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Robert Heid is a minister in Louisville, Kentucky



God's Family

W. R. H.

The eighth chapter of 1st Samuel strikes a sad note for the people of God, when they decide to ask for a king so that they may be like the nations around them. Samuel was distressed by their foolish request and God was disappointed, to say the least. "They have rejected me, that I should not be king over them," Jehovah said to Samuel. "The Almighty, who had been their guide and stay from the call of Abraham, the flight into the land of Goshen, the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, forty years of wandering in the wilderness, and the conquest of the promised land—was now deemed impersonal, invisible, and unacceptable. "Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we may be like all the nations."

People of God today are grappling with the same temptation. We have had our history of the guidance, provision, and good things of God. Prayers have been answered, faith has been reinforced time and again by Divine providence. Loved ones have been strengthened and sustained while at war or battling disease of mind or body. Grievances have been borne with a peace that passes understanding, and joys have followed in the morning, according to the word of God. These have been present testimonies to all of us.

Why, then, are we hesitant to fully surrender our wills unto Him, so slow to bow to Him as the Lord of our lives? Are we fearful to commit some of the minor details unto Him, fearing that they might be forgotten in His busy workdays? We need again to know that He notes the sparrow's fall; that He gives the glories to the flowers of the field.

Some of God's instructions may seem a bit too risky for our modern-day rationalism. Try these Scriptures and see how they fit you:

- Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.
- Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church.
- Children, obey your parents.
- Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

- Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you.
- Is any among you suffering? let him pray.
- Is any cheerful? let him sing praise.
- Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.
- Love one another from the heart fervently.
- Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.
- Forget not to show hospitality to strangers.

These Christian graces have never come naturally to sinful, fallen humanity. Contrariwise, the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. Israel wanted a king like the nations round about them. We find ourselves wanting to be conformed to our neighbors also. The thought of being a "holy nation," or, as the King James version has it, "a peculiar people," is not appealing to many.

Let Jesus be heard as He again asks the question, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

You'll be a better driver . . .

WITH JESUS ON YOUR BUMPER

Gordon R. Linscott

Maybe you're not a bumper sticker sort of person; some people aren't. Some feel very strongly about it; they wouldn't mar their car with a bumper strip for anything. At the other extreme are a few who turn their car (or van) into a rolling billboard. I don't think it's my place to tell you what you ought to do, but I do think it is worth your while to think about the subject for a few minutes.

First, we should acknowledge that all (Christian) stickers are not alike. There are a good many that have a message for Christians only. "MARANATHA! What a way to go!" That is a statement that thrills my soul, but when I see it on a bumper, I wonder how many people have any idea of what it is talking about. When I see the little one that simply says "ICHTHUS," I wonder if the driver knows what it is talking about. Mind you, I'm not criticizing any of the bumper strips of this kind nor the people who wear them; I'm simply pointing out that most unbelievers—and perhaps even some Christians—get no message from some bumper stickers. Even some bumper strips that are designed for unbelievers may not really deliver the message. "REPENT and believe the Gospel," says one. That's a good, biblical admonition, but it's Greek to most unbelievers. (I was 25 before I learned what the Gospel is.)

Whether or not a bumper sticker is suitable for use depends upon what you want to say—and to whom. If you want to remind Christians that the Lord is coming, then "MARANATHA, etc." is

quite appropriate. However, in my thinking, the overwhelming purpose of our lives is to make known the Lord Jesus—as John the Baptist, to call attention to Him, “Behold the Lamb of God!” If I do this, I will automatically identify myself with Him. In substance, I want to tell the world two things: “Jesus is Lord” and “Jesus is *my* Lord.” There may not be stickers available that are quite this explicit, but there are plenty that mention Jesus by name and exalt His person or work.

So we pick out a bumper sticker that holds out that lovely name that is above all others. What is it like, driving in traffic with a label like that for the world to see? I don’t think a person can do it without being conscious of the fact that the honor of our Lord is riding on that bumper. What I, the driver, do wrong is likely to be charged to Him. “Is *that* the way a Christian drives?!!” And so I am more alert to be careful, to be courteous in traffic.

At work I park by the door and, sooner or later, everybody sees that bumper strip: “Jesus is the bridge over troubled waters.” And they see me—the kind of work I do, the kind of jokes I listen to, etc.—and it makes a difference in the way I conduct myself. I am aware of the fact that my actions reflect on the reputation of my Lord, Jesus, and I strive to be found well-pleasing in His sight.

By some means, we Christians need to make known our heavenly citizenship, that we belong to Jesus Christ. In so doing, we honor Him and we live more consistent lives before our fellow men. OK, so you don’t like bumper stickers; I think it is one good way to fill the bill.

Judgment of the Sheep and Goat Nations

A Contextual Study



N. B. Wright

In this study of Matthew 25:31-46, the saying: “a text apart from the context is a pretext” comes to life with a true significance. While we have read many good things written about this passage, yet apart from the context the articles tend to miss the point.

Two considerations illuminate the significance of this judgment. One is the identity of the peoples concerned; the other is the occasion.

The identity is given; namely, "all the nations." There is no reference to the Hebrew people, for in Baalam's first prophecy he said: "Lo it is a people that dwelleth alone, and shall not be reckoned with the nations." (Numbers 23:9. See also Ex. 33:16; Lev. 20:24.) Lest any one should think the nations have reference to nations as a whole which exist at the present time, Jeremiah 46:28b is emphatic in its thrust: "For I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee." No nation, then, which enters the Great Tribulation will emerge as a nation—except Israel. The nations of our text refers to individuals from the various nations on the earth. Dr. D. L. Cooper in his *Messiah, His Historical Appearance*, is careful to point out these are living nations. It is not a judgment to follow a resurrection.

The second consideration in this study has to do with the *time* of the scene. Verses 1-30 of Matthew 25 have to do with the rapture of the church and the rewarding of the faithful. In verse 31, however, there is a break: "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory." Furthermore, "Then shall he sit on the throne of his glory." No word pertaining to the resurrection. The time can refer only to the close of the Tribulation period. It is also known as Daniel's 70th week, Daniel 9.

One word more to help us to understand the contextual setting on this momentous occasion. When the Lord Jesus comes to earth He finds four classes of sinners alive on this planet. According to Psalms 50:3-5 and Matthew 24:29-31, He pauses in the upper regions and gathers by translation all the living saved people (the relatively few believers alive at the end of the Tribulation) and all dead saved of Old Testament days by resurrection unto Himself. The many martyrs of the Tribulation will find their glorious resurrection at the same time. Here is the third installment of the first resurrection. All of the saved people of all time are now accounted for. The church already, before the Tribulation, has been raptured and returns with Christ. (Rev. 19.)

Only sinners now are left alive on the earth. But they are not of one kind, as has been indicated. 1). There is the remnant of Israel, converted the last three days of the Tribulation. Hosea 5:14-6:3. They call upon Messiah to return (Zech. 12:10; Matt. 23:39); in response to this cry from His beloved nation, He returns. They are given more of the gospel and enter the kingdom. 2). There is a group known as hard-core sinners; wicked ones. They are obliterated to the last individual. Is. 33:14; 2 Thes. 1:7-10. 3). The Sheep nations and 4). the Goat nations. When these two classes appear before the Judge and hear His words the last sinner has been converted or sentenced; none are left alive. The sheep on the right hand are given the gospel (we know of no other way to be saved) and enter the kingdom. The Blessed Lord can now, after firing the earth and re-creating at least the surface (Is. 65:17, 17; 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-13), establish His millennial reign over a world free from evil

men and the curse. (Zech. 14:11; Rom. 8:19-22; Acts 3:20,21.)

Having seen the peoples involved, the time and the setting of the judgment, we are now in a position to understand the significance of the Master's words to each group.

1. JUDGMENT OF THE SHEEP NATIONS

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (Vs. 34-36.) At first we are caused to wonder at their surprise. "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" The King answered, and said unto them, "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even the least, ye did it unto me."

