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1959 President's Address . . .

BIOLOGICAL BLIGHT OVER AMERICA

JOE D. NICHOLS, M. D.

Louisville, Kentucky — March 7, 1959

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"Today germs are not our principal enemy. Our chief medical adversary is what I consider a disturbance of the inner balance of the constituents of our tissues, which are built from and maintained by necessary chemicals in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. Persons who are afflicted with 'rheumatism' or 'cancer,' for example, are not the victims of germs but of altered chemistry. For a generation we have worked on the concept that our cells are never static and that in time they must be replaced in varying degrees by the nutrients obtained from food. More specifically, our working hypothesis has been that all disease is chemical and, when we know enough, chemically correctable."

This is a direct quotation from the article "Some Recent Advances in Nutrition" by Dr. Tom Douglas Spies in the June 7, 1958 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. To quote again from the same article "A large part of human disease is chemical rather than bacterial in origin, and in diseases of chemical origin the trouble may be either excess or deficiency—the effect on the patient is a general biological blight, and a spectacular response follows the administration of complex foodstuffs."

There is today a **biological blight** over America. Despite millions spent on re-

search, year after year, the incidence of metabolic diseases continues to increase. Cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, mental disease, gallstones, kidney stones, liver and blood disorders, are steadily claiming the lives of more and more young people.

Voltaire wrote "We put medicine about which we know little, into bodies about which we know less, to cure diseases about which we know nothing at all." And the statement is more apt today than it was when it was first written.

New wonder drugs for arthritis and other metabolic diseases are announced with every visit from the drug detail man. Newspapers and magazines announce some of them with great fanfare, promising that the end of this or that disease is just around the corner. But we never seem able to quite get around the corner. Before every great national drive for funds to combat the dreaded diseases, we hear promises that if we will just furnish enough money for the "foundation" or the "society" that a major breakthrough is imminent. The latest of these that I have seen comes from Ann Arbor, Michigan. "The conquest of Paralytic Poliomyelitis 'is in sight' through universal immunization of the population under 40 years of age." This report was made to a scientific symposium on poliomyelitis, held

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under the auspices of the University of Michigan School of Public Health. The symposium was held in connection with the national opening of the 1959 March of Dimes. But at this same symposium reports were made of outbreaks of polio in many American cities where cases of paralytic polio occurred even in children who had received all three polio shots. Undoubtedly something more than Salk vaccine will be required if we are to conquer paralytic polio.

In many recent medical articles in our best medical journals, it is evident that physicians are becoming more and more concerned about the toxic side effects of many of the new wonder drugs. Their indiscriminate use is being condemned. In *The Lancet* of December 1, 1956, an editorial headlined "Cautionary Cards" sounded a warning that the remedies in use today are so powerful that they can result in death if knowledge is not available concerning the patients previous treatment with drugs and serums. In *The Practitioner*, another English journal of January, 1956, an article warned against the indiscriminate use of antibiotics, especially for minor infections. "They deprive the patient of that immunity from subsequent infections which he would have acquired if the infection had been allowed to run its course."

I am a practicing physician and enormous pressures are sometimes made on the physician by the patient himself to prescribe a new wonder drug that he has read about in a magazine. The mother wants her child to have the immediate benefits of the new antibiotic and have her child well in one day. A great professor of Medicine at the University of Arkansas Medical School taught me a principle when I was a senior. He said, "Never be the first to take up the new nor the last to discard the old." The rule is more important today than when I learned it 27 years ago.

I do not mean to insinuate for one minute that medicine has not made some great triumphs in recent years. In the prevention and treatment of some of our infectious diseases, advances have been made. But in the prevention and treatment of metabolic disease, there is little to brag about.

