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JUNE, 1976

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God's Family

W. R. H.

Segregation by age

"Segregate" means to isolate, separate, or set apart. There are circumstances under which this is a desirable state, but there are other areas where it is real hardship and loss. For example, we used to think that isolation was our country's one great hope, and being situated between the earth's two greatest oceans was our best political asset for safety and defense. With the "one-world" philosophy of the present, however, the worth of such separation is being questioned.

There is a segregation that has grown upon us—not on the national or racial level, but within the family unit itself. I mean that segregation that exists because of the difference in the number of our years—the "generation gap." And this, not limited to the current problem of children being unable to communicate with their parents—but actual, total breaks within the family system that sever society into three main categories; the retired, the main stream of the working class, and the youth. Think of the many older citizens who crowd the "Sunset" communities; count the young adults who prefer to live in apartments to themselves or with their peer group; and finally, consider the boarding schools, kindergartens and day-care centers where little tots are enrolled so that the young mothers can pursue that dream career that has been interrupted by childbearing. Consider the number of parents who plan their vacations to correspond with the kids' weeks at camp or visiting a distant relative.

Blessings of a close-knit family

By nature, man finds himself in a family life-style that our Creator has planned, a style which supplies the whole gamut of fellowship and group association so needed for survival and the good life. In the old time, close-knit society the parents nourished and protected the young, while the young grew up to emulate the parents. Grandparents, too, lent counsel and guidance along with many needed services and extra benefits, for they had time to give and an inclination to give it. In return, these aged ones remained in the main-stream of family affection, going down to old age in an atmosphere of dignity, companionship and contentment.

Selfishness in this matter of age discrimination is a two-way street. Today many young couples do not plan to be tied down with the responsibilities of raising children. These marrieds would rather have their time to themselves and be able also to afford more of this world's goods and pleasures. But late in life the fact will come home to them that such selfishness has its price tag; the young ones who would have been apt to comfort and attend them, were prevented from being born.

Also, there are many of the young who have ignored the Bible admonition to requite their parents. Not just failing to meet the financial responsibilities, they also fail the even more needful area of reciprocating love and companionship. It is as if they prefer to separate themselves from their kin, supposing that the senior members will be able to fend for themselves right down to the end.

Trends invade the church

Any social trend that invades the family will also be found invading the church, since the church is itself a family of families. In churches today we see much of "youth church," kindergarten, and fully staffed nurseries. These tend to magnify any age-bias that may already exist, and give sanction to further development in this direction. For many tots, Sunday morning has long been a "play day," and it is a rude awakening later when these must graduate into the main auditorium to sit still and listen to an unfamiliar service. Then follows a measure of rebellion, and we parents and elders ask each other, "Where are our young people?" We need to re-think these programs to find out if they have really paid off in developing children that are superior in their Bible orientation, to those who were reared up in older style.

The writer is a guidance counselor at a high school in Louisville.



The Man and the Plan

Gordon R. Linscott

Twenty-four years ago K. C. Moser's *Christ Versus a Plan* went on sale at the Harding College Bookstore. That little booklet stirred up a controversy that still hasn't been put to rest. Every so often somebody publishes an article with a title similar to the one above. Some agree and some disagree, but the majority, I am convinced, never really understand what Bro. Moser is talk-

ing about. He charges (Church of Christ) preachers with neglecting to preach Christ, preaching instead a “plan of salvation.”

This is a serious charge. If we are commissioned to preach one thing and we preach something different, the consequences may be disastrous. Those of us who preach would do well to occasionally review the content of our preaching. The gospel—which is what we are sent to proclaim—is briefly outlined in 1 Cor. 15:1-8. How often do you hear it preached?

The real issue

A few days ago I shared Moser’s booklet with a fellow-worker of mine who also preaches. When he returned it, I asked for his opinion of it. “Well,” he said, “I’m kind of in the middle on this. I don’t think a person should go to either extreme. Grace and works are both necessary.” I had to give him credit for seeing the real issue—which I don’t think Bro. Moser had spelled out quite as clearly as he might have. The real question is whether salvation is by grace, by works, or by grace and works.

The third option is quickly dispatched by Rom. 11:6: “If it is by grace, it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.” As far as salvation is concerned, grace and works cannot be mixed. This conflict should not be hard to understand. Grace is a free gift; it is not an item on sale at a ridiculously low price. “He that hath no money . . . come ye, buy and eat . . . without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1). A payment of ten cents turns the gift into a fabulous bargain—but a bargain is not a gift. “The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

The second choice above—salvation by works—is completely ruled out by Scripture. “By works of law shall no flesh be justified in his sight” (Rom. 3:20). “. . . God reckoneth righteousness apart from works” (Rom. 4:6). “By grace have ye been saved . . . the gift of God; not of works” (Eph. 2:8).

The Man and the plan

Moser’s complaint was that men were preaching that salvation comes from following a “plan.” Rather, he said, salvation was accomplished by a Man—Christ Jesus, at Calvary. If salvation is by a “plan,” the grace is no more grace and our salvation is no more perfect than our obedience. If, on the other hand, salvation is the work of God—and given as a gift—then we may say, “Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God hath done it . . . ” (Ecc. 3:14). “By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).

In a discussion of this topic, one question is always raised—and legitimately so. What about works? Aren’t you doing away with

obedience? Not at all! "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Works have nothing to do with procuring salvation; they *follow* our being "created in Christ Jesus." He has made us to be new creatures; consequently, old things have passed away; all things have become new. We keep His commandments because we love Him, and His commandments are not grievous (1 Jn. 5:3).



Standards

J. H. McCaleb

A young man was asked regarding his progress at school. "Well, I am better than the average for my class." It happened that the average for that class was failure.

We are tempted to set the same kind of standards. The public performance may be either high or low, but we tend to follow along with the crowd. Paul, in the second Corinthian letter gives us some sound advice: "For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves: but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding."

To the Colossian brethren Paul gives a positive direction: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

There is no room for temporizing in these terse statements. Only the best is satisfactory. Furthermore, that degree of perfection applies to all our activities: our worship together, and our daily operations. It is not sufficient merely to be as good as someone else.

Paul reasons that if one is a Christian, if he has really risen with the Lord to a new life of power, he will of necessity exercise that new nature in seeking to attain to the highest spiritual and secular levels. Our actions will demonstrate our progress.

Bible Exposition -- Matthew

WHEN BETHLEHEM BECAME THE HOUSE OF BREAD

S. Lewis Johnson Jr.

Introduction

It might seem quite strange for Matthew, the gospel of the King with its distinctively Jewish coloring, to give us an account of the visit of the wise men from the East. It might appear more appropriate for the Gospel of Luke, for that gospel delights in the note of universality. The gathering of the nations to the Light of Israel, however, is an essential part of true Judaism, and it is very fitting that the gospel that sets forth the glories of the Messianic King should contain it. And that gathering of the nations to Christ is beautifully portrayed in the visit of the magi, or wise men. In fact, it would seem to be the chief purpose of the evangelist in this section to point out the acknowledgment of the young Son of David by representatives of the non-Jewish world. They, as well as Israel in the persons of His immediate family, worship Him as the King of the Jews and the Lord of the nations.

How different from the symbolism of this beautiful account is the reality of our day! Our days are days of religious disorder and spiritual chaos. It is not surprising that Israel does not acknowledge Him. They still abide in the blindness of rebellion (cf. Rom. 9:25). And the nations are still raging in defiance of Him who sits in the heavens (cf. Psa. 2:1-3). It is shocking, however, to see the church in spiritual decadence. It is no longer the "little flock," meeting in the name of Jesus to worship the Father by the Scriptures in the Spirit. Its shepherds are no longer experienced, concerned, and faithful. The great doctrines of sin, redemption, and holiness are rarely proclaimed.

