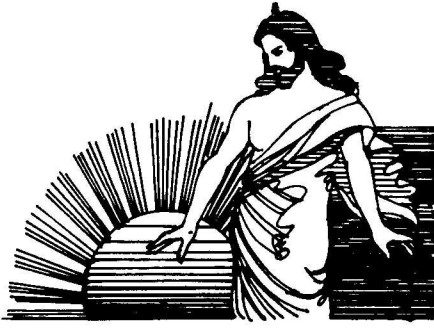


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W. F. Hughes

Solo Christo — Sola Scriptura — Sola Fide — Sola Gratia



Calvary Revisited

4

April, 1983

Vol. 3, No. 4

—statement of faith—

This magazine is dedicated to three principal reference points of the Christian faith:

1. **The centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ:** The gospel centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ in history. Its principal modes of expression are those of law and covenant. In Jesus Christ God's final verdict on man has been rendered, and therefore the gospel anticipates fully God's decision in the final judgment. It is the window through which all life and history is to be seen and understood.

2. **The authority, sufficiency, and clarity of the Bible:** The Bible is exclusively authoritative in all matters of faith and practice. While its writers reflect their respective contemporary world views, these do not compromise the integrity of their witness. While we admit that all Scripture does not enjoy uniform clarity, we affirm that the Bible is essentially clear in its central message — the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. **The priesthood of all believers:** The gospel, through the Scriptures, is the central means by which God expresses himself in the world, and constitutes the basis on which all Christian fellowship is built. We believe that true fellowship is best expressed and preserved in a congregational setting. The primary purpose of church government is the orderly preservation, teaching, and promotion of the gospel message on the sole authority of Scripture alone, and we affirm all forms of government that prove compatible with this objective.

Our support of these objectives is without antagonism or prejudicial exclusiveness toward any individual or group. We feel a kinship with all who have embraced the good news of the cross, regardless of human distinctions such as race, color, denominational ties or forms of church government.

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—editorial—

The Apostle Paul evidently had an immensely creative mind. We so often find him grappling with language to express the big ideas that occupy his thoughts. He is free in his use of metaphors to picture things divine. The Gentiles are a wild olive shoot (Rom 11:17). The Holy Spirit is a down payment guaranteeing our inheritance (Eph 1:14). Christ's death was the payment of redemption money to secure our freedom (1 Pe 1:18,19). Paul constantly using analogies to convey spiritual truths.

One of his startling figures of speech is his statement to the Philippian believers, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Php 3:20). What a remarkable statement! Does God really keep civil records, membership inventories and the like? What does it mean to have one's citizenship in heaven?

Allow me to suggest three things. First, it means that as far as God is concerned, heaven is where we belong. He has no doubt about it. From his point of view he's counting on us having one of those mansions up yonder. He is not awaiting a future time when a decision is to be made about where we really belong. For the person who distrusts self, and turns wholly to Jesus for salvation, there is no question where he is to spend eternity.

