

having to scan QR codes, to sanitise hands with alcohol, and practise physical distancing. It is upsetting to have schools closed, lessons held online, and examinations rescheduled.

Businesses have closed down, the economy has been adversely affected, and many lives have been lost to Covid. Many people are still suffering from loss of jobs, loss of loved ones, and the prolonged effects of Covid-infection. One wave of infection has followed another, and one variant of the virus has emerged after another, with no certainty of when the pandemic will end. While there is talk of the pandemic becoming endemic, and definite signs of the situation easing are appearing, there is anxiety that one might still be infected by the virus.

It seems wise that we take stock

of our situation and attempt to see the pandemic as clearly as possible. The first characteristic of the pandemic is its worldwide scale, affecting every nation — regardless of colour, creed, or culture. The second characteristic is its devastating effects — killing young and old, wiping out businesses, and humbling the nations. The third characteristic is its elusiveness — the virus is invisible to the naked eyes, spreads imperceptibly, and mutates incomprehensibly. The advancement in science has helped us to mitigate the spread and the effects of the virus, but we are far from being confident or in control. We must not concede defeat to the pandemic, but we must concede to our mortality and human limitations.

Even without the occurrence of the pandemic, “it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).” We quote the Bible because there is clearly a spiritual dimension to life, and to the pandemic. It behoves us to acknowledge not only

the fact that “it is appointed for men to die once” but also the truth that there is a judgement awaiting us all. The Lord Jesus Christ warns us that “there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places (Matthew 24:7).” The Bible speaks of “the pestilence that walks in darkness” and “the destruction that lays waste at noonday” (Psalm 91:6). The present pandemic must be seen as a prelude to judgement day. It is a solemn reminder that you are appointed to die once, before the day of judgement arrives.

On the day of judgement, all the living and the dead will be gathered together. Yes, even the dead will be raised and given their bodies! After the judgement, those whose sins have not been paid for by Christ’s death on the cross will be cast back into hell, which is the second death. “But the cowardly,

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