Who are these "brethren" of the Lord? Turn to Revelation 7 for an answer. There are 144,000 saved Jewish evangelists to go out into the world during the Tribulation to bring in the greatest revival harvest ever known to man. The Lord's brethren would be these evangelists and all who believed through their testimony. We recall the prophetic forecast pertaining to those days. No one who will receive the mark of the beast will be able to buy or sell. Multitudes will go home by the chopping-block. The sympathetic souls who befriend the believers will certainly run great risks as they minister to the needy in many ways. Are they saved by works? According to Ephesians 2:8, no. A more complete answer is to follow. In this connection read Isaiah 56:6-8.

2. JUDGMENT OF THE GOAT NATIONS

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

They, too, were surprised. "Then shall they also answer, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" His reply was to the point. "Then shall he answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me,"

The late Dr. D. L. Cooper, a most eminent scholar-theologian of his day, has this to say in regard to the sheep nations: "Those

who survive the tribulation and are brought into the judgment of this passage consists of good, moral people living up to the light which they have and those who are not biased against Christ and His people." We quote him further: "The basis of this judgment is the attitude which those being judged take toward Christ and His brethren during the tribulation—brethren in the flesh, the Jewish people, and brethren in a spiritual sense, the tribulation saints: those who are sympathetic and helpful to His brethren are represented as sheep, put on the right hand by the shepherd, whereas those who are callous toward human suffering and are antagonistic toward Christ and His people are represented as goats and are put on the left hand."

The last verse reads as follows: "And these (the goats) shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life."

SERIOUS REFLECTIONS

A PRINCIPAL'S VIEW OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Claude Neal, Retired Principal, P.C.S.

My first interest in Christian education began with an inborn desire to attend a Christian school. After five years of teaching in the public schools of Greene County, Indiana, I was able to satisfy that ambition somewhat by attending what is now Freed-Hardeman College at Henderson, Tennessee for more than a year. Then I was called to teach in Christian High School, New Orleans, Louisiana with Brother Stanford Chambers as principal. Omitting further details we come to the year 1927 when I began teaching full time in Portland Christian School with Brother Chambers again as principal. As I remember, about 1931 I was appointed principal of the high school in connection with its accreditation by the Kentucky State Department of Education. Out of these experiences of the past there comes in part what we have to say now.

First I would have us observe that Christian education as we speak of it here is that phase demonstrated in Christian Day Schools rather than in the activities of a church, commonly called Sunday School, though the content and purpose of each are the same.

Christian education in day school and college is not an experiment. It is just as effective as the Word of God can be when taught by faithful Spirit-filled teachers and received by responsive minds and hearts in the time devoted to Bible study. The fruit may be seen in form as a bud for a while, then it will open up as a flower out of which will come the mature fruit that will fill a place in the world to the glory of God. The day school enables the Bible as good seed to be planted and cultivated in virgin soil before Satan usurps the whole field. The home and the church Bible school

may or may not have done something to this end, but the Christian school possesses multiplied opportunities to strengthen what the home has already begun, or to begin what so many homes have never undertaken to do. The truth of what I am saying is plainly seen in every class at the end of every school year. There will be failures apparent, but then the good seed may not germinate as readily in one heart as in another. But do not judge Christian education by the barren trees but by the fruitful ones. The value of Christian education is verified by many living witnesses in the home, in the activities of the church, and in the world of business and industry.

Christian education is not easy. Like missionary endeavor, this work also is both promoted and maintained by what is termed sacrificial effort. It is an offering to the Lord. Christian education calls for the enduring of hardship on the part of all involved whether sponsors, parents, children, or teachers. It must be carefully guarded to be kept free of contamination from the polluted atmosphere of the world. Those who administer this type of education should be aware of a four-fold responsibility toward the child. This responsibility considers the child's physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual well-being. This work is one that calls for all the resources and talents of individuals who rely upon God for guidance, wisdom, strength, and skill. Christian education is not easy, but is very rewarding to him who participates whether in giving or receiving. It is a service to the Lord who will not forget "your work of faith and labor of love."

—Selected from 1967 issue of *The Christian Beacon*, a P.C.H.S. Alumni publication, the late Brent Hickman, Editor.

A GREAT MAN OR A LEPER?

Alex V. Wilson

The commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Syria had a spectacular career. It almost matched the in-power/out-of-power/in-power/out-of-power experiences in recent years of Teng Hsiaoping of Red China, the leader recently purged by Mao Tse-tung and "the masses." However Naaman, the Syrian general, experienced reverses in the physical and spiritual aspects of life, rather than in political affairs. Two key expressions are found in 2 Kings 5:11 and 15, and they show two stages in his attitudes toward himself and God. 'Naaman was angry, and went away, saying, 'Behold I *THOUGHT* ...' "Naaman returned to the man of God and said, 'Behold I *KNOW* ...' "

Naaman came from Syria, which then was a powerful country. He was a great man and was very satisfied, until one day his life was shattered. Leprosy was detected! Nothing he was, or had,

was of any use any more. No one in Syria could help him. He would have to become an outcast. This is what happens, in various forms, to many people. They are quite content with life until they come face to face with a deep problem and then they realize that no one can help them. They suddenly wonder if perhaps the church or God have any answers. Naaman began to think, too. He collected a large amount of money and gifts together. *He thought* it was a good buy, but expensive. *He thought* he would receive a dramatic sign. Many people today try to buy salvation by trying to be good. They expect God to do something dramatic, but instead He usually works quietly.

Naaman first had to learn that his healing was a free gift. Elisha asked him only to obey. We, too, must receive salvation as a free gift. This is humbling; pride is one of the greatest hindrances to our becoming Christians. God humbled Naaman in several ways. He first heard of the possibility of being healed from a captive foreign girl who was a servant in his household. He had to go to Elisha's house, not to a palace, as would have been more customary for him. Elisha did not even receive Naaman, but sent his servant to tell him to wash in the Jordan seven times. Naaman thought, "In the Jordan, a muddy little stream, when Syria has some of the loveliest rivers in the area?" Up till this time he mainly thought of himself as *a great man who just happened to be a leper*, rather than as *a leper who just happened to be a great man*.

Finally Naaman sensibly listened to his servants. He humbled himself and obeyed God's instructions. After dipping in the Jordan seven times, he was healed and began a new life. He believed in the Lord, and experienced certainty: "I KNOW that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel."

We should imitate Naaman. We ought to humbly admit our need and our inability to save ourselves from it. We ought to believe in God's power to deliver us—and trust Him enough to follow His instructions—It is no good saying, "I think it should be like this" or "I think it should be like that." We must humble ourselves, not thinking "I am a pretty good person who just happens to be sort of a sinner." Instead, "I am perhaps better than average but nevertheless I am guilty and doomed unless Christ washes me clean." We must do exactly what God tells us. He invites us to the foot of Christ's cross, that He may wash away our sins and take over our lives. He tells us to express our need for cleansing and our trust in Him by being baptized—a humbling step. When we commit ourselves to Christ and His grace, then we can say, "I KNOW that Christ is my Savior, Lord, and Friend, and that there is no Savior or God like Him."

—adapted by Alex Wilson from a message by Julian Charley

Carl Kitzmiller is a minister in Oakdale, Louisiana.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Do you believe God allows sickness into Christian lives as judgment for wrongdoing?

Certainly! This is clearly set forth in 1 Cor. 11:17ff, where Paul rebukes the Corinthians for their abuse of the Lord's Supper. In their failure to "discern . . . the body" they became those upon whom sickness and even death was visited. The word declares specifically, "For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep" (1 Cor. 11:30). Now let me hasten to add that I do not believe *every* case of sickness is chastening upon the individual for his sin. There are a number of other things God seems to accomplish by using physical infirmity of all sorts, and we must not be too hasty in concluding that it is always, or even often, for chastening or judgment.

Parents of defective children probably tend more than others to wonder whether the sickness of their child is due to some punishment for sin. And, of course, there are social diseases which tend to be sin-connected and which can have an effect on the child. Some medical ties may be established in some cases with wrong-doing. Moreover, God took the life of David's child as a chastening upon him (2 Sam. 12:14). So we must not write off the possibility that God may act even in this way to speak to the hearts of those involved. But there is also a clear-cut example in the Bible in which Jesus specifically declared that the blindness of a man from birth was not because of any particular sin of his parents (John 9:3). Most of all, we should beware of declaring for others the chastening of God when we do not know the issues involved. It is a mistake to see chastening where God has not intended it.