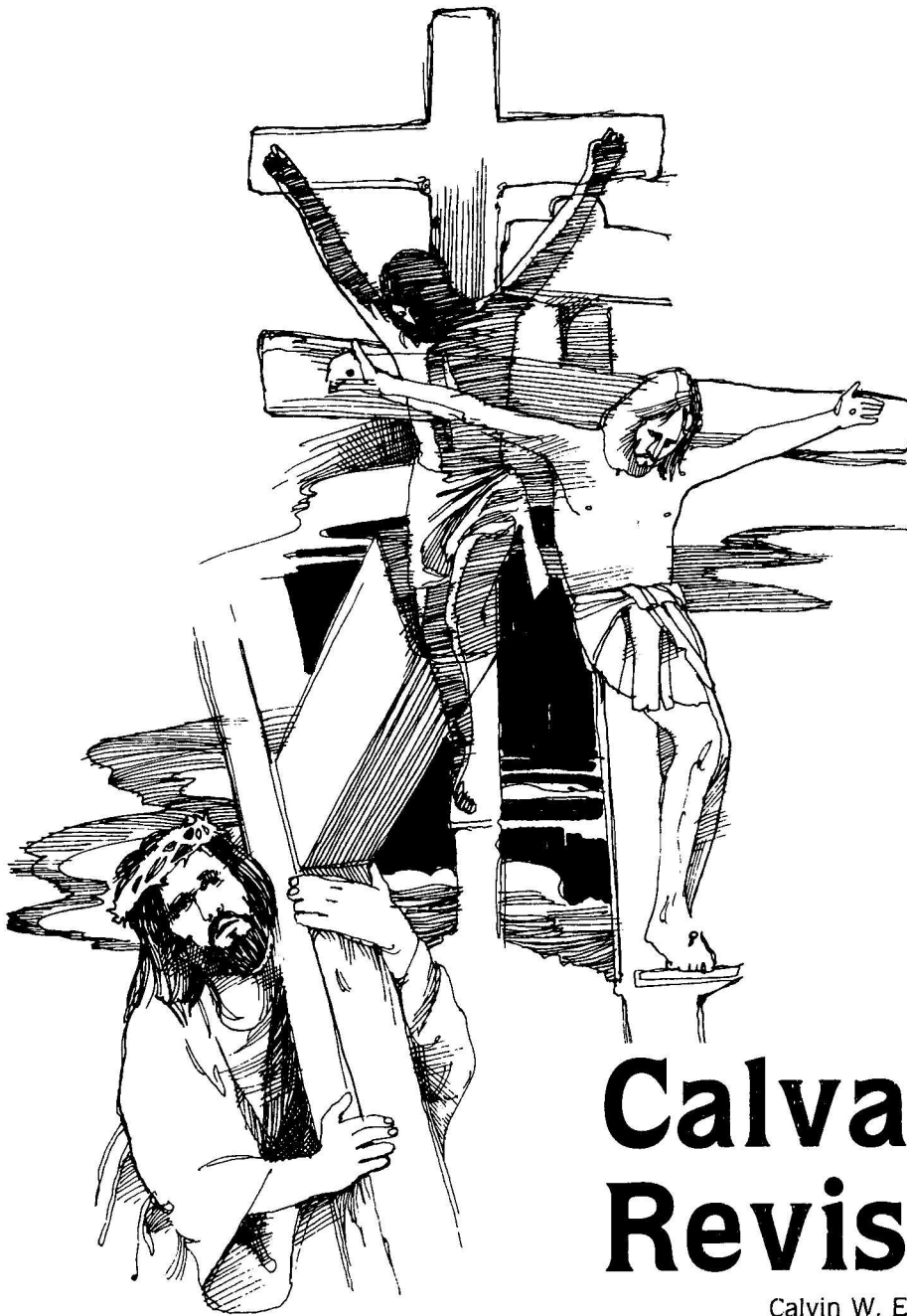
Second, and this is the primary meaning of the Apostle's statement in its context, having heavenly citizenship means that we are to live in accordance with the place where we belong. Paul exhorts his readers not to live as "enemies of the cross of Christ" (3:18). Christians are not to have their minds on "earthly things" (3:19).

The world looks on appalled when members of a royal family neglect their breeding away from home. And God expects his citizens, even though they be away from home at the present, to live up to the standards of the place where their citizenship is held. It is a serious matter to hold a passport whose coat of arms is "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev 5:5), and whose country is "Mount Zion....the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God" (Heb 12:22).

And finally, to be a citizen of heaven surely must mean that God intends to take us to the place of our citizenship. Who could bear to never see the place where one truly belongs? God plans to gather his citizens and take them to dwell eternally in his presence.

Friends, our citizenship is in heaven. Herein is reason for joy, today and every day.

