

DESTINY BULLETIN

A commentary sent to the supporters of the ministry of Christian Destiny.

Dear “Special Friend” of Christian Destiny,

June 2003

LIVING IN TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS

Have you ever been beset by the dark suspicion that all is not well in the world? Do you feel like there’s an undercurrent swirling beneath the surface of life? Have you awakened to a sense of foreboding that you just can’t explain? It’s not a fantasy. You’re not losing your mind. It’s real! The fact is that every one of us will spend his or her life living in two different worlds at the same time! How *is* this possible? Well, it’s difficult, but it is possible. Actually, everyone in many ways lives in several different “worlds.” As we can readily see, a young man falls in love and suddenly he is “in another world.” When he gets married, he lives in the “world” of married people. But, at the same time, in his job he continues in the “world” of salesman or shoe repairman.

But the two different worlds of which we are speaking are even more “real” than these and of greater importance. What are they? They are the world of good and the world of evil, of light and of darkness. They are one world where Satan has his big influence and the other which is Christ’s kingdom. They are, in another sense, the world of physical things and the world of spiritual things. These are real worlds, and *at this very moment* they are both pressing upon us. We deal with them every day, every moment of this human life.

The important thing to remember about these two worlds is that one is evil—powerfully and persistently evil. The other is good, pure, fine, beautiful—a world of righteousness and truth. One world—the good one—is most greatly to be desired. The evil one will attract, harm and finally kill all that it touches.

Keep in mind, also, that it is perversely easier to do evil than it is to do good. About this, the Apostle Paul said, *“To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not”* (Rom 7:18). *“Sin. . .does so easily best us”* (Heb. 12:1), the Bible says. So it takes a lot more effort to resist evil and to do good than the other way around. To give in to evil is easy, but alas, it is ultimately fatal.

And why is this? Is God not strong? Will He not help us? Does He not love us? Yes, He loves us, He is strong, and He is able to do more than we ask or even think. The love or ability of God is not the problem. The problem is that we, you and I, have sinned. We *are* sinners. That means that we have inherited a disposition toward sin, and we have cooperated with that perverse nature within us. Man, because he is a sinner, does not *want* to quit sinning. Lollipops, to many, taste better than spinach. But lollipops, sweet as they are, will finally kill us.

The same is true about sin. It is enjoyable for a short time (time keeps getting shorter), but finally, it will do us in. *“When it is finished,”* the Bible says, sin *“brings forth death”* (James 1:15). So we must recognize that the pursuing of evil—living according to our lower, sinful nature—is a course to be resisted. We must not drop into evil and its consequent ruin. *No fact of life is more important!*

How then shall we live successfully (the Bible calls it “victoriously”) in these two different worlds of light and darkness? The problem, of course, is particularly the Christian problem. The person who is not saved is simply lost; for him there is no hope. Assuming, then, that we are Christians, let us face this “two-different-worlds” problem. What shall we do to make it, to survive the strain? How shall we operate in these worlds and still preserve our sanity?

First, *recognize it; don’t run away.* This, of course, is not easy. That is why many retreat into escapism. They attempt to hide from the dual reality of this life. They forget that we can run, but alas, we cannot hide.

For the poor creatures of this world, the attempted escape hatches are many. Some try alcohol, thinking that they can intoxicate themselves into forgetting that they are still and always relentlessly pursued by the hound of heaven. Some, those who can afford it, opt for amusement, supporting with millions everything from professional sports to crooked roulette wheels. Soon the spinning wheel stops, and the two contradictory worlds rush back in. One wonders what whirlwind romances, what frenetic activity, what grandiose spending, what foolishness has engaged the frightened people of this world in an attempt to forget, at least temporarily, their sinful natures.

Even Christians manufacture their own form of escapism that bears watching. Some of them go for hyper-religion--spurious spiritual activity that seems cultic, rather than Christian. Others opt for asceticism, checking out of real life. Still others pursue ecstasy, hoping that emotions will override the will and the external realities of life. None of these will finally work, for those two different worlds will continue with us.

Second, *know why God allows it to be like this.* God, the Bible says, made us in His own image. We were created for fellowship with Him. We were not made to be creatures of darkness, stumbling and falling into sin. Our eyes were made for sunshine and our ears for hearing heaven’s music and the voice of God. We will, therefore, be always restless, said Augustine, until we find our rest in Him.