It is equally serious, however, to miss the fact of God's chastening when He, in His love, administers it. Whom the Lord loves He chastens, and one of His chastening methods surely is sickness. To miss the fact of his chastening, and thus the correction that is intended, is to invite more serious difficulty. He tempers the chastening to what is needed for Him to be heard, and to be hard-of-hearing in these matters is to invite added pressure on the blows that He strikes. I am persuaded that there are those who seek medical remedy for sickness and even certain religious remedies

(prayer, healings, etc.) when the real need is repentance and forgiveness which will allow a loving Father to remove the chastening.

May we not be misguided like Job's supposed comforters, declaring to those under some infirmity that they must have done something wrong or it would never have happened to them. May we not be a people with a judgment-complex, who see God as a tyrant intent on dealing us misery. But every one of us will do well to keep this aspect of sickness in mind and to examine our infirmities in the light of the possibility of His chastening.

Is it not a part of a Christian's responsibility to get involved politically and to vote to put Christian men in office?

In the words of Rom. 14:5 we would say: "Let each man be fully assured in his own mind." It is right for us to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," but the New Testament does not spell out specifically all that involves. Christians of the New Testament period did not have the opportunity of electing their rulers, so we have no example of just what early Christians might have done in such matters.

It is very popular in our day for Christians to get involved in politics and to advocate the Christian's voting and being elected to office. In fact, for many this is assumed to be the only correct or acceptable position. All that is needed for bad men to rule, it is sometimes declared, is for good men to shun their responsibilities. *If God has left these matters in human hands and does not overrule in them*, then such is the case. In some ways, of course, God leaves us largely to our acts and allows certain natural laws to rule. For example, the farmer who uses good seed, plants wisely, fertilizes well, etc., can expect a better crop than the man, however pious, who does not give heed to these things. We might wonder about the real piety of the man who is indifferent to all of these things, who either did not plant or who did not use good judgment in doing so, but who declared that he had prayed to God about his crop and that that was sufficient. God does deliver some responsibilities into our hands, and in great measure we must act or suffer the consequences.

All of this may be an oversimplification when we come to the matter of politics, however. In our form of government, the majority is supposed to rule. In most instances, however, true Christians will be in the minority and the power will therefore not lie in their hands to overrule the unregenerate (even if Christians always voted as a bloc). Also over against this let's set a few other things which we can know concerning the Christian. We are members of a "called out" body. God is not so much trying to reform the world (He exercises some restraint on sin) as He is interested in calling out a people for His name (Acts 15:14). We are not "of the world" even though we are "in the world" (John 17). Our

citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20) and we are to be sojourners and pilgrims here (1 Pet. 2:11). It is evident that our great responsibility is in the spiritual realm, turning men and women to the Lord and teaching them the things of God. We really have no commission to make the world a better place to live except in shedding the good influence of a Christian life. The whole world is seen as lying in the evil one (1 John 5:19), destined for destruction; hence, our best influence could only be to hold off the inevitable for a little season.

At the risk of being misunderstood and perhaps thought by some to be a heretic, I would suggest that true Christians are not necessarily the best rulers. Many positions (I do not say all, but perhaps more than popular opinion will concede) require such a compromise of Christian convictions and values that the true Christian placed in that position can only go one way—downward. The man who goes into the position good does not necessarily come out good. Now he can surrender convictions and become a hypocritical, compromised Christian who uses his Christianity as a way of gain, but the Lord cannot well bless that man. There is really more reason for God to use the moral but unregenerate man in some cases than for Him to yoke the believer with unbelievers. “The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light” (Luke 16:8). We may be assuming too much in supposing that God wants Christians in all places of political leadership. In much of the world’s history He has used unregenerate men for this task.

I am persuaded that God exercises much oversight in the matter of government. Nebuchadnezzar is a prime example of a heathen king who learned that God rules in the kingdom of men, giving that rule to whomsoever *He will* (Dan. 4). Solomon noted that “the king’s heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the watercourses: He turneth it whithersoever He will” (Prov. 21:1). Since we are taught to pray “for kings and all in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity” (1 Tim. 2:2), it must be that God somehow continues to overrule in these matters.

One of the problems I personally face in weighing these matters is in deciding which is God’s choice. Good Spirit-filled men need not assume that they always know God’s choice (cf. Acts 1:24). They do not always know what God wants to accomplish through such ones. Israel of old was much better off when they accepted God’s choice of a ruler for them than when they got into politics, insisted on a king and tried to tell God what they needed. It has been my practice to ask God somehow to overrule in the strivings and connivings of men to give us the leaders of His choice. When one considers the votes that are bought or otherwise unrighteously influenced; those cast for foolish reasons (“He’s cute”); the gross management of information fed to us concerning the men and their positions; the duplicity of the candidates and the behind-the-scenes

power, pressure, and influence that made them candidates in the first place; etc.; there is far less good Christian judgment exercised in an election than most would have us believe. Personally I am convinced that if God is not overruling in the process, we are without hope.

113 N. 6th St., Oakdale, La. 71463

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

PROPHECY

SPACE FLIGHT

Winson N. Allen

Noon one September day in the late 1960's found me far above timberline in the Talkeetna Mountains of south-central Alaska. I had been on a short vacation in that great unspoiled wilderness, camping out alone and hunting with bow and arrow for caribou. The night before there had been a spectacular display of the northern lights, the like of which I had never seen before. Long curtains of colored light had shimmered and undulated from horizon to horizon. Now my gear was packed and all was in readiness by the rough gravel landing strip on the mountain top. I was waiting for the bush pilot to appear and airlift me back to the little town of Talkeetna where the Rambler was parked (the pilot was the late Don Sheldon who had offered me a reduced price since he was going to the area anyway). We had agreed that he would come at 12 noon on the specified day, if possible. At one o'clock I was still waiting. By two o'clock there was a feeling of concern as to why the plane did not appear. Later that afternoon the sound and then the sighting of a small aircraft in the distance raised hope, but soon it became apparent the plane was headed elsewhere. In an attempt to seek shelter from the cold wind, I moved equipment to the lee side of a large rock. Much of the long evening was spent scanning the southwest horizon, reading the Scriptures, praying, and wondering what had happened. Perhaps the pilot had been forced down in the wilderness. Could I make it back to civilization on my own? What was Irene thinking and what would she do? So far as I knew there was not another human being in that vast area. As night approached the small tent was again erected and preparations made for a time of rest. The last of the food—a little can of emergency ration known as pemmican—was eaten (I had expected to be with my family in Anchorage for the evening meal). For the present there was nothing to do but commit the whole situation to the Lord, watch another awe-inspiring performance of the aurora borealis, and sleep (Psalm 4:8).

The next morning as I was again packing the gear, not sure what the next step would or should be, attention was attracted by the sound of a plane in the distance. Was this plane coming for

me? Would I be taken or left? As the plane came near and then circled before landing, I knew this was my pilot. Soon, in spite of a strong wind, I had the equipment loaded while Mr. Sheldon kept the plane under control. In a matter of minutes we were airborne and my situation had changed completely. Deliverance from the wilderness and escape from the approaching winter weather was effected by a man from the first heaven who came for me. I had looked forward to his coming and, even though he was delayed, adequate preparations had been made. For me that experience has been an illustration, an object lesson, regarding the rapture and the Christian's escape from the approaching "great tribulation."

It is becoming increasingly obvious to the thoughtful and informed that world conditions are heading toward a climax and time is running out. In the words of another, "In this strange insecure world where no one knows whether he will be alive tomorrow, and where ancient states vanish like morning mists, it is not easy for those who in youth were accustomed to ancient solidities to believe that what they are now experiencing is a reality and not a transient nightmare. Very little remains of institutions and ways of life that when I was a child appeared as indestructible as granite." Many of the prophecies in Matthew 24 and 2 Timothy 3:1-7 are being fulfilled before our eyes. The view is gaining wide acceptance among leaders that world problems are becoming too deep-seated to be solved "except by a strong hand from someplace." The stage is being set for the coming world-ruler described in Revelation 13 and 2 Thessalonians 2.

