special function, such as the development of a little blade of onion. Such specialized organisms are referred to as multicellular organisms. I discovered that multicellular organisms are found both in the plant species and animal species.

But my overwhelming surprise came when I learned that the unicellular organisms were created to decompose the multicellular organisms and that sometimes there is a war between them for resources.

The apostle Paul wrote through divine inspiration that the “base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are”

(1 Corinthians 1:28). This actually anticipates what the renowned French scientist Louis Pasteur would later write in a letter dated March 22, 1863, in the time of the last French monarch, Napoleon III: “When God created the world He put in every organism, however small it be, germs which can decompose and [for these] decomposed elements to be reintegrated in the environment to be used,” continuing that “God did not grant this discovery as an illusion but as a reality and a vast field of knowledge with real applicability in all the areas of our lives.”¹

PASTEUR’S DISCOVERY

It is very interesting to observe how the Pasteur germ theory transformed. Although Pasteur made the discovery that all infections are caused by an infectious agent which is contagious and easily transmis-

sible, he also anticipated that some organisms were better hosts to the rapid multiplication of these infectious agents. Most of his observations were made from studying the process of fermentation. He noticed that certain fermented wines spoiled more rapidly than others, and linked the quality and health of the mother-vine to the ultimate quality of the grape and its potential to spoil or not. Likewise, he asserted that epidemic maladies affect those who are most vulnerable when in contact with the germ.² Later, as he studied diseases in silkworms, Pasteur further noticed that heredity also was an influence to the strength or weakness of the silkworm. And finally, towards the end of his career, Pasteur also adopted the homeostasis (balance) theory of “the father of physiology,” Claude Bernard, arguing that the balance of the internal organism is able to withstand the attack and invasion of an infectious germ. Louis Pasteur recognized the truth behind the workings of Claude Bernard when on his deathbed he stated, “*Bernard is right. The microbe is nothing. The environment is everything.*”

We must have a clearer understanding regarding certain infectious agents which have the potential to trigger an epidemic anywhere and everywhere, but the disease may or may not develop, depending on the “field,” meaning the health of the body which is being attacked. This assertion of Claude Bernard and Pasteur set the platform for a new field of study which premiered in recent years. In our days, this field of science is called Epigenetics, the study of environmental factors which strengthen or weaken our DNA.

VACCINATION

Although Pasteur discovered the principle of vaccination, the father of the vaccine was actually a simple, countryside doctor from England, Edward Jenner. Approximately 100 years prior to Pasteur, on May 14, 1796, Jenner began the first studies on immunization. He inoculated James Phipps, the eight-year-old

son of his gardener, with cowpox-matter which he collected from the infected cowpox blister of an English milkmaid, Sarah Nelmes. Phipps had a mild case of cowpox and soon recovered. Months later, Jenner exposed Phipps a number of times to the smallpox virus, but Phipps never developed smallpox.

Then Edward Jenner inoculated the boy for the second time, and still he developed no infection. Thus Edward Jenner deduced that a mild cowpox infection seemed to protect humans against the highly contagious and fatal human smallpox. The word vaccine, and vaccination, actually comes from the name for a pox virus—the cowpox virus, vaccinia.

Edward Jenner had a lifelong struggle with the thought of whether or not his research conclusions were sound, as he often observed patients who had received the “cow-pox” vaccine, later develop smallpox, although in a milder form. He also caused some confusion in the scientific world, triggering a mixup between two related viruses: *Poxviridae bovis* (cowpox) with *Poxvirus variola* (human smallpox). Although Jenner advanced the idea of immunization, he never expanded his studies with regard to the human immune system, as to why the human body developed resistance to human smallpox after its exposure to a weaker version of cattle smallpox. He simply believed that using the cattle virus for a “vaccine” could prevent smallpox in humans—which is impossible because these are two different viruses. For this reason, Jenner was never able to synthesize a completely effective vaccine for the eradication of small pox. The results of his haphazard

experimentations were inevitable. These included the death of his own son, who was injected with a mixture of cowpox and small pox at 10 years of age, and then died at 21 years old with senile dementia, a 5-year-old boy who died by injection and a 8-month-pregnant woman who spontaneously aborted her baby that had specific pustules on his whole body—failures which he never acknowledged. This confusion was never even officially recognized, although more than 200 years have since passed.³

SOME MEASURE OF REAL SUCCESS

In expanding on his previous theories, Louis Pasteur used meticulous discernment to disprove the popular theory that microbes spontaneously appeared from non-living matter. His research in the 1880's demonstrated that if wines are heated up to 131–140°F (55–60°C) and tightly sealed, they could be preserved for a very long time without alteration. He thus proved that it's through contamination that microbes were introduced and that thermal treatments could inactivate these microbes.

This discovery set the foundation for Pasteur's future studies with fowl cholera, a disease plaguing chickens. He used heat to warm the bacteria, *Cholera bacilli*, to a certain temperature, and noticed that when the chickens received the weakened form of cholera, they did not die. He was not satisfied with that discovery, but later inoculated those same chickens with the aggressive form of fowl cholera and still the chickens did not die, yet they did manifest a less aggressive form of the disease.