Calvin W. Edwards



Calvary Revisited

Calvin W. Edwards

Easter is the time when the eyes, minds and hearts of the Church, and even the world beyond, are turned toward Calvary. It is a time for reflection, examination and celebration. It speaks to us of the greatest sacrifice of all time. It pictures to all who will behold the ugly seriousness of sin and the beautiful willingness of One who was prepared to bear its penalty. It also draws us away from our ordinary worlds to contemplate One who has power over death, who has risen from the grave and who is exalted and glorified at the right hand of God.

Jesus Christ is the center of all Christian doctrine. He is ever to be the most important fact in our lives. As we consider the life of our Savior we notice the strange fact that the most significant point in his life was his death! Unlike all other great men in history, Jesus accomplished his greatest work as he died. For this reason the cross of Christ is the central hub around which all other aspects of Christianity find their position.

To take the cross from the Christian is like taking oxygen from the atmosphere. The doctrine of salvation should be the most important doctrine to any person, for it answers the crucial questions of life. Since it is at the cross that Jesus provides salvation for all humankind, that ancient object of torture and crucifixion is to become the special object of contemplation for the Christian.

The Cross and Salvation

The cross undergirds every aspect of salvation. Justification, or forgiveness, is founded upon the cross for there our Savior paid the penalty for our sins and met the full requirements of the law.

Regeneration, or the new birth, finds its roots in the cross too. Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about the new birth and its importance for those who would follow him. Although he had not yet gone to the cross, he pointed out that the eternal life which came to the person who was born again would come as a result of his

being lifted up (Jn 3:14, 15). When Jesus spoke of all men being drawn to him as he was lifted up (Jn 12:32), he referred to the cross. His sacrificial death is the divine means to attract people to himself. If men will not be impressed by the cross of Calvary, God has no other resource to attract.

Sanctification, or the Christian life, also has its foundation in the cross. What Jesus is, he beckons us to become. The Christian life is not one of stagnation. There is progress and forward movement. Obedience to God's commandments is rendered with all the ability that can be mustered. But even this day-by-day struggle is not one which leaves behind the cross. The great deed that Christ did for us is to be the most forceful motivation for us to work for him and to strive to bring him glory. We seek to duplicate his obedience.

Since it is at the cross that Jesus provides salvation for all humankind, that ancient object of torture and crucifixion is to become the special object of contemplation for the Christian.

Paul says that sin will no longer have dominion over the Christian because he is not under law but under grace (Rom 6:14). Since the cross is the most powerful demonstration of God's grace, the cross is the means God uses to smash the power of sin in our lives. As we see the magnitude of God's love for us and the horror of what sin did to the incarnate Son of God, we feel ashamed and hate sin. Just as one would never frame the knife that slew one's mother, we cannot give honor to the sin which slew our Savior. It is as impossible to take the cross away from salvation as it is to remove heat from fire.

Jesus' Self-Giving

When Jesus died it was not as a deluded false prophet. It was not as a mere human who could not control his own fate. It was not simply as one who had fallen victim to a corrupt judicial system. Jesus died because he chose to lay down his life.

We come into the world and we must die, but Jesus came into the world in order that he might die. This he did of his own will because it was a crucial part in the plan of salvation that God had designed to accomplish the redemption of mankind. When every other person was crucified in Palestine it was because they were, by that time, in the hands of the Roman or Jewish officials and were no longer in control of their own destiny. But not so with Jesus, he came into this world that he might give his life a ransom for many (Mk 10:45).

The Cross Is Filled with Miracle

It was a miracle that what appeared to be the end of an ill-fated religious movement was in fact the beginning of Christianity — the greatest religious force the world has ever seen. It was a miracle that the

death of a king should establish his kingdom. It was a miracle that Jesus should use his cross as a throne and from there dispense forgiveness and eternal life to those who would receive it.