But God has allowed the creature to be subject to vanity *“not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope* (Rom. 8:20). We see, then, that God has great hopes, great plans for us! Today’s temptations and frustrations are to condition, to educate, to prepare us for the realization of that hope. When that day comes, we will have the explanation for every problem of life.

Third, *trust the Lord and angle toward the spiritual*. When in doubt, do the godly thing. You will always know what that is when you are trusting the Word of God rather than the voice of men. The Book of Proverbs gives us very good advice in this regard: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths”* (Proverbs 3:5,6).

Perhaps it is time, once again, to recommend a nearly timeless book that has had a tremendous impact upon the lives of many. A number of years ago, Charles Sheldon wrote *In His Steps*. It is the account of a church that decided to cope with the normal pressures, frustrations and temptations of modern life by asking the question, “What would Jesus do?” Their story gave rise to the WWJD Movement. It is a moving work. After all, as *Christians*, we are supposed to be “little Christs,” imitators of Christ. If you would like a copy of *In His Steps*, it would be our pleasure to send a **free copy** as our gift to you.

“What would Jesus do?” After all, in this life we are supposed to be imitators of Christ, we are supposed to follow in His steps, we are to do what He taught us.

Indeed, we are predestinated *“to be conformed to the image of His Son”* (Rom. 8:29). This means that God has set up an inexorable process whereby every experience of life is to make us more like Jesus. We do best to cooperate with that program. It is far more comfortable to be involved in willing conformity than the severe discipline from on high, which is the inevitable alternative.

Fourth, *steel yourself against the world’s strong magnetism*. The world has taken to itself powerful instruments designed to beguile and persuade each of us. The media are not inherently evil, but many who use them are. And while you may study the Bible on Christian television, the airwaves are also filled with prurient and even satanic influences. The gurus of TV often sell the idea that you can have fornication without tears, violence without death, death without judgment, and indulgence without responsibility. And so discernment is the watchword for Christians as pertains to the mixed and often subversive message portrayed in the media.

This world—don’t fall in love with it! *“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him”* (I John 2:15).

No message is stronger in the Word of God than the one that warns us not to trust this world. We are instructed that the whole world lies in the lap of the wicked one and that Satan, the god of this world, is our enemy. In dramatic fashion, we are told, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world”* (I Pet. 5:8,9).

We, therefore, must not be eternal positivists, telling ourselves and others that

all is well. We must warn ourselves--and all of those whom we have the opportunity to teach--of the pressure, the danger, the fatal nature of evil. Satan must be seen as a frightful monster who is to be resisted valiantly.

Fifth, *stay with the side that will finally win.* No battle goes on forever; one side or the other must win. In the battle between good and evil, who will triumph? Happily, we have advanced information in answer to that question. Christ will triumph! Good will! God will! Satan, our deadly adversary, will ultimately be cast into the bottomless pit (see Rev. 20:3), and then finally into the lake of fire (see v.10).

Our blessed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is coming again in power and great glory. He will triumph over His rebellious creation and subdue every form of evil on the occasion of His glorious return. God will, in fact, take flaming vengeance upon every evil work and every individual who knows not God and chooses not to obey the Gospel. They will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints (see II Thess. 1:8-10). There is no doubt that evil will finally be defeated and the universe will be cleansed from the awful scourge of sin. We who believe the Gospel are a part of the army that will ultimately triumph.

In the meantime, in our brief sojourn in this world, He promises victory in this struggle between good and evil. His power will triumph in us (see Rom. 5:17; I Cor. 15:57). As we trust Him, even in this world of sin, He will strengthen, and sustain us. He promises His presence, His power, His guidance and a hundred other benefits to His believing children. We are not left alone, but we travel an illuminated pathway as we walk with Christ in the gloaming of this dark world.

Let us remember, then, that we can be victorious in this life. We can be masters of life in this two-different-worlds existence on this earth. How? Clearly, we are promised a constant reality and capability in our lives by the Word of God that says, "*Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*" (I John 4:4).

Believe that! His power and His presence will never fail you, not in this world and not in the world to come.

Taken from the writings of Dave Breese, with Dave Weeden.

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