

FOOD **4** THOUGHT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

Why doesn't God end all problems?

The wars, the chaos in international relations, the collapse of moral standards, the disasters in which the innocent die along with the guilty. These are the situations that make us stop and think—and perhaps doubt God's goodness. It is then that we ask: "If there is a God, why does He not end all of this once and for all?"

The simple answer is that God, yes, will someday end all suffering and sin, but He has a well-defined purpose in the present delay.



What does He need to put an end to? Not to suffering itself, but to selfishness, hatred, deceit, envy, and a multitude of other defects that dwell in the heart of mankind and that are the true cause. In other words, He has to put an end to sin. The apostle Peter speaks of the situation in this way: *"The Lord does not delay His promise, but is patient with us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9)



Alleviating suffering and solving problems of the present life is of interest to God, but it is insignificant in comparison with the redemption of mankind. He wants to change people in all aspects of their lives.

The sovereignty of God, even if it seems a contradiction, includes the free will of each person. So during the present time, anyone can submit to Him, not by force, but by his own will.

On that sad day, when the crowd surrounded the cross and watched the cruelty and injustice of its murderers, no doubt the friends of Jesus asked themselves: "Why doesn't God intervene to prevent all this?" At that moment everything seemed dark and impossible to accept. However, now the answer is very clear. God could have prevented it, but in that case He would have put an end to His own plan before consummating our salvation.

Today we live in the midst of all kinds of injustice and suffering, and we are asking the same question: "If there is a God, why doesn't He intervene?" The truth is that He has not lost control in any way. He knows what He's doing. "The mills of God grind slowly," but the end is certain: both the punishment of the evildoers and the salvation of those who have surrendered themselves to Him. This is a time of opportunity for man, his time to choose. The purpose of all that happens to us is to bring us to repentance. □

The Valley of the Blind



Among the novels and stories by H. G. Wells, there is a work of fiction with the title: *The Valley of the Blind*. It is about two men who made an expedition in search of gold in a remote area of Peru.

One day in their explorations, they accidentally provoked an avalanche and they fell many feet, carried along with tons of earth and rocks, yet their lives were miraculously saved. When they were able to analyze the situation, they found themselves in a small valley, entirely surrounded by high mountains, which prevented their escape and their return to civilization.

A tribe of people lived there, similar to them in every way, excluding the fact that they all were blind. Parents and children, big and small, all were blind. The place on the face that in normal beings is occupied by the eyes, was completely covered by skin. The explorers concluded that this defect was due to an illness that attacked the tribe years ago, and was transmitted from parents to children for many generations. No one in the tribe remembered hearing conversations about the existence of eyes.

The first impulse of the two men was to try to help this unfortunate people in some way, perhaps by opening the skin that covered the eyes through surgery. However, these blind people who thought they were normal, had no desire to see and sensed their visitors were abnormal. Despite all the demonstrations of the advantages of having sight, nobody was

convinced. On the contrary, the feeling that grew stronger among the inhabitants of the valley was that these new men needed to be operated on in order to remove the rare "tumors" from their faces which they called eyes.

In the beginning the two believed that it would be easy to elude their enemies. Even though they were blind, they had developed the other senses to an incredible degree. They eventually imprisoned the visitors in preparation for the operation. At the last moment, the visitors were able to escape with the collaboration of one of the blind people who for some reason believed that they were right. Then, by a secret path, they went up from the valley and they returned to civilization.

The author always interwove his fantasies with a large amount of philosophy and psychology. In this case it is evident that he wrote satirically about the peculiarity of human nature that can be called "the obstinacy of popular ignorance". This attitude starts with the idea: "If I don't know understand it, it does not exist".

The figure of blindness presented by Wells coincides with what the inspired authors of the Bible have written. Jesus spoke to the religious people who could not see their own faults, saying: "*If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.*" (John 9:41) The Apostle Paul explained why some people do not accept the gospel: "*The god of this world (Satan) has made them blind of understanding, so that they may not see the bright light of the message of the glorious Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 4: 4)

Let us not hide behind the spiritual blindness of the majority, let alone try to force others to accept the beliefs and customs of the masses. A small minority has opened its eyes to the most important values of life and eternity. They are those who have received Christ by faith and have had a personal encounter with God.

You can be one of them, allowing the light of Christ to enlighten you. You can start with the simple prayer found in Psalm 119: 19, a request that God always answers if it is prayed with sincerity: "*Open my eyes, and I will look at the wonders of Your law.*" □

Rebellious Creation

Frankenstein is a name that is now almost synonymous with monster. In the literary work, Frankenstein is a student of natural philosophy, who in his experiments discovers the secret of how



to animate matter without life. Using materials extracted from morgues and research rooms, he creates a monster and he gives it life, but then, horrified, he lets it escape.

Today, 200 years later, in this day of electronic brains and robots, the subject is repeated a thousand times in science-based novels. In short, the argument is always the same. A great scientist manages to create a machine with all the powers of movement of the human being, and much of the human capacity to think. Everything is going well until something unexpected happens and the ma-

chine escapes the control of its creator and wreaks havoc all over.

With certain differences, it is precisely what happened between God and men. According to the biblical account, the Almighty created man essentially in His own likeness, giving him faculties with which he could move, think, choose and enjoy communication with other human beings and with God Himself. And as in the novels, something happened. The created being rebelled against the Creator and began to tamper with the rest of the creation, damaging his own happiness and threatening the designer's plan.

From here on, the similarity with scientific novels is even more remarkable. The rebel has descendants for many generations, all with the same attitude of rebellion. The Creator pursues them, not to destroy them, but to offer them redemption. These descendants are us, and the plan of redemption is the new life offered through Jesus Christ, who is God Himself made a man. Just as He did not force them to obey Him in the beginning, the Creator does not impose by force the redemption He has provided. Salvation is by personal choice. It is for everyone who receives it. *"But to all who received Him, to those who believe in His name, he gave them the right to become children of God."* (John 1: 12)

Those who continue to flee and do not want to accept the offer, go to their destruction, not because the Creator wants it, but because it is impossible to live without Him. *"They will deny the Lord who rescued them, bringing upon themselves sudden destruction."* (1 Peter 2:1) □

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Message without words

Federico Franson, a well-known evangelist of the last century, spent most of his life traveling and preaching on four continents.

Once in the Middle East he spoke on the street in English, but none of the public understood. After the speech, a man came forward wishing to converse with the evangelist. Returning to the hotel, they found someone

who served as an interpreter and they were able to communicate. It turned out that the man, although he could not explain it, had felt deeply moved by the sermon, without having understood a single word. He shared about how during the preaching he realized his need for God and then he became a Christian.

On another occasion in China, a man saw Franson strolling through a city, and he had the strong impression that this foreigner had what he was looking for. He followed him to the house where Franson was staying. While the two communicated by means of an interpreter who knew Chinese and English, the Chinese man heard the gospel and accepted Christ. He had seen something unique and fascinating in the evangelist's behavior which indicated to him the presence of God.

Some will say that the two cases were coincidences, others might say that they were miracles and others have explained it by taking into account the enthusiasm of Franson. The truth is that we are constantly "communicating" who we truly are. If we are children of God, He exercises control over our lives, and with our actions we need to communicate that to others.

What do you communicate to those around you?