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ONE TRUTH, MANY LIES

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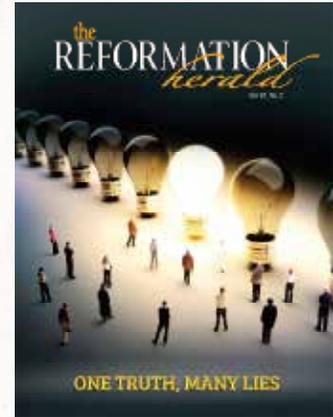
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"The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold."—*Education*, p. 57.

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Illustrations:



ONE TRUTH AND MANY LIES

Civilization is quickly racing toward the close of history on a fallen planet. The prophecies revealed in the Holy Scriptures are rushing to their final fulfillment. As the masses of earth's teeming multitudes drag the Ten Commandments into the dust, there is one commandment that is really taking a beating right now. It's the ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exodus 20:16).

What does it mean to bear false witness? It's reporting something as being real when it's not. It's hiding what is genuine and replacing it with the artificial. This habit has now become so widespread, so commonplace, so entrenched in today's society that many people do not even have any sort of pulse or sense of what is really happening.

In refreshing contrast, Jesus Christ identified Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Yet how many of those who profess to follow Him don't seem to care much about truth as plainly revealed in what is written as a "Thus saith the Lord."

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

How did we arrive at such a point in history? The atheist insists there is no God. The agnostic simply avoids the topic by claiming not to know. Yet, how can the overwhelming evidence be evaded? It's by assuming that there cannot be a God because surely He would not permit the horrible suffering that exists in the world. But the doubters do not seek to understand God's loving character in the perfect blend of noble justice and tender mercy. They do not choose to pursue His handwriting in earth, sea, and sky—and in the lives of human beings

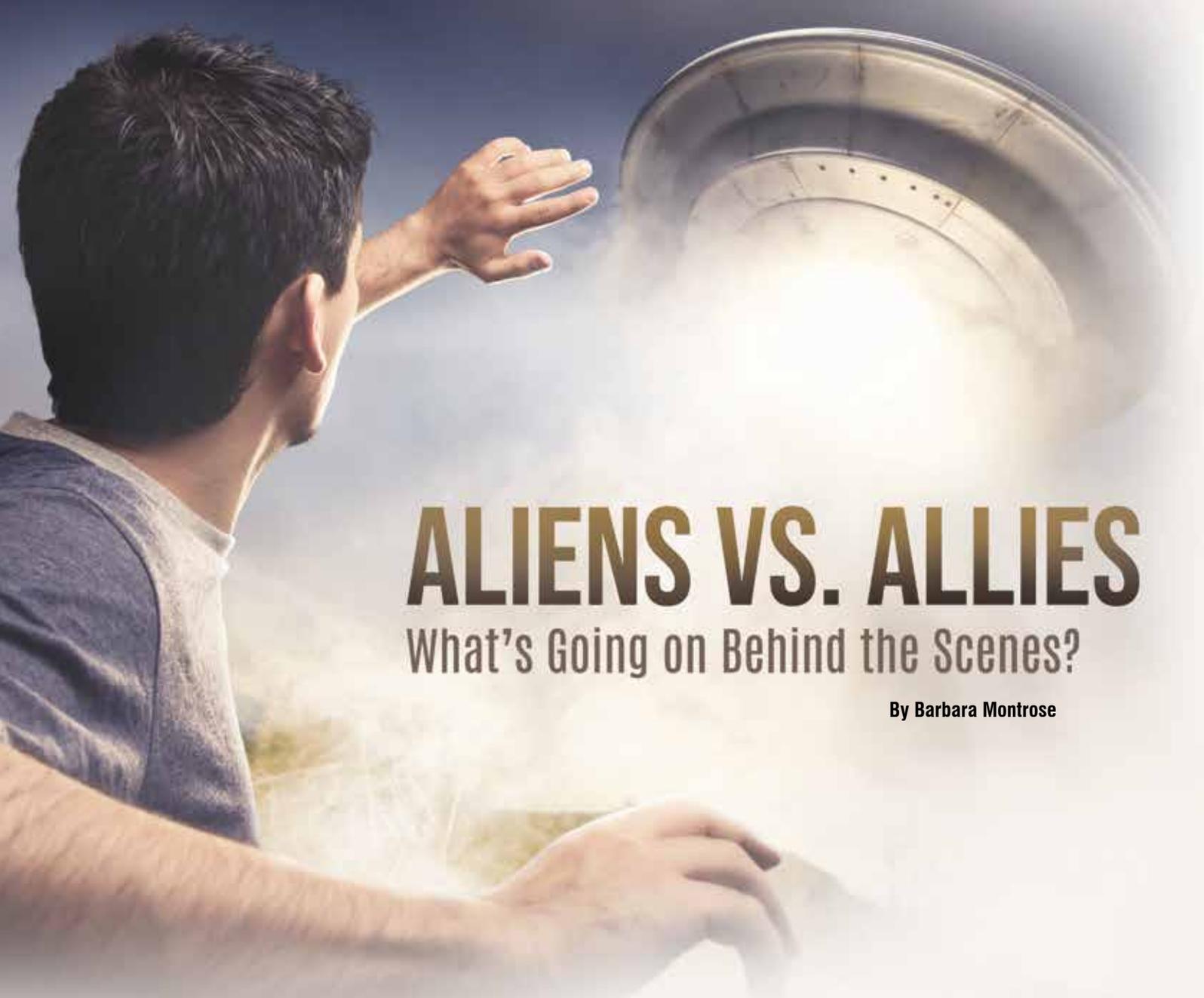
made in His image as free moral agents, not robots.

The absence of God's presence is confusion. The absence of love is hatred, the absence of a smile is a frown, the absence of beauty is ugliness, the absence of good is evil, and the absence of truth is deception. It seems that the world has pushed the "pause" button on a blatantly negative scene and is stuck on viewing it. In such an atmosphere, deception reigns, lies are believed, and fiction is fortified.

CHOOSING INSTEAD TO SEEK REALITY

How can we get off this whirling merry-go-round of lies? There is one truth, and one source of truth—the Lord Jesus Christ. As we keep our eyes fixed on Him whom our sins have pierced, we have hope. Looking heavenward to the Author of life, the Sustainer of life, and the Provider of eternal life, we see a very different picture than the twisted one etched by the lies the world has to offer.

Our Creator poses a challenge to all of us: "Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood [or perhaps electronic devices or whatever] of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour: there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:20–22). *R*



ALIENS VS. ALLIES

What's Going on Behind the Scenes?

By Barbara Montrose

WE ARE NATIVE EARTH-LINGS

What is an “alien”? The term simply refers to someone who is not from a particular group or place—typically in contrast to a “native,” one who was born in that place.

The Latin term for the native species that was designed to dominate planet Earth is *homo sapiens*, the distinct race known as humans. Holy Scripture unveils the history of the human race from its beginning:

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and

multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:27, 28). Humanity was made in the image of its Creator, was generously provided with the ideal conditions to sustain life, and “God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

The Creator does not live on this planet; He assigned it to the human race. The Creator, God, is referred to as “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy” (Isaiah 57:15).

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is

Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). He lives in the third heaven—far away in outer space, and we as humans—the native people of Earth—are still made in His image.

Although the corruption of our race has separated us from our Creator (Genesis chapter 3), He is still intensely attentive and mindful of us. The people of God in ancient times addressed Him in prayer: “Hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:)” (2 Chronicles 6:30). He knows our

thoughts; He reads our hearts. And although He may be far away in miles, in reality He is “not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). He is sustaining you at this very moment. If it were not for His tender, attentive care for you, your heart would not be beating right now, your eyes would not be able to read this article, nor your mind able to comprehend it. The Majesty of heaven is actively involved in all these processes at this very moment.

You were born on this planet; you are a native earthling, also referred to as a terrestrial (1 Corinthians 15:40–44). But what happens if any of us humans try to go to another planet?

“Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord” (Obadiah 1:4).

Yes, people have traveled to outer space. But sooner or later, they had to come back. Human bodies in their present condition are designed for planet Earth. “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). This Son of man who visited this planet is also known as the Word of God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:1–4, 14).

We read the account in Scripture of the birth of the Word made flesh—Jesus Christ—in Bethlehem of Judea, so He is native to Earth through His human mother, Mary (Luke 2:7). Yet His Father was not born on Earth—because He actually created the Earth! This was explained to the mother of Jesus before He was born: “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the

Highest. . . . Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:31–35).

“That holy thing” came from the Holy Ghost—who is divine, not human. So, the Word made flesh, the Son of man, the Son of God, Jesus Christ—was human from His mother, but divine from His Father. This is something distinctly unique in all of history!

Meanwhile, the angel that brought the message to Mary was a created being not born on Earth—yet was in perfect harmony with God as a servant of the Creator with a mission to help humanity be reconciled to their Father in heaven. This messenger was one of many angelic beings that are usually invisible to our sight but nevertheless are constantly at work for our protection. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14). “Bless the Lord ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure” (Psalm 103:20, 21). These are our angelic **allies**, protecting and helping us in the battle against evil. Typically, you do not see them, but are nonetheless surrounded by them.

Yes, Jesus Christ and the angelic messengers—our friends, allies—from pure, innocent, unfallen worlds have come to Earth on a rescue mission helping to deliver us from the invader who seeks to destroy us—Satan, the fallen angel, together with the evil alien angels who do his bidding.

LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS

Ellen G. White, the prolific, most-widely translated American author in history (having written over 60,000 manuscript pages translated

into more than 160 languages) was endowed with the biblical gift of prophecy. The Bible gives very strict criteria in order to test the validity of a prophet—and amazingly, Mrs. White’s extraordinary gift measures up to them all. We have yet to see in recent generations among any who are purported to have the prophetic gift a single case (besides hers) that passes every one of these biblical tests. The biblical criteria must be complete; there is no middle ground even for what some might come up with as a 99% prophetic gift. It’s all or nothing.

Living as we do in the space age, most people tend to believe that there must be life on other planets, yet they acknowledge that the details surrounding this topic are a mystery. However, back in the mid-1800’s, Ellen G. White shown in prophetic vision all that is essential for us in our sphere to know and understand about life on other planets. She describes:

“The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place. **I asked one of them why they were so much more lovely than those on the earth. The reply was, ‘We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth.’** Then I saw two trees, one looked much like the tree of life in the city. The fruit of both looked beautiful, but of one they could not eat. They had power to eat of both, but were forbidden to eat of one. Then my attending angel said to me, ‘None in this place have tasted of the forbidden tree; but if they should eat, they would fall.’ Then I was taken to a world which had seven moons. There I saw good old Enoch, who had been translated. On his right arm he bore a glorious

palm, and on each leaf was written 'Victory.' Around his head was a dazzling white wreath, and leaves on the wreath, and in the middle of each leaf was written 'Purity,' and around the wreath were stones of various colors, that shone brighter than the stars, and cast a reflection upon the letters and magnified them. On the back part of his head was a bow that confined the wreath, and upon the bow was written 'Holiness.' Above the wreath was a lovely crown that shone brighter than the sun. I asked him if this was the place he was taken to from the earth. He said, 'It is not; the city is my home, and I have come to visit this place.' He moved about the place as if perfectly at home. I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again."¹

She was then assured that if faithful to the Lord, she would be granted the privilege of eternal life and the opportunity to view the handiwork of God throughout the universe and enjoy fellowship with the innocent, intelligent beings of other worlds.