Perhaps the greatest miracle of the cross is the way in which it turns everything that we do for God into a response to his initial love for us. It is impossible to do something for God before he first loved us. The father meets the servile confession of the wayward prodigal with such an overwhelming flood of affection and acceptance that the son cannot plead for forgiveness before he is already forgiven by the father. All that the son plans to say in order to move the father's heart to accept him is smothered in the fullness of the warm embrace with which he is met. It is indeed a miracle how God can turn the darkest hour of earth's history into its brightest day. Oh the miracle of free life flowing from the death of One who is bound to the old rugged cross!

The Cross and the Old Testament

Isaiah is often called the gospel prophet, and in his picture of the Suffering Servant of chapter 53, Christians have long seen a picture of Jesus Christ and his atoning sufferings. It seems that the inspired prophet of old here catches a deep insight into the character of the One who would be the savior of Israel. He repeatedly returns to the theme of One who suffers for his people:

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that bought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us have turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all....It was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." (Is 53:4-6,10,11)

Here is the One who will die for the sins of his people, who will become a sin offering, who will become a substitute in the place of the nation, and who will bear the penalty due all people. The New Testament, after the cross-resurrection event, affirms the same great truth. "God made him [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). This is the gospel in summary, and we find it traced in principle in the Old Testament.

His sacrificial death is the divine means to attract people to himself.

Numbered with Transgressors

There is another aspect of Isaiah's prophetic passage which is of special interest, for it is the portion which we see fulfilled so precisely at Golgotha. The prophet says, "he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors" (Is 53:12). It is true that Jesus was ever the friend of sinners, one quick to

accept the unacceptable and to love the unlovely. Jesus acknowledged the charge, "This man receives sinners and eats with them" (Lk 15:2). But to be numbered with the transgressors means more than simply to associate with and befriend sinners. It means to be treated as a transgressor, to be identified totally with those who have broken the law.

From Pilate's hall a procession makes its way in dreary fashion up Calvary's hill. Jesus strains and collapses under the weight of the cross for he carries

And the victory of Easter Sunday is a victory in which we share. For when Christ was raised from the dead, so too were we.

on his shoulders a much heavier burden — the sins of a world. Eventually the procession reaches the appointed place of execution and the creator of the world is subjected to the most cruel death at the hands of those whom he created in love, and returned to redeem.

And it is here that the words of the prophet are fulfilled. Now, as he dies the death of a common criminal surrounded by two thieves and a jeering mob, Jesus Christ is indeed numbered with the transgressors. Jesus himself foretold this gloomy scene using the words of the prophet: "It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me" (Lk 22:37).

The Cosmos at the Cross

Here Christ was treated as we deserved that we might be treated as he alone deserves. There on Calvary we see a miniature drama of the destinies of the whole world — a dying savior, a dying saint and a dying sinner.

It is Jesus who splits the world in two. On one side those who reject the sacrifice of the central figure, and on the other side are those who joyfully receive the free gift of eternal life and hear the words of the Savior, "You shall be with me in paradise."

Calvary contained three crosses and all three speak to us down through the centuries. One is the cross of redemption, another the cross of reception, and yet another the cross of rejection. The invitation comes to us to receive the acquittal that is made available by the grace of God through his unspeakable gift at Calvary. It cannot be bought or earned for God's love is not for sale. But he generously offers his very own righteous life and his atoning death to us.

He who receives this gift has eternal life and a positive assurance in the judgment. "You shall be with me in paradise," said Jesus. There is no uncertainty with God's gifts. But anyone can reject the goodness of God as did the unrepentant thief. His destiny shouts a warning down throughout history that to reject the Gospel incarnate is to receive eternal damnation.

At Calvary one man was dying for sin, another dying to sin, and the third was dying in sin. When Jesus died for sin in our place what a tragedy to die in our own sin.

The penalty for the sins of the world was paid on that dark Friday afternoon. God ever invites us to accept that payment on our behalf and to thereby enter into life eternal.