"We are living in a day of hazy standards of right and wrong," Vance Havner has pointed out. "The old line of demarcation has practically disappeared from modern thinking. A prominent minister said: 'The delineation of sin has undergone a transformation somewhat similar to that which has taken place in the world of painting. The old clear-cut lines have given way to an impressionistic indefiniteness, the black and white contrasts to low-toned grays. The churches have adopted a hush policy on the doctrine of depravity and a rotarian gospel takes the place of repentance."

"I like his reference to painting. There was a time when you could look at a picture and tell what it was. Today black and white have become gray. Someone has said: 'The religion of China is Confucian; the religion of America is confusion.' A country school-teacher, applying for a job, was asked, 'Do you teach that the earth is round or flat?' 'Which way do you want it taught?' was the reply. 'I can teach it either way.' Something like that is the

attitude of many a pulpit today."

It was in Bethlehem that the Eastern pilgrims from Gentile lands came to worship Him. *Bethlehem* means *the house of bread*, and since the village stood in a fertile countryside, it was a fitting name. It was a lovely place with a lengthy history. It was there that Jacob buried Rachel. It was there that Ruth and Boaz met and lived out their beautiful and meaningful romance. It was there that the first news of the temple was proclaimed. And, above all, Bethlehem was the home and city of David the King. And how fitting it is that prophecy should state that David's Greater Son should be born there! It was only then that Bethlehem truly became *the house of bread*. It is one of the purposes of Matthew to spell this out in the account of the visit of the wise men.

The arrival of the wise men

"There is something extremely striking and stimulating to the imagination in the vagueness of the description of these Eastern pilgrims," Maclaren says. "Where they came from, how long they had been in travelling, how many they were, what was their rank, whither they went—all these questions are left, unsolved. They glide into the story, present their silent adoration, 'and as silently steal away.' The tasteless mediaeval tradition knows all about them: they were three; they were kings. It knows their names; and, if we choose to pay the fee, we can see their bones today in the shrine behind the high altar in Cologne Cathedral. How much more the half sometimes is than the whole!"

The identity of the wise men (2:1). The magi were men with a lengthy and somewhat uncertain ancestry. They had become by this time the teachers and instructors of the Persian kings. They were men who were skilled in philosophy, in medicine, and in natural science. And, on top of this, they were soothsayers and interpreters of dreams. In later times their name came to refer to common fortune-tellers, sorcerers, magicians, and other similar charlatans. It has been thought that there were three of them who came to Jerusalem, due largely to the mention of the three kinds of gifts, but we do not know their number or their place of origin.

Why should they set out for the West looking for a king? The answer is not hard to find. Testimonies are available from several sources to the fact that in the world at that time there was a strange state of expectancy, a sense of anticipation of a coming king from Judea. Suetonius could say, "There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief, that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judaea to rule the world" (*Life of Vespasian*, 4:5).

The interrogation of the wise men (2:2). The question of the magi is beautifully pointed, but the response is revealing and tragic. They traverse the streets of the city of the Great King, but seem to find none to answer their query. And, further, it seems that

no one wanted to know the answer. Incidentally, the expression "in the east" (v. 2) is better rendered *in its rising*. The reference apparently is to some remarkable astrological phenomenon which occurred in their homeland and which convinced them that the time was ripe to travel westward to find the expected ruler.

The alarm of Herod and Jerusalem

The reaction of Herod (2:3-4). The Herod here is Herod the Great, called by Robertson, "The Great Pervert." Born in 73 B.C., Herod was half Jew and half Idumean. Edomite blood was in his veins. He was related to Esau, and the connection is significant. An insanely suspicious man, although a very gifted ruler, he was now in his last days. Someone has called him, "a murderous old man," and the words are no exaggeration. His wife Mariamne and her mother Alexandra he had murdered. His eldest son, Antipater, and two other sons were assassinated by him. Caesar Augustus, playing upon the Greek words for *pig* (*hus*) and *son* (*huios*), said bitterly that it was safer to be Herod's sow than his son.

It is easy to see, then, that the announcement of the arrival of another king was sure to provoke the interest and the hostility of this implacable foe of truth. The significant thing is that the Jewish leaders do nothing about investigating the truth that may be contained in the news from the magi. Herod's concern is understandable. As Bruce says, "The foreigner and usurper feared a rival, and the tyrant feared the rival would be welcomed." The people's terror was caused by Herod's. When he was in a rage, anything could happen and often did. But pagans, sad to say, are more interested in the Messiah than His own people (cf. John 1:11-12)!

The religious experts are now called in, and a theological question is put to them. "Where is the Messiah to be born?" is the query.

The response of the chief priests and scribes (2:5-6). The authorities do not hesitate. Bethlehem of Judaea is the place. The answer is not put in their mouth by Matthew. It is their answer, although Matthew then freely cites from Micah's great prophecy to establish the truthfulness of the reply. The text must be awfully clear in its meaning, for there is a remarkable unanimity in the context. The star (v. 9), the Jews (vv. 5-6), and the evangelist (vv. 1, 6) all affirm that Bethlehem is the right answer. And Scripture sets its seal of approval upon our Lord's birth as the fulfillment of Micah's prophecy in that from the time of David to the time of the birth of Christ no other birth in Bethlehem of Judaea is recorded in it.

The definiteness of the prophecy of Micah is most telling and relevant. There were two Bethlehems in the Old Testament record, (cf. Josh. 19:15), one in Judaea and the other in Zebulon. But con-

trary to the vague and indefinite and ambiguous prophecies of the Delphic Oracle and modern counterparts, such as Jeane Dixon and Maurice Woodruff, the inspired prophecies of the Word are specific.

The prophecy of Micah is a beautiful portrayal of the work of the Messiah. He is to be a "Governor," a title that involves three things:

(1) First, He shall be the Messianic Prophet, who shall guide His people in the way (cf. Luke 1:79).

(2) Second, He shall be the Messianic Priest, who shall feed His people by virtue of the sacrifice He shall offer (cf. Micah 5:4, "feed"). They shall be led and fed.

(3) Third, He shall be the Messianic King, who shall guard His people in the way (cf. Jer. 30:21).

All of these functions are in the realm of His humanity, for it is "out of thee," that is, the earthly Bethlehem, that He comes.

But, lest we think of Him only as an earthly sovereign, the prophecy in Micah adds the final description of Him, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." "Out of thee" points to His earthly side, but this points to His heavenly side. He is David's Son, but He is also David's Lord.

Some years ago a moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, after listening to Sir Bernard Lovell tell the assembly of the astronomer's immensities, thanked him at the conclusion of his lecture, adding, "But we believe that our God rules over all your worlds." How true that is. Herod may, indeed, be called, "the king" (v. 1), but the royal child rules his world.

The council of the theologians illustrates the difference between orthodoxy and life. They know the Scriptural answers, but have no interest at all in the realities of the King, His person and work. And as for Herod, he is a dangerous, but ludicrous illustration of the irrationality of malevolent unbelief. "He believes the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem," as Maclarens points out, "and yet he determines to set himself against the carrying out of what he must, in some sense, believe to be God's purpose. 'If this infant is God's Messiah, I will kill Him,' is surely as strange a piece of policy gone mad as ever the world heard of."

The request of Herod (2:7-8). After the meeting with the Sanhedrin the scheming king called a second secret meeting with the wise men, in which he concealed his real intention, the murder of the King. He feigned a deep interest in the things that interested the wise men, assuring them that he wished to worship Him, too. The wise men, thus, become unwittingly the CIA, the spies, of the wicked despot. But the God who rules over all His worlds will overrule the enmity of this little puppet.

The adoration of the wise men

The guidance of the star (2:9-10). The reappearing star becomes again the guide of the dedicated seekers, and the end of the search is near at hand. A great deal of discussion has taken place over the nature of this guiding star, but the statement of verse nine seems to say that the guidance of the star was miraculous. It truly did guide them, although they were given help from Herod through the answer of the chief priests and scribes. In fact, special revelation (Micah's prophecy) and general revelation (the star) unite in pointing to Bethlehem.