Here we see a clear explanation as to why we do not have direct contact with the beings of other planets—the Extraterrestrials. We are polluted by sin, but they are not. Planet Earth has had to be in quarantine because of the rebellion of the human race—yet, by God's merciful grace, our planet will ultimately be remade and inhabited by those natives of this planet who are not rebels, but rather love and obey the One—Jehovah—the Creator who first loved all throughout His vast creation (1 John 4:19; 2 Peter 3:9–13; Revelation 21:1–4).

INVADING ALIENS

Beautiful Earth is a planet lovingly designed specifically for humanity to thrive—custom built with the necessary water, air, food, and so forth. "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and

there is none else" (Isaiah 45:18). It has always been the Creator's intention that this globe would be a haven for the human race to flourish. His ultimate plan is for us to be redeemed from corruption in order to have the chance to be saved for eternity. The root of evil that has tainted our beautiful planet was triggered by lawless beings—the illegal aliens on the globe—Satan and his host, who have victimized the human race, compelling us all to dwell in enemy-occupied territory.

When Jesus Christ was crucified on Calvary's cross to pay the redemption price for the sins of humanity, "Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken."²

"The world that Satan has claimed and has ruled over with cruel tyranny, the Son of God has, by one vast achievement, encircled in His love and connected again with the throne of Jehovah. Cherubim and seraphim, and the unnumbered hosts of all the unfallen worlds, sang anthems of praise to God and the Lamb when this triumph was assured. They rejoiced that the way of salvation had been opened to the fallen race and that the earth would be redeemed from the curse of sin. How much more should those rejoice who are the objects of such amazing love!"³

Does Satan, the arch-rebel against God, want us to have the privilege of eternal life without sin and suffering when he already forfeited that opportunity himself? No, he is working against every

single one of us out of insane jealousy over the opportunity that we are being offered. So, what is he going to try to do to block us from attaining the glorious, promising future still available to us?

The enemy of our souls has many sinister tools within his vast weaponry—discouragement, temptation, sickness, pain, destruction—just to name a few. But one of his main ploys is deception. Would the archfiend be clever enough to manage to come up with an alternative scenario? How about if he would direct **evil angels on this planet to pose as freaky-looking extraterrestrial beings with a false narrative for the human race?** With all its decades of imbibing science fiction and ghost thrillers plus the mesmerizing productions pouring out of Hollywood and television, would today's society be vulnerable and even ripe for such trickery? Absolutely!

The phenomenal sightings of strange, non-human beings are numerous—and the various types sighted have even been categorized!⁴

These apparitions can rightly be called "aliens" because they are not human beings, born on this planet and made in the image of God. Rather they are **manifestations of evil angels adeptly capable of a wide range of supernatural disguises.** However benign or even alluring that some may appear, we must realize that evil angels are **never, ever** genuinely friendly to the eternal interests of people. Some may come with special, exclusive, hidden information that may even turn out to be true. (Sure, Satan has access to some information around the world that we as individuals may not be able to get. But do you really want to be ensnared by the occult?) Often they are alluringly attractive to the senses, just as the serpent allured Eve in the garden of Eden. The look, the tone of voice, the flattering words are all enchanting. They may even play an altruistic role. Whatever the pose, we must not allow ourselves to be fooled by such traps! This is a

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:12, 13).

dangerous, delusive path to eternal destruction.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

In defending ourselves against hostile agents who may come as alien warriors, it may not be feasible to rely on conventional warfare. Why not? The reality is that the structure of evil angels is not limited to the characteristics of human bodies. Evil angels are known to seamlessly shift from body to body.

A famous example of this is found in Scripture:

“When [Jesus] was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine,

that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea” (Mark 5:2–14).

What happened to those evil spirits? They clearly did not have the man’s best interest at heart—they were intent on totally destroying him just as they did the pigs.

But this history, of course, has a happy ending for the man who was wonderfully delivered by Christ. He was later found clothed and in his right mind, and the Lord even bade him go and tell others of his miraculous deliverance.

How was the man freed? Only by the direct intervention of Jesus Christ: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:12, 13).

If and when we are confronted by these evil agencies, our only safety is in relying upon the sure promises of the Almighty, declaring in the name of the Lord, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (Matthew 4:10).

TECHNOLOGICAL ILLUSIONS

Modern technology has conjured up some additional deceptions of a different sort. The science of cloning human beings is become increasingly sophisticated, as has the production of increasingly advanced holographic imaging.⁵

Body doubles with state-of-the-art voice alteration are also part of the current spectrum of tools. The science of such things is expanding at an incredible rate, so we are reminded that “God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

THE ULTIMATE DECEPTION OF ALL TIME

“No marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

“Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of Heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. **Persons will arise pretending to be Christ himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing, and will profess to have revelations from Heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.**

“As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation.

[Revelation 1:13–15.] The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air, ‘Christ has come! Christ has come!’ The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands, and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying, This is ‘the great power of God.’ [Acts 8:10.]

“But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures.”⁷

WHAT IS OUR SAFETY—FOR NOW AND ETERNITY?

We need to speak up about the reality of this phenomenon. Sincere people everywhere are getting duped by the sensational, supernatural things going on. We need to help them, seriously, and we do not need to be ashamed of the real, legitimate scenes of the future:

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; **looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;** who gave himself for us, that he might redeem

us from all iniquity, and **purify** unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Titus 2:11–15). [Emphasis added.]

“It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race. The throne of Justice must be eternally and forever made secure, even tho the race be wiped out, and another creation populate the earth. By the sacrifice Christ was about to make, all doubts would be forever settled, and the human race would be saved if they would return to their allegiance. Christ alone could restore honor to God’s government. The cross of Calvary would be looked upon by the unfallen worlds, by the heavenly universe, by Satanic agencies, by the fallen race, and every mouth would be stopped.”⁸

“Before the worlds unfallen and the heavenly universe, the world will have to give an account to the Judge of the whole earth, the very One they condemned and crucified.”⁹

Jesus Christ, the crucified One, is coming again. He will come in the clouds and every eye shall see Him—not with a crown of thorns,

but with a crown of glory. Those who have trusted in Him will rise to meet Him in the air—and ultimately travel to faraway planets and finally meet pure, holy, intelligent beings that have no taint of corruption. Yes, these have been our faithful, compassionate allies in the battle against evil.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18).

What an amazing privilege is available to each one of us! Let’s not miss it! *R*

References:

¹ *Early Writings*, p. 39. [Emphasis added.]

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

³ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 104.

⁴ <http://proofoffalien.com/top-10-different-types-of-alien-species-on-earth/>

⁵ <https://www.mattcole.us/what-is-project-blue-beam/>

⁶ <https://thedailycoin.org/2019/12/16/project-blue-beam-the-technology-for-mass-holographic-deception-and-psychological-manipulation-has-existed-for-decades/>

⁷ *The Great Controversy* (1888), pp. 623, 624. [Emphasis added.]

⁸ *The Signs of the Times*, July 12, 1899.

⁹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 132.





HOLINESS VS. HOLLYWOOD

By Enrique Natarén

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

The human heart can be compared to a huge warehouse where you can store all kinds of things—large and small things, treasures and useful things, as well as toxic and vile things that do not benefit anyone, and in fact, do damage.

When, as in the above verse, the Bible uses the word “heart” to refer to the behavior of an individual, it is referring to the mind. This is where we store our thoughts and ideas, our conclusions and reasoning which determine how we behave towards our fellowmen, but mainly towards God. The word of God explains, “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things” (Matthew 12:35).

Another way to think of the heart (mind) is that it is a series of five main streets connecting in the center of a large city. Our hearts are like a central point for these busy main avenues where information is constantly delivered and stored:

- a) Our eyes (vision): Matthew 5:28, 29; 2 Samuel 11:2–15; Psalm 119:37.
- b) Our nose (smell): 1 Corinthians

- 12:17, 18; Ecclesiastes 10:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16.
- c) Our mouth (taste): Ecclesiastes 10:17; Luke 21:34; James 3:5–10.
- d) Our ears (hearing): Ecclesiastes 5:1; Isaiah 65:12; Matthew 13:43; Romans 10:17.
- e) Our hands (touch): 1 John 1:1; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; Matthew 5:30.

The heart is like a citadel. Our Creator makes the appeal to each one of us: “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways” (Proverbs 23:26).

Our enemy is not a physical person (Ephesians 6:12). Satan has entrenched himself everywhere you turn in the world, to war against us. And there is a deadly, invisible army of demonic hosts dedicated to the destruction of your thought life. Satan’s desire is to conquer and control your thought life, and then make it a citadel from which he can war against God. But when God saved you, He gave you the mind of Christ. The converted heart becomes His citadel.

“Every organ of the body was made to be servant to the mind. The mind is the capital of the body.

“The mind controls the whole man. All our actions, good or bad, have their source in the mind. It is the mind that worships God and allies us to heavenly beings. Yet many spend all their lives without becoming intelligent in regard to the casket [jewel case] that contains this treasure.”¹

“All should feel the necessity of keeping the moral nature braced by constant watchfulness. Like faithful sentinels, they should guard the citadel of the soul, never feeling that they may relax their vigilance for a moment.”²

TWO MAIN AVENUES

We are going to talk about two of the avenues over which you need to maintain constant vigilance. These two are the most exposed to what is going on around us all the time, either for better or for worse. We’re talking about sight and hearing. Human beings are bombarded daily, constantly, by different visual and auditory messages—at home, at school, at work, as we travel from one place to another, etc. And honestly, most of the information



The words and images are designed to subtly manipulate our minds about how to think, how to act, what to say, and how to make life decisions.

we receive is not good. News of tragedies around the world, manipulations of the mind through commercials either on the radio, television, or roadside billboards which bombard us with the ways of the world. The words and images are designed to subtly manipulate our minds about how to think, how to act, what to say, and how to make life decisions.

We can say with certainty that a **battle is being fought for the minds of each one of us on this planet.** We must be alert, we must be aware, because it is a mighty battle. The saddest thing is that we do not even realize it! Satan doesn't care what color we are, how old we are, what gender, what creed, etc., as long as he wins our mind—his prize trophy.

The battle that is being waged is to set up a banner in our minds: The banner of righteousness or the banner of evil. We can wave a banner that will represent the kingdom of holiness, or a banner that will represent the kingdom of evil.

HOLINESS INVOLVES WHOLEHEARTED CONSECRATION TO GOD

Romans 12:1, 2 states that in order to present ourselves a living sacrifice to God, we need to consecrate our body to Him. In order to do that, we must have transformed minds, not minds that are in the world, but minds that put God first. When God is transforming our minds, **our thoughts, our words and our actions will show it.** The mind will be like a fortified city—a city well protected from any wicked or sinful thoughts meant to divert us from

the path that God has shown us, to walk with Him and towards Him.