It is in this field of metabolic disease where quality food can play such an important role both in prevention and treatment. Even in the field of acute infection the importance of proper nutrition is now being recognized. Segmour Lionel Halpern, writing in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, October 28, 1955, says, "The ability of a patient to recover from an illness, injury or operation is closely related to his previous and current nutrient supply. Rare indeed is the patient who cannot be aided by proper nutritional guidance, since *nutrition is probably the most important environmental factor affecting health and dis-*

ease." Good nutrition will help to insure rapid wound healing after surgery, burns or radiation exposure. Proper nutrition thus is not only important in preventing weight disturbances and specific deficiency disease, but it has an equally vital role in maintaining high grade health. Thus in a non-specific manner, nutrition participates in the prophylaxis against most acute infections and, when used as an adjunct in therapy, shortens the duration of convalescence of virtually all pathologic processes. Halpern maintains that for an optimum effect, there must be a proper balance and proportion among nutrients, and *all* the nutrients utilized by the tissues must be *simultaneously* available to the cell.

Yes, the importance of proper nutrition is slowly beginning to be appreciated by the medical profession. Writing in the new "Perspectives in Biology and Medicine," Hans Kannitz, M. D., states "New observations suggest that emphasis is shifting to more concern with the qualitative properties of food-stuffs." The title of his article is "Non-Energetic Powers of Nutrition." He suggests that it is becoming more and more apparent that emotional, hormonal and immunologic responses to food are very important. And now a new medical organization has been formed. It is the International Institute of Clinical Physiology. The purpose is to study physiological methods for the prevention and treatment of disease. A journal, "Clinical Physiology," will be published which will emphasize the place that nutrition has in the maintenance of optimal health. Dr. Jonathan Forman is Editor-in-Chief and the first issue is scheduled for late spring of this year.

Yes, more and more doctors and thinking people are questioning the effectiveness of modern drugs in this treatment of metabolic disease. They are turning to proper nutrition for help and in many places now they are proving the truth of Hippocrates' own advice "Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food." In an editorial in the *Journal of the AMA*, June 7, 1958, the statement is made, "The only prevention is a daily supply of all the necessary elements in the diet."

But here in America we face the almost impossible task of finding quality, poison free food. There is now barely enough for the handful of us in NFA and we have to search everywhere, order by mail, and grow it ourselves to get it.

Dr. Nichols is the national president of Natural Food Associates. He is a practicing physician in Atlanta, Texas, owns and operates a 35-bed hospital, and is Chairman of the Board of the Atlanta National Bank. He is the owner of Jonica Farm, a 1,000-acre organic farm two miles south of Atlanta.

Recently I read a statement which said that it was ridiculous to think that America could turn back from modern scientific chemical farming methods. The writer stated that it would be like going back from modern transportation methods to the ox cart. He laughed at people who go about seeking natural poison free food. He said "theirs is a hopeless quest." He contended that if we discontinued the use of chemical fertilizers and modern insecticides, the nation would starve.

I will agree that the change will not be made overnight. But I am convinced that the change can be made and must be made if our civilization is to survive.

Nearly every empire in history has ended in deserts. The reckless cutting of trees and the overgrazing of the lands which resulted in erosion, destroyed the ancient civilizations. And now soil erosion is one of the greatest dangers that faces America today. The loss of humus, the destruction of the "life" of the soil in the form of the fungi, molds, soil bacteria and earthworms, and the leaching of essential minerals from the soil, is bringing disaster to America. The ever increasing use of modern commercial fertilizers has stepped up the pace of erosion and destruction of our topsoils. The restoration of the fertility of our soils is a basic need of America today.

And since the war the insane use of chlorinated hydrocarbon, and phosphorous insecticides is poisoning both the life of our soils and our people.

I say again that the change will not come suddenly—it will be gradual but the change *must* be made. And to bring about that change as rapidly as possible is my job and yours.

I can report to you that there are evidences all over America that the change is being made. Farmers all over the country are looking for a better way. Many of them are finding that their profits from farming all go to pay for the fertilizer and insecticides they have been taught to use. In practically every state organic farming methods are being followed by more and more intelligent farmers. I have visited organic farms all over this nation that are highly successful. They are producing both quality and quantity. And they are finding an ever growing demand for their high quality poison free products. Many of these people are here at this convention. Yes, there are hundreds of farmers, many of whom are members of NFA, who are producing natural foods and advertising them in our "Farmers Market" in our *Natural Food and Farming* magazine.