"There is a lovely legend," Barclay reminds us, "which tells how the star, its work of guidance completed, fell into the well at Bethlehem, and that it is still there and can be still seen sometimes by those whose hearts are pure."

The gifts to the King (2:11-12). Discovery leads to adoration and offering. The depth of the faith of the wise men is not explicitly told. It is common to say that they could hardly have come to a knowledge of His true character. On the other hand, having been in the city of Jerusalem in contact with many of the chosen nation, and probably with many of their Scriptural experts, it would not be incredible that, guided by the Holy Spirit, they should have come to a faith in the greatness of the Messiah whom they had been discussing, and with whom they had been involved for so many months.

At any rate, having entered the house—evidently some weeks had elapsed since the birth and the babe had been removed from the manger to a more substantial dwelling—they finally see Him. The child is mentioned first, customary in this narrative (cf. vv. 11, 13, 14, 20, and 21), for He is the object of the main interest, the center of attraction.

The gifts are laid before Him in token of esteem and worship, and the scene is suggestive of all the great prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of the worship by the Gentiles of the great Messianic King at the inception of His future kingdom (cf. Psa. 72:10, 11, 15; Isa. 60:6). The meaning of the gifts is not ascertainable with any certainty. Commonly they have been thought to represent His royalty, His divinity, and His mortality as seen in His sufferings for our redemption. If the meaning of the myrrh is related to His death, then the shadow of the cross is already falling over His face.

Conclusion

As we bring this study to a close, several thoughts come before us.

In the first place, we reiterate one of our opening remarks. Bethlehem means the house of bread, but only by the coming of the Child does it attain to the significance of its name. Then, finally, she becomes *Bethlehem* through Him who later shall say, "I am the

living bread that came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51; cf. vv. 27, 35). We have tried Sinai, with its "thou shalt's," and "thou shalt not's," but the Law cannot give life. It can only condemn. Bethlehem, however, satisfies through Him. Brooks was right.

"The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight."

And the aim of the evangelist is accomplished in the setting forth of the acknowledgment of Christ as King by both Jew, through the royal family, and Gentile, through the learned Eastern pilgrims. He is revealed, as Paul, too, puts it, "to the humble and untaught first, and then to the rich, to the West first, and then to the East.

In the second place, the response and reaction of Herod, the chief priests and scribes, and the wise men illustrate three common reactions to the Son of God today. There is, first, the reaction of Herod, the man who believes, evidently against his will, and sets himself to erase the testimony to the King, if at all possible. It is the insane reaction of a man who suppresses in unrighteousness the truth that he has.

There is, second, the response and reaction of the chief priests and scribes. It is the response of superior knowledge, but complete indifference. They are quite sure, as Maclaren indicates, "where Messiah is to be born; but they do not care to go and see if He is born."

And, third, there is the reaction of the wise men, the reaction of adoring worship. Spiritual knowledge comes to its climax in the bowing of the head and heart in the presence of the King. May we respond in the same spirit, in the spirit of the Christmas hymn,

"O Come, let us adore Him,
 "O Come, let us adore Him,
"O Come, let us adore Him,
 Christ the Lord."

But can the Babe really grant us the life that is life indeed? Can He bestow the bread that satisfies? Is the giving of *eternal life* within His power? There is a clue to the answer to the question in the last lines of the prophecy of Micah. His goings forth have been "from of old, from everlasting." He is no newcomer to the human scene. In the theophanies of the Old Testament He ministered to His ancient people that they might be prepared for and not surprised by His incarnation.

"Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
 Hail th' Incarnate Deity."

He is no blind guide into the unfathomable abyss of the Beyond. He has *been* there! He can be trusted.

Carl Kitzmiller is a minister in Oakdale, Louisiana.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Why do some people believe in a secret rapture?

Why? There are probably many reasons. Their favorite preacher, Sunday school teacher, or dear friend may have so taught. They may have read a book that so taught. Or they may believe there are good evidences in the Bible that such is the case. The writer takes no position, believing there is really not clear and final testimony in the Bible allowing a positive stand either for or against a secret rapture. It must be conceded that there are some lines of thought which point very much toward a secret rapture, but we hesitate to declare what could be uncertain.

Definitions may be in order. The rapture, of course, refers to the snatching away or catching up of the church as spoken of in 1 Thess. 4:17. It is a part of the second coming of Christ—the very opening phase of it, in fact. In the series of events that make up His second coming the rapture precedes His coming to earth in glory with the church by a period of seven or more years. By "secret rapture" I understand the idea to be that the unregenerate world will not see, hear, nor know when the rapture takes place, and will discover that it has happened only after it has occurred. The saved will just disappear and the ensuing accidents (as people disappear from vital activities) and the missing people will cause those remaining to discover that the rapture has taken place.

It is certain, from Rev. 1:7 (cf. Matt. 24:27), that some phase of His coming is very visible and evident even to the unbelieving, for "every eye shall see him," including those who put Him to death. This may have reference to His coming in glory, however, rather than to the rapture. His coming in glory is the time of the signs in the heavens and of the mourning of the tribes of the earth (Matt. 24:29-30).

There is to be a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God at the rapture (1 Thess. 4:16). Will not the world hear this and thus be aware of what is taking place? In our world of industrial sounds, sonic booms, and electronic amplification, as well as the sounds of nature, it is not certain that even if this comes to the ears of the unsaved they will know what it is. On an occasion near the close of Jesus' public ministry God's voice

came out of heaven to Him (John 12:27-29). Many of the multitude who heard the sound, said that it had thundered. That was all they heard. God spoke to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Those with him heard the sound but did not understand what was said (Acts 9:7; 22:9). So it is very possible that if the unbelieving world hears these sounds they will be ignorant of their content and meaning.

At least one feature of the rapture will take place so quickly that the very time element could suggest a secret rapture. Paul, in 1 Cor. 15:51-52, says that the change of the living saints from a corruptible to an incorruptible body will take place in the twinkling of an eye. That physical act of blinking the eyelid is so fast that it is not noticed unless we are watching very carefully. The world will not be watching for Him, and to them He comes as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

Now at the same time as the change coming to the living saints there is to be the resurrection of the dead in Christ (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Do we have reason to believe that this will require any more time than the change of the living? The rapture of the church, both the living and the resurrected, when it takes place *may not* require more than a split-second—literally! Remember we are dealing with God's power in this case, not that of men. But what about the graves—will not their opening, the bursting of vaults and concrete chambers, and such like all take time and announce what is taking place? The tombs of some of the dead at the time of Jesus' death seem to have been literally opened (Matt. 27:52), but the kind of resurrection experienced by these was apparently not the same as resurrection unto life. Discerning people have realized that the stone was not removed from Jesus' grave to let Him out, but rather to let men limited to the present physical existence into the tomb and to give proof of His resurrection. Those saved who are in the tombs will come forth, but there *may not* be so much as the rustle of a blade of grass or the displacement of a marker to indicate what has happened. In His resurrection body Jesus could pass through closed doors, so do not suppose it impossible for the saints to rise while the cemeteries will remain to the human eye the same.

The unbelief that will persist during the tribulation judgments (Rev. 6-19) makes it *unlikely* that every eye sees Christ at the rapture. How would such ones be able to continue in unbelief and rebellion when they have seen Christ? But, it may be objected, if the rapture is secret they will soon discover what has happened and should realize He has come. So, would there not be almost as much reason for belief as if He were literally seen? Consider, however, the very definite possibility that for the Bible-rejecter the missing ones might be explained by supposing there had been an invasion from space by beings from another planet or that the strange things taking place are to be attributed to some such event.