When we are struggling in this life to bring our characters into holiness, we do not do it alone. It is impossible for us, in and of ourselves, to change old thinking, old habits, old patterns. To change our heart requires a divine miracle. To make this miracle happen we have to **choose** it, and to be committed to our choice!

God provides the weapons to enable us to face Satan, our fierce and cunning enemy. “‘We are laborers together with God.’ He provides us with all the facilities, all the spiritual weapons necessary for the pulling down of Satan’s strongholds.”³

The following text assures that God is with us in this spiritual warfare: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Corinthians 10:3–8). Our God-given weapons are powerful!

This is real-live war! We are fighting battles constantly during our lives. God gives us real weapons—“the weapons of our warfare”—and please note how powerful these weapons are: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought

to the obedience of Christ.” Where is this war fought? **It is fought in the mind, the thoughts, feelings, and the way of understanding and expressing those thoughts and feelings. Our mind is the battlefield,** and the enemy uses all kinds of tricks to win this war.

We need to remember that the reason God created the human race was to be able to enjoy His children, like any good father, but also to reflect His glory, His image, and thus reproduce His character in each of His sons and daughters. From the beginning, Satan, the enemy of God, has waged a determined battle to conquer the minds of God’s children. Was the fall of Adam and Eve the result of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? No, it wasn’t. Before taking the fruit, their minds were attacked with subtle insinuations and mental pressures, with graphic, auditory and visual experiences—the beautiful serpent speaking wisely and authoritatively, and the lustrous, delicious-looking fruit gleaming in the sunshine—which all led them to make fatal decisions that affected themselves and their offspring forever. If only they had fled that place and run to God! So, throughout the centuries, Satan has played with human minds, presenting clever temptations and pressing the consciences of human beings who, despite having the knowledge of God, are being defeated in the war for their minds.

The information coming especially through these two avenues (senses)—vision and hearing—makes the strongest and most lasting impressions on the mind. For this reason, in the book

of Psalms we find the following prayer: “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way” (Psalm 119:37).

A SLY, ENTICING FOE

I would like us to consider something that is harming all people of all ages and social status. Now, more than ever, given the fact that the mind is largely controlled by the film and television industry, it goes almost unnoticed. It is already a part of the lives of most people to watch movies, television series, violent sports, and music videos that divert the mind and practically exclude God from good human reasoning.

I am referring to the entertainment industry—in particular to Hollywood. Why is it that all that comes out from there is so dangerous? A careful analysis will give us a clearer idea as to why there are so many social tragedies, why there’s such a lack of love and justice in the world, and why there is rampant anarchy everywhere. These are all caused in large part by the products that Hollywood offers to society.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Hollywood is a neighborhood in the central region of Los Angeles, California. Its name has come to be a shorthand reference for the U.S. film industry and the people associated with it. Many of its studios such as Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros., and Universal Pictures were founded there. Paramount still has its studios there. Hollywood was incorporated as a municipality in 1903. It was consolidated with the city of Los Angeles in 1910, and soon thereafter a prominent film industry emerged, eventually becoming the most recognized in the world. From this place comes every manner of iniquity and impurity, targeting every human—whether adult or child.

It can be observed that in almost every movie or television series or sports program, music video, or video game, many things are graphically shown that affect the minds of each of the viewers. These presentations are filled with content

of witchcraft and communication with evil spirits which incite violence and perverted action. Hollywood’s worldliness and evil create an addiction in people. Not only do viewers want more, they want increasingly more intensity. The offerings of Hollywood invade the mind to drive away thoughts of the grace of God. And even worse, people do not feel the need to seek God, but instead take pleasure in contemplating all the perverted things they see and hear.

Most folks do not realize that even the name of Hollywood comes out of pagan mythology! It is connected with magic, casting spells, summoning spirits—in short, witchcraft. It is entrenched in the various pagan aspects of the world’s Christmas activities. The magic of holly is part of the Christmas imagery—on Christmas cards, wreaths, mantels, table settings, wrapping paper. And then there are songs about holly like “The Holly and the Ivy.” Ancient Celts made wands out of holly wood to focus their wishes and practice their magic. Today we still have magic wands, e.g., Harry Potter’s magic wand was made from holly wood. **Do we really want to watch or listen to anything coming out of Hollywood?** Why would we want to feed our minds with the poison of Satan? There is a battle raging for our minds. Who will control it? The forces of evil or the forces of good?

Witchcraft and magic are not natural things that we are dealing with here. They aren’t just Hollywood fiction. They are supernatural and they are real! Ephesians 6:12 says: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” We are actually wrestling against Satan and his evil angels.

Humanity is exposed to sorcery 24/7. This is a battle that cannot be fought with our natural mind, but has to be fought by a supernatural, divine power from above. The entertainment industry has a goal. Whether the entertainment is subtle

or blatant, the goal is all about taking control of the human mind and separating it from God.

IDOLIZING THE STARS

Many people are addicted to astrology without even knowing it comes from ancient sorcery and witchcraft. They read their daily astrological forecast and base their activities for the day on what it predicts. Their lives are led by stars—stars of a different sort. What kind of stars are many humans following? Remember that there was a war in heaven. The word of God declares in Revelation 12:4: “And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and he did cast them to the earth.” These stars are the angels that joined Lucifer in his rebellion against Divinity. Deceived folks believe they are following the placement of the stars, heavenly bodies, when they are really being led by Satan’s stars, demons.

The rebel angels wanted to be like God—to be their own authority. Satan presented the same idea to Eve in the garden of Eden. But notice, his first entrance into the mind of the woman was suggesting things that were not the will of God. Eve, believing Satan’s lie that she and her husband could be their own authorities, ended up putting themselves under the authority of Satan, a forceful and powerful ruler. And that was the beginning of death, misery, destruction, chaos, and rebellion in this planet. Stars indeed! There’s no such thing as being under our own authority. Unless we are under the authority of God, we are slaves to the so-called stars.

Satan’s same work is being carried on in this modern day as the serpent speaks his seductive sorcery through the magic of television, movies, sports, music and video games. Everything is designed to pollute the human mind and separate it from God.

As the Bible says, our battle is not against humans, it is against Satan. He uses his sorceries to continue the battle that he started in heaven. He and his evil angels (fallen stars) promote the idea in the minds of

feeble humans that they want to have power and fame and to be worshiped.

Through power-hungry individuals, Satan transmits his message of rebellion, creating in the minds of those who are entertained an opposition to the will of God. Satan's angels are promoting godless thinking and behavior in the followers of all Hollywood's superstars. Are we followers?

People dress, talk, eat, drink and behave like the superstars that they follow, and their minds are under the control of Satan. We know there is nothing good in this industry when even those messages that we consider acceptable are combined with lies and wrong application. Therefore, the principle of sanctity or holiness cannot exist in what Hollywood produces.

The world is flooded with all kinds of shows, all kinds of poisonous sight and sound experiences. Some offerings are not as dangerous as others. Some are violent, immoral and/or obscene. Others are varnished with more refinement, but the influence of it all is sneaky and toxic.

"We have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts.

"The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest."⁴

Tragically, what so often happens to men—and to women, also? "The sight of her eyes and the hearing of her ears have perverted her heart."⁵

These statements were written over a hundred years ago. What on earth would the writer say now if she could see what is going on?

The apostle Paul warns us: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).

"There is reason for deep solicitude on your part for your children, who have temptations to encounter at every advance step.

It is impossible for them to avoid contact with evil associates.... They will see sights, hear sounds, and be subjected to influences which are demoralizing and which, unless they are thoroughly guarded, will imperceptibly but surely corrupt the heart and deform the character."⁶

"You will have to become a faithful sentinel over your eyes, ears, and all your senses, if you would control your mind, and prevent vain and corrupt thoughts from staining your soul. The power of grace alone can accomplish this most desirable work. You are weak in this direction."⁷ "When an appetite for exciting, sensational stories is cultivated, the moral taste becomes perverted, and the mind is unsatisfied unless constantly fed upon this trashy, unwholesome food."⁸

CONCLUSION

Many fail to understand that we can sin with just a simple look. If someone had followed after Eve in the garden of Eden and asked her what she was doing in front of the forbidden tree, she might have answered: "**I am only looking.**" But her "looking" led her to the multiple sorrows and the deaths of billions of human beings throughout six thousand tragic years.

King David woke up from an afternoon nap and almost by chance saw the beautiful wife of his neighbor bathing herself on the Mediterranean roof of her house. If David had been asked what he was doing, he might have answered: "**Nothing wrong, I'm just looking.**" Was this a casual look? Maybe. The bad intentions only succeeded after he chose to consider the exciting scene and its possibilities.

David was as surely ensnared as Eve was when he let his imagination run wild. Let us remember that his "casual" look led him to adultery, and later to murder. **How much did David later mourn as a result of his disastrous "casual" gaze?** If only he had fled the scene and run to Jesus!

So, how are we going to gain the victory in this war over imaginations, and "high thing" attitudes like arrogance, ignorance,

despair, bitterness, pride, and anger? Certainly not with carnal weapons! The Bible tells us that we are going to win because our Commander has already defeated the enemy. Satan has been trying his utmost to win this war for your soul, but when Jesus offered His life at the cross, He sentenced the devil forever. Now all we can do is choose to claim Christ's victory as our own.

We will win this war as we cooperate with Christ, battle by battle, by choosing His will instead of ours. He will supply the power. We will win this war because the authority that we have over Satan comes from above. It is given to us through the Holy Spirit, and the glory of our victory is for God alone. Our Lord Jesus won this war and He said in Luke 10:19, 20, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

Remember, always remember, we have no power in us to endure in this war, but Jesus won the battle for us—every one of us.

Now, one final thought: Our aim is not just winning the war, first we need to win the battles—one by one. We also need to aim to place in our minds and hearts only godly thoughts. In the battle for our mind this is a big part of the strategy—and it is presented in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any praise, think on these things." *R*

References:

¹ *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

³ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1086.

⁴ *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 107.

⁵ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 108.

⁶ *Mind, Character and Personality*, vol 1, p. 116.

⁷ *Messages to Young People*, p. 74.

⁸ *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 165.

Dualist Anthropology:

IS THE SOUL NATURALLY IMMORTAL?

.....
“Lazarus,
Come Forth!”
.....

The immortality of the soul is the common denominator of all religions and religious currents, an idea without which the modern ecumenical movement itself cannot function. The study “Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?” by Oscar Cullmann, published in 1956, gave rise to lively controversy, exposing the fallacy of the above doctrine and giving Ellen G. White credit for her biblical understanding of the topic. He similarly argues that the early fathers of the church (in the 2nd century) did not agree with the Platonic philosophy of the natural immortality of the soul, and that even later, although a minority, there always have existed both theologians and many other believers in opposition to the spiritualist wave which paganized the Christian Church.

In short, Cullmann said that the immortality of the soul and the resurrection are different and even incompatible concepts, the first being Greek and the second Hebrew. The resurrection means bringing back to life, so it presupposes death, the cessation of all existence, while the immortality of the soul from the Greeks presupposes that after the death of the body the soul remains alive. I propose to review the biblical texts that I consider the most eloquent for the subject. Perhaps a good starting point would be to examine Jewish conceptions of the soul during Jesus’ time.