Unfortunately, in the years that followed, the later vaccines were not what Pasteur had discovered.



Pasteur certainly was not the first scientist to discover that a weakened form of the disease could provide immunity, but he was the first to take the process to the laboratory. Thus he set the foundation of the development of “live” vaccines, such as the pneumococcus vaccine which contains a weakened form of the bacteria, pneumococcus, for immunity against severe pneumonia, meningitis and sepsis in the young.

Rabies was another particular obstacle for Pasteur, because unlike cholera, which was caused by a bacteria, rabies was caused by a virus, an organism much smaller and not identifiable at that time. Pasteur obtained spinal matter from rabid dogs, and introduced it into the brain of rabbits through the process of trepanation, or creating a burr hole in the cranium of rabbits. He then found a way to obtain spinal matter from these infected rabbits and allowed them to “dry

out” or dehydrate in natural air. These dehydrated spine-fragments he would later introduce into 50 healthy dog brains which never developed rabies. This discovery was just in time for his first human patient on July 6, 1885. A nine-year-old boy arrived with fourteen bites from a rabid dog. Pasteur inoculated the boy with material from a rabid rabbit spinal cord that had been dehydrated for 15 days. The child survived and was declared completely healed a few months later. In September 1885 the experiment was repeated on a shepherd, Jean-Baptiste Jupille, badly bitten by a mad dog, who was also healed a few months later. So, on October 26, 1885, Pasteur presented his meticulously detailed experiments to the academy of science in Paris, and declared that 726 persons bitten by mad dogs had been saved by injection. He therefore proposed to the institution not only to treat

rabies, but to research and use the technique of pasteurization. The institute founded in 1887 was then named the Pasteur Institute of Paris.

PASTEUR’S CLEAR GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE INOCULATION

The rules for inoculation were clear:

- At the appearance of a contagious disease, the infectious agent must be isolated.
- The virulence would decrease as temperature would increase, due to humidity or lack of nutrients.
- Inoculation was introduced to people during an epidemic, with the exception of small children and elderly, since they were considered highly vulnerable to develop the disease from the immunization.
- Fulfill the need for local epidemiological labs capable of producing vaccines locally, quickly and actively in the endemic area, discouraging the use of bacterial or viral strains obtained from other geographic zones.

We can conclude that vaccination was not done randomly. It was not applied to the whole population; it was not done with random microbes, but rather only to those involved in the epidemic, and it excluded the very young and elderly. Pasteur’s vaccine was not made from viruses with low virulence using heavy metals or from bio-engineered bacteria or viral RNA. He used the whole virus or bacteria, employing natural methods to attenuate them or decrease their virulence. It is interesting to note that although science is very particular, the principles stated by Pasteur and his meticulous labor were and still are recognized, and critics are not able to find any breach in his discovery. Moreover, medical science has credited him with discovering the process by which the immune system produce specific antigens of immunity in response to an infectious agent, which can help the immune system memory to attack

the microbe if it were contacted a second time.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Unfortunately, in the years that followed, the later vaccines were not what Pasteur had discovered. This idea became part of a profit-oriented system of corporate greed. Vaccines that were produced in different centers were sold in other places around the world. These vaccines started to incorporate viral and bacterial fragments which were neutralized by using heavy metals, and they were injected to little children whose immune systems were not ready to form specific antibodies to the specific vaccine, and from here began to appear chronic allergies, auto-immune diseases, and chronic degenerative and inflammatory diseases.

Today, after years of intense studies of physiology, it is known that there are three lines of defense to the body that protects us from the pathogens which are around us and with which the body learns to live in a symbiosis. There are some microbes with which the bodies in different parts of the globe have never been exposed—and therefore for those persons traveling into those areas, vaccines are often necessary. This usually occurs for the benefit of adults. For example, the yellow fever vaccine protects travelers going to endemic regions. In a healthy adult, if this vaccine is taken once, it can offer protection that lasts 10 years—although this, too, involves some risks which are to be assumed.

UNDERSTANDING OUR NATURAL BARRIERS

The first natural barrier to protect our bodies against pathogenic agents is represented by tissue factors, such as: constant shedding of skin, skin acidity, mucous membranes, mucus production, digestive enzymes, and non-pathogenic microbial species, also known as normal flora, present from the oral mucosa to the colon.

The second barrier is represented by humoral factors (from blood: peroxidases—those that trigger fe-

ver by the action of thermal centers from the hypothalamus, raising the body temperature to the level where the invaders can't survive), and interferon, the complement system.

The third line of defense is the cell-mediated immune system. This involves phagocytic cells: polymorphonuclear leukocytes (PMN), and mononucleocytes (macrophages) which are part of the white cells (leukocytes and granulocytes).