All these considerations make me believe the rapture could be an event unseen and unknown to the world until after it had taken place, and even then there could be "satisfactory" human explanations for the many unbelievers. Some may be slow in recognizing what has happened. But I personally doubt that what is revealed is enough to make us certain that it is to be secret.

Much help as to the answer to this question lies in realizing that there are different reasons for judgment. When it is said that the Christian is not to be judged, there may need to be the further explanation that the judgment meant is a judgment of condemnation, a judgment where salvation is an issue. There is judgment for the Christian in the sense of chastening (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30), that which takes place in this life. At the second coming there is also a judgment of one's works. Paul places all of us (Christians, note contexts) before the judgment seat of Christ to render an accounting of our works and to receive our rewards (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:10-15). When the Christian's works are judged there is no question of salvation, however (1 Cor. 3:15). The Christian is not judged in some judicial assembly where salvation is the issue. The reason for this is that his judgment has fallen on Another. It is sometimes said that his judgment took place at the cross when God's wrath was on Jesus as the Sin-bearer.

A solid statement of this escape from judgment is found in John 5. Note in 5:22 the fact that judgment is committed to Jesus. He is the Judge. But in v. 24 comes the declaration that the believer does not come into judgment. Users of the King James version may miss this declaration because the word "condemnation" is used. Even a fledgling Greek student can discover that the word is the same one that is used in v. 22, where "judgment" is committed to the Son. The American Standard version keeps the consistent reading and says: "He that . . . believeth . . . hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." Likewise, John 3:18 declares: "He that believeth on Him is not judged; he that believeth not hath been judged already . . ."

The Christian does not wait until the day of judgment to discover if he is saved. Eternal life is a present possession of the true believer (Note the present tense in John 5:24). Moreover, he may have assurance of his salvation (1 John 5:13). But if there is any doubt that one is a Christian, that is settled the moment he dies when he is either "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8; cf. Phil. 1:23) or lifts up his eyes in torment (Lk. 16:23). The body rests in the grave until the resurrection, but the spirit or soul is at once in either a place of blessedness or a place of evil. The Bible knows nothing of "soul sleep," wherein the dead are all unconscious and unaware of anything until the resurrection. Now since one's eternal state is forever settled at death, it is pointless to gather the redeemed at the resurrection to tell them that they are saved. They

have known this all along. They are not to be taken from being "with Christ" and discovered to be unsaved after all. The Lord knows those who are His, and He claims them. Added to this, the very participation in the resurrection of the righteous or the change coming to living Christians at the Lord's coming (1 Thess. 4:13-17) would make a general judgment (to discover who is a Christian and who is not) pointless. The very presence of these in this event of 1 Thess. 4 marks them as Christians. If we die, our state is evident in where we go. If we live till the Lord comes, our being caught up settles the matter of whose we are. The only need for judgment for the Christian is as to rewards (or lack thereof).

One of the big problems many have in seeing these things is their acceptance of Matt. 25:31ff as teaching what they choose to call "the general judgment." This passage must be fitted with the rest of God's word, however, and not made to stand by itself.

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

God's Atomic Storehouse

Dr. Horace E. Wood

I have been told that the catacombs in Rome, Italy extend some sixty-five miles in different directions. A few years ago after walking deep into the catacombs, perhaps a mile, we came to a fairly large room. The flood lights were focused on one particular open tomb. I took a flash picture of its contents. There were fragments of human bones. An outline of a body was made in the dirt floor, perhaps made by oil from this body many hundreds of years ago, perhaps the first century.

The human mind staggers when it is asked to believe that some day this body will be revived and made to walk again.

It has been reported that one day in the laboratory of Michael Faraday the chemist, a workman accidentally knocked a priceless silver cup into a vat of acid, probably hydrofluoric. The silver cup was consumed by the powerful solution. Immediately Faraday threw some chemicals into the acid solution. Soon the dissolved particles of silver were precipitated, the metal was reclaimed and sent to a silver-smith to be cast into a beautiful cup.

Some years ago I wanted to make a plaster cast of a patient's teeth, and this time I wanted it to be red in color instead of the usual white. Into the mixing bowl which contained water I put a small quantity of mercurochrome which is very red. The white plaster was immediately red. This was placed in the impression of the teeth and allowed to set until next day. To my utter amazement there were countless little drops of pure mercury which is a metal, standing out on the plaster model. Thus pure mercury was recovered from its previous unseen state.

If the chemist can perform the reconstruction of the lost silver cup; if we can recover pure mercury that had been lost in the

mercurochrome liquid, certainly our great God can gather the lost particles of our bodies though the years have smothered them into extinction.

Listen to Job's great words, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" Job. 19: 25-27.

Will the United States Be a Victim of the Genesis Curse?

Daniel Fuchs

"God Bless America, Land That I Love" is not just a sacred song. It's our prayer as we begin to celebrate our two-hundredth birthday. We need God's blessing, but God will not bless America apart from America blessing the Jews.

On the corner of Wabash and Wacker in Chicago there is a 20-foot-high statue honoring three Revolutionary heroes: George Washington, Robert Morris and Haym Salomon.

Salomon was a Jew who was forced to flee from Poland in 1772 along with Pulaski and Kosciusko—men who became military heroes of the Revolution. Salomon prospered quickly and showed his gratitude by joining the Sons of Liberty, a group of revolutionary patriots.

He was arrested twice by the British but both times the Sons of Liberty engineered his escape—the second time just a few hours before he was scheduled for execution. He fled to Philadelphia where he met Robert Morris, the Superintendent of Finance.

Calvin Coolidge said of Haym Salomon:

"He negotiated for Robert Morris all the loans raised in France and Holland, pledged his personal faith and fortune for enormous amounts and personally advanced large sums to such men as James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Baron Steuben, General St. Clair and many other patriot leaders who testified that without his aid they could not have carried on the cause."

Early in our history the colonies opened the doors to Jewish immigration and this has paid ample dividends. Without Salomon's contributions we would never have celebrated a tenth birthday much less a two hundredth!

I believe one of the reasons our nation has been blessed is because it has been a haven to the Jewish people.

Please don't misunderstand. Our national record is far from perfection. But until recently our national policy has been favorable to the Jewish people.

I fear it is changing, for we are apt to forget the economic aid of Haym Salomon and use economics as an excuse to aid Israel's enemies.

God has always judged the nations on their treatment of the Jew and the United States of America is not an exception. The Abrahamic Covenant has always been God's basis of judgment of the nations.

I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:3).

We are being tested by God during our Bicentennial year. As I write this letter a *Jerusalem Post* editorial states the United States:

... will shortly sign a \$1.2 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia, which should bring the value of military equipment and services contracted for the Saudis from U. S. within a period of six months to the staggering total of some \$5 billion.

Included in the new list are 150 M-60 Patton tanks, 1,400 troop carriers, and 1,000 Dragon anti-tank missiles. These are, of course, only the latest items of an enormous arsenal.

Saudi weapons purchases from the U.S. have been soaring ominously for some time now. Recently, however, they have rocketed straight into the financial stratosphere.

Why should the U.S. help whip up this orgy of arms overspending by a country which is not visibly threatened by anyone? Two main reasons are given.

First, as John Foster Dulles argued 20 years ago in defending the earliest proposed sale of tanks to the Saudis, it is necessary to assure that the vast expanse of the sparsely populated desert kingdom is efficiently "policed."

Secondly, it is necessary to assure that the U. S. rather than its competitors—not so much Soviet Russia as Britain and France—turns out to be the main beneficiary of the Saudi's "recycling" of their bloated oil revenues.

The first argument is as fatuous as the second is unseemly. Although attempts have lately been made by some people in Washington to discount the role of any but the neighboring Arab countries as a military problem for Israel, it is surely no secret to American leaders that the Middle East balance of power is decisively affected by the arsenals of such non-contiguous states as Libya, Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

It should be emphasized that our thesis that God judges the nations on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant is not merely a by-product of our "dispensational theology" but rather the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

And before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:32).

Notice this is the judgment of "all nations." They are divided into two groups: the sheep and the goats.

They are not judged on the basis of grace, but by merit. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). "Inasmuch as ye did

it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (v. 45).

So the sheep and the goats are judged by their treatment of a third group who are called "my brethren."

I realize there are schools of biblical interpretation which teach that our Lord was speaking of a general judgment, not the judgment of the nations.

It makes no difference what method of interpretation is employed. It is not just sheep and goats. There is a third group who are "my brethren."

Those who teach this scene is the judgment of the saved and the unsaved at the end of the world simply cannot identify the third group whom the King calls "my brethren."

If the sheep are the saved people, who are "my brethren"? If they are the church, who are the sheep nations? If those who are the sheep are those "who are saved by faith apart from works of the law" how can our Lord judge them on the basis of works?

Those who assume the saved are on the right hand of our Lord and the lost on the left hand cannot account for the group whom our Lord calls "my brethren."

This is not the "Last Judgment." It is the judgment of the nations. They are judged by their treatment of the Jews.

There is no mere accident in the fact that the two words **blessed** and **cursed** appear in the Abrahamic covenant respecting the attitude of Gentiles toward Abraham's seed according to the flesh (Gen. 12:1-3), and that these words appear again when Gentiles are being brought into judgment respecting their treatment of God's elect people.

In Genesis it is written, "I will bless them that bless thee," and in the description of the judgment of the nations it is said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

In Genesis it is said, "I will curse him that curseth thee," while in this same judgment it is said, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

But why? Only because ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren. Existing without attention to the Word of God, the nations have never realized the favored place Israel holds in the love and purpose of God." (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 5, p.139).

Why does Israel hold this favored place? There are many reasons. One of which is "they are beloved for the fathers' sake" (Rom. 11:28).

It has always been God's purpose that all men everywhere would know Him and worship Him. God tested Adam and he failed. God also tested Abraham and he did not fail. "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

"God bless America, land that I love." We can assure this blessing by opening our hearts of compassion to all men—which includes bringing the Gospel to the seed of Abraham.

—In *The Chosen People*. Used by permission

Louisville Christian Fellowship Week

August 9-13, 1976

DAY SESSIONS: Portland Avenue Church of Christ, 2500 Portland Avenue.
EVENING SESSIONS: Sellersburg Church of Christ, Sellersburg, Indiana.

Theme: **MY PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD.** Romans 14:12. "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

MONDAY		Chairman, Tom Rowe
Evening session		
7:00-7:45	Youth Conference: Christian Life Patterns	Julius Hovan
8:00-9:00	Regarding: Study	Dennis Allen
TUESDAY		Chairman, J. T. Embree
Day session		
9:00-10:00	Bible Exposition: 1 & 2 Peter	Carl Kitzmiller
10:00-10:20	Fellowship period	
10:20-11:20	Regarding: Forgiveness The Need of Forgiveness	Richard Denny
11:20-12:00	Prayer time	
12:00-1:15	Lunch time	
1:30-3:00	Regarding: Family Regarding: Possessions	Bruce Chowning Jesse Wood
Evening session		
7:00-7:45	Youth Conference: Christian Life Patterns	Julius Hovan
8:00-9:00	Regarding: Prayer	Dale Offutt
WEDNESDAY		Chairman, Alvin Price
Day session		
9:00-10:00	Bible Exposition: 1 & 2 Peter	Carl Kitzmiller
10:00-10:20	Fellowship period	
10:20-11:20	Regarding: Forgiveness The Basis of Forgiveness	Vernon Lawyer
11:20-12:00	Prayer time	
12:00-1:15	Lunch time	
1:30-3:00	Regarding: Christians Practicing Sin Regarding: Conversation	Stan Broussard Waldo Oar
Evening session		
7:00-7:45	Youth Conference: Christian Life Patterns	Julius Hovan
8:00-9:00	Regarding: The Great Commission Special Missionary Offering	Robert Boyd
THURSDAY		Chairman, Robert Gill
Day session		
9:00-10:00	Bible Exposition: 1 & 2 Peter	Carl Kitzmiller
10:00-10:20	Fellowship period	
10:20-11:20	Regarding: Forgiveness The Condition of Forgiveness	Antoine Valdetero
11:20-12:00	Prayer time	
12:00-1:15	Lunch time	
1:30-3:00	Regarding: Daily Worship Regarding: The Lord's Supper	Hall Crowder H. E. Schreiner
Evening session		
7:00-7:45	Youth Conference: Christian Life Patterns	Julius Hovan
8:00-9:00	Regarding: The Local Congregation	Harry Coulter

FRIDAY		Chairman, John Pound
Day session		
9:00-10:00	Bible Exposition: 1 & 2 Peter	Carl Kitzmiller
10:00-10:20	Fellowship period	
10:20-11:20	Regarding: Forgiveness	
	The Outcome of Forgiveness	
11:20-12:00	Prayer time	
12:00-1:15	Lunch time	
1:30-3:00	Regarding: The Second Coming of Christ	Victor Broaddus
	Open discussion of the week	
Evening session		
7:00-7:45	Singing	
8:00-9:00	Regarding: Time and Talent	C.V. Wilson

Hospitality Committee: Herbert Ball, 812-944-7188
Ronald Hickman, 812-246-4347

Planning Committee, 1976: John Pound, chairman; Fred Bowser, Glen McLean, Robert Gill, B. D. Fields, Joe Blansett, Jim Embree, Alvin Price, Tom Rowe.

Churches serving noon meals:

TUESDAY: Sylvania, LaGrange, Shawnee, Jeffersontown, Jefferson Street, South Louisville, Fern Creek.

WEDNESDAY: Kentucky Avenue, Ormsby Avenue, Highview, Buechel, Community, Utica.

THURSDAY: Cherry Street, Highland, Sellersburg, Iroquois, Henryville, Waterford.

FRIDAY: Fisherville, Portland Avenue, Ralph Avenue, Rowan Street, Eastview, Rangeland, Eighteenth Street.

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

Purposes for the Great Tribulation

Winston N. Allen

“ . . . when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants . . . of the world learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9b).

The severity of conditions during the approaching “great tribulation” as described in both the Old and New Testaments and as foreshadowed in current events evokes the question, Why? Has God revealed to us what is to be accomplished by the earthshaking events? We can be sure that good and sufficient are His reasons for everything He does, and that His plans and purposes started in the eternity of the past will continue to unfold through time and in the eternity of the future. As we study what is revealed, several reasons for the great tribulation become evident. Two are dealt with briefly in this article.

1. To lead as many as will to repent.

God “would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). He does not wish “that any

should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9b). Intense suffering usually leads either to repentance or to willful rebellion, depending on the choice of the individual (Pharaoh's heart was hardened by trouble, but David said in Ps. 119:67, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I observe thy word"). Both reactions will be evidenced during the great tribulation after the rapture of the church.

Following the earthshaking events described in Rev. 6:12-17 and the preparing of 144,000 Jewish servants (evidently evangelists) in Rev. 7:1-8, the inspired writer tells about a great multitude in heaven "out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues." In response to his question "Who are they?" the apostle John is given the answer, "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). It is evident from Revelation 13 that turning to Christ during the seven-year reign of Antichrist will invite martyrdom. The wrath of Satan and of the millions in his kingdom will focus on Israel during the great tribulation. Two-thirds of the Jews will be killed, but a remnant (one third) will be miraculously preserved from death and will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ as their promised Messiah (Zech. 13:8, 9; Jer. 30:4-9; Rev. 12).

Chapters 8 and 9 of Revelation describe additional more severe judgments involving the whole world. Rev. 9:18 foretells the sudden death of a third of the world's population. But notice the amazing reaction of those who remain. "And the rest of mankind who were not killed with these plagues repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons and the idols of gold and of silver and of wood, which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk, and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:20, 21). See also Rev. 16:10, 11.