Speaking to His own about escape from the "great tribulation" the Lord said, "Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10). As recorded in Luke 21:36 He said, "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

The manner or method of escape is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Do we love His appearing, and are we ready by His grace to check out of here at any moment? The countdown for space flight may be approaching zero.

Ernest Lyon is a professor of music at the University of Louisville and minister of the Highland Church of Christ.



Viewing the News

Ernest E. Lyon

PRISON CONVERSIONS: I have mentioned before that some prominent persons in prisons have been reported as being converted to Christ. One of the most recent of these conversion accounts is that of former Black Panther revolutionary Eldridge Cleaver in his cell at the Oakland Courthouse jail in January. As a consequence he no longer speaks harshly of this country and the great number of "liberals" who had vowed to support him when he comes up for trial have deserted him . . . Manson clan members Susan Atkins and ex-Mansonites Bruce David and Charles "Tex" Watson have also reportedly confessed Christ . . . Not a prison conversion nor even a conversion to Christ, but maybe I should report here that William Murray, son of the atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, is reported as having renounced atheism; his bid for a Congressional nomination clouds that a bit. Also, in this connection, the estranged husband, Richard F. O'Hair, is reportedly attending a Methodist church since he and Madalyn split.

TM MAKES NEWS: Transcendental Meditation is being challenged more and more as a branch of Hinduism instead of the non-religious meditation it has claimed to be. The Coalition for Religious Integrity ad hoc committee formed to sue TM Inc., the U. S. government, and the New Jersey Department of Education is probably involved in a trial now over the experimental TM programs in six New Jersey schools; among their witnesses are expected to be a number of Hindu gurus! On the other hand, Canadian TM proponents hope to introduce a resolu-

tion endorsing TM to United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) soon if they have not already done so. The resolution, if approved, would give TM the UN seal of approval. It is expected to be voted on by the General Assembly in September.

BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE is the title of a new book by Harold Lindsell, editor of *Christianity Today*, and a description of what is going on in the press and in religious circles, partially due to Lindsell's book. Lindsell argues that to merit the name of evangelical, one must hold to biblical "inerrancy," defined as meaning that Scripture is scientifically precise on history, geography, and science. The battle has just begun again (it has happened many times before) and much will be said by unbelievers and religious "liberals" as well as by those who profess to be evangelical without believing in that kind of inerrancy.

I WAS MISTAKEN when I said that Billy James Hargis had denied all the accusations made against him in matters relating to adultery and homo-sexualism. What he said was, "I am not guilty of all the things they accuse me of." A clearer statement than that is needed if he is to continue to get support of large groups of Christians. I hope he will make a clearer statement soon and, if guilty of any of the charges, that he will show a truly repentant heart.

THE RHODESIAN problem is not the simple problem of a white government oppressing a black constituency, as our mass media and many in our government keep referring to

it. In the first place, every communist government in the world is more oppressive, keeps in subservience over 95% of its subjects and yet gets no blame from the sources chastising Ian Smith and his government. Secondly, the black people in Rhodesia are being bombarded constantly by well written propaganda against the government, yet they by and large support that government and feel it is for their good. Thirdly, the guerrillas trying to take over the government constantly try to get support by doing inhuman warfare against those that will not submit to them. I have many reports of murders, bombings, terrible disfigurement and every kind of oppression the communists always work to scare people into supporting them. Many of the guerrillas have met death at the hand of fellow blacks who realize that they are oppressors, not "liberators" as they try to picture themselves.

DID YOU KNOW that in the average week there are 200 murders on t-v, but in that same week there are less than 150 murders in all 50 states?

A GOVERNMENT commission in Sweden has recommended that the age of sexual consent be lowered from 15 to 14; that penalties for incest over the age of 18 be abolished; and that the minimum penalty for rape be reduced from two years to six months in jail. Do you like this fruit of socialism?

CAN YOU FIGURE why many liberal religious groups are opposed to what they call "oppressive regimes" in Rhodesia and South Africa and in Chile or South Korea, but they say not a word against the genocide being practiced by the communists in Cambodia or the murdering of hundreds of thousands in South Vietnam—nay, they even give support to such regimes.

THERE ARE NOW 10 members in the Common Market and 10 in NATO—but not the same 10.

A CLERGYMAN in England has admitted to several bank robberies and to stealing antiques from an abbey, a prep school, and a neighboring vicarage as well as eight other offenses dating from 1973, including thefts from his own church and Sunday school offerings—a total haul of

\$36,000. He said "I have made my peace with God and am making my peace with the State."

CHRISTIANITY TODAY reports that the confessional "box" appears to be on its way out among Catholics. It has not been abolished, but it is being outmoded in favor of a "reconciliation room," where a penitent may discuss his shortcomings face to face with a priest, if he wishes to. Under a new rite of penance, they say, more emphasis is being placed on counseling.

A KENTUCKIAN holds the dubious distinction of being the first reported white member of the Nation of Islam (Black Muslims). Her name was Dorothy Hill, of Lawrenceburg, Kentucky; she is a convent dropout who holds a Ph.D in sociology and taught at Beloit College. In 1970 she married a member of the Black Muslims, Donald 12X Dorsey.

WOMEN now constitute almost half of the enrollment at some seminaries in the Boston area, according to a Boston newspaper report.

UNITED METHODISM is one of the many mainline denominations being troubled by the appearance of pentecostalism or charismatic worship practices. As a consequence, guidelines asking for openness and love for pentecostals have been drafted by the executive committee of the Board of Discipleship's division of evangelism, worship and stewardship. They next go to the General Council on Ministries for transmission to the quadrennial General Conference of the denomination—or, maybe I should say, they were expected to go to that last month, but I have had no report of the results. Six of the guidelines meant for all United Methodists: (1) Be open and accepting of persons whose Christian experiences differ from your own. (2) Continually undergird and envelope all discussions, conferences, meetings and persons in prayer. (3) Be open to new ways in which God by His Spirit may be speaking to the church. (4) Seek the gifts of the Spirit which enrich your life and you for ministry. (5) Recognize that even though spiritual gifts may be abused, this does not mean that they should be prohibited. (6) Remember that like other new movements in church history,

the charismatic movement has a valid contribution to make to the ecumenical church. The guidelines also address themselves to charismatics and to church administrators. The charismatics are urged to refrain from trying to enforce their experience on others. As in many other groups, the UMs are bothered by those who think all charismatic experience is of the devil and those who feel that if you have not spoken in tongues you are at best an inferior type of Christian.

A JEWISH leader in the work against the Nazis who murdered so many Jews has at last spoken out against speaking of the Jewish deaths without mentioning that 5 million non-Jews were put to death also and were in the concentration camps with the Jews. Many Christians are now also pointing out that Jews and Gentiles combined in the death of Christ—as pointed out, for example, in Acts 4:25-27. May this kind of understanding bring more Jews to realize that Jesus is the Messiah many of them are looking for.

THE COMING STORM, published by the Christian Heritage Center, continues to point out the dangers of communism to our country. A recent issue pointed out that last year a massive naval exercise was held by the Soviets, with their fleets operating in every ocean important to the

defense of the United States. American military circles were astounded at the size and effectiveness of the exercises that indicates the Russians now have control over the seas when they wish to exercise it. Write to 205 Watterson City West, 1941 Bishop Lane for inquiries about the services of the Christian Heritage Center, Dr. N. Burnett Magruder founder and editor of the papers they put out.

THE BLACK WOMAN, Joan Little, who was acquitted of murdering a white jailer in her Beaufort County, North Carolina, Jail cell, received \$325,000 in donations for her defense. She is now combining with the admitted communist Angela Davis in lecturing against this country. In a speech last fall she said there are about one million innocent black persons in prison today, but the last federal government statistics claimed that all state and federal prisons in this country hold fewer than a quarter million inmates of all colors! I hope that is not representative of the "facts" used by her lawyers.

MANY THANKS again for your clippings and your questions. Keep them coming to Ernest E. Lyon, 2629 Valletta Road, Louisville, Ky. 40205—and keep praying that this column will keep us informed so we can pray for the churches and for our country.