JUDAISM IN JESUS' TIME

Titus Flavius Josephus, the well-known historian who was also a priest at the Temple in Jerusalem shortly before the destruction of A.D. 70, tells us that Judaism was divided into three major religious currents: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

Concerning the Pharisees, Josephus tells us that "they also believe that souls have an immortal rigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again."¹ Elsewhere Josephus again presents the doctrine of the Pharisees: "They say that all souls are incorruptible, but that the souls of good men only are removed into other bodies, but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment."²

"But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: That souls die with the bodies."³ However, Josephus states that few adhere to this teaching, while most Jews, the common people, are followers of Pharisaism. The Sadducees, on the other hand, were wealthy people who, once they became magistrates, used to please the crowds and even promoted Pharisaic teaching. The information is repeated elsewhere: "They also take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades."⁴

The third direction of Judaism was represented by the Essenes, who taught "that bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent; but that the souls are immortal, and continue for ever; and that they come out of the most subtle air, and are united to their bodies as to prisons, into which they are drawn by a certain natural enticement; but that when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward. And this is like the opinions of the Greeks, that good souls have their

habitations beyond the ocean, in a region that is neither oppressed with storms of rain or snow, or with intense heat, but that this place is such as is refreshed by the gentle breathing of a west wind, that is perpetually blowing from the ocean; while they allot to bad souls a dark and tempestuous den, full of never-ceasing punishments."⁵

We can complete this picture by recalling the philosophy of the Sadducees, who denied the concept of any resurrection (Luke 20:27), "for the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both" (Acts 23:8). Here it is strange that, although there are three elements (the resurrection, the angel, and the spirit), it is said that the Pharisees agree with both. Many have commented that it cannot be a question of denying the existence of angels or spirits, present throughout the Old Testament (in fact, there are not enough arguments to postulate that the Sadducees had a narrower biblical canon than the Pharisees, that is, only the Pentateuch). Rather, the "angel and the spirit" look at the teaching of the resurrection; they do not believe in the resurrection, "neither as an angel nor as a spirit." They do not conceive of the idea that the soul, after subsisting like angels or like spirits, could in the end be resurrected. I think this would be the best solution for understanding the text and would be in agreement with other texts (Luke 24:37—a vision of the "spirit," Acts 12:15—a vision of the "angel").

However, it is clear that in Josephus' portrayal, the Pharisees did not believe that the soul disappeared through death, but that it went underground into the grave, where it received honor or punishment, depending on the life spent. Later, the good would be resurrected with the body ("another body," of course, refers to the resurrection, not reincarnation), while the souls of the wicked continued to be punished in an eternal prison. The Essenes seemed to have similar understanding, where, although despising the body as a prison, they did not seem

to believe in a resurrection of the body, only that souls would go to a happy place without the body. The Sadducees did not believe that the soul endured after death, but simply that it perished. Therefore, in their view, there are no rewards or punishments in *Sheol* (the abode of the dead), as the Pharisees believed.

It is therefore observed that in Judaism in the time of Jesus there was no unified concept. Most believed in the resurrection after the immortal soul (*athanatos*) spent time in the grave—*sheol*, located underground. It is interesting that only the righteous were to enjoy the resurrection in the flesh (a different body from that of earthly life), while the souls of the wicked were to be tormented forever in an eternal prison. I do not think we are wrong to link this resurrection with the body of the good to the "resurrection of the last day" in John 11:24, as Martha, Lazarus' sister, puts it, testifying to what seems to have been a common concept among the Jews.

We cannot fail to notice that approximately the same belief has continued to this day. Most Christians (traditional Orthodox, and Catholic Churches, as well as most Protestant and Evangelical Churches) have an eschatological doctrine similar to that of the Pharisees. It remains to be seen whether the teaching of the Pharisees has an Old Testament basis or whether it is a new evolution, influenced by Greek culture.

WHAT IS LIFE?

Death has most often been defined as the end of life. But what is life? And how did it begin on planet Earth? If we want to understand the secret of what happens when we die, it's important to know the nature of life.

In the book of Genesis, which means "beginnings," we find the story of the Creator making Adam, the first human being. According to the Bible, on the sixth day of creation, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created he him; male and female he created he them" (Genesis 1:27).

A more complete picture of the creation of Adam is found in the next chapter. Notice the details: “The Lord God formed man of the **dust** of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life**; and man **became a living soul [being]**” (Genesis 2:7, emphasis added). The term “formed” comes from the same Hebrew word used to describe a potter working to create a clay vessel (see Isaiah 29:16).

Did you notice how God combined two elements to create Adam?

The **first** element is the “dust of the ground” (Hebrew *adamah*, which simply means the soil, dust, or earth). We see the truth of this when a body decomposes at death. “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Further, after Adam sinned, God told him, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19).

The **second** element in the creation of Adam came directly from God. The Lord breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. God used divine breath, joined with dust, to create a “living being” (Hebrew *nephesh*). Adam did not exist before breath and earth were combined; he came into existence only when God formed him and breathed into him the breath of life.

What, exactly, is the breath of life (Hebrew *neshamah*)?

The “breath of life” God gave Adam was the divine spark of life, a life-giving energy that came into the lifeless body of the first man. This vital life force did not belong to Adam but was given to him at his creation.

We see the nature of life elsewhere in Scripture. For instance, Job explained, “The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life” (Job 33:4).

It’s crucial to know that the same term (“breath of life”) is also used for animals. Speaking of the worldwide flood in Noah’s day,

the Bible says, “All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: **All in whose nostrils was the breath of life**, of all that was in the dry land, died” (Genesis 7:21, 22, emphasis added). Non-biblical accounts of the Creation written at the same time as Genesis describe people being made of divine matter, but the Bible says that humanity’s physical framework came from the elements of the earth.

A KEY POINT: LIVING SOULS

The King James Bible translates the Hebrew word *nephesh* as “soul.” Thus, it renders Genesis 2:7 in this way: “Man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). Most modern translations render *nephesh* as “living being” or “living person.”

The word “soul” in this passage might be confusing because this term is often connected with the idea of the “immortal soul,” but this is a concept that this passage in Genesis doesn’t address. Genesis does not describe Adam as *having a soul*—some type of ethereal entity that is distinct from his physical body. Instead, the Bible says that Adam *became* a soul—a living person—when God combined the dust of the earth with the breath of life.

It’s clear from the Bible that a “soul” is simply a living human being. When you walk down the street and see another person strolling by, you are seeing a soul. Nothing in the Creation account indicates that a soul exists apart from the body. There is no reason to assume, then, that a conscious, immortal entity exists separate from the physical form given to us by God. The Bible even says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20).

Often the Bible uses the word “soul” to refer to the whole person, and sometimes translators used it to refer to our emotions. But Scripture does not teach that humans are made of two distinct parts that exist apart from each other. Again, a living being exists only when the body and breath come together.



This indivisible union makes a soul—a living person. A soul is simply a living human being.

WHAT IS DEATH?

In the very simplest terms, death is the opposite of life. So, what happens at death should be the reverse of what happened when Adam was created. That is, the elements that make up the body return to the earth (Genesis 3:19) and the breath of life returns to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Again, we have no indication from Scripture that this “breath” that returns to God is some kind of conscious being floating up to heaven. Instead, it is simply the divine, life-giving energy that God gives to all living things.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *psyche* is sometimes translated as “soul.” Notice how the following passage uses the words “life” and “soul.” Jesus said, “Whosoever will save his **life** shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his **life** for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:25, 26, emphasis added).

Did you know that both uses of the word “life” and both uses of the word “soul” come from the same Greek word—*psyche*? Thus, in this one passage, “life” and “soul” are used interchangeably.

Sleep is the perfect illustration to describe the state of death. When we are asleep, we are unconscious of our surroundings. The Bible says of death, “The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

This is important, as it clarifies what Jesus was actually saying. Though many believe we have an immortal soul that cannot be lost or destroyed, Christ clearly said we can lose our souls. (The good news is that our souls can also be saved!) The word “soul” is used in a similar way in a passage written by the apostle Peter. He wrote that “in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:20). He clearly meant eight living breathing persons were saved from the Flood, which is how many translations convey this passage.

ARE WE IMMORTAL?

The word “mortal” means “subject to death.” A “mortal blow,” for instance, describes an injury that leads to death. People instinctively know that everyone is mortal, because everyone eventually dies.

However, many today believe they have a soul that is not subject to death—that is, immortal—even though the Bible never indicates that we have an immortal part of us that is distinct from the body; rather, we *are* souls who can die, according to the words of Jesus.

Let’s consider this carefully; you may be surprised to find out what the Bible really says about immortality!

For instance, did you know that Scripture never once uses the term “immortal soul”? Indeed, the Bible rarely even uses the word “immortal.” The apostle Paul wrote, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever” (1 Timothy 1:17). He further stated that God “only hath immortality” (1 Timothy 6:16).

Paul used the word “immortality” to describe what is **given** to the saints at the resurrection. See 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54. Never is it used as something inherent to humans. It’s clear that God is the only immortal being. If that is true, what does the Bible teach about the natural state of humans—are we mortal or immortal? Let’s look at the first statement in the Bible regarding death. God said it directly to Adam in the Garden of Eden: The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt **surely die**” (Genesis 2:16, 17, emphasis added).

Notice that God did not say, “If you sin, you will live forever in hell.” Eve understood this reality. When tempted by the serpent, she said, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Genesis 3:2, 3).

We can also see that the consequence of being driven from Eden reveals that God did not create humans as immortal beings who would naturally live forever. “Now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: . . . he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:22, 24).

THE SLEEP OF DEATH

The Bible uses another word for death—“sleep.” You might suppose that Bible writers used the term

“sleep” only occasionally to soften the blow of the subject. In reality, however, they used the word consistently to describe the state of death. Israel’s ancient historians spoke of their kings “sleeping” or “resting” with their forefathers. “Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David” (1 Kings 11:43).

Job wrote, “Man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep” (Job 14:10–12).

King David wrote, “Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death” (Psalm 13:3). Daniel the prophet foretold, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).

New Testament writers also used the word “sleep” to describe the state of death. When Jairus’ daughter died, Jesus came to raise her up. “When he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth” (Mark 5:39). When Lazarus died, Jesus said, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth” (John 11:11). When they misunderstood Him, “Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead” (verse 14). When Jesus raised him up, notice that the Lifegiver called, “Lazarus, come forth!” (verse 43)—not come “down,” clarifying that even four days after death, no part of the deceased had “gone” anywhere but rather had remained exactly where he had been when alive.

When Luke wrote about the martyrdom of Stephen, he said that Stephen “kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:60). Peter also referred to death as asleep. (See 2 Peter 3:4.)

Sleep is the perfect illustration to describe the state of death. When we are asleep, we are unconscious

of our surroundings. The Bible says of death, "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). Our daily activities cease when we are asleep. So, of death, the Scriptures say that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Also, sleep implies that there will come a time of awakening. Jesus explains that "the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29).

PLACES OF DEATH

Where do people go when they die? When a person dies, the spirit (the breath of life) returns to God and the body returns to dust. The Old Testament calls the place where people go at death *sheol*, a Hebrew word that simply means "grave." The New Testament uses the Greek word *hades*.

