



## *Touching Up Our Picture of Health* *part 12—Toxic Thoughts*

*by Risë Rafferty*

**W**e have been exploring the variety of influences that can impact our minds, affecting our ability to spiritually hear and discern. This month we will learn that our thoughts have the potential to actually change the structure of our brain and alter our destiny.

As a physician, John Harvey Kellogg applied sincere zeal, earnestness and energy in accomplishing his dream of building up the Battle Creek Sanitarium. With God's blessing and Dr. Kellogg's knowledge of the human body and various remedies such as hydrotherapy and nutrition, the Sanitarium, with God's health message, became world renowned. Its fame in successfully treating illness captured the patronage of the elite and the famous. The world came through its doors and accepted its lifestyle tutelage. However, it was from his own brethren in the church that Kellogg found the greatest resistance.

It pained him that the conference brethren demanded chicken and meat when they visited the Sanitarium, while his patients from the world accepted vegetarian fare with eagerness. His grief over this regrettable reality caused his trust and respect for them to wane. In addition, their lack of esteem for the health message and, in turn, for Dr. Kellogg's work, led them to withhold their support. Ellen White saw what was transpiring and wrote:

"It will be seen sometime that our brethren and sisters have not been inspired by the spirit of Christ in their manner of dealing with Dr. Kellogg. I

know that your views of the doctor are not correct. Your attitude toward him will not bear the approval of God. . . you can pursue a course that will so weaken his confidence in his brethren that they cannot help him when and where he needs to be helped.

"Dr. Kellogg has done a work that no man I know of among us has had qualifications to do. He has needed the sympathy and confidence of his brethren. . . they should have pursued a course that would have gained and retained his confidence. . . . But there has been instead a spirit of suspicion and criticism.

"If the doctor fails in doing his duty and being an overcomer at last, those brethren who have failed in their want of wisdom and discernment to help the man when and where he needed their help will be, in a large measure, responsible. . . . His brethren do at times really feel that God is using the doctor to do a work that no other one is fitted to do. But when they meet so strong a current of reports to his detriment, they are perplexed. They partially accept them and decide that Dr. Kellogg must really be hypocritical and dishonest. . . .

"Christ paid the redemption price

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for his soul and the devil will do his utmost to ruin his soul. Let none of us help [the devil] in his work.”<sup>1</sup>

“The spirit of criticism shown to [Dr. Kellogg’s] work from the first has been very unjust and made his work hard. . . .

“It is a fact that our ministers are very slow to become health reformers. . . . This has caused Dr. Kellogg to lose confidence in them.”<sup>2</sup>

“God has given Dr. Kellogg the success that he has had. . . . God gave the light on health reform, and those who rejected it rejected God. One and another who knew better said that it all came from Dr. Kellogg, and they made war upon him. This had a bad influence on the doctor. He put on the coat of irritation and retaliation.”<sup>3</sup>

The story of J. H. Kellogg is a sad one. He eventually dismissed the reproof, correction and appeals made to him through God’s servant. He began to explore ancient forms of Eastern mysticism, ultimately believing (and teaching his followers) that, for example, the Holy Spirit came physically into us by way of the health reform’s food and fresh air. I believe that toxic thoughts were one of the means Satan used to distort Dr. Kellogg’s spiritual perception and pervert his judgment. Dr. Kellogg allowed those thoughts to rule his mind and destroy his connection to God. Are thoughts really *that* powerful to actually transform our very beliefs?

Whether we realize it or not, thoughts and emotions have a strong influence on the health and action of brain neurons. “Scientists are now beginning to study the alteration in neurotransmitters that occurs when we feel positive thoughts—love, compassion, peace, courage, commitment, faith, hope. Just as angry, hostile thoughts bring about physiological changes, positive thoughts produce corresponding changes via the different composition of neurotransmit-

ters and hormones generated.”<sup>4</sup> Negative thoughts such as bitterness and hatred breed destruction. “Pride, self-love, selfishness, hatred, envy and jealousy have beclouded the perceptive powers.”<sup>5</sup>

The Bible tells us that God wants to work in us to get rid of “all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”<sup>6</sup>

The secret to purging these caustic emotions and thoughts is supernatural. We find it in Ephesians 4:32 and 5:1-2: “And be kind and compassionate to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God . . . and walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us” (KJV and NIV).

Only as we accept God’s forgiveness and love, and experience them for ourselves firsthand, will our minds be free to extend love, acceptance and forgiveness to those who hurt us, ultimately freeing us from the corrosive effects of toxic thoughts.

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<sup>1</sup> *Letter 21*, 1888 to G.I. Butler on October 14, 1888; found in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, pp. 99-100, 103-105.

<sup>2</sup> *Manuscript 175*, 1888; January Diary; found in *Battle Creek Letters*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>3</sup> Talk on April 3, 1903, entitled “Our Duty to Leave Battle Creek,” found in *Review & Herald*, April 14, 1903.

<sup>4</sup> *Total Wellness*, p. 327.

<sup>5</sup> *2 Testimonies*, p. 605.

<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 4:31-32, NIV.