Reprint:

THE STIGMA OF THE PHARISEES

R. H. Boll

There is much space and prominence given in the gospels to the Pharisee. The Pharisee's way, the Lord's clash with him, and the revealing of Pharisaism, form a considerable portion of the records of Christ's life and work. And so bad is the impression left that the Pharisee has become proverbial in his ill savor, and the term "Pharisaical" never carries good significance. It carries with it the stigma of self-righteousness, hypocrisy, cringing falsehood and devilish malice masquerading behind a pretense of godliness. Certain is it that they were the bitterest opposers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and were chiefly interested in the murder of Calvary. And yet—it may come as a surprise—Pharisaism represented the best and truest teaching. The palm of orthodoxy was theirs. They held resolutely by the authority and divine inspiration of the Old Testa-

ment word. They were intent upon obedience to the law, scrupulous down to trifling details, or rather *especially* in details. And let it be well noted here that they were never blamed for their adherence to the word of God, nor for the scrupulousness of the details of their obedience.

It was a badge of honor to be numbered among the Pharisees. The Sadducees were a worldly, easy-going, "let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die" set. But the Pharisee had convictions. Religion was his chief concern. He held faith and truth and fought for the best ideals, and was very strict in his observance. "After the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee," said Paul, in his defense before Agrippa; and it was no matter of dishonor. In the enumeration of his natural advantages and the prestige he possessed before becoming a Christian, Paul mentioned that "as touching the law" he was "a Pharisee"; to which he adds that which was expected of a true Pharisee (Phil. 3:4-6). How, then, did it happen that the name "Pharisee" came to carry such a stigma?

What Was Wrong With The Pharisee?

With all their orthodoxy and strictness of their religion and intense religiousness, there was one great deficiency, a fatal lack that turned all their good into evil and rendered their whole service of God worse than worthless. It was simply the lack of *love*. Briefly the Pharisee's trouble can be summed up under these three heads (all three of which were naturally due to the absence of love in their religious system): first, they knew not God, and therefore of course did not love Him; second, not loving God they of course did not love man; and third (which is the inevitable corollary of the former two), they lived for self.

"They Knew Me Not"

It seems at first sight an unreasonable charge to bring against the Pharisees that they knew not God. They were well acquainted with the only book that revealed God. They knew long stretches of it by memory. They called the Lord by name; insisted on the fact that Jehovah is one; fiercely condemned idolatry. They searched and, intellectually, they knew the scriptures. How, then, could it be said they knew not God? The Gentiles knew not God; but the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, and their scribes—? Yet long before, God brought that charge against them, "They that handle the law knew me not" (Jer. 2:8). Now "the law" embodied the revelation of God. Those that "handled" the law were familiar with it, and one might suppose that they, of all men, would have known God well. But they knew him not. They talked about Him and mentioned His name and His attributes; but it was as blind men conversing about colors and forms. They had no conception of Him, nor any sympathetic understanding of His character and will and way. In an intellectual way they knew of Him; as a matter of fact, they were not personally acquainted with Him.

The entrance of the Lord Jesus Christ among them demonstrated the strange, sad fact. If they had known God, they would

quickly have recognized the Lord Jesus; for He was in all things the Father's perfect picture and likeness. The man who knows me recognizes my photograph wherever he may see it. Those who are acquainted with me would instantly recognize my image in a mirror. Now Jesus was "the image of the invisible God," "the very image of his substance." Yet when He came they knew Him not. So different was their conception of God that when He stood before them in the person of His Son, He was utterly repugnant to them. He traversed their ideas and ideals so that they could only hate Him. They both saw and hated Him and the Father; "because," as Jesus said, "they have not known the Father nor me" (John 15:24; 16:3). And those who know not God cannot, of course, *love* God. However much they may be in love with the false concept of their own imagination, God they do not and cannot love. The Pharisees, therefore, had no love of God (Luke 11:42; John 8:42); but, as already seen, they hated Him.

Who Knows God?

We must stop a moment and consider. The Pharisees were not freaks or oddities. They were just men, religious men; and their tendencies and faults are the tendencies and faults incident to human nature—even *our* nature. The whole matter is intensely practical: religious people may today easily slip as the Pharisees had slipped. Yea, no doubt many have done so already, and many are in precisely the Pharisee's place today, they know not God. They neither understand Him nor love Him. They may be well versed in the Scriptures; able in argument; strong in defense of this, or in condemnation of that, practice. They may be intensely scrupulous unto the smallest details, but as ignorant of God and Christ as ever the Pharisees were. If Jesus should appear among them, He would meet with no welcome. He would, no doubt, ignore and walk over the little crochets and shibboleths of some, just as He rudely stepped over those of the Pharisees; and they would hate Him for that. He would be too lax for some, too extreme for others, too good for many. It is safe to predict that reviling and vituperation would be heaped upon Him, and He would come in for a share in full plenty of the "odium theologicum"—the religious hatred. And all that for precisely the same reason which accounted for His ill treatment among the Pharisees: "They have not known the Father nor me."

Religion Without Love

It will help us at this point to recall the fatal deficiency of the Pharisee's religion: it was in the main the true religion, but a *religion without love*. And that accounts for their misapprehension of God and misunderstanding of all the truth. It is only as we apprehend love that we can understand God and His plans and His teaching. "Everyone that loveth is begotten of God, and *knoweth God*. *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love*" (1 John 4:7,8). Let us then put down this maxim, that we may

never forget it: *Religion with the LOVE taken out of it is Pharisaism.* It may be strict, abounding even in what among men are called "good works"; moral, blameless, zealous; but for all that, only Pharisaism (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Bible Exposition -- Matthew

THE KING'S SUPERNATURAL BIRTH

Lesson 2 — Matthew 1:18-25

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

Introduction

To a world prepared politically, economically, morally, and spiritually Jesus came. "There is a tide in the affairs of men," wrote Shakespeare, "which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." His time was God's time. Paul knew this, too, for he wrote, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

Not only were the circumstances of the entrance of the Messiah providentially arranged, but His birth also was a miracle. Matthew, who has written the royal gospel, has taken pains to point this out. There must be no question that the words of the superscription over the cross, a climactic note in the sweep of the gospel's thought, are true. He really was "Jesus the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37).

The accounts of the birth of the Messiah are written from different standpoints, but they each agree in the fact and in the manner of His birth. In the Matthaean narrative it is stated twice that Mary's conception was "of the Holy Ghost" (1:18,20). Luke, who gives more detail concerning the birth itself, writes, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (1:35). Both accounts unite in the affirmation that He was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary" (Apostles' Creed). While Mark does not expressly assert the virgin birth, his gospel is in harmony with it. He opens his narrative by referring to Jesus as "the Son of God" (1:1). Later one comes across the term "son of Mary," but Mark never calls Him "son of Joseph," although He may be called that *legally*. John, too, agrees, for we hear our Lord saying, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23; cf. 1:1,14).

THE OBJECTIONS TO THE KING'S SUPERNATURAL BIRTH

The mythological objection. It has been asserted by some that the miraculous birth of Christ was a story invented by the early Christians to dramatize the origin of their Lord. If this were so,

then it is doubtful if the church succeeded very well in its intentions. One also wonders how an account in which a babe is born in a manger in the presence of a carpenter and a few shepherds could have survived the competition with the story of the births of Pallas Athena who, born by no mother, sprang out of the head of Zeus, full-grown and in full armor.

The biological objection. With some the chief problem of the virgin birth is its violation of natural processes. But, if we accept the inspiration and authority of the Word of God, we must be prepared to face the contravention of the natural, or the fact of the supernatural. Adam and Eve were both born without human parents. Is the creation or the virgin birth the greater miracle?