The Bible teaches that everyone who dies goes to the grave. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" (Psalm 89:48). Both righteous and wicked people go to this place. When Jacob thought Joseph had died, his children tried to comfort him. But he refused to be comforted and said, "I will go down into the grave (*sheol*) unto my son mourning" (Genesis 37:35). Likewise, wicked Korah and his cohorts went "down quick into the pit (*sheol*)" (Numbers 16:30).

People are not conscious in the grave, again, the Bible compares death to sleep and explains that "the dead know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). The soul does not have a separate entity that lives beyond the grave at death. The dead are in a state of unconsciousness in the grave until the resurrection when the grave (*hades*) will give up the dead. (See Revelation 20:13.)

ABSENT FROM THE BODY

If all this is true, then what did the apostle Paul mean when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 that he

would rather be "absent from the body" and "present with the Lord"?

This famous passage says, "We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

In verses 1-8, the apostle compared our present mortal state with our future immortal life in heaven. He was showing us the difference between our earthly bodies that will someday perish and the new, perfect bodies that will someday perish and the new, perfect bodies that will be ours in heaven. Notice the expressions he used for the two conditions:

PRESENT MORTAL STATE FUTURE IMMORTAL STATE

Present Mortal State

1. Earthly house
2. This tent
3. Mortality
4. In the body
5. Absent from the Lord

Future Immortal State

1. Building from God
2. House not made with hands
3. Our habitation which is from heaven
4. Absent from the [mortal] body
5. Present with the Lord

Remember, the Bible is clear that when we die, we're simply dead until the resurrection. So, being absent from the body means to be absent from the infirmities of our earthly bodies prone to disease, sickness, and death. To be present with the Lord means to have our glorious immortal bodies that we'll receive when Jesus comes.

Because we have no consciousness of time in death, it is certainly true that following the moment of death, the believer's next conscious thought is in his or her glorified body. But that does not happen until the return of Christ and the resurrection. Indeed, Paul very precisely noted the hour when the change from mortality

will take place. In 1 Corinthians 15:52, 53, he wrote, "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." That will happen only when Jesus comes. I couldn't agree more with the Christian commentator Ellen G. White, who writes, "Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him."⁶

CONCLUSION

It is imperative that these biblical truths presented here be understood personally. The distinction between spiritualism and conditionalism is so great that we can speak not only of different denominations, but of different religions: a religion of life and immortality through resurrection, and another religion of death and the dead, of fables based on the theory of immortality of the soul. A spiritual religion, based on Scripture and the perfect creative power of God to raise the dead; and a materialistic, mystical religion, based on suspiciously universal human opinions. *R*

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- ⁴ Josephus, Flavius: *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 2.165, [162].
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, Book 2.154, 155.
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By Peter D. Lausevic

FAKE HEALING AND FAKE HEALERS

The healing aspect of ministry

As Jesus began His ministry on earth, one of the things that identified Him as the Messiah and that drew the attention of the people to Him as a personal Saviour is that He really cared for people. He was not detached from their necessities and He empathized with their circumstances in life. He clearly combined preaching and teaching about the eternal world and guidance in this present life with the healing of the maladies that afflicted the people all about Him. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in

their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." It is this combination of work that attracted so many people to Him and that eventually led the leaders to become jealous of the crowds that flocked to hear Him and be healed. "And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan" (Matthew 4:23–25).

This combined ministry is actually a part of the gospel commission given by Christ: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:7, 8). Both by teaching and example, the New Testament clearly shows that the work of healing is associated with the ministry of the word. The elders of the church have a special care for their constituents, the flock entrusted to their care. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:14, 15).

This is why when we evaluate the ministry of our Lord, we can immediately see that He spent more time in caring for the needs of the people than in the formal teaching of the message to them. "The Lord Jesus is our example. He came to the world as the servant of mankind. He went from city to city, from village to village, teaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing the sick. Christ spent more time in healing than in teaching.

"As our example, Christ linked closely together the work of healing and teaching, and in this our day they should not be separated. In our schools and sanitariums, nurses should be trained to go out as a medical missionary evangelists. They should unite the teaching of the gospel of Christ with the work of healing."¹ When people are sick, it is more difficult for them to comprehend the spiritual truths that bring eternal salvation. But when someone cares, when someone brings healing, then the heart is open to the condition of their soul. This is why it is so important for every medical worker to have a deep relationship with Jesus as their personal Saviour. In the same way, it is important for those in the gospel ministry to understand at least the basics of the medical missionary work so that they can give the help to the body as well as the soul.

For this reason, when we speak of the gospel minister or the ministry, we are not just speaking about merely the teaching aspect but all the various ways of caring for and helping people. "Jesus called [His disciples] unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25–28). When we understand this aspect of Christian ministry, we will have the same kind of success that Jesus had—and of course the same kind of opposition that He had as well. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. . . . The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord" (Matthew 10:22–24).

LAST-DAY COUNTERFEITS

We also need to understand that Satan has always been a master

counterfeiter of the truth. For that reason we can also expect that this healing ministry will have its false or fake aspect to it. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). This fake caring, this fake working of miracles, this fake healing ministry will be so deceptive that it will shake, to some degree, the very elect people of God. We can thank the Lord that it says in this prophecy, "if it were possible." This means that by the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, it will not be possible to deceive the true and faithful children of the heavenly King.

When we look at last-day events, we cannot help but think of the prophecies in Revelation when the beast and the image of the beast will be set up and the entire world will be convinced to worship them and to receive the mark of the beast in their forehead or in their hand. The majority of the world will fall in line with this and the faithful few that refuse will be persecuted. "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:15–17).

How does this take place? How do so many people get hoodwinked into giving up their freedoms, rejecting clear Biblical evidences of the truth about the seal of God and our duty to worship the Creator above the created? It is through the work of miracles. "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the

sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (Revelation 13:13, 14). Are people so hungry for miracles that they are ready to accept anything in order to experience them?

It is the same principle of miracle-working that brings the entire world to the final conflict with one another and eventually drags in very many of the people of God. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:13, 14).

Although there is some miracle-working that uses relatively obvious deception and trickery, when we read these verses, many will also be using real miracles that have no explanation in trickery. "No mere impostures are here foretold. Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan's agents have power to do, not which they pretend to do."² The problem we find is when someone cries "wolf" (when there is no wolf) so many times that eventually the wolf does come—and people do not believe it but the wolf still destroys. So, when we see so many fake miracles, we eventually believe that all these miracles are fake—and then when something really comes that is a miracle (but from the wrong source), we are deceived and the wolf catches us. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they

are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

Because of the way Satan works in the last days, we are not to depend on the working of miracles to prove that we are the people of God. The prophecy speaks of the coming Elijah to prepare the way for the second coming of Jesus. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Malachi 4:5). Before the first coming of Christ, there was another Elijah. Speaking of John the Baptist Jesus said: "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matthew 11:14). It is very interesting that John the Baptist did not use miracles as a way to prove his authenticity. When comparing Jesus with the work of John, the people could say: "John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true" (John 10:41).

For this reason the Elijah people of the last days do not prove their work through the use of miracles. "The way in which Christ worked was to preach the word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way; for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought."³

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN MIRACLES

How do we distinguish between the true and the false? Sometimes we can see the fake by careful examination. One time I heard of a preacher who used to try to prove that he was connected to God by

telling the people that the cross would be shown on his forehead. So he would paint some kind of invisible ink on his forehead before the sermon and then when he got worked up enough and his head became heated, the cross would suddenly shine upon him and thousands of people then believed that he was a messenger from God because of this supposed miraculous sign. Although there may be some fakes of this nature, most are more complicated than that. "Through spiritualism, Satan appears as a benefactor of the race, healing the diseases of the people, and professing to present a new and more exalted system of religious faith; but at the same time he works as a destroyer. His temptations are leading multitudes to ruin. Intemperance dethrones reason; sensual indulgence, strife, and bloodshed follow."⁴

Satan is naturally a destroyer and so as he heals some, he destroys others. "While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation."⁵

So, how can we really discern between the one and the other? How do we tell whether a miracle is wrought through the power of God or if it is coming from Satanic agencies? "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth



"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16-20). We are not simply talking about whether a person is healed or not—because Satan can bring a disease and then suddenly remove it. What are these fruits we are looking for that result in both good to our bodies and souls, and that glorify our Father in heaven? We need to keep in mind that that is ultimately the goal for all good things that God enables us to do. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

PRAYER FOR HEALING

Let us examine the prayer for the sick that the elders are supposed to perform. Do we just accept any request and then just pray for the sick and suddenly they are healed? After speaking about calling the elders together and praying for the sick and anointing them, the Bible gives specific guidance. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (James 5:15). This means that the persons themselves who are requesting prayer must themselves have faith. We can see this in the working of miracles that Jesus did. It was not just, "Let me touch you and you are healed." He first worked to develop faith in the supplicant. "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). The individual petitioner must have that faith that claims the promises of God. On many occasions the person would recognize that their faith was insufficient for the miracle that they needed. But there was still a remedy. Christ was still there to help. "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Verse 24). If we see

that we do not have sufficient faith, then we need to plead for such a faith so that God can bless us in accordance to His will.

THE REAL AIM

The greatest illustration of the type of faith needed is seen in the experience of the centurion whose servant was sick of the palsy. Jesus assures him that He would come and heal the servant personally. But this man understood more than the entire Jewish nation about the method of healing that Jesus was using. As a soldier he understood what it means to obey commands. So instead of accepting the offer of the Great Physician, he said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8). The centurion recognized the mighty power of the word of God. He trusted in the power of the word of God to accomplish exactly what the Word says it will do. That is what faith is all about and Jesus recognized it as such. "When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Verse 10).

This faith in the mighty power of the Creator is not just for healing of disease, but is also for cleansing of the soul from sin. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:15). Saving the sick in this context does not always mean physical healing. It is also (and especially) speaking of forgiveness of sins. The main thread in all healing is removal of sin from the person. "And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). This is why we are told to recognize our sins and the sinful nature that comes with it. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

We know that the healing of the body is not the main purpose



of the miracles of Christ, because ultimately all the people that were healed by Jesus died. We also know that men of God in ages past who did great miracles themselves suffered from sickness. "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died" (2 Kings 13:14). Elisha, a faithful man of God, healed many people and even raised some from the dead—but he himself died of an illness. We need to understand the will of God and be yielded to God's will for us whatever that may be. "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:15).