Then, as now, the great majority will continue in willful rebellion against God. If the goodness of God doesn't lead to repentance, He brings or permits the storms of suffering to assail the body and spirit. Jonah repented because of the sufferings he experienced. The prodigal son "came to himself" in the hog pen. But if the sinner continues to reject Christ as Savior and as Lord, then it is just a matter of time before the sinner faces death, and judgment, and hell. If God's love and mercy are spurned, then His justice and judgment follow. A Holy God must deal with sin and with the sinner.

2. *Another purpose for the great tribulation is to purge the world of wickedness and of the effects of sin.*

Before Christ begins His glorious millennial reign with His church, the earth must be purged of sinners who refuse to repent.

The earth itself and the atmosphere must be cleansed in preparation for the restoration of Edenic conditions foretold in many passages of Scripture (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 8:18-23; Isa. 2:1-4, 9:6, 7, 11:1-10). We read in Isa. 13:9-11, "Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity: and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." Also the prophet Isaiah said in 24:5, 6, "The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." Additional details are given in Zephaniah 1:14-18.

Geophysical changes during the great tribulation apparently will include: 3½ years of drought (Rev. 13:3, 6); winds will be restrained (Rev. 7:1); solar radiation will be drastically increased (Rev. 16:8, 9; Isa. 30:26; Mal. 4:1); great meteors or comets will plunge into the ocean (Rev. 8:8-11); great earthquakes together with shifts in the earth's crustal isostasy (due to melting ice and evaporating oceans) will renovate the earth's topography (Rev. 16:17-21; Ezekiel 38:19, 20). It has been calculated that the melting ice caps would raise sea level enough to destroy most of the world's great cities. By the end of the seven-year period many of the antediluvian conditions on the earth and in the atmosphere could well be restored.

Prophecies in God's Word regarding the approaching time of trouble "such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21) should motivate us to preparation and to evangelization.

"But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." "Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. 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" (Luke 21:28, 31-36).

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

George and Sophia Galanis

Athens, Greece

March newsletter

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 14th March 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 invitation has been already sent out for the 16th May 1976. We expect more to come.

Campaign in Crete. On 25th March to 6th April we 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 seventy responses.

New campaign in Corfu. Four people 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.

Delores Harris

Salisbury, Rhodesia

March 27.

We have plans complete and ready to build the new home if (when) the Lord permits. We have about 41,000 bricks delivered in new yard and will start foundation as soon as rains let up.

We have acquired a little wood house to set up in church yard for our papers we sell. Donald and I have been soaking the boards with creosote. We sure smell good when we get through. Keeps the insects away anyway and almost anyone else.

Francis has found a job now with the Education Department—something to do with selecting films to show, I think. The Lord has been gracious in this. He likes his work.

Shichiro Nakahara

Shizuoka City, Japan

May 6.

Our young people at our congregation conducted a meeting to which several young people from two other congregations came on April 29. It was strictly done by the young people. They had a worship service to start with, and one of our boys spoke at it. This

was designed to seek to better a forth-coming Bible camp by mobilizing the young forces more actively and effectively as well. And also we encouraged them to have at least once a year such an assembly as that that will be planned and administered by the young people. They have so few opportunities to have themselves trained in the ways of the Lord and I thought it very necessary for them, in particular our own young people, to have such experiences as that. They thought it great and were very enthusiastic about the idea. The outcome of the meeting was rather good and they were all happy over it.

Our coming to the U. S. may be far delayed if ever we could come, for we've been told that our support wasn't sufficient and the application wouldn't be acceptable for presentation. I am to get police record if there is any from each city both of us had been in in the U.S. and so far we've heard nothing from them yet.

The work here is coming great. Attendance has been increasing and several mothers with their children are coming now very regularly who are quite interested in the things of God. We wish for you to remember them, too. We don't know if the Lord wants us to remain in Japan so as to continue working for Him for a few more years. Whatever His will for us may be, we will be happy to follow His directions. Of course, this doesn't mean that we have given up the idea of going to the U.S. May God bless us all in all things we will do, for His coming is ever near.

Alvin Hobby

Livingstone, Zambia

April 2.

It seems that our dry season has started, after the wettest month of the whole rainy season. The amount of rainfall always affects our work, one way or another, especially the village work.

Elaine Brittell spent the last two nights at our place. She is waiting this morning to see if the Sims family arrives on the 10:30 plane, so she can help them on their way on to Namwianga. Elaine is a great help to many people.

Elaine Brittell

Livingstone, Zambia

May 31.

There were 133 women (including some young girls who helped prepare the food) singing, praying, studying God's word, and sleeping beneath His truly glorious star-lit sky, around 5 fires! We truly saw many of His great wonders as we read about his handiwork, and viewed it as we closed our eyes in sleep. So often I was reminded of how unthankful we so often are for our daily blessings of running water, lights, a roof and windows in our homes. The dear sisters at Mantanyani, where the women had their meeting, have to walk about three-quarters of a mile for every drop of water they use! They have to carry their wood from the bush. They wash their clothes in a little pool just below where they get their drinkwater, and just beyond that is where the people bathe and

the cattle drink. The bushes or grass are their clothesline. Still they worship the Lord and teach their children to praise and thank God for all His many blessings. Their crops should be good this year as God sent them plenty of rain.(We were in a hard downpour as we drove to the village and it took us from about 11 to 2 to find the village—we walked several miles in the rain to find the road. We could pass over the deep holes.) God let the rains just miss the gathering where the women were. The Hobbys led the way as we came out on our way home so it was easy going. Just like when we follow our Lord, who knows the way, then our journey is easy.

T. W. Hartle

Capetown, South Africa

May 21.

More and more families are requesting cottage meetings and film strip classes in their homes, for which we are thankful, that at least there are those who "seek for a life richer than what this old world has to offer." I have just completed a series of film strip lessons in the home of a family, living in the very area where we intend to erect our new church building Lord willing. For 6 consecutive Tuesday and Wednesday evenings the interest shown by the family (along with other neighbors who attended) was very encouraging indeed.

We just pray that this effort, with other methods we are using to reach the lost (tract drives, hospital services), shall eventually culminate, to the glory of God, with fruit-bearing results. And also pray, that other of our brethren who are also at the moment conducting cottage meetings and film strip classes too, shall also give much cause for rejoicing in the near future, Lord willing. Up to date, there has been no further development with regards to our new building project, due to the fact that we are still negotiating towards obtaining a reasonable subcontractor, to do the entire floor level of the project, after which the men hope to carry on themselves.

J. C. Shewmaker

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

May 10.

No doubt you are concerned about the situation in Rhodesia, particularly in view of all the sensational headlines and horrific articles which appear in the Press. The psychological war being waged against Rhodesia through many of the news media of the world has escalated to such proportions of misrepresentation that many observers outside this country find it difficult to separate fact from fiction. Daily examples of deliberate distortions and half truths are carried in the headlines of the world's newspapers. Some of these news clippings have reached us, and many of these bear no relation to the real situation in Rhodesia.

Journalists from all over the world have descended upon Rhodesia, and are often hard put to find the sensational news they have come for. Though there are no blood baths or massacres, our young men take their stints guarding our borders, where there have been several incursions of terrorists. However, most people

go about their daily affairs in peace and without fear.

We hope to continue here for some years to come, to help build up, encourage, and strengthen the young church at Bellevue, to reach out for souls in this community. As we see it now, much can be done through the children, to reach the parents.

Although our building is nearly ready for occupation, much work needs to be done on the parking lot before we can have our official opening, as it would be very difficult for cars to get into the grounds.

J. R. Stewart-Brown

Simonstown, South Africa

May 16.