The Resurrection

All the benefits of this self-sacrifice of our Savior and Lord are guaranteed to us because of his resurrection. There was an old-style black preacher who was giving his Easter sermon. He lingered for some time describing the mockery of a trial that Jesus received, the agony and shame of his crucifixion, the callousness of those responsible, the fear and wonder of the onlookers. But through his graphic portrayal of those tragic scenes from Easter Friday he would interject, "It's Friday, but Sunday's a-comin'." His sermon concluded as he left behind the darkness of Friday and brought his congregation into the brilliance of resurrection Sunday with a climactic repetition of his catch phrase, "It's Friday, but Sunday's a-comin'."

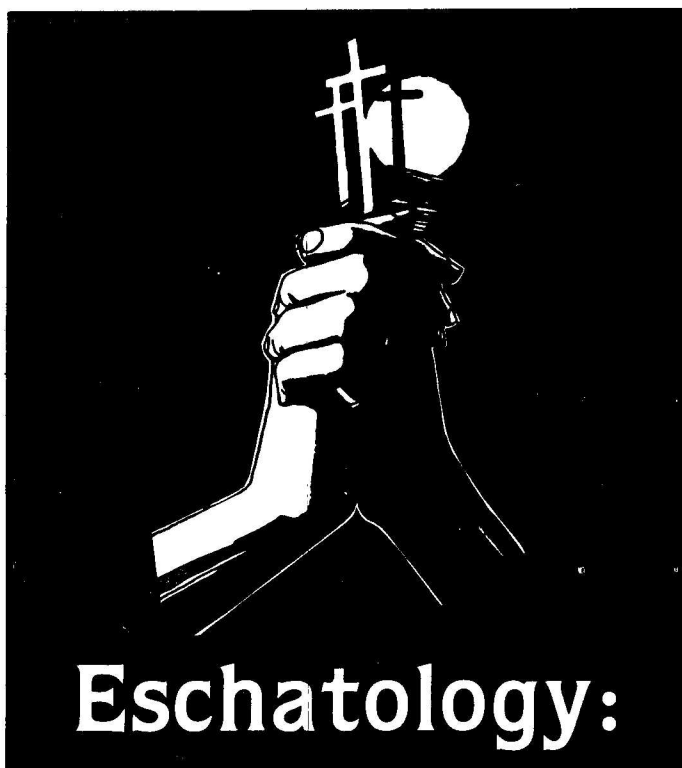
Friends, Sunday has come. Jesus broke the bands of death, destroyed its power and came forth from the grave victorious over the powers of evil. Herein is our justification assured. "He [Christ] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Rom 4:25). It is Christ's loyalty even unto death (Php 2:8,9) and his victory over the grave that makes his sacrifice effective for Christians. A defeated savior is no savior. A dead Messiah is no messiah. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (2 Cor 15:17).

And the victory of Easter Sunday is a victory in which we share. For when Christ was raised from the dead, so too were we. "You have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1). In an even more daring statement, the Apostle Paul declares, "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). Think of that, for the person of faith God already considers him or her as being seated in heaven with Jesus himself! Our salvation is that sure. With God we've already arrived.

Conclusion

This Easter should be a time to recollect the true significance of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Its importance is not connected with chocolate eggs and furry pink bunnies. It is something much more profound than that. It is something much more important to the universe, something much more important to us. Easter is the time when Christians specially recall their monumental debt to their Lord who staggered up Calvary's hill carrying their burdens.

At Calvary we see that Jesus gave of himself for the transgressions of others. That his sacrifice was complete. That there is nothing else that we can add to the glorious work he has done. That his victory over death was our victory, and that death is but a sleep for those who are in him. That any may come and gather at the foot of the cross and receive the benefits he freely distributes to those who will believe. That while we may live in a world of Fridays, his resurrection promises us that a glorious Sunday's a-comin'. □



Eschatology:

What Difference Does It Make?

Smuts van Rooyen

Last month we argued that the New Testament does not view the **eschatos** (literally "the last thing") simply as the second coming, so that eschatology becomes the study of the events surrounding the return of Christ. The **eschatos** in its primary sense is neither a thing nor a day, but a person. Christ himself is the **eschatos**.^{*} As the fulfillment of the Old Testament eschatological hopes, his whole life from the stable in Bethlehem forward is the last thing. Eschatology then includes the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and second coming of Christ. Eschatology therefore looks to the future but also to the past.