SUBMITTING TO GOD'S PERFECT WILL

Even Jesus ultimately died. His prayer shows the true nature of any miracle. "And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). If Jesus did not die the death that we deserve, we would not have the possibility of salvation. The same may happen in our life. We need to be willing to suffer for Christ's sake and experience whatever is

“God’s people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought.”

necessary—even death if need be. So to expect the miracles to take place in the way we want and expect regardless of the will of God in the matter is simply presumption. “Some have professed to have great faith in God, and to have special gifts and special answers to their prayers, although the evidence was lacking. They mistook presumption for faith. The prayer of faith is never lost; but to claim that it will be always answered in the very way and for the particular thing we have expected, is presumption.”⁶

When we compare the time remaining for this earth from the time Satan was banished from heaven, we can see that time is constantly getting shorter and shorter. “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Revelation 12:12). And what does the enemy of souls do the shorter the time seems to be? “Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows that his time is short, and he seeks at every point to counterwork the work of the Lord upon this earth. It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth. And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect.”⁷

The less time we have on this earth, the more desperate Satan

becomes. And what does he do in desperation? The performance of miracles to deceive if possible the very elect. For that reason, the basis of our message proclaiming Christ’s second advent cannot be the working of miracles—just as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ’s first advent, did not use miracles as proof of his authenticity. “God’s people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought.”⁸

EVIDENCE OF AUTHENTICITY

Instead of the use of miracles, we have greater proof. “God’s tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12–18. They are to take their stand on the living word: ‘It is written.’ This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely. Those who have broken their covenant with God will in that day be without God and without hope.”⁹

This sign in which we are to place our trust is found in the Sabbath commandment. “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. . . . It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:13–17).

The real sign is a change of heart. This change of heart has to do with the inner man. “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love” (Ephesians 3:16, 17). This is called the new birth or new creation. This new creation happens when we pray to God to miraculously create in us a new heart. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10). The sign of that new heart, the sign that we have had a born-again experience (John chapter 3) is the seventh day Sabbath that is a memorial of the creative power of God.

CONCLUSION

Do you want a sign? A real miracle? It does not necessarily have to do with healing necessarily. It does not have to do with other miracles that may or may not happen. It has to do with the greatest of all miracles in changing the sinful human heart into that of a truly born-again Christian. The sign of that is the observance of the seventh day Sabbath as a memorial of that new creation—not just the creation of this world about six thousand years ago—but a new creation in Christ Jesus. This is how we know the true God of our salvation. “And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God” (Ezekiel 20:20). The choice is yours. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15). *R*

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- ¹ *The Review and Herald*, September 10, 1908.
- ² *The Great Controversy*, p. 553.
- ³ *Medical Ministry*, p. 14.
- ⁴ *The Great Controversy*, p. 589.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 589.
- ⁶ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 231.
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By Liviu Tudoroiu

[Emphasis added throughout]

PROPHETIC FAITH

— Genetically Modified!



Dear friends, we are living in a world that has gone “modified.” The great “GMO” reshapes the face of almost every product that our body needs to host. Nothing of natural occurrence can match the standards of the “new normal.”

We as humans have proven over and over again that in our blind pride, we cannot seem to adequately acknowledge our limitations, nor recognize God as our Creator and Designer.

There are things we can change—and there are things we cannot. Sure, progressivist science can modify the world which they never created, rejecting the Designer and the obvious principles of His creation. But with what result, or what consequences? Too often we recognize our wrong decisions—usually when it is too late.

Ever since GMO foods forced humanity into a corner, an explosion of allergic reactions and autoimmune diseases have occurred at every age and level of society. The progressivist movement keeps denying the Creator, while science modifies

what can never be created—for example, a tiny little wheat seed. From the spiritual perspective, any abbreviation from the original intent is a faith that has been *genetic modified spiritually*—a “GMS.” It is as if you have the right answer but a wrong application.

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO PROPHECY?

The Old Testament treasured the most beautiful prophecies about the first and the second advent of Jesus Christ. Prophets animated by the Holy Spirit saw these scenes in vision and rejoiced. The “Messiah” was the hope of Israel. But gradual separation from God led them to become self-sufficient and to read the Scripture without the guidance of the Lord. Oftentimes, prophecies were twisted to feed their national pride. Such is the case about the first advent of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The priests and rabbis were handling the location of the Messiah’s birth pretty well. The question that shook Jerusalem actually came from

outside Israel: “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2).

“Where is he?” That may have sounded like a *secret birth* for most of the Jews, but why? Not because the prophecy was not there to be studied, not because the Lord was not willing to reveal to them the correct understanding of the first advent of Jesus—but because pride made them twist the interpretation and the nature of the events concerning the first and the second coming of Jesus.

In their national hatred against the Romans, the religious leaders started to invent some changes in regard to the first advent of the Lord Jesus. They took the glory of His second coming and by a forced interpretation, applied it to the birth of Christ. They didn’t want a *secret birth*, they wanted a *secret rapture*. This was the beginning of the end of their nation. They modified the “genetics” of biblical prophecy. At nearly every major

God did not have any intention of changing the terms and conditions of His salvation. Our Heavenly Father could not negotiate with the pride of Israel.



national event, the priests and rabbis would repeat the prophecies of the second coming as a form of retaliation against the Romans. The propagation of such counterfeit theology caused the Hebrew nation to reject the Saviour. The rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ had nothing to do with His spotless character or His flawless integrity; it was simply an outburst of fury against the One who unmasked their own hypocrisy and departure from God.

“In this our day, as in Christ’s day, there will be a misreading and misinterpreting of the Scriptures. **If the Jews had studied the Scriptures with earnest, prayerful, humble hearts, their searching would have been rewarded with a true knowledge of the time, and not only the time, but also the manner of Christ’s first appearing. They would not have ascribed the glories of the second appearing of Christ to His first advent.**”¹

Had Jesus come with the display of power and majesty, showing His blood affiliation with the suffering nation, showing open resentment and frustration toward the cruel Roman injustice, the Jewish nation would have had a different history. Unfortunately, God did not have any intention of changing the terms and conditions of His salvation. Our Heavenly Father could not negotiate with the **pride of Israel** since for many centuries He said, “The Lord God hath sworn by himself, saith the Lord the God of hosts, **I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces**: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein” (Amos 6:8).

The same mistake was repeated by the Christians in later centuries. As the Jews rejected Christ because of His original approach toward the moral law, so the Christians rejected the law in the name of Jesus.

“[The Jews] were so blinded that they knew not the time of His visitation, or what they were doing. Thus they were fulfilling the Scripture.

“Many are doing the same thing today ... because they have not had experience in the testing message comprehended in the first, second, and third angels’ messages. **There are those who are searching the Scriptures for proof that these messages are still in the future.** They gather together the truthfulness of the messages, but they fail to give them their proper place in prophetic history.”²

As Caiaphas refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and as his High Priest, so the papacy refused Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the church and the Saviour of the world.

In the time of the Reformation, there was a lot of heat going on in the political and theological world. More and more Bible readers and intellectuals unveiled the papal system as the fulfilling of the prophecy regarding the despotism known as the antichrist. The book of Daniel and Revelation were two powerful tools to be contested by the papal system. But the Roman Church eventually came to the conclusion that it would not be able to ban or burn all the Bibles, “heretical” books, and “heretics” that possessed or preached from them. Such an oppressive and cruel tactic merely **confirmed** Rome’s identification as the harlot persecuting the church of prophecy. So, a new and more subtle approach was needed in order to effectively counter the clear application of apocalyptic prophecy to the Roman hierarchy.

A new **interpretation** would have to be found that deflected attention away from the 12th-century papal rule of the Middle Ages that had fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel 7:25, that the little horn power

would think to change the prophetic set times of the most High, just like king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had thought to change the prophetic vision of the statue of the man in Daniel chapter 2, by building a solid-gold statue in chapter 3. The little horn, the mystery Babylon, would in like manner try to deny and obscure the meaning of prophecy.

TWO CRAFTY ALTERNATIVES

A fiendishly clever mind that came to the forefront with this new modification of the genetics of the prophecy was **Francisco Ribera** (1537–1591). He was a Jesuit doctor of theology, born in Spain, who began writing a lengthy commentary in 1585 on the book of Revelation (Apocalypse) entitled *In Sacrum Beati Ioannis Apostoli, & Evangelistiae Apocalypsin Commentarij*, published around the year 1590. In order to remove the Roman Church from consideration as the antichrist power, he proposed that the first few chapters of the Apocalypse be applied to ancient pagan Rome, and the rest he limited to a yet future period of 3½ literal years, immediately prior to the second coming. During that time, the Roman Church would have fallen away from the pope into apostasy. He then theorized that the antichrist, a single individual, would: Persecute and blaspheme the saints of God, rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, abolish the Christian religion, deny Jesus Christ, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God, kill the two witnesses of God and finally conquer the world. So, according to Ribera, the 1260 days/42 months/3½ times of prophecy were not 1260 years (as Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6 and history have proven) but rather a **literal** 3½ years. Under Ribera’s false interpretation, **none** of the book of Revelation supposedly had any application to the Middle Ages or the papacy, but rather was all thrown into the future, to a period immediately prior to the second coming, hence the name **Futurism**.

Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, one of the best-known Jesuit apologists, published a work between 1581 and 1593 entitled *Disputationum Roberti*

Bellarmini De Controversiis Christian Fidei Adversus Hujus Temporis Haereticos, (*Polemic Lectures Concerning the Disputed Points of the Christian Belief Against the Heretics of This Time*), in which he also denied the day = year principle in prophecy and pushed the reign of the anti-christ into a future period of 3½ literal years.³

Manuel De Lacunza (1731–1801), a Jesuit from Chile, wrote a manuscript in Spanish titled *La Venida del Mesias en Gloria y Magestad* ("The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty"), under the pen name of Juan Josafa [Rabbi] Ben-Ezra about 1791. Lacunza wrote under an assumed Jewish name to obscure the fact that he was a Catholic, in order to give his book better acceptance in Protestantism, his intended audience. Also an advocate of Futurism, Lacunza was deliberately attempting to take the pressure off the papacy by proposing that the antichrist was still way in the future. His manuscript was published in London, Spain, Mexico, and Paris between 1811 and 1826.⁴

Edward Irving (1792–1834), a Scottish Presbyterian and forerunner of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, translated Lacunza's work from Spanish into English in a book entitled *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* with a Preliminary Discourse, published in London in 1827 by L.B. Seeley & Son, which included Irving's own lengthy preface. Here are excerpts from Irving's translation:

"That there shall be an Antichrist; that he shall be revealed, and publicly declared, towards the last times; and that he shall commit in the world the greatest evils, making formal war against Christ, and all that pertains to him."⁵

Lacunza taught that the antichrist power would not be just one man, yet he did identify the harlot woman riding the beast in Revelation 17 as referring to Rome:

"The doctors do all agree, that the woman here spoken of is the city of Rome, in other times the capital of the greatest empire in the world, and now the capital and centre of unity of the true Christian church."⁶

"It is not present Rome which is at all spoken of here, but future Rome alone to which the prophecy hath its determinate application."⁷

Rome yes, Lacunza agrees, but **not** the Roman Catholic Church of his day, which he called the true church. Instead, he pushed this prophecy in Revelation 17 off into the future.⁸ He claimed that this apostate Christian group termed Antichrist would be: "slain and destroyed by Christ himself in the great day of his coming in glory and majesty."⁹

THE RESULT: A HEAP OF CONFUSION

So, we see here that at the **FIRST** coming of Christ (the **discreet arrival of baby Jesus in Bethlehem**) was taken by the 16th-century Counter-Reformation theologians and **was applied to the SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST** in the clouds of heaven. **Such theological gymnastics can be nicknamed spiritual genetical modification.** Why? Because it is misguiding the honest and sincere seeker of the truth to a wrong pattern of understanding the solemnity of Christ return.¹⁰

THE PRATTLE OF PRETERISM

The first distorted counter-interpretation to the Historicism of the Protestants was proposed by the Spanish Jesuit **Luis De Alcazar** (1554–1613). He penned a commentary named *Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse*, around 900 pages long. There he proposed that **all** of Revelation applied to the era of pagan Rome and the first six centuries of Christianity. According to Alcazar (or Alcasar):

Revelation chapters 1–11 describes the rejection of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Revelation chapters 12–19 were the overthrow of Roman paganism (the great harlot) and the conversion of the empire to the church.