Approximately 90% of the body's infections can be recognized and combated by the immune system of the newborn baby.⁴ This means that these soldiers fight with the invaders, or at least recognize when a cell of the body becomes malignant or has been attacked by a virus, due to the fact that it does not respond to the special chemical salute.

HOW DOES THIS PROCESS WORK IN YOUNG CHILDREN?

The newborn's immune system is not fully developed until month 2 or 3 of life. However, if a newborn's immune system meets a certain microbe in the early stages of infancy, it will activate the necessary mechanisms to develop a strong defense mechanism through close collaboration with all the three lines of defense aforementioned. The unfortunate thing is that this close collaborative process is circumvented

through the process of vaccination, since the first and second barriers are untrained.

There are cells of the immune system which are supposed to "take a picture" of the microbe-invader. These are cell-mediated defenders, known as polymorphonuclear leukocytes and macrophages. These cells will pass the information to the T lymphocytes which use dendritic cells from the lymph nodes, to memorize the antigen. Then the T-helper cells give this photographic information to the B lymphocytes, which will produce specific antibodies against the infection and develops into humoral immunity. This process of developing humoral immunity takes three days. This is why we usually feel better after the third day of disease.

Other microbe invaders will produce different B lymphocytes and different antibodies. Some T and B lymphocytes have a memory strictly used to differentiate the difference between normal self-cells and the nonself-cells (those that are infected or have been malignantly transformed) in the body. The maximum level of T lymphocytes are activated on the 6th–8th day after the infection, when the invader is defeated and the disease is healing.⁵

This is the basis of present antigens in the form of vaccines to the immune system to develop a memo-





The widespread controversy surrounding modern vaccines requires us to investigate this subject with more depth than ever was needed before. . . .

ry and heightened awareness in case of future exposure. But it is illogical to treat a problem that doesn't exist. Instead, it is logical to take the problem and to find the solution. That's exactly what Pasteur proposed.

In the case of an epidemic, after following Pasteur's protocol of using natural substances, naturally inactivating them and harmlessly inoculating them in the population at risk would be far preferable to developing 1,000 vaccines thinking that perhaps sometime we will meet with that infectious agent. This will lead to unnecessary exhaustion of the immune system and produces stocks of antibodies which might never be used, thus weakening the body's ability to face relevant and active immune system attacks.

The immune system of a baby, especially the cell-mediated component—is in full development when the vaccines start to be administered, at the age of 2–3 months. Until recently, vaccinations have stimulated the humoral immune system, (which forms antibodies). But recently, there are some vaccines which are recommended which stimulate the cell-mediated immune system. This leads to an exaggerated stimulation of the cell-mediated component which can lead to auto-immune disease even in adulthood, a side-effect well known to immunologists.⁶ For example, it

is generally accepted that adult allergic respiratory disease result from an excessive cell-mediated activation against environmental allergens.⁷ In the infant, this imbalance between the humoral and the cellular immune system is broken and the entire immune system of the baby will have to suffer.⁸ The autoimmune diseases provoked by vaccines are chronic disease: Childhood Type-1 diabetes, bronchial asthma, Celiac Disease, Crohn's disease, ADHD, Autism syndrome, and many more. The sudden death of infants is the most serious postvaccine complication, also referred to as sudden death syndrome (SIDS), which has been linked to the DTP vaccine (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis). In Japan, SIDS rates were drastically reduced once the DTP vaccine was no longer administered to the infant, but rather at the age of two years, when the immune system is more mature.⁹

Even though the side effects to combined vaccines are well known—in the form of more or less aggressive responses; and the impossibility to recognize which specific vaccine in these combinations caused the side effect, government laws require parents to vaccinate children with 5, 6 or 10 vaccines combined in one shot.

For example, the vaccine DTP-HIB, a combination of four vaccines,

causes serious reactions, including seizures and for the baby to cry nonstop for 3 hours, known as “encephalitic screaming.” Encephalitic screaming (also known as the encephalitic cry) shows a post-vaccine side effect that can provoke acute encephalitis, post vaccination demyelination, and finally Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder syndrome, autism, and many other severe neurologic effects. The rates of these side effects were 10 times more frequent than in the case of the simpler vaccine DTP.¹⁰

The hexavaccine “hexavac” (DTaP, IPV, HBV, Hib) can provoke more secondary effects (fever, sleepiness), than the pentavaccine “Pentavac.”¹¹ Doctors recognize that when the adverse reactions will appear after the pentavaccine or hexavaccine we will not know which elements provoked it.¹²

The American Academy of Pediatrics has observed that “the reactions and potential side effects of the combined antigens have not yet been determined. Since there is the potential for physical and chemical interaction among the vaccine components and the buffers and preservatives, the immunogenicity of each component needs to be addressed to determine whether these are similar to and as effective as the components given individually.”¹³



We must ask ourselves, were these studies ever done? If so, where are they published and where can they be found? But despite these issues, children continue to be inoculated with penta-, hexa- or even more complex vaccine combinations.