We have asked the question, "What?" Now we ask the practical question, "So what?" What difference does it make how one defines eschatology? Are we not just rearranging the same old furniture in the same old room? We believe that our definition has enormous practical repercussions for the doctrinal structure and life of the Church. We will look at three vital areas — salvation, mission, and ethics — to illustrate the crucial importance of the eschatological past for the future.

Salvation

Because Christ is the **eschatos** it is possible for the end to be reached (albeit in a limited way) **before** the natural history of the planet comes to a close. In the being of Christ **the future is brought into the present**. Or to put it another way, all future eschatological events are merely a recapitulation, a repetition of the history of Jesus. The great tribulation, the judgment,

the resurrection, glorification, hell, etc., have **already** happened with Christ. He experienced each of these in his earthly existence. He is the **eschatos**.

Now the beauty of it is that the outcome of these last day events can be determined for us ahead of time, if we accept Christ the **eschatos** in the present. By participating in Christ we participate in final events. Incredibly, our future has already been lived in the past. Christ the **eschatos** who lived two thousand years ago lived our future. The future has already (in a limited sense) happened.

Thus the believer can have the assurance right now that he will come from the grave in the future resurrection day because he now holds onto Christ the resurrection. The believer can already know that he will survive the great tribulation because he rests in Christ who has passed through Gethsemane. The believer can at this very moment know he will be glorified because he has accepted the ascended Lord.

Justification and Judgment

With regard to salvation one particular area deserves special attention — the relation between justification and the future judgment. Few issues have vexed the Christian community more. Believers know that they face a judgment in the future. They also know that they have been justified, or, to use a synonym, acquitted. But what is the value of being acquitted if you face the same music again? Is a Christian tried twice for the same crimes? Are we now acquitted by grace and then finally acquitted by works?

But such confusion is immediately dissipated when justification is seen to be **eschatological**. In other words, justification in Christ brings the last day judgment into the present. The believer is acquitted and thus the outcome of the future judgment is settled beforehand.

The Jews believed that there would be a great judgment in which men would be judged according to their works. They held that it is **only** in the final judgment that God would render his verdict and decide each man's destiny. But the New Testament writers radically modified this doctrine. The realization that Christ is the **eschatos** made an incalculable difference to their judgment theology. It was possible to be acquitted **ahead** of time. It was no longer deemed necessary to wait for the last day as Judaism believed.

This becomes clear in a passage such as Romans 5:9, "Much more then, **being now justified** by his blood, **we shall** be saved from wrath to come." In other words the future day of judgment or wrath loses its sting because of that which has happened in the present, namely, justification. Justification is forward-looking. Romans 8:33 asks, "Who **shall** lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." To paraphrase one could say, "If a person is already justified by God, who would dare file a case against him in the judgment?" There is no condemnation now for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).

From this we conclude that justification is not only a sort of preliminary hearing that gets the believer off the hook for the time being. Justification does not merely forgive sins for now and leave the real business

of acquittal for later. No, what we have here is the real thing, the actual acquittal that gets us to heaven. Christ the eschatos has brought the future into the present. Professor George Eldon Ladd gives this magnificent summary:

Justification is one of the blessings of the inbreaking of the new age into the old. In Christ the future has become present; the eschatological judgment has in effect taken place in history. As the eschatological Kingdom of God is present in history in the Synoptics, as the eschatological eternal life is present in Christ in John, as the eschatological resurrection has already begun in Jesus' resurrection, as the eschatological Spirit is given to the Church in Acts (and in Paul), so the eschatological judgment has already occurred in principle in Christ, and God has acquitted his people. (*A Theology of the New Testament*, p. 443)

The believer is acquitted and thus the outcome of the future judgment is settled beforehand.