The Scriptural objection. There are certain biblical phrases upon which unbelievers have laid hold in order to cast doubt upon the virgin birth. For example, in Luke 2:33 we have the words, "Joseph and his mother," and in 2:48, "thy father." In Matthew 13:5 the question is asked, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" There is, however, no difficulty with these clauses and phrases if we simply bear in mind that Joseph was indeed the father of Jesus in the purely legal sense. Joseph bowed to the miracle of God, took Mary into his house as his lawful wife, legitimatizing and admitting Jesus in a formal, legal sense to the house of David.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE KING'S SUPERNATURAL BIRTH

Joseph's realization of Mary's condition (1:18-19). In the days of Augustus Caesar, the man whom some wished to make God, two Hebrew men contracted a marriage between a young carpenter, a son of David, and a pious maiden, also of David's family, from whom would come the God who became man. Some time after the engagement, which was legally binding, knowledge came to the young man that the maiden was pregnant. A struggle began within the mind and heart of the man. But if Joseph was in doubt over the origin of the maiden's pregnancy, the Scripture is not. Twice Matthew says that the child was "of the Holy Spirit" (vs. 18,20), a phrase which refers to a secret we can never really fathom, only adore. As Campbell Morgan put it, it is "the Holy Mystery—the touch of God upon the simple life that made it for ever sublime."

Finally, Joseph made up his mind and determined to divorce Mary privately, with the minimum number of two witnesses.

The angel's revelation to Joseph (1:20-23). During a restless night Joseph was visited by the angel of the Lord, who informed him of the divine origin of the maiden's child. We shall have no problem with the divine conception if we remember at least these things. In the first place, the Lord Jesus did not have common human parentage, although He was completely human. He had no human father; He possessed divine nature as well as human nature. In the second place, He was not a new, original creation,

a kind of hetero-human. We must not fall prey to any kind of Docetism by which the divine nature of Christ overshadows and overpowers the human. His humanity was not a camouflaged humanity. He possessed no phantom body.

A great deal of stress is laid upon the name *Jesus* in Matthew's account. The angel informs Joseph that this is to be His name. *Jesus*, the Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua*, means *O Lord, save!*, or *Yahweh is salvation*, or simply *Yahweh saves*. The name itself was a message. Every time Mary and Joseph called His name the gospel was proclaimed. And that name suggested His calling. He is the second Joshua who will lead Israel into the promised land of salvation and the kingdom.

The name pointed to the fact that the real problem of the people of Israel was not political, the problem of Roman domination, economic, or social. The real problem was sin, as it is in our Western civilization, which is disintegrating in red ruin because we are not willing to admit that sin has entered into this old world. That doctrine was slain by human contempt, but the truth has lived on to document itself in subsequent history. And that we should have replaced this relevant and revealing teaching by the brainless babble of a Coue' is a colossal marvel. There is no idiotic imbecility beyond the ability of great modern psychologists and philosophers to believe. Man's greatest need is not human engineering, nor time, but salvation. This salvation our "Yahweh saves" came to provide by the blood of Golgotha.

The simplicity of the name of the Savior is also remarkable. Men call their world rulers by names which make extravagant claims for them as, for example, *Alexander the Great*, *Charles the Bold*, and *Richard the Lion-Hearted*. How different is the simple *Jesus!* Genuine believers, however, revere none of His names and titles more than this one, which so definitely underlines the office He holds.

In the twenty-second verse we are introduced to the first of the quotations avowedly introduced by the author of the gospel with the impressive formula, "This is come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet." There are ten of the "fulfillment quotations," which, if isolated, tell us considerable about the author's purpose in writing the gospel. But the principal point the evangelist wishes to make here is that the birth of Jesus was the subject of Isaiah's great Immanuel prophecy. The child born of the virgin, to be called *Immanuel*, would come into the midst of the degradation of His people Israel (Cf. Isa. 7:10-16) but ultimately overcome all His enemies (9:6-7). The sweep of Isaiah's argument demanded that the "child" of 7:14 be the "son" of 9:6. Although born of a lowly virgin in Israel (Cf. 9:6, "unto us"), He would be Immanuel, "the Mighty God," and the government would be upon His shoulder. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Matthew links the prophecy with the history of the birth of Mary's

son, because each of these elements is found in the history also. Of all the elements, however, the greatest stress lies upon His deity, or upon Immanuel. He is *with us* by virtue of the virgin birth, but let one never forget that He is *God* with us.

The response of Joseph (1:24-25). Joseph, then, following the angel's appearance, obediently brought Mary home, publicly acknowledging her as his wife and formally legalizing the connection of her son with the Davidic line. But normal marriage relations awaited the birth of the infant.

He was given the name *Jesus*, the best, truest, and most appropriate name for Him in the days of His flesh, since it was divinely ordered and expounded. And, when believers plead this name, they bring back to God His own name for Him. It is the name that identifies Him with His people and the name which indicates His principal work. Think of knowing Shakespeare, but not as an author, or Bacon, but not as a philosopher, and Jesus, but not as Savior. This is the sad situation of those who profess to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Master, or Teacher, but not as Redeemer.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KING'S SUPERNATURAL BIRTH

In contrast with the opinion of William Barclay, a noted Scottish professor, who claims that the virgin birth is a "crude fact," and that it is a doctrine that his church does not compel him to accept in any literal sense, it has been the view of orthodoxy down through the centuries that the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ is an important teaching. I think orthodoxy is correct in this view. It is an important teaching.

In relation to the Word of God. In the prologue to Luke's gospel the evangelist claims that he, possessing "perfect understanding of all things from the very first," writes that Theophilus might know the "certainty" of the things in which he had been instructed (Cf. Luke 1:1-4). The evangelist then proceeds to relate the accounts of the unusual birth of John the Baptist and the virgin birth of Christ. Now, suppose he is wrong on the very first important matter investigated? What confidence can we place in the remainder of the story? One can see that the account of the virgin birth is directly related to the trustworthiness of God's Word.

In relation to the Son of God. In the first place, the virgin birth is necessary for a sinless Son (Cf. Luke 1:35). If He had received Mary's nature, He would not be able to save, for He, too, would have a nature under divine condemnation.

Further, if we accept the historicity of the gospel accounts, the choice that faces us is that of a virgin birth over against an illegitimate birth. It is clear from the record in Matthew that Joseph knew *he* was not the father of Jesus. In other words, the virgin birth is a refutation of illegitimacy.

In relation to the salvation of God. The virgin birth has ultimate connections with the cross. Helmut Thielecke has said, "Crib and cross are both of the same wood." In a different context we may say that, if Jesus possessed Joseph's nature, He possessed his sin. And, if He possessed his sin, He could not become our Savior by the blood of Calvary. He would have needed a Savior Himself.

In relation to the kingdom of God. Great stress is laid in both Matthew and Luke upon our Lord's right to sit upon the throne of David in the kingdom of God (Cf. Matt. 1:1,17; 2:2; Luke 1:31-35). It is sometimes not realized that this right is directly related to the doctrine of the virgin birth. Jesus received legal title to the throne through Joseph and Solomon, but upon his ancestor Jeconiah, or Coniah, had been pronounced a curse of great magnitude. Jeremiah wrote, "Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man (Coniah) childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: *for no man of his seed shall prosper*, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (22:30, italics added). While not deprived of legal title, the direct line of descent was smitten with a curse. The line could hand on to another that from which it could not profit, and this vacant title had passed on down from Jeconiah to Joseph. It might have seemed impossible to solve the problem that faced the fulfillment of the Davidic promises. Its resolution lay in the wisdom and power of God. Jesus, genuinely a son of David through Mary according to the flesh (Cf. Rom. 1:3), by reason of the virgin birth and nonparticipation in the seed of Joseph, qualifies to receive the title without coming under the curse. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33).

To this day He alone possesses the right to the throne of David, and the only remaining and reliable genealogies of the Jews are those of Matthew and Luke, and they validate His claim. The superscription of the cross, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," flashes its light over the centuries and proclaims far and wide that he was God's King. In this Man, this Davidic Man, also Immanuel, God is moving to the throne of royal, universal sway over the affairs of men. And, as Isaiah says, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (9:7).

Ultimately, our response to the teaching of the virgin birth will hinge upon our view of Christ's uniqueness. If we regard Him as a mere man, or even as *primus inter pares*, we shall probably reject the virgin birth. But if we by God's Spirit sense that He is unique—unique in history, unique according to His own consciousness in His relation to God and man, and unique in His redemption, will we not reason that it is credible that He be unique in His origin? We will concur with Denny, "He came from God, all the apostles believed, in a *sense* in which no other came: does it not follow that He came in a *way* in which no other came?"

Would a word of appeal be considered in bad taste? Have we noticed and reflected upon His name *Immanuel*.—God *with us*. Is this personally true? Surely Phillips Brooks was right when he wrote the familiar carol:

“O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee liel
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent years go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.”

Yet the great preacher also emphasized the need of personal appropriation. Is He really God *WITH US*, with *ME*? Does the last stanza represent a prayer that we have made in the first person singular?

“O holy Child of Bethlehem Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in—Be born in us today!
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell—
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!”

A COUPON CLIPPER AT LAST!

Daniel Fuchs

(President, American Board of Missions to the Jews)

At last I am a coupon clipper! When I was a kid in Brooklyn things were tough in our home. My mother raised three scrapping youngsters by scrubbing floors. “Waste not, want not” was more than a motto; it was our way of life. If a man owned \$100,000 bond at 6% interest, every three months he could “clip a coupon” worth \$1,500. Why work if you can clip coupons? Coupon clipping became a goal for us. Some of the boys succeeded; of those who did, a few jumped out of windows in the 1929 stock-market crash. Others have continued to clip coupons. I never attained the goal.

But, at last, I am really a coupon clipper. Every Monday my mail box is stuffed with ads from competing supermarkets. I never realized how much I can save by spending more! Each ad baits the hook with pages of coupons to lure me into the stores. I take these coupons seriously. If I can buy a loaf of bread for thirty cents and a coupon, why should I pay fifty-five cents?

There have been many startling changes in recent months. Suddenly the price of a loaf of bread has become very important to countless Americans who until now have taken our standard of living for granted. I wonder how our workers with growing families can make both ends meet; but I also realize that tough as things are here, there are other areas of the world where the price of bread is not just important, it is vital. At least here there's plenty of bread available.

This year we will be celebrating our Bicentennial Thanksgiving Day. Somehow, I feel that it would be more suitable to hold a Thanksgiving fast instead of a Thanksgiving feast. I will eat my turkey (stuffed with thirty-five cent bread), but I expect to match its cost with a gift to an agency that does relief work in needy areas. Christians in the United States should do their best to make sure that the Parable of the Rich Fool does not become the Great American Tragedy.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:16-21).

. . . The first point noted is that accumulated wealth breeds anxiety rather than satisfaction. The man is embarrassed by his abundance. The trouble of knowing how to keep it is as great as the labour of acquiring it, and the enjoyment of it is still in the future. Many a rich man is more worried about his securities than he was in making his money. There are so many 'bags with holes' that he is at his wit's end for investments and the first thing he looks at in the morning's paper is the share list, the sight of which often spoils his breakfast.

The next point is the selfish and arrogant sense of possession, as betrayed by the repetition of 'my'—my fruits, my barns, my corn, and my goods. He has no thought of God, nor of his own stewardship. He recognizes no claim on his wealth. If he had looked a little beyond himself, he would have seen many places where he could have bestowed his fruits. Were there no poor at his gates? He had better have poured some riches into the laps of these than have built a new barn. Corn laid up would breed weevils; dispersed, it would bring blessings.

Again, this type of covetous man is a fool because he reckons on 'many years.' The goods may last, but will he? He can make sure that they will suffice for a long time, but he cannot make sure of the long time. Again, he blunders tragically in his estimate of the power of worldly goods to satisfy. 'Eat, drink,' might be said to his body, but to say it to his soul, and to fancy that these pleasures of sense would put it at ease, is the fatal error which gnaws like a worm at the root of every worldly life. —Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Luke, pp. 340, 341.

The context of this parable is very instructive. There is a big difference between social concern and a social gospel. Every Christian should have concern for all, but he knows that there is only one gospel:

... how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3, 4).

We must continually realize this as we share the love of God with all men everywhere.

Our Lord had been teaching about confessing Him before all men, the divine help which would be given, and the blessed reward. There was one of the company who could only think of one thing, "speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me" (vs. 13). Our Lord's answer was abrupt and pertinent, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" There are many who take Jesus to be foremost a judge and divider. They see in Him mainly a social and economic reformer, but they fail to see His deepest work and their own greatest need. It was to one such person our Lord directed his parable.

Let us clip our coupons carefully. As we thank God for His abundant supply for all of our needs, let us share all of these riches with those who hunger. Men hunger not only for bread—hunger of the body; but also for the Bread of God—hunger of the soul. Our Lord was born in Bethlehem, the "house of bread." Shepherds found Him "lying in a manger." A manger has one purpose: it holds food. By God's grace, let us share our Bread with the hungering multitudes.

American Board of Mission to the Jews. —Used by permission.



Nena Laguisan

Philippines

April 1, 1976

Excerpts from a letter of Nena Laguisan, missionary to the Ilongot tribe in the Philippines, to the Manila church:

I know many of you were praying for the conferences that were held here in my new village [where Nena moved in January for pioneer evangelism —Alex Wilson]. So I want to share with you some of the things that happened.

Before the conferences, the people of my village, Keyat, had to give all their time for preparations. A meeting place was built; also huts where the people would have to stay temporarily so people from other villages could stay in their houses.

The Elders Conference was first, and the General Conference followed. Twenty-six native elders from 11 different churches in the Ilongot area were here for the conference. They became more aware of their responsibility to reach out to their own people, not

counting the cost. Many of them faced the fact that they were too relaxed, just depending on the missionaries to evangelize.

The people from the different villages upriver and downriver arrived Sunday afternoon for the General Conference. As usual they brought their banners with them. The people from closer villages had to hike for one day to get here. Some others had to hike for three days, but most had to hike a week. Most who came were believers but some unbelievers came along too. Sunday night was the first meeting. We found that 15 villages were represented, with about 300 delegates. That was a great time for them to see fellow believers from other places and have fellowship together.

The next day we missionaries shared God's Words with them. Six separate meetings went on at the same time, with classes for old men, younger men, married women, single women, and children. I handled the single women's group, and had a grand time teaching about the coming of the Lord. That afternoon all the groups met together. Elders from the Ilongot churches shared God's Words too and were given various responsibilities to do also. The whole conference was a blessing to each person. Thanks for the part you had by praying for us.

Thomas W. Hartle

Cape Town, South Africa

March 24, 1976

Doors for cottage meetings by various families in various areas continue to be the encouraging factor, praise the Lord. While the other men are busy with cottage meetings, I have been personally busy with two families, one in the Athlone area, and the other about a mile from my home. We just pray that it might result in a "reason for great rejoicing."

Interest by the patients at the two hospitals where I am conducting services remain an encouragement. They just cannot wait when the time comes for me to be there. And the cooperation by the sisters of the various wards, and the nurses, is both thrilling and uplifting. This is augmented by tract distribution to the patients (this is apart from other tract drives which we do here and there as opportunity affords itself). Thank God for the many backward members who have returned to the fold, but we are still praying for others to return. Both my personal work and daily visitation programs are quite busy ones.

We are at present preparing for the first of our series of gospel meetings for 1976, to be held April 8-11, with a preacher from one of our local congregations as our guest speaker. I have just completed duplicating the handbills for distribution. Pray that these meetings will be successful and fruit-bearing, along with the many efforts we exert from time to time in reaching the lost, wayward, and careless.

Donald and Delores Harris

Salisbury, Rhodesia

March 5, 1976

We have already ordered 60,000 bricks for the new home. They have started bringing them already; we have 5 loads now.

Donald went to an auction last night and bought a bunch of things. We have been making little toys, painting them, and we enjoy it.

We took Barbara to the doctor yesterday. He said she was ready for her second operation in April. All the rest of the children seem well.

We received the go-ahead on the plans today for the new home. From now on it is in the Lord's hands to move his people's hearts to give of their means, and to pray we will receive the right parents for the new home. God can do it and we trust in Him to do His will and not our own.

Robert and family are well at this time. They went to Goromunze last Sunday. The triplets stayed with us all day. We enjoyed having them. We see them pretty often now as Robert has been teaching us on Revelation on Wednesday nights.