In addition to the risk incurred by cross immune response (to the multiple antigens in the combined vaccine, the effect of adjuvants and preservatives in the vaccine is also well known to cause adverse immune responses.¹⁴

Adjuvants are substances which attract the immune response to the site of the injection. Some of the most known adjuvants are aluminum hydroxide, aluminum phosphate, and potassium aluminium sulphate. These adjuvants increase attract inflammatory factors and immune system cells to the injection site to improve the immune response to the vaccine.¹⁵

The response and magnitude of side effects in any human being to vaccines is largely based on the genetic component, or as Pasteur used to say “the field.”

As an example, adult-onset inflammatory joint disease and rheumatoid arthritis, as a reaction to the Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccine are higher in individuals who already have several genetically active

markers on their HLA gene (human leukocyte antigen).¹⁶

I would also like to highlight that heavy metals from vaccines, as well as metals found in cosmetic and dental products can also trigger autoimmune and inflammatory diseases.¹⁷

This is a vast and difficult study to tackle.

CONCLUSION

As a medical doctor and surgeon, I would like to conclude by saying that vaccines as initially proposed and developed by Louis Pasteur, saved many lives throughout the years, and revolutionized the study of medicine for many years to come. Pasteur’s scientific rigor born out of good faith and the fear of God showed his research to be useful and scientifically tested. He emphasized not only on the quality of inoculum, or the vaccine, but also the health of the “field,” or the body which was going to be vaccinated. Unfortunately, as occurred with Alexander Nobel’s discovery of dynamite, when egocentric, materialistic, capitalist and ungodly people without morals or the fear of God, gain control, the result is a superficial, careless, and distorted end result. The modern-day production and mass administration of vaccination is reckless and has become a hazard to our health and that of our children. We see the end results in our modern world in ever-increasing chronic diseases, autoimmune disorders, and chronic inflammatory syndromes that are often incurable, incapacitating, or— even worse— fatal.

Although some vaccines can be useful in some limited situations, we need to be very cautious and intelligent with regards to how and why to accept them (for example, a rabies vaccine for a patient bitten by a rabid dog).

I believe there is a moral duty to declare that God has gifted us with a well-equipped immune system that can successfully face every infection— whether it be bacterial, fungal, viral, or prion— by finding the right solution for our issue and watching the cells and the self tex-

ture of the nonself. It is absolutely unnecessary to offer our body multiple vaccines, if the need or the time requires it. However, it is indeed our responsibility to strengthen the immune system and to keep it in perfect health in order to be protected. For this reason, I urgently encourage the careful reading and study of the following books: *The Ministry of Healing*, *Medical Ministry*, *Healthful Living*, written by Ellen G. White. These books are beacons of light sent to us through divine inspiration by the Greatest Physician who ever existed— the Lord Jesus Christ. In these testimonies we find balanced solutions for strengthening the immune, endocrine, and nervous systems.

It is also our moral obligation and responsibility to be knowledgeable regarding everything that enters our body. Knowing that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, we should be prudent with regard to each type of vaccine, becoming aware of what are the possible side effects and the risks *vs.* benefits.

May the Lord help and give us His wisdom as described in Proverbs 8, that we may stay strong and not be manipulated— and that our “whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). *R*

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BY Liviu Tudoroiu



CONTROL YOUR MIND V S . MIND CONTROL

One of the most fundamental problems we face today is the inability to properly manage our emotions. Too often we fall in the trap of our own “bad moods” when our emotions overthrow the reasoning process and make our life miserable and somewhat senseless.

Is there any way out of this problem? Is there any hope for the people that are overburdened with the complexities of this life? Is there any pattern that can lead to a meaningful purpose?

If we do a personal investigation in today’s society, it will not take much to discover that we are living in an **emotionally-oriented world**. Music and its lyrics with specific messages gear both the youth and adults toward an unpleasant emotional conflict.

“Let your heart lead you,” “Live the moment,” “You hurt my feelings,” “You broke my heart,” (and the list continues), show that our

world is composed of prodigal sons and daughters that are seeking compassion, being far away from the presence of our Eternal Father.

The article you are reading is intended to meet the needs of a class of people that is really seeking for eternal happiness. How important is to control our feelings and emotions? Is that even possible? Has there ever been a moment when such a thought has crossed your mind?

When I was young, I believed that it was normal to let my emotions—and implicitly my thoughts—to fly everywhere. I did not think for a second that I could control my thoughts and emotions—until I found a very interesting statement written by a 19th-century author: “It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray.”¹

This statement fell on me like thunder. I never believed that I

would ever be able to achieve such a feat as to control my thoughts and emotions. I did not even conceive that such a thing would ever be possible. However, after reflecting deeper on the subject, I was determined to try. It was not easy. Later, I happened to stumble upon another text of the same nature that encouraged me to go ahead in my attempt to control my thoughts, emotions and feelings: “Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise.”²

If we go step by step on the pattern of the subject, we realize that, first, it’s our responsibility to control our thoughts and feelings—and after that, the actions which are the result of our thoughts and emotions. But after we manage to control them, our mind becomes very selective and our thinking will reflect the individuality of a free man. People that cannot control their thoughts and emotions are unconsciously in a state of slavery.

Many blame circumstances or maybe the fact that life is not just. Some people blame disappointments and other “x” factors, and that is why most of us abandon the contest. The apostle Paul emphasizes the question: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Romans 8:35). He then mentions circumstances from his own experience: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38, 39).

Even though the text is a couple of thousands of years old, it is still very real and matches the needs of today’s society. “A man at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable.”³

In recent years, medical science and other branch-related sciences have analyzed the adjustment of the human mind to the speed of century and to the stress that occurs as a consequence: According to a recent report, it looks like “13% of Americans take antidepressants.”⁴

FAR FROM “THE GOOD OLD DAYS”

Positive thinking became a significant point of discussion only about 70 years ago. Before then, the country people would have a little bench to rest on after coming in from the field, taking time to converse with the neighbors and socialize in a decent spirit. Today, to say “Hi” to your neighbor makes you look strange.

In those days, general transportation was done with horses for the “first class” people (or cattle for the “economy class”). In spite of these means, our forefathers were always on time. Today we have replaced the horse speed of 15 miles per hour with nice, fancy cars, and yet we are late to our meetings and our business much of the time.

In those days, our grandparents would not secure the doors when they went to work. Today we have security doubled by video surveillance. The world is changing rapidly, and the problem is that we cannot keep up with the speed. What is sad is that in this marathon for comfort, the human race is losing its human qualities.

We lose our temper more often, we cannot control our anger and form a very sick society of individuals, walking on the streets as a multitude lost in an immensely cold, concrete empire. Studies show that a five-minute episode of anger is so stressful that it can impair your immune system for more than six hours. All of these trigger health issues that can lead to more serious problems such as heart attacks and stroke. Today’s medical science links the relationship between positive thinking and good health, underlining more and more the fact that being nicer is healthier while hate often decreases the quality of life. Stress is believed to be a serious element in the birth and development of illnesses, starting with insomnia and digestive disorders, and eventually leading to cancer.

Kindness is chemical. When we turn our hatred into love—or at least, kindness, our brain releases chemicals such as dopamine, which can improve our mood. On a biochemical level, it is perceived that the good feeling we get is due to elevated levels of the brain’s natural form of morphine and heroin, which we know as endogenous opioids. They generate a high level of dopamine, so we get our good mood or natural good disposition.

“We all seek a path to happiness,” says Dr. Waguih William IsHak, a professor of psychiatry at Cedars-Sinai. “Practicing kindness toward others is one we know works.”⁵

But what we need to realize is that acts of kindness must be repeated till they become a habit. When that happens, we are born again. New thinking will generate new people. Yes, **born to serve.** Every act of kindness sustains our

positiveness for a while—that is why we need a repetition of that act of kindness to give us a boost for the day. Consequently, these acts of kindness will **change our nature** entirely and transform us into better people.

Somehow the world of modern science is drawing closer to the Scripture, forced by the power of human reality nearer to the initial design of the Creator. At this stage, science is very interested in regard to how we should interact with each other in order to avoid an apocalyptic chaos.

In order to produce acts of kindness, we need to produce total control of our thoughts. Positive thinking it’s a healthy way of checking the traffic of our mind. If we don’t care about what we think, the mind will not care about what we become.

The Bible warns of the “trash in, trash out” form of marketing: “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

In this biblical context, the heart is a symbol of emotional intelligence; it is obvious that the physical heart does not have a brain. But the Scripture recognizes the heart as the first “emotional sensor” of our body. As soon as the amygdala, which is the emotional center of the brain, sparks a reaction of our thoughts, an emotional movement is triggered and the very first physical perception is the heart through the most sensitive nerve connected to the brain.

ENTER THE SAVIOUR!

The best exercise to flex the “brain muscles” in this respect is believe in a miracle. We call it PRAYER. Based on my personal experience, one hour of prayer can change the mood and the disposition of the individual to harmonize with the disposition of Jesus. When we talk to Him as we talk to a

friend, we become more like Him. Naturally we'll share His words, we'll borrow His vocabulary, we'll smile like Him, we'll behave like Him—even in critical moments—and ultimately, we will love our enemies as He did.

You see, my brethren, when we pray, we talk to God—and when we read the Bible, He talks to us. A refined and balanced mind is always the result of human friendship with divinity. **Prayer is chemical.**

STAYING ON THE RIGHT SIDE

“We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Hebrews 8:1). Jesus is on the **right side** of the throne of God, because on this side is faith, mercy, love compassion. The right side is the side of **positive** thinking. That is why Jesus is our defender. He finds the solution for the sinner in the most impossible circumstances. What a beautiful example of encouraging attitude towards those who are in peril!