This does, of course, raise questions about the final judgment and its importance. What exactly happens and what does **not** happen then? We start with the latter. The decision as to whether or not a person is saved is not made there. That decision has already been made. John says, "He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son hath not life" (1 Jn 5:12). The person holding the Son does not face a second verdict yet to be rendered in the future (Jn 5:24). This judgment does not, therefore, focus on giving the verdict. It only reaffirms the past.

The task of this judgment is to give each person a sentence or an award. First the wheat, the good fish, the sheep, must be separated from the tares, the inedible fish and the goats. Then each group receives either a sentence or an award. But again we stress the people involved are either already saved or already lost. This judgment does not seek to determine eternal destiny a second time. It only **reveals openly** which ver-
has already been operative.

And how are the two classes distinguished? The answer is, by their works. Their works reveal which verdict has already been pronounced upon them. Men, by their works, are openly exposed for what they are in relation to Christ.

It is crucial to grasp that works are not evaluated **meritoriously**. That is to say, the works are not earning a particular verdict in a system of merits and demerits. Instead they are evaluated **evidentially**. Deeds are simply the evidence showing one's regard or disregard for Christ. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have **done it unto me**. Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye **did it not unto me**" (Mt 25:40, 45). It is a day of revelation and of reward which simply reaffirms an earlier verdict (Mt 10:26; Lk 2:35, 12:2; 1 Cor 3:13).

Any doctrine of the judgment that looks **only** to the future will inevitably drive people to despair. As long as the believer still faces a verdict, there is no possible way to find rest. In Christianity justification fits into the doctrine of the judgment like the pin does into a handgrenade. Remove the pin and a shattering explosion occurs in the spiritual psyche. There is no rest but

only turmoil, uncertainty, yearning, fear. But if the eschatological past remains in place, we need not fear. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1).

Mission

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mt 24:14). From this verse the basic mission of the Church may be derived — to preach the good news of the kingdom.

But what is the kingdom? When is it ushered in? The answers given to questions such as these determine the way a church defines its mission. Those churches that have defined the kingdom as a future home for the Jews have as their mission the gospel of dispensationalism. Others which believe that the Kingdom of God has already come, and have no future dimension to their kingdom eschatology, often have a social gospel as their mission. Yet others see the real kingdom as finally arriving at the second coming and have a futuristic warning message aimed at preparing people for that event. Some groups, for example the Roman Catholic church, view themselves as the Kingdom of God and therefore have a sole goal of bringing people into the "ark."

The position of this paper is that the Kingdom of God was **inaugurated** on earth and in history with the coming of Jesus, and that it will be **consummated** at the return of Christ. The Kingdom of God is therefore **really** here. The Kingdom and the eschatos began together when Christ came. The promise of the Kingdom has been fulfilled in actuality. It does not exist simply in the hearts of men. The special reign of God on earth began with the arrival of the Messiah. He drove out devils to prove that the kingdom had come **in history** (Mt 12:28). Yet we await the time when the realm of God will be added to the reign of God.

When this definition is accepted, then the mission of the Church is to preach not simply the imminent future but also the eschatological past. The kingdom is to be preached in its fullness. No one phase is stressed to the exclusion of another. The task is not simply to prepare people to immigrate to heaven when Jesus comes, but to accept citizenship in the kingdom which is here right now. There is reason for great rejoicing even in the present context because the groom is with us and nobody fasts in his presence. We have found a fantastic treasure in a field, it is ours. That treasure is the Kingdom of God. It is here.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached for a witness unto all nations; then shall the end come" (Mt 24:14). According to this verse the final eschatological message that is to usher in the second advent already existed in history at the time of Jesus. It did not come into being at the end of time. Christ calls it "**this** gospel of the kingdom." Churches that claim to have as their mission the preaching of some kind of "final warning message" need to take more seriously the actual arrival of the kingdom. No substitutes will do.