There is evidence that even the manufacturers of commercial fertilizers are beginning to sense the importance of organic matter. Some of them are now using sludge as a base for their chem-

icals. The county agents who heretofore have been the chief salesmen for the chemical companies, are beginning to teach the values of winter cover crops and stubble mulching. Recently I heard a high official in the USDA say that many authorities agree that chemical farming "has gone too far."

The dangers of modern postwar insecticides is also becoming apparent. Opposition to mass spraying has been violent in every area where it has been practiced in recent years. The Audubon Society, the Fish and Wildlife organizations and sensible scientists all over the country have joined us in the condemnation of this mass suicide. At the trial in Brooklyn which resulted from the mass spraying of 3 million acres in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, a famous physician from the Mayo Clinic testified to the danger to human beings of these deadly insecticides. Doctors everywhere are alarmed because they are convinced that these poisons are related to the increased incidence of liver disease and blood disorders.

At least one large manufacturer has discontinued the production of these insecticides. May I read to you again the famous Thompson letter:

Dr. Joe D. Nichols, Secretary
Marion Cass Soil Conservation
District
Atlanta, Texas

Dear Dr. Nichols:

Please accept my thanks for your nice letter of July 1st, in reference to our withdrawal from agricultural insecticide production.

There is beginning to pile up a great deal of incomplete data which appear to make out a sound case against the general use of the current broad spectrum toxic organic insecticides. Our decision, however, was based on our own study over a 12 year period. We saw the Louisiana cotton area welcome the new insecticide a very few years ago. Today for practical purposes no cotton area can control any of the cotton insects with any known insecticide. From a position of losing part of their crop from insect infestation they are now faced with going out of cotton entirely. At least, until a natural balance is again developed.

The Washington and Oregon apple people started spraying for codling moth a few years ago. Today they are spraying up to 15 times to control mites and this is a losing battle. I could cite many more.

Examination of the milk supply and food animal flesh is showing a relatively high percentage of DDT and other toxicants. Although the USDA claims this below a toxic level, they also say the chemicals are cumulative. Many cars of lettuce have recently been confiscated

in the New York market for high concentration of parathion.

In the handling of parathion for example, 25 milligrams on the skin can be fatal.

Frankly, the whole thing began to cause us all so much concern I decided to discontinue any connection with such production. My letter to our customers pretty well explained our position.

I appreciate very highly the interest you have shown.

Sincerely,

W. T. Thompson, Pres.
Thompson Chemical
Corporation
Los Angeles, California

Yes, the change *can* and *must* be made. New desert lands are coming into production as a result of vast new irrigation projects. These lands should be started by organic methods. Raw rock phosphate and potash are available where needed. The production of commercial compost is increasing. At Gainesville, Georgia, chicken litter is being changed into compost in 14 days by the addition of raw rock minerals and bacterial activators. City garbage and sludge is being made available for use on the land to speed the restoration of its fertility. The demand for its use must be encouraged by all of us.

The value of vast organic mineral deposits all over the country is beginning to be recognized. And the fact that they do not require treatment with sulphuric or muriatic acid is also recognized. The importance of trace minerals in a healthy agriculture is receiving the attention it has long deserved.

Thanks to the work of the leaders of NFA and other organic soil scientists, "nutrition from the ground up" is no longer the idea of a faddist or a quack. I will admit that there are still some in high places both in agriculture and medicine who are not aware of the simple basic truths of plant, animal and human nutrition. But I predict that in the very near future, even the most skeptical will come to agree with our idea about the relationship of soil to health.

Plants grown on poor soils, soils that are deficient in organic matter, soils that cannot make the minerals available to the plant because the conditions are not optimum for the growth of soil micro organisms, these plants attract insects. An insect-plagued plant is a sick plant because of malnutrition. Plants grown on fertile soil have a natural resistance to disease and insects because fertile soil gives them *proper nutrition*.

Of even more importance is the fact that proper nutrition gives a natural immunity to people against disease and the onslaught of an ever increasing horde of staphylococci which have become immune to the modern antibiotics. The natural immunity to disease of the

human body must not be forgotten. The first line of defense against metabolic disease is of course proper nutrition as we suggested in the beginning of this address. The recognition of the importance of proper nutrition in the defense against both bacterial and virus infections is another of the great needs of modern scientific medicine.