Jesus does not gossip nor evil surmise; rather in opposition to the majority He finds **a solution to every problem**. His words show that for every problem there is a solution.

Remember the experience of the woman accused of adultery in John chapter 8—and Christ's responds to the charge of the hypocrites with the words: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” And after the deep silence so painful to the accusers, the Lord reveals the solution for the problem as well: “Woman, where are those your accusers? has no man condemned you? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn you: **go, and sin no more**” (John 8:7–11).

THE BIBLICAL BRAIN

The left side is always representing the side of negative thinking, gossiping, and backbiting—and ultimately is the side of the accusers of our brethren. In the light of these words, we can surprise ourselves in daily life, either on the right side

of Jesus or on the left side of Jesus. There is an interesting confirmation of such a case: “Some doubted. So it will ever be. There are those who find it hard to exercise faith, and they place themselves **on the doubting side**. These lose much because of their unbelief. **If they would control their feelings, and refuse to allow doubt to bring a shadow over their own minds** and the minds of others, how much happier and more helpful they would be. They close the door to many blessings that they might enjoy if they would refuse to place themselves on the doubting, and would, **instead, talk hope and courage.**”⁶

There was a critical time in the life of the disciples, when they were overwhelmed by discouragement and unbelief. They were successful fishers for many years and had sufficient experience to earn an income from this work, but as never before, on that night they experienced a failure. Pulling the empty net out of the water they did not see any future in their life. But all of a sudden, they heard a voice coming from the shore: “Cast the net on the **right side of the ship.**” They did not notice that they had cast the net on the opposite side, and now Jesus insisted for them to make a second attempt by casting the net on the right side of the ship. “Jesus had a purpose in bidding them cast their net on the right side of the ship. **On that side He stood upon the shore.** That was the side of faith.”⁷ The right side is the side of faith, the side of positive thinking, while the left side is the side of doubt—the opposite side from where Jesus is.

We learn from this event that as long as we are overwhelmed with discouragement and are in a depressed mood, we cannot convert anybody to Christ. It is very important to have that positive thinking, an uplifted spirit and to be on the side of Jesus in any circumstance, especially when we introduce the Gospel to other people. In reality we have to share with the people something that we have and they don't. That very something is the atmosphere of heaven carried with us wherever we go. That is our peace,



We have to share with the people something that we have and they don't. That very something is the atmosphere of heaven carried with us wherever we go. That is our peace, our rest in Jesus.

our rest in Jesus. The happiness we have in Jesus, the very something people see in us and crave for: "Give me this water" (John 4:15) in order to avoid having to come back to the well.

The Scripture brings out a few precious pearls in regard to this subject. "Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, **there ran out waters on the right side**" (Ezekiel 47:2). [Emphasis added.]

The water of life was running on the right side of the gate. They are healing waters and everything that has a positive property comes from the right side. As with the waters, so the law of God is not given with the left hand but with the right hand: "and he came with ten thousands of saints: **from his right hand [went] a fiery law for them**" (Deuteronomy 33:2). [Emphasis added.]

The Gospel—the Good News—always comes from the right side of the altar. "And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the **right side of the altar of incense**" (Luke 1:11). [Emphasis added.]

All these specifications are not accidental in the Scripture. They have a meaning. To be on the right side means to be on the side of Jesus, on the side of faith, on the side of defending people instead of accusing them. Being on the right side means to be on the side of the erring, which means to be on the side of mercy. There will always be people yielding on the left side while others will choose the right side. For instance, "**Judas pressed** next to Christ **on the left side**; John was on the right. If there was a highest place, Judas was determined to have

it, and that place was thought to be next to Christ. And Judas was a traitor."⁸

Why was Judas on the left side of Christ? Because, **he "cultivated a disposition to criticize and accuse."**⁹ John was on the right side of Jesus, reforming his thinking according to the mind of Christ. It is true that somewhere in time he had requested fire from heaven to destroy the rejecters of Christ's message but how changed was he now! It is amazing to realize how he reached the state of filtering his negative thoughts and allowing the Spirit of God to mold and reshape his thinking. While Judas became totally evil, John became totally noble to the point of being recognized as the apostle of love, writing the Gospel of love.

In our daily encounter with our personal human nature we ourselves are the decisive factors in what we want to become. Under any circumstances, we cannot blame Jesus or our Heavenly Father for an eventual arbitrary choice. Jesus did not selectively accept John while rejecting Judas. It was a personal choice. As we read above, Judas cultivated the disposition to criticize and accuse. That means that he found perverse satisfaction—a sort of pleasure—in those brain functionalities to the point where he was adversely transformed by his own way of thinking.

MORE EXAMPLES

I am sure that the reader remembers the two thieves on the cross. One was on the right side of Jesus; the other was on the left. In the providence of God, Jesus was placed in the middle, according to the Roman custom to be

viewed the greatest sinner among the three. We know that **the one on the left** engaged in the dialogue with the Lord without any faith in the Saviour, "One of the malefactors which were hanged **railed on him**, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Luke 23:39–42). [Emphasis added.]