Revelation 20 describes the final persecutions by **Antichrist**, who is identified as **Caesar Nero** (A.D. 54–68) and judgment. Revelation

chapters 21–22 describe the triumph of the New Jerusalem, the Roman Catholic Church.

Again, Alcazar found no application of prophecy to the Middle Ages or to the papacy. That his interpretation differed so greatly from that put forth by Francisco Ribera or Cardinal Bellarmine, mattered little. Catholicism, the supposedly divine and infallible interpreter of Scripture, was presenting two vastly different and quite incompatible interpretations of prophecy in a desperate effort to counter the claims of the Protestant reformers who upheld Scripture.

THE FOLLY OF FUTURISM

As revealed above, the misleading **Futurist** system of prophetic interpretation came into being as the papacy again sought to hide from having been identified as the antichrist. This new, alternative system of interpretation was devised to counteract the light and confuse the issue.

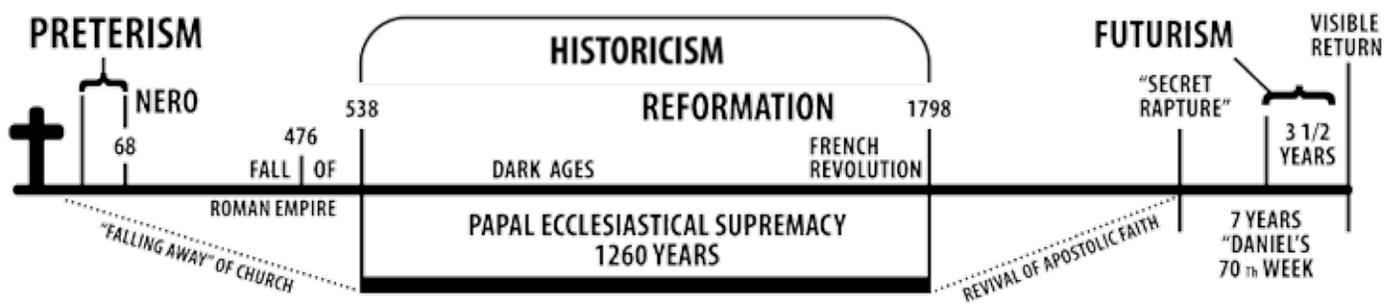
It is unfortunate to see that those who hold and advocate the Futurist system these days are not even Catholics. They have simply fallen for the smokescreen. Now more than ever, just as in the time of the great Reformation, there is need for transparency in this.

IN SUMMARY: ANTICHRIST IS MOVED EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD IN TIME

When children want to play hide-and-seek successfully, they usually hide in a different place than they were before. Typically, when anyone wants to hide or cover up something, they move it somewhere else, so it won't be readily discovered.

Likewise, the intent of both Futurism and Preterism was to counter or offset the Protestant Historical interpretation, and present alternatives, no matter how implausible they might be.

Ribera's Futurism hides the antichrist by moving it into a future 3½ literal years. Alcazar's Preterism labels the antichrist as Nero. Both theories put Antichrist outside the Middle Ages and the Reformation period—the biblical timeframe



clearly identified by Protestant Historicists as Antichrist's reign of 1260 prophetic years.

The sad irony today is that the Futurist theory has now come to dominate Protestant teaching! In evangelical circles, you constantly hear about the soon-appearing of Antichrist, who will be unveiled in the last 3½ years of Daniel's 70th week, when he supposedly declares himself to be God in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. That scenario, as you can now see, is directly traceable back to the pen of the Jesuit, Francisco Ribera.

Like the Jewish nation of old, Christianity has separated from daily devoutness, and by doing so, they have slid away from the truth. They have genetically modified the rhetoric of the prophecy in regard to the second advent, whereas the Jewish scholars of the apostles' time "ascribed the glories of the second appearing of Christ to His first advent," futurists today make the mistake of taking prophecies that were fulfilled long ago and apply them, with a twist, to anticipated events yet to be. The twist to make it all fit is the "secret rapture" theory.

The secret rapture theory is a modification of the doctrine of the literal, visible second coming of Christ. The theory hijacks the correct interpretation of the Antichrist-era of 1260 years from a.d. 538–1798 which period marked the tribulation of persecution and supremacy under the papal system.

The secret rapture theory twists the words of the apostle Paul, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the sons

perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3, KJV). "Falling away" is from the Greek word for "apostasy"—a departure from the truth. Those who advocate the secret rapture reinterpret this word to mean a departure or removal, not from the truth, but from this world! The 3½ prophetic days of Daniel 7 and Revelation 12 are interpreted as 3½ years of tribulation, commencing with the disappearing of the faithful from this earth. "Then shall two be in the field, the one taken and the other left" (Matthew 24:40). According to the theory, those left behind will experience 3½ years of tribulation during which time the Antichrist shall arise, be revealed, and then deceive all those left alive upon the earth. But Jesus is clear. Those left behind are dead. They are carcasses on the ground. Destroyed by the brightness of His coming, their bodies are left as food for the eagles (Luke 17:37).

It is very interesting that when one fundamental doctrine of the scripture is altered—"genetically modified"—in any way, it will eventually taint the purity of biblical faith, with the end-result being confusion, deception and death.

REALITY CHECK: THE RETURN OF CHRIST AS SHOWN IN SCRIPTURE

In contrast to all the confused notions, the actual second coming of Jesus will shake the world. (Psalm 50:3; Isaiah 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Revelation 1:7.) It will not be a secret rapture—it will be a glorious event that will stop the time and movements of celestial bodies. It will cause the entire planet and all that are in it to tremble.

"[Christ's] coming surpasses in glory all that the eye has ever seen. Far exceeding anything the imagination has conceived will be His personal revelation in the clouds of heaven. Then there will be a perfect contrast to the humility which attended His first advent. Then He came as the Son of the infinite God, but His glory was concealed by the garb of humanity. Then He came without any worldly distinction of royalty, without any visible manifestation of glory; but at His second appearing He comes with His own glory and the glory of the Father and attended by the angelic host of heaven. In the place of that crown of thorns which marred His brow, He wears a crown within a crown. No longer is He clad with the garments of humility, with the old kingly robe placed upon Him by His mockers. No: He comes clad in a robe whiter than the whitest white. Upon His vesture and thigh, a name is inscribed, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.'"¹¹

May the Lord Jesus give us clear understanding of this matter and help us discern the solemn times of the imminent return of our Saviour! *R*

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By Emil Barbu, MD

THE AFTERMATH

After the Gospel is preached to the whole world under the loud cry and probation closes for human race, the entire planet will be desolate. World leaders will realize too late that **transhumanism is a disastrous concept**. The world meets its destruction due to the manufactured anarchy that concludes with God's intervention.

The idea of evil should become so evil in people's minds that not even its own producers and supporters are able to bear it anymore. Evil must become so horrid as to seem like a putrefying dead carcass, stinking horribly and full of worms—to such an extent that even its remembrance will cause a sensation of utter disgust, a glaring impression in huge contrast to the grace, love, peace and absolute kindness that springs from an eternal God. The print of the nails, the enduring scars in the human body

of our Lord Jesus should trigger a strong enough memory of the terrible marks of the misery, disorder and anarchy produced by this cancer called sin so as to render it totally despicable.

As time goes by, we are more and more amazed at how God has entrusted wisdom and creativity to the human race—yet tragically, it is used for evil. The devil's manipulation of the human mind is used by the forces of evil to destroy humanity. The mind that was created by God to research the amazing unicellular world is instead used in labs to produce viruses that are spread in the cities and in the highly populated areas to bring death—igniting economic crises leading to the manipulation of the world.

"Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature,

and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows."¹

"While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast. 'The earth mourneth and fadeth away,' 'the haughty people . . . do languish. The earth also is defiled

under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant' (Isaiah 24:4, 5)."²

Under the government's protection, maneuvered in the shadows by Satan, noted scholars are led by evil spirits. They receive new technologies from evil angels and discover strange technologies that are said to be for the "common good"—yet actually bring degeneration and ruin of the human race. These scientific discoveries propose to improve the human organism by introducing a "living machine" by means of a genetically engineered solution, through the insertion of **artificial intelligence** into the organism and changing its chemistry accordingly.

Man forgets that God said that "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17), and people believe the lie of the devil: "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). In reality, this is the devil's lie for our generation and nowadays it is called transhumanism—claiming that through its own thinking and technological achievements, mental and physical abilities and skills can supposedly be improved, and the undesirable and unnecessary characteristics of our sinful human condition—characteristics such as stupidity, suffering, disease, aging, and even death can supposedly all be removed.

The essence of this idea of transhumanism is to create a technologized super-human being. The Brookings Institute, a Washington-based think tank, along with other high-profile sources, document the plan of the Chinese military to use artificial intelligence extensively to produce super-soldiers. In an article in *The Washington Times*, renowned physician Dr. Ben Carson cites the ominous religious implications of carrying out phenomena such as this. It has even secular psychologists worried.³

Yet it all sounds appealing to many. After all, who wouldn't find tempting a smooth, easy path to supposedly live forever? Wouldn't you like to be always healthy? Who wouldn't like to have refreshed

tissues every five years? Who wouldn't like to have a 25-year-old body and 70 years' worth of reasoning or maturity? Would you like to accumulate more information and more knowledge faster than ever? Because when we are talking about transhumanism it is about this as well. This is the "candy" that Satan is using to lure us to destruction.

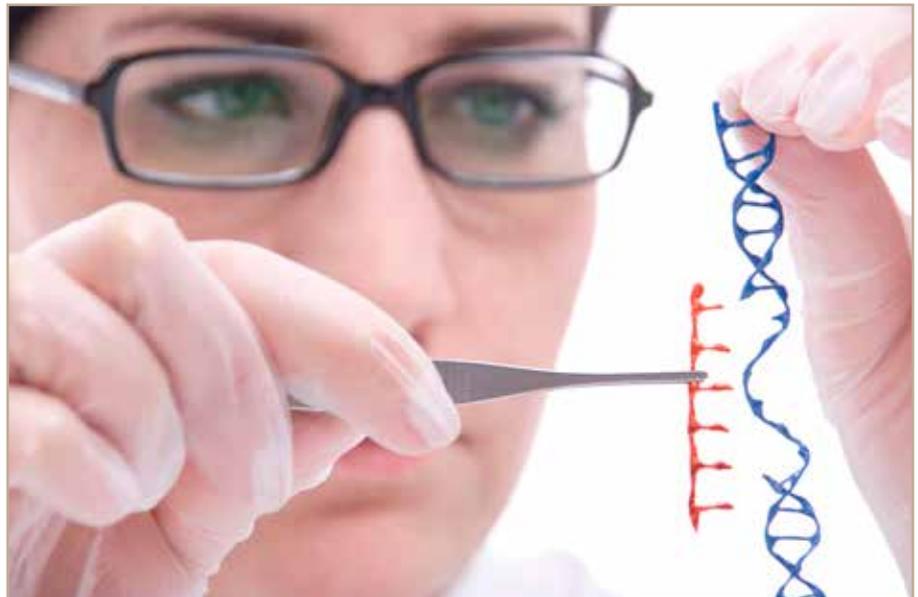
The idea of transhumanism is often used and accepted in science as the transformation of a mortal man into an entity that will ultimately tend to "euthanasia"—death by personal option. Using and replacing overused organs with nanotechnological complexes (nanobots), through using computer interfaces that would send information from the brain to the computer and vice versa through nanobots, has the tendency to prevent the shrinking of the telomeres from human cells and prevent aging—and even death—through the use of cold, artificial intelligence and even to reach the mixing of artificial intelligence with the human to produce a cyborg. What is that? A cyborg is a being with both organic and biomechatronic body parts combined. Such technologies contradict God, who clearly warned: "In the day that thou eatest thereof [of the tree of knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). These kinds of concepts and ideas—although not materialized—involve a sort of mixture, usurping the creative authority

of God. But even now, I would like to warn about genetical engineering in the human genotype.