And what is proper nutrition? You have heard many times before at our conventions and in the pages of our magazine, that proper nutrition simply means natural food grown on fertile soil, eaten fresh and poison free. Proper nutrition for a plant can be provided by organic farming methods. These are simple truths that most of you have heard over and over again. I apologize to you for repeating such elementary facts. But there are millions of people who do not understand or believe these simple truths.

Who is there to teach them the truth about proper nutrition for plants and people? Is it too much to ask our agricultural schools to teach organic farming principles? Can we expect the county agent to forsake all his training and switch overnight, to an idea that is contrary to all that he was taught? Can we expect the agricultural college to throw away their "grants for research" and condemn chemical farming? Can we expect a young chairman of the Department of Soils of a great university to lose his job by embracing organic farming principles, when he has a wife and children to educate? Can we expect a young farmer to make a complete change on all his farm overnight? I am afraid this is asking too much. I believe the change will have to be gradual.

We in NFA, the only national organization that is trying to make this change and is really trying to save our agriculture, must be patient and persevering. We must be realistic and understanding. We must not constantly curse, condemn and criticize the opposition. We must be willing to go the second mile.

We must make friends everywhere we can find them. And one does not make friends by accusing everyone who disagrees, of being dishonest. We must understand that the greatest brain-washing in history has been going on in this country about these matters of nutrition. And the tempo of their propaganda is now being increased.

A recent issue of a popular nutrition journal has an article that recommends books and names of current publications which will keep the modern doctor "up to date" on matters of nutrition. The list includes the monthly publications published by the makers of processed foods, synthetic vitamins and chemical "plant food."

To make this change from chemical farming to organic farming methods, and to present our ideas about natural, poison-free food to the medical profession, is the most gigantic effort that I can imagine. Yet this is our task. And

we are a select few. We are almost a hopeless minority. But this is still America. And in this country it is still possible for the minority opinion to become the majority opinion. I am completely convinced that our position is scientifically correct. We have the truth on our side. And we have every reason to believe that eventually truth will triumph.

You must not become impatient or discouraged. All of us must constantly keep "boring like a termite" if necessary, to break through the defenses of the pseudo-scientists who are destroying the health and strength of our beloved America.

In five short years, Natural Food Associates has gained a place of respect in this country. Our strength and our influence cannot be judged by the size of this convention or the numbers on our membership roll. All of you have been able to influence many others. I have had the opportunity to talk to thousands of people who now understand and agree with our ideas. Many of them are not members of NFA but they are nevertheless our friends and are supporting us in many ways.

There are thousands of people who need help in this fight against artificial fluoridation. And our central office can give them the help that they need. They can stop artificial fluoridation with the aid of our tapes and our literature when these materials are brought to the attention of the people where they live.

We are doing our utmost to expand

the services of the central office. We have a Board of Directors made up of some of the greatest scientists in the world, men who are dedicated to the ideals of NFA. You have, on your board of directors, some of the most astute businessmen in America. You have on your board some of the best organic farmers in the nation. They *must* have your complete support.

There is a saying in Rotary that "He profits most who serves best." I can say from experience that the more you serve and give to NFA, the more you will receive from NFA. NFA desperately needs all the time and effort that you can afford to give.

Yes, there is today over America, a *biological blight*. The physical and mental degeneration of our youth is perhaps the gravest danger that threatens our country. I suspect that the H in the hydrogenated fats is a greater menace to our freedom than the H bomb. America needs a powerful NFA as a defense against an atheistic, materialistic commercialism. You, the members, will determine our success or our failure. What do you propose to do about it?

Most of us have children. Some of you have grandchildren. What kind of America will we leave them? In my humble opinion the answer may very well lie in your hands, the one group who are really dedicated to the restoration of our topsoil and the integrity of our food supply. Only proper nutrition will save us from a biological blight

that threatens our physical existence.

Not only is our physical existence being threatened but also our moral and spiritual values as well. There is going on in this country a battle for the minds of men. When you joined NFA, you took sides in that battle.

Let me close this with a quotation from Henry Jones, "However much is wrong in the world, it is enough for us if all things are in the course of being set right." That is Christian optimism.

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NATURAL FOOD & FARMING

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