We still have many visitors on Sundays, and since you heard from me, we have had more baptisms. Praise God for His mercy towards those who seek Him and find Him.

Our preacher said on Sunday, that soon we will have to book our seats on a Sunday, we are growing to such an extent; this is only in the English service. We also have an Africaans service every Sunday morning downstairs, in the same building which is also growing—we had two baptisms in the Africaans last week.

Quite a number of our Africaans members come from the Dutch Reformed Church, from which I was also a member many years ago.

Until I sought for deeper things in Jesus, and wanted to obey God's word, to follow Him through the waters of Baptism, I can now shout Hallelujah for the love of our Lord and Master, for His guidance and care, what a wonderful day that was, almost 25 years ago, when I found my all and all in Jesus.

Addie Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

May 19.

This is a lovely sunny afternoon. Today has been declared a national day of prayer for the nation—for God's guidance at this critical time. I have no idea how many came together to pray. We had a nice crowd come to the church here. The service was very good. A woman sitting next to me cried—she was baptized several months ago—and was quite touched. She sorta apologized after the meeting and I told her I loved the tears. God does too, I believe.

The ladies of the church had a very good meeting yesterday morning. We are studying Titus now. We have spent some time on chap. 2 verses 3-5. I feel this teaching has been so neglected, and it is so very important. The first time I was ever in such a class was at Harding and Sis. Armstrong was teaching us women. I was about 30 I suppose—a bit late to help me as much as it might. Why has the church neglected teaching older women their duty to teach the younger women—and to set the good example? Surely there has been much loss because of this failure.

A missionary to the Philippines begins a four-part series on God's ministry of healing.



Did God Make You Well?

Alex V. Wilson

John Q. Christian is gripped by an excruciating and incurable disease. But he suffers from perplexity as well as from pain. For contradictory advice bombards him from all sides. His buddy from work urges him to visit a healing campaign now going on in their city. John's preacher visits him often and assures him of the church members' daily prayers; but John knows they don't expect him to get well. A nephew in Ohio sent him a book with the testimonies of nine people who were all instantly cured by "exercising unwavering faith and requesting prayer from God's present-day miracle-man, Brother Bob Carr." Aunt Sally reminds him that her husband Harry was an outstanding Christian leader and yet he died from a lingering illness, "so just trust God for grace in the midst of pain." A longtime Christian friend says that the elders in his church practice praying and anointing with oil, as taught in the book of James. And John's sister Ellen tells him his trouble is simply in his mind, for she recently joined "Christian Science"!

Sickness and healing are important subjects for personal reasons, as the above semi-fictitious example shows. But they are also important because they relate to more urgent issues, such as the spread of the Gospel of Christ. For example, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (April 1974) reported that in Ivory Coast "the whole country was stirred" when meetings were held in various places "accompanied by numerous healings and conversions." Not only there but also

in other parts of Africa, missionaries report a causal relationship between healing and church-growth. . . Healing was one aspect of the early church's ministry that attracted immediate attention and in some places led to a rapid increase of converts. Perhaps in the final days of this age, as God's Spirit moves across the world, healing may become as much an asset to the church's witness as it was for the early Christians.

It is difficult to discuss healings because there are various kinds. Many sick people recover naturally, through the recuperative pow-

ers God built into our bodies. These are divine healings even though they are natural, not supernatural. An old saying in medical circles recognizes this: "I set the bone; God healed it." But we will restrict our present study to healings that seem to be supernatural. Even here it is important to define our terms carefully, especially the terms "miracle" and "miraculous." The late Rendle Short, a Christian doctor well known in England, suggested this definition: to be considered a *miraculous* healing, a cure should "be a *sudden, complete, and long-lasting* recovery from *organic* bodily disease."

Five possible explanations

It seems to me that there are five possible explanations for seemingly miraculous healings. Let's consider them.

1. *Healings from God.* The Bible records a number of healing miracles. But even so it is hard to deduce fixed principles regarding the subject. Elisha healed a leper and raised a dead boy, yet he himself died from sickness (2 Kings 13:14). During Jesus' ministry the twelve apostles, *including Judas*, performed miracles of healing (Matt. 10:1,5-8). Mark 6:13 adds the information that they "*anointed with oil* many that were sick, and healed them." Our Lord Himself healed multitudes of sick people. Sometimes crowds of the sick sought Him out, and He healed them *all* (Matt. 8:16; cf. Mk. 1:32ff). Yet at least once Jesus cured *only one* man out of a vast throng of blind, lame and paralyzed people (Jn. 5:1-15). In the beginning years of the Church "the apostles performed many miraculous signs"; again it is mentioned that crowds gathered together "*and all of them were healed*" (Acts 5:12-16). Yet it seems that even the apostles did not share equally in that ministry, for Peter is given special mention (v. 15). Philip healed many Samaritans (8:5-7). Paul performed healings, sometimes many more than at other times (19:11-12). "Gifts of healings" are listed among the gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:9, 30, but are omitted in the lists in Rom. 12 and Eph. 4. James 5 mentions prayer and anointing with oil by elders.

But what about today? Does God heal miraculously now? Many can testify that He does, at times. Doctors said that Ruth Wood (now Wilson) would live one year at most because a malignant tumor was wrapped around her spinal column. That was twenty years ago. Her sudden and complete cure in answer to the prayers of many Christians amazed every doctor who investigated her case. Examples could be multiplied. This subject will be explored at greater length in a later article, D. V.

2. *Psychosomatic healings.* Many cures are faith-healings but not divine healings. They result from faith, but not necessarily

faith in the Lord. Over half of the patients in hospitals have illnesses with emotional roots (tensions, angers, fears, etc.) rather than merely physical causes. Often such people can be quickly cured if only they can be made to *want* and/or *expect* healing. In some cases, placebos ("medicines" with no real chemical value; sugar tablets, for example) will make such people well, if they believe in them.

Our emotions have almost unbelievable influence on our bodies. During Orson Welles' notorious radio drama describing Earth's invasion by Martians, an agitated listener who had been crippled for years ran out of his house, got into the family car and drove away! Again, scientific experiments show that even plants, when prayed for and talked to, grow faster and healthier than other plants! Again, a German magazine described two detailed medical tests that were made. In the first one, a number of wounded men who complained of great pain were promised pain-killers. After getting injections, nearly half of them noted considerable relief. In the second test, some men in similar pain were told they could be given only mild pain-killers. After getting injections, 20 per cent of them said the pain had not diminished and in fact had become worse. Yet in test 1, a totally ineffective salt solution was used—a placebo. And in test 2, the drug used was morphium, a very strong painkiller. "Which shows," concludes the article, "that pain is largely in the mind." Because that is so, many "healings" are also largely in the mind or emotions. We may be thankful when people are cured in this way, but it is a mistake to regard such healings as divine miracles. For healings of this kind can be performed by atheistic doctors, quack-doctors, witch-doctors, Hindu gurus, Christian-Science practitioners, revered images of Mary, and anything else in which people put their faith.

We should notice in passing that a Christian's strong faith in His Father's power, wisdom, and loving care may prevent him from getting psychosomatic sicknesses that stem from anxieties and fears.

3. *Healings from unknown causes.* Some persons considered hopelessly sick by doctors experience remissions in their disease, and recover fully. They cannot be called psychosomatic cures, for in some cases the patients neither expected nor even wanted to get well. They cannot be called divine miracles either, in those cases where Christian faith and prayer were not even remotely exercised by the patients or their friends or relatives. Perhaps some day medical science will be able to explain and even regularly produce such healings; but at present it cannot.

4. *Satanic healings.* Some heathen witch-doctors, priests of other religions, and spiritist-mediums perform healings which seem far more than psychosomatic. They seem definitely super-human.