GENETIC MODIFICATION: GMO HUMANS

In 2004–2005, in his book "*The God Gene*," geneticist Dean Hamer wrote about the hypothesis that the VMAT 2 gene responsible for the spirituality of man could be altered at a certain point through an inoculation (FUNVax)—causing people to no longer believe in deity. The apostle Paul anticipated such a crisis in 2 Timothy 3:5, foreseeing a generation of people "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Reading the hypothesis through which Dean Hamer saw that mass inoculation could be done on virtually a global level—and being right now within a similar reality, our world today is really frightening. Dr. Hamer said that by the spread of respiratory viruses such as influenza viruses or rhinoviruses, scientists could justify a mass inoculation of the entire world. But even with the VMAT 2 gene in its right place, the people living in our times under the ecumenical "peace" umbrella and with "the holy papal seat" blessing, they nonetheless appear to have "a form" of godliness.

"Appetite is indulged without restraint. Professed followers of Christ are today eating and drinking with the drunken, while their names





“When the heavenly intelligences see that men will no longer present the truth in simplicity as did Jesus, the very children will be moved upon by the Spirit of God and will go forth proclaiming the truth for this time.”

stand in honored church records. Intemperance benumbs the moral and spiritual powers and prepares the way for indulgence of the lower passions. Multitudes feel under no moral obligation to curb their sensual desires, and they become the slaves of lust. Men are living for the pleasures of sense; for this world and this life alone. Extravagance pervades all circles of society. Integrity is sacrificed for luxury and display. They that make haste to be rich pervert justice and oppress the poor, and ‘slaves and souls of men’ are still bought and sold. Fraud and bribery and theft stalk unrebuked in high places and in low. The issues of the press teem with records of murder—crimes so cold-blooded and causeless that it seems as though every instinct of humanity were blotted out. And these atrocities have become of so common occurrence that they hardly elicit a comment or awaken surprise. The spirit of anarchy is permeating all nations, and the outbreaks that from time to time excite the horror of the world are but indications of the pent-up fires of passion and lawlessness that, having once escaped control, will fill the earth with woe and desolation. The picture which Inspiration has given of the antediluvian world represents too truly the condition to which modern society is fast hastening. Even now, in the present century, and in professedly Christian lands, there are crimes daily perpetrated as black and terrible as those for which the old-world sinners were destroyed.”⁴

This human desensitization—the destruction of emotional intelligence and its replacement with a cold rational intelligence devoid of emotion—when placed in the hand of

the evil one, will lead to the close of probation for deluded souls. How? Under such circumstances, it becomes impossible for the Holy Spirit to change the heart, because the heart referred to in the Bible (the emotional intelligence) will no longer exist. To a large extent, the support of these matters given by the religious world under the pretext of the supposed medical benefits of transhumanism, makes people less and less human. Sadly, the people will end up being manipulated, controlled, labeled and used—which leads to the death of freedom under the cover of technological benefits. Those who want to control the great mass of people are delighted with these twisted realities.

It is very interesting that in the immediate succession of the events presented by Ellen G. White in *The Great Controversy*, after these pandemics, the next event is the imposition of mandatory Sunday restrictions with a supposed intent to save humanity from the many outbursts of nature, abused by humans—all under the pretext that the earth has a day of rest, and whosoever does not keep it holy, makes God angry. I think this event is exactly what will follow.

“And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God’s commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that

those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity.”⁵

The frightening results of the imposition of religious holidays in the church by mandate of the civil authorities, the flood of spiritualism, and the hidden but rapid advance of the papal power—will all be revealed. Through these solemn warnings, the people will be moved. Thousands and thousands of people will hear the words which were unheard until then.⁶

“Amidst the deepening shadows of earth’s last great crisis, God’s light will shine brightest, and the song of hope and trust will be heard in clearest and loftiest strains.”⁷

GOD’S FAITHFUL FEW

“As the third angel’s message swells into a loud cry, great power and glory will attend its proclamation. The faces of God’s people will shine with the light of heaven.”⁸

FAITHFUL CHILDREN

“When the heavenly intelligences see that men will no longer present the truth in simplicity as did Jesus, the very children will be moved upon by the Spirit of God and will go forth proclaiming the truth for this time.”⁹

THE ANGELS

“The angels of heaven are moving upon human minds to arouse investigation in the themes of the Bible. A far greater work will be done than has yet been done and none of the glory of it will flow to men, for angels that minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation are working night and day.”¹⁰

“Two great opposing powers are revealed in the last great battle. On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth. All on His side bear His signet. They are obedient to His commands. On the other side stands the prince of darkness, with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion.”¹¹



“A terrible conflict is before us. We are nearing the battle of the great day of God Almighty. That which has been held in control is to be let loose. The angel of mercy is folding her wings, preparing to step down from the throne and leave the world to the control of Satan. The principalities and powers of earth are in bitter revolt against the God of heaven. They are filled with hatred against those who serve Him, and soon, very soon, will be fought the last great battle between good and evil. The earth is to be the battle field—the scene of the final contest and the final victory. Here, where for so long Satan has led men against God, rebellion is to be forever suppressed.”¹²

“The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend.”¹³

“In every city in America the truth is to be proclaimed. In every country of the world the warning message is to be given.”¹⁴

“During the loud cry the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so abundantly that light will be communicated to every city and town.”¹⁵

“A crisis is right upon us. We must now by the Holy Spirit’s power proclaim the great truths for these last days. It will not be long before everyone will have heard the warning and made his decision. Then shall the end come.”¹⁶

No matter how great the ideal and the coalition of spiritualism may appear to be, the transhumanist worldwide government and ecumenical religion led by the papacy from underneath to create a future for mankind without the true Creator will have disastrous results. Jesus has warned, “without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). The presumptuous ploy will lead a fallen human race manipulated by the devil into such a great catastrophe that people will long for death and look upon it as a blessing.

At the same time, those, in contrast, who will stand “in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1) will not be afraid; they will only behold with rewarded eyes the fate of the wicked, because God has been their place of refuge and their strong tower.

The misery and degradation of humanity will be unbearable to those who have joined the sinful and evil coalition led by the devil. At the same time, those, on the other hand, who have chosen the goodness and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, will cry out: “Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). The benefit of this contrast will be that the wicked who were manipulated by the devil will ultimately recognize as well that “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments” (Revelation 16:7)—although their destiny can no longer be changed. As for those who are

saved, the unimaginable misery will cause such a terrible scene that in eternal ages no one will ever wish to repeat it. A guarantee for that are the marks of the nails in the palms of the Lord—when beholding them, in the eternal ages, the redeemed ones will discover new dimensions of the infinite love that was able to destroy every trace of evil forever.

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”¹⁷ *R*

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- ¹² *The Review and Herald*, May 13, 1902.
- ¹³ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 176.
- ¹⁴ *The General Conference Bulletin*, March 30, 1903.
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Southern South American Union Online Health Seminar

From September 3–October 20, 2020, health professionals and pastors from various Spanish-speaking countries participated in lectures under the theme: “Health, Quality of Life, and Salvation.” The seminar was held online three days a week—and a total of 22 classes were delivered to 192 participants from 21 countries. Topics included psychology, nutrition, physiology, naturopathy, anatomy, and theotherapy. The classes were recorded and later posted on YouTube.



SDARM Musicians' Convention via Zoom

For three days, November 13–15, 2020, musicians from around the world were united at a virtual SDARM Musicians' Convention via Zoom. This event brought together musicians of all levels to learn from, encourage, and motivate each other. Uplifting spiritual messages, experiences, and discussions were presented, which touched and united hearts around the globe. The spiritual messages showed God's great love for sacred music and songs, while the experiences showed how God can lead, guide, and develop talent in extraordinary ways when we place our trust in Him.



Youth Convention and Baptism in Kenya

From December 27, 2020–January 2, 2021, the brethren in Kenya held a youth convention around Lake Victoria at Sindo. The speakers presented Christ as the focus of our lives—in the choice of trade and profession, in health, in stewardship, in prophecy, in choice of a life partner, in education, etc. The youth choir presented several songs. The brethren began the New Year with three young people making a covenant with Jesus through baptism in the waters of Lake Victoria. Praise God!



P.O. Box 7240
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MOVING? Please let us know.

REAL GOLD FOR REAL SHEEP

Not all that glitters is gold.

Gold is a precious metal known for its great beauty. In nature, it is rare and very hard to find. Tiny bits of gold are sometimes in quartz rock on the sides of hills or in small stones in riverbeds, but not often.

When people are trying to find gold, they might discover some mineral that looks like it, but is not gold. They are really excited to think they have found real gold, but they are very unhappy later to learn that it glittered like gold, but was not gold at all. They should have studied ahead of time to know the difference before wasting too much of their energy.

One of the saddest feelings we can ever have is when seeing that we have been fooled. Maybe a friend has lied to us, somebody has stolen from us or badly hurt us in some other way. How do you feel when that happens? So, so sad! Then something that looked shiny turns out to be fake.

The world has a lot of fake things in it. Jesus has told us not to be surprised when something ends up being fake. He does not want us to pretend things are real when they are not. That would be living in a lie. So, He tells us, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

God's children are to be like doves and like sheep—both are peaceful and pure. But there are many wolves in the world that try to destroy the sheep. Sometimes we can see clearly that they are wolves. But other times they dress up to look like sheep—and that makes them

much more dangerous. Jesus warns us: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). This is scary.

So, Jesus has told us to watch out. Be aware like the serpent, but harmless as a dove. A dove does not usually try to hurt anything—that's why the dove is a symbol of peace.

What does all this mean for us? Don't be fooled by false "gold" that glitters, but is not real—like the false words of people who seem fine but they are not really telling the truth. Jesus calls them wolves. The Bible also compares real gold to faith in Christ and sheep to God's faithful children.

Study your Bible deeply to know what the truth really is! Live by that truth in God's strength. That will protect you from lying wolves, no matter how they may be dressed.—BHM.