This is a very clear example in which we can see how the negative thinking of the left side malefactor affected his final destiny, while the positive thinking of the one on the right shows the virtue of a man who wanted to be saved. It was not by accident that one was on the left and the other was on the right side of the Saviour—it was the providence of God that proves in His infinite wisdom that in the end we are the artisans of our own decisions. So, the scenario is repeated with every person that has ever considered salvation as a priority. Judas loved Jesus, but he loved money more than Jesus. John loved power, but he loved Jesus more, and at the end they both made their irreversible and eternal choice. In fact, the phenomenon on the cross is nothing else but another version of Judas on the left and John on the right.

In Matthew chapter 25, the day of judgment is described: "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: and he shall set **the sheep on his**

right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matthew 25:32, 33). [Emphasis added.]

In this chapter, we see the biblical coherency on this matter. Jesus shall separate people one from another based on exactly same criteria, positive-thinking people to the right, acting like sheep and thinking like sheep and knowing the voice of the Shepherd—while on the opposite side, the negative-thinking people are acting like goats and thinking as goats, not being capable of recognizing the voice of the Shepherd.

We are coming back to the actions emphasized by the Great Judge: “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:35, 36).

Kindness is the chemical that makes us happy and justifies the purpose of our existence. The people that are on the right side of the throne of glory are on the right side of Christ; they were **not looking to themselves** to see whether or not they were good, they will have continually depended on the grace of Christ in prayer and benevolence, their character is as the character of the Saviour, and guess what? They are not aware of how good they are. The closer to Christ, the farther we are from self. “Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?” (Matthew 25:37).

These are unable to identify in their life the moments of their charity, neither their acts of kindness and compassion, and do you know why? Because these acts of charity were not sporadic moments of their life, but rather a permanent behavior; they were born to serve—and that is what heaven is!

In the whole immeasurable and immaculate universe of God, everything serves the purpose of its creation. In the kingdom of God there is **not personal interest, but rather interest for the well-being of others**. If we want to be there, then let us be here on the right side first!

HOW CAN I, A SINNER, BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE?

To properly address this question, we have to bring this statement to the highest level of understanding, observing the missionary spirit of these actions. Jesus was not ashamed to identify Himself with our physical and spiritual needs. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted” (Isaiah 53:3, 4).

There are many ways by which we can follow the pattern shown in Matthew 25:

“I was an hungred” for the word of God, and you gave me meat; you studied the Bible with me: I was thirsty for a change in my life, I was thirsty for eternal happiness, happiness that will never expire, and you gave me to drink from that happiness, to take this water of life and drink from it freely. When I was a stranger, visiting your church for the first time, being new in the town, you said “Hi!” to me and befriended me, making known my presence to the congregation, and you took me in. When I was “naked,” you presented to me the beauty of Christ our righteousness and you helped me to be clothed with His character: when I was sick in my spiritual life and had lost or was just about to lose my faith, having stopped coming to church for a while, you visited me. Even after I was disfellowshipped and I gave up church and church gave up on me, you did not abandon me; you still visited me. When I was in prison for the truth’s sake, when the people did not have courage to associate with me because I was “spiritually quarantined,” you were not embarrassed to come to eat with me at the same table.

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM HISTORY

Henry Gerecke was an American Army Chaplain who ministered to

the Nazi war criminals in the Trials of Nuremberg. He was one of the few that could cast the net on the right side of the throne of God, accepting to share the gospel of forgiveness to the 21 war criminals that had been sentenced for execution at midnight on October 15, 1946. Confronted with hate letters from the side of his American countrymen, accused of being a Nazi lover, he still went ahead in spite of such gross defiance, and went ahead and nurtured these people with the Word of God, visiting their cells, praying with them and appealing to their hearts on a daily basis. At first it was not easy. Some of these people were very cold, despising him, saying that they had no consideration or respect for that Jew who claimed to be the Son of God. Working under adverse conditions, ridiculed by the prisoners on one side and facing disapproval from his co-nationals, Henry went ahead and prayed for each one of these individuals.

Soon the results began to be visible. One of the first who fell at the foot of the cross was the notorious slaver Fritz Sauckel, who had been chief of the forced labor department. He felt that he had done his job without any idea of committing wrong against God or man. Eventually, after attending the service in the chapel, he approached Gerecke, inviting him to his cell. Hearing the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ and His love for sinners, Sauckel’s heart was touched. He implored the chaplain to pray for him. Without fear and without shame he was praying with the missionary. The last words of his prayer were: “Lord, be merciful unto me a sinner.” Sincerely converted, he was wondering what he could do to reverse the tremendous evil he had produced. At the end he accepted the chance to participate in the communion service. One man that shifted sides for Christ! From the man that would use his propaganda to instigate hatred, shifted sides, from the left side of accusing and exterminating to the right side of the throne of Majesty. Christ had touched his heart, and as the thief



Gerecke during his time as an army chaplain

intense devotion. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the 'great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,' . . . 'before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands' (Revelation 7:9). Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the

race and reached the prize."¹⁰

It is up to us if we want to use our mind in order to produce positive thoughts constructive to our faith or not to use our mind at all—and by default, the weeds of negativity will place us on the left side of the murmurers and complainers, ruining our chance to heaven.