Indeed, some of these healers openly acknowledge that their powers are derived from spirits which come upon them. There are a number of well-known spiritist healers here in the Philippines, who falsely claim to be Christians. (Some renew their powers monthly at seances.) A few of these men have been exposed as fakes who use the power of suggestion plus sleight-of-hand. But others have proved under close scrutiny by scientists and doctors to possess fantastic powers. Sick people from as far away as the U.S. and Europe have come here to be cured. And a sufficient number of them have been healed to cause whole groups of diseased and crippled folks from their homelands to fly here seeking similar relief. The *Reader's Digest* carried in its book-section the story of a similar healer in Brazil and his remarkable methods and results: "Arigo: Surgeon of the Rusty Knife" (April '75 in the Asian edition but maybe a month or so earlier or later in the U.S. edition of the *Digest*). A careful reading shows his powers were demonic though he claimed to be a Christian.

Merrill Unger tells us that such cases are by no means new:

The world in which the early Christians lived was full of demon-energized healers and magic workers (cf. Acts 8:9-11; 13:7-10). In the temple of Serapis at Alexandria, Egypt, multitudes of pagans were remarkably healed. Pilgrimages to Epidaurus in Greece became world famous, and a night's sleep in the sacred temple there cured thousands. Appollonius of Tyana (3 B.C.-A.D. 96) was a well-known miracle-worker who effected magic cures and was regarded by many as a "heathen Christ." People almost worshipped him as a God (*Demons in the World Today*, p. 138)

5. *Fraud.* Some "cures" are cover-ups. Some "healers" are hypocrites. Several years ago a pentecostal healer named Marjoe, a one-time boy wonder of the healing circuit, openly confessed that he had been a fake. He even allowed a film to be made showing how he performed his tricks of the trade.

Over a decade before that, editor and Bible teacher Donald Barnhouse warned regarding such tricksters. He mentioned a book "in which the woman who was personnel director for the Bosworth brothers' healing campaigns exposed the methods which they used. No person with a serious malady was allowed to appear in front of the public. Only people with very suggestible minds who might be impressed were allowed anywhere near the public meetings. The others were anointed in private and sent away." Barnhouse then gave another example.

Not too long ago in the South newspapers exposed a "healer" by publishing photographs of "healings" in different cities. The photographs demonstrated that the same man complete with bandages and crutches was healed in half a dozen different cities,

throwing away his crutch with a cry of triumph, and always just before the offering was taken. (Eternity Magazine, Feb. 1953).

We are not saying that all healers are hypocrites, nor that all healings that occur in healing campaigns are either psychosomatic, demonic, or fraudulent. But let's not close our eyes to the facts noted above.

What then can we conclude about healing? First, that the subject is complex, to say the least. Second, that our God still can and sometimes does heal miraculously today. Third, that we should not be gullible regarding claims of healings and healers, but should investigate them carefully, prayerfully, and Biblically, for seemingly miraculous cures may be produced by forces other than the power of God.

NEWS AND NOTES

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

Salisbury, Rhodesia: All of us at the church in Waterfalls would like to go on record in giving our sincere thanks to Bro. Gordon Linscott for the giving of himself in making the Word and Work one of the best Christian publications today. We trust that the same standard and spirit of the paper will be continued by its new editor. The Lord bless you all as you serve Him.—David Brown

Long Beach, Calif.: I just realized my subscription is up next month. I enjoy the little magazine very much. —Martha Eby

Atlanta, Ga.: I'm looking forward to each copy! May God richly bless all whose efforts bless all of us. —Emma Hargesheimer

Louisville, Ky.: One of the nicest happenings at Buechel this past six weeks was the "working-worshiping-recreational" retreat for the young people held at Echo Valley Camp April 9, 10, 11. The worship service and Lord's supper on Sunday proved to be a very special time!

Allong with other improvements at Echo Valley Camp, curtains are being made by the ladies of Buechel for the windows. Colleen Morrison is in charge of that particular project.

A number of registrations for camp have come in and Senior Week (the first week of camp), June 13-19, already has a good group registered.

The young people made a fun trip to Opryland and Nashville the weekend of May 15-16 and worshipped with the young people at Gallatin that Sunday. The weekend at Opryland impressed several of the young people because of the presentation Liberty's Song, a special Bi-Centennial program held in the Opry House. It was particularly enjoyable. —Michael T. Sanders

Gallatin, Tenn.: An Education Director, Maury Smith, was secured for part time for the Christian School which is being planned by Gallatin. He will work full time during the summer and part time through the school year, under the direction of the Gallatin Elders.

The Ladies Lectureship, May 15, was a great success. Speakers were: Mrs. Cooper Qualls and Mrs. Demus Friend.

One qualified young man has agreed to go to Alaska to assist Brother Winston Allen in the work at Eagle River.

PORTLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
The Baccalaureate and Graduation exercises were stirring occasions at

Portland School. Brother Nathan Burks, minister of the Jeffersontown church and Brother Don Finto, minister of the Belmont church in Nashville, Tenn. were the speakers.

The school graduated eighteen students, eight with honors and two with

honorable mention. The song that Brother Chambers wrote for the school was sung and a number of teachers, former teachers and faithful friends were honorably recognized. It was the 49th graduating exercise of Portland Christian High School.

PAUL R. AND KIVA NEAL

Paul R., age 79, and Kiva, 75, of Sullivan, Indiana, after a marriage of 59 years, were called of the Lord to be at home with Him. On Thursday, May 20, 1976 from the home of their son Robert, Kiva was called to go first. On May 22, the day of Kiva's funeral, Paul from his hospital room in Terre Haute, Indiana, was given the privilege of following her. For the past two or three years she had suffered from a painful affliction which the doctors could do little to relieve. Paul, perhaps around the age of 30, contracted arthritis. In time he was forced to resort to crutches and for years he was a shut-in confined to a wheel chair. He never gave up fighting his ailment. The Lord gave him an active mind up to within a few hours before the end. He was a good student of the Word, and preached it as long as able to get out to do so, and maintained an interest in all the progress, activities, and affairs of the churches.

The faith of these two servants of the Lord grew with the intensity of their afflictions. Many visitors came to their home to cheer them up, but went away feeling they had obtained the greater blessing. Though so handicapped they always had friends at hand to assist their needs, and especially their son, Robert, his wife Darlene, their children Robin, Mark, and Jan; together with daughter, Mrs. Pauline Stone, and another son, Billy Neal and family of Atlanta, Ga. Much comfort and help was added by faithful grandchildren.

Brethren Orell Overman and Waldo Oar had charge of both services. They were assisted by Eugene Pound and Audrey Smith with other local ministers.

The following poem, The Unoffended Faith, by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman, was read at the funerals. It is based on the words of Jesus in Mt. 11:6: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." It reflects well the faith of these children of God, and we trust these words will strengthen the faith of precious souls who follow in their train.

Blessed art thou, O child of God who
Suffers and canst not understand
The reason for thy pain, yet gladly
Leaves thy life in His blest hand.

Blessed is he who through long years of suffering
Cast off from active toil
Still shares by prayer and praise the work of others
And thus divides the spoil.

Yes, blessed art thou, whose faith
Is not offended by trials unexplained,
By mysteries unsolved, past understanding
Until the goal is gained.

For thee awaits an "afterward" of glory,
Eternal bliss complete,
An understanding of His purpose for thee,
A joy exceeding sweet!

An "unoffended" faith that here has trusted
A Father's boundless love
Shall then, made manifest in all its beauty
Be crowned forever above.

-Claude Neal

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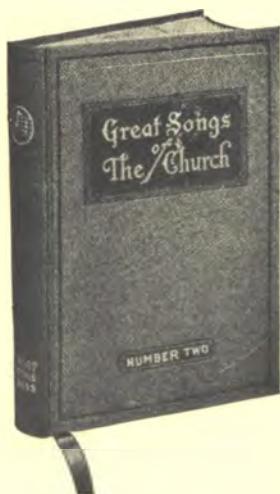
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