We so much enjoyed Bro. Morrow's visit with us. In his last letter to us he was saying something about having a meeting with Bro. Forcade and Bro. Kitmiller combined and was looking forward to it.

Addie Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

March 26, 1976

This is a beautiful sunny morning in Rhodesia. There is a tinge of autumn in the air that tells us winter is at hand. We are still having roasting ears from our little garden. Prices have soared here as they have everywhere.

Yes, I agree that Satan is working overtime in this old world. There is so much violence, hate and murder nearly everywhere and it seems he is having his way—yet God is still on the Throne and He will have His way in His own time! We have been reassured of this as we looked into Ezekiel 38 & 39 recently. I don't understand everything in the prophecy but it tells me that God—the Lord God—will have His way as He brings Russia and the confederation of nations down into Israel; just when, I don't know. But we can see Russia having great power in Africa — even in Mozambique — and of course in Angola.

Thank you again for your daily prayers in our behalf. Prayer means more than anything else, I believe.

Elaine Brittell

Livingstone, Zambia

March 30, 1976

This has been a wonderful month serving the Lord. Word came from the head office regarding the rules for the written Chitonga which is gradually changing to meet the modern speech.

So now we have something definite to follow in our typing of the New Chitonga Bible. We have been busy other than typing for the past few weeks; now soon, Lord willing, I will begin again.

This month has seen the Lord's body grow in several places with 72 being born into the family of God. The students from Namwianga Christian Secondary have gone out to teach God's word at some of the villages and His word has borne fruit. Also five Form I students at the Secondary were baptized last Lord's day evening. As new ones come into Christ, the older Christians go and help them learn more of the way to walk pleasing to God, bearing much fruit for eternity. A soul is so happy when pointing another onward in the pathway of God.

This week I had fun making a young Christian mother a blouse, her baby girl (named Elaine) a little dress, and her little son a shirt all from the same material. When I took them to their house, we found a dear little 4-year-old girl with only one leg. So we are going to investigate the possibility of her getting an artificial leg.

George and Sophia Galanis

Athens, Greece

March, 1976

The Bible correspondence course is growing in number of enrolling students day by day. Thanks to the freedom we have now we work freely spreading our advertisement cards. We throw them under the doors, we pass them out at train and bus stations, at universities, high schools and anywhere in street squares, etc. We have thus far distributed one hundred thousand cards and we have received eight hundred responses. Praise the Lord for so great opportunity He has given us to evangelize our countrymen.

On March 14, 1976 we invited some two hundred of the enrolled students and one hundred twenty of them came. The program was very good and all were very much impressed. New invitations have already been sent out for May 16, 1976. We expect more to come.

Campaign in Crete. On March 25–April 6 I went to the Island of Crete with my wife. In four days, with four boys we passed out twenty-one thousand cards. The result was one hundred and seventy responses.

New campaign in Corfu. Four of us are planning to go to the Island of Corfu to distribute ten thousand cards and to have revival at the small church there that is affiliated with us.

An appeal for help. Allow us to let you know that we are in difficult condition financially. As our work grows, our financial needs also increase tremendously. This correspondence course program absorbs great amounts of funds. However, it pays, for it is a very positive method of evangelism. Due to our increased

activities and the inflation, we face a very acute financial problem. We feel our duty is to make known to you the situation and it is God's business whom He will raise to show His goodness and through whom He will supply our needs.

O. S. Boyer

Sao Paulo, Brazil

March 3, 1976

We have seen the time when millions of free Bibles, Testaments, Gospels, books and tracts were being burned in public squares. When times changed we put on a campaign that furnished 7 million tracts to dedicated distributors.

In great contrast was another campaign that furnished over 5 million tracts to distributors that bought them for the bare price of the printer. For us free literature campaigns, at the best, do little more than scratch the surface of a terrific need. Even the distributors themselves give a far different value to tracts they themselves have bought with great sacrifice.

When I had to move to a business zone and legalize my work, according to Brazilian laws, it was Carl Hultgren that came to my rescue. Everything was turned over to him and brought up to be one of the best Evangelical bookstores in all Latin America.

What Carl needs now is not more distributors to receive cheaper books, but more subsidized bookstores. For even if the distributors receive the books entirely free, freight paid, even then these books cannot be sold for enough to pay overhead.

Let's pray that Carl be helped to get subsidized bookstores instead of distributors. Let's also repeat: The desperate need of 5 million Evangelicals is for just such literature as the *Myer Pearlman Commentary*.

NEWS AND NOTES

"They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . ."

Southeastern Christian College

The baccalaureate service was held May 2 in the school's auditorium. Bro. Billy Ray Lewter was the speaker. The graduation service followed on Tuesday night, May 4.

This year's degrees were awarded as follows:

- Associate of Arts -8
- Associate of Applied Arts -1
- Associate of Science -3
- Junior College Certificates -3
- Honorary Associate of Arts -1
- Associate of Arts in Bible -1

Portland Christian School

Outreach Seminar at P. C. S. was held April 24. The speakers were: Vaughn Reeves, Mike Sanders, Harry Coultas, and Robert Boyd. An open forum followed the sessions. All sessions were recorded.

Rangeland Church, Ky.: Bro. Boyd held a weekend meeting at Mountain View Church of Christ (April 30-May 2). Nick Wiese took his place at Rangeland.

Some listeners who can't "go to sleep" on Bro. Boyd's late radio message sent a check for two hundred dollars. Quite a few recent letters

have mentioned the need for additional expansion . . . with special emphasis on the Nashville, Tenn., and Cincinnati, Ohio areas.

A letter from Nigeria recently expressed a desire for a Bible and a tape recorder. They were promptly given by the Grahams and the Freemans respectively and were to be mailed soon. Three stations are scheduled to be added to the growing "Words of Life" network called Radio Cayman, reaching Jamaica and countries in that area, the week of May 31.

Our youth chorus, directed by Bro. Glenn Suell, sang for the residents of Maple Manor (Adult Division) last Thursday night, and the Bradshaw Quartet also sang on the same occasion (April 22).

Sellersburg Church of Christ, Ind.: Bro. Glenn Baber will direct the VBS June 7-12. Woodland Bible Camp: Jr. Week I—June 13-19; Intermediate Week I—June 20-26; Sr. Week I—July 4-10; Family Week—July 11-17; Jr. Week II—July 18-24; Intermed. Week II—July 25-31; Sr. Week II—Aug. 1-7.

Meeting: August 1-8; Evangelist, Stan Broussard.

Fellowship Week: August 9-13; evening sessions at Sellersburg.

The Thursday Ladies' Group visited Maple Manor Christian Homes to bring good cheer to its residents.

Henryville, Ind.: The monthly young people's meeting recently started had twenty-three present April 17. They meet on the second Saturday night.

Glenmora, La.: The theme of the Christian Fellowship Week in Louisiana is "Distinguishing Features of the Church." Dates are November 15-18. The planning committee for the Fellowship week are Stan Broussard, A. J. Istre, A. V. Babb, Carl Kitzmiller, Charles Seal, Carroll Dean Weatherford, and Bob Morrow.

Beginning April 11 a week of gospel meetings were held by Bro. Glenn Baber of Louisville, Ky. He is the minister of Ormsby Ave. Church of Christ and teaches sixth grade at PCS. Bro. Baber reports good attendance, good interest, and the Lord gave good messages. The blessings in-

creased as the meeting progressed.

Other Louisiana Meetings:

Cyprus Creek, with Brother Stan Broussard, April 19 through Friday.

LeCompte, beginning April 25, with Bro. Carl Kitzmiller.

Oakdale, May 2-7 with Bro. Stan Broussard.

Abbyville, May 10-15 with Bro. Stan and Bro. Valdetero.

Portland Ave., Louisville: During Bro. Wilson's absence in the Philippines the Sunday services will be conducted by Brothers Robert Heid and Dennis Allen. Elders and deacons will be on call for any other needs of the church.

During the month of April, two confessed Christ and were buried with Him in baptism.

Highview Christian Academy

Ground was broken for the building of the Highview Christian Academy at three o'clock Sunday, May 2. This is located on the Highview Church of Christ grounds, at Fegenbush and Glaser Lane.

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