In the whole immeasurable and immaculate universe of God, everything serves the purpose of its creation. In the kingdom of God there is not personal interest, but the interest for the well-being of others. Since this subject will be continued in the next issue of *The Reformation Herald*, let us pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will be at our side and we be on His right side of faith. *R*

References

¹ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 251.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Our Father Cares*, p. 50.

⁴ *TIME* magazine: <https://time.com/4900248/antidepressants-depression-more-common/>

⁵ <https://www.cedars-sinai.org/blog/science-of-kindness.html>

⁶ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1110. [Emphasis added.]

⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 811.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 644 [Emphasis added.]

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 717. [Emphasis added.]

¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p. 665.

on the cross received the Saviour, so Fritz Sauckel received salvation.

The second one that fell on the rock and switched sides from the left to the right, was Hitler's closest military advisor, Field-Marshal Wilhelm Keitel. During the hours of studying the Bible, he was memorizing many Bible verses—especially those that emphasized the mercy of God. One of the most extraordinary evidences of his true conversion was the fact that he was not embarrassed to kneel down by his bedside and confess his sins one by one. Before his time of execution, he thanked Gerecke with these words: "You have helped me more than you know. May Christ, my Saviour, stand by me all the way. I shall need Him so much." He received communion and afterwards he was hanged. He took the side of faith, which is the right side of the throne of God. It is the side of mercy and forgiveness; it's the side of the Saviour.

Keitel took the side of John the beloved on the right side of Jesus, while Hermann Goering took the side of Judas, rejecting Christ as his personal Saviour. When Gerecke pleaded with him to "surrender your heart and soul completely to your Saviour, Herr Reichsmarshal" Goering remained on the left side,

the side of the accuser, by saying:

"I cannot do that. This Jesus you always speak of—to me he's just another clever Jew."

To be on the right side is to be capable of loving your enemies and proving it. Henry Gerecke's two sons died on the western front. And in spite of that, he went ahead to love and pray for people that were part of that system that was responsible for the killing of his sons. It is very probable that people like Henry Gerecke will be on the right side of the throne of majesty.

The Bible says that: "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

Another lesson for us in order to be on the right side of Jesus among the sheep—and not among the goats—is to always err on the side of mercy, that is always the right side of the throne of glory. Heaven will unveil to us many surprises and a specific one is specified in the book, *The Great Controversy*, where the author says: "Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep,

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MOVING? Please let us know.



HOW CAN I STAY Healthy?

This year we've all heard a lot about COVID-19. That's a short name for the corona virus disease which came in the year 2019. The virus that causes this sickness is a tiny germ that spreads very quickly from one person to another. It spread so fast that soon it was called a "pandemic"—a sickness that seemed to be everywhere.

The idea of being careful to not "catch" a disease is not new. We read in the Bible in the book of Leviticus chapters 13–15 about how to deal with leprosy. Leprosy was a very bad disease in those days. It still exists today, but now it is very rare. Part of the reason why there are not many cases of leprosy is because many people read the warnings in the Bible and obeyed them.

The Old Testament says a lot about how to keep things clean. Our God knows that we need to stay clean in order to be healthy, so He tells us these things in His word so we can have a better, happier life.

In the mid-1800's, God again began to speak clearly about how to not get sick. He knew that people were getting weaker—but needed to be stronger for hard times ahead. He wanted to help us because of His great love for the whole human race. Through the gift of prophecy, He shows that there are eight natural doctors that can help us. Do you know what they are?

Nutrition. By eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, and some beans, nuts, seeds, and whole grains, our bodies can make good, healthy blood to fight disease.

Exercise. By moving our muscles, they become stronger.

Water. By drinking clean water and washing ourselves, our bodies are cleansed both inside and out. Most germs spread in dirty places, so we don't want that to be in us!

Sunshine. By spending time outdoors in the sunshine, we get a free health boost that helps us fight sickness—and makes us more cheerful, too.

Temperance. By not overdoing anything, we get the blessing we need. Too much of anything can turn out bad.

Air. By breathing deeply of fresh, clean air, our lungs are able to work a lot better and the oxygen we take in helps to keep us well.

Rest. By getting proper rest—going to bed early in a dark room without electronic screens on—we are healthier. During sleep, our bodies do much of their disease-fighting work. Let's make it easier for our body to do what it needs to do to keep us well.

Trust in God. By looking to Jesus, who loves each one of us so very much, we think about His care for you, for me. That makes us feel better already!

So then, when we hear the scary stories about sickness, we remember there's One in Heaven who is looking kindly on His children. He says, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 3, 4).—BHM.