And what is the content of this gospel? It is nothing less than the things Jesus preached when he was on

earth. Mark tells us that Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Mk 1:14, 15). Most of his parables are prefaced with the remark "And the kingdom of heaven is like unto. . . ." But not only his words are the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel is found in his encounters with Nicodemus, the rich young ruler, the thief on the cross, etc. Invariably such encounters involve kingdom concepts. Moreover, his miracles and healings, especially those involving exorcism, are kingdom signs. The cross, resurrection, ascension, and second advent are **all** the story of the Kingdom of God which came with Christ the eschatos.

A stress on the final end must remain but it must not remain alone. When Jesus himself is seen to be the eschatos, the tension between gospel and final message within the Church will finally come to an exhausted resolution.

The believer can already know that he will survive the great tribulation because he rests in Christ who has passed through Gethsemane.

Ethics

There is no question that the New Testament uses future events to encourage Christians to live responsible, positive and good lives. Peter reminds us of the excellent sort of people we should be in view of the impending judgment (2 Pe 3:10-12). John declares that people, filled with hope for the appearing of Jesus, try to purify themselves (1 Jn 3:1-3). But this approach for motivating right behavior is by no means the only one the New Testament uses. Nor is it the predominant one.

The fundamental motivational force that excites the Christian to act in a positive way is the glorious realization that the Kingdom of God has come, and that he **already** has citizenship in it. Fellowship with the Messiah in his kingdom is the greatest privilege that anyone can possibly have. Such privilege is the fountain of Christian ethical behavior.

When the apostle writes to the gentile believers in Rome, he reminds them of the incomprehensible ways of God which made citizenship in the kingdom possible for them (Rom 9-11). He repeats the tragic story of how the kingdom was taken away from the Jew and given to another. He emphasizes that to them, the Gentiles, has come the magnificent honor of being grafted like an olive tree onto the stump of God's people. They, incredibly, are citizens of the kingdom! Then comes his heartrending plea, "I beseech you **therefore**, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:1). Doing good is utterly and totally reasonable in view of the privilege of citizenship.

The Gospels also take this approach. When a man finds the kingdom it is like finding a Robert Louis Stevenson treasure in a rented backyard. There it is: treasure chest, lock, coins and jewels — the lot. This stroke of sheer fortune leads him to sell everything he

has in order to buy the field and possess the treasure. Citizenship in God's Kingdom is like that treasure, a euphoric, motivational force for sacrifice (Mt 13:44-46). Therefore Jesus built the entire structure of his ethics on this concept of the kingdom that had come (Mt 5-7). The Church must build its ethical structure on the very same foundation.

When Christ came, he established the Church which is nothing less than the community of the kingdom. Here, the kingdom works of the ascended Lord continue. These works can be continued because at his ascension he gave to his community great eschatological gifts. Her mission then is not only to preach the gospel of the kingdom but to act out its principles in the present age.

An illustration of the way this should work out in practice is something like this. Christ showed us that illness and disease are against his principles and therefore against the principles of his kingdom. He stood against disease. The Church is to continue uphold his principle. Therefore she will reject disease as abnormal to the kingdom that has come and seek to eliminate it. For the accomplishment of this task she has received the gift of healing. By means of the gifts, she is in this world to oppose all that is contrary to the kingdom. Ignorance and foolishness must be confronted with the gifts of knowledge and wisdom. Misunderstanding must be faced with the gift of interpretation. Communication and love gifts counteract every form of disunity. For every problem there exists a last day gift to oppose it.

The ethical stance of the Church grows out of the fact that the Kingdom of God has come. She must therefore act not **as if** the kingdom has come, but **because** it has come. Racism, war, poverty, and sin cannot be tolerated without compromising the principles of the kingdom. Because the Kingdom of God has come, the Church must order its priorities accordingly. One stands in openmouthed amazement when the Church spends its energies on the micro-ethics of movies, foods and video games while virtually ignores the macro-ethics involving issues such as abortion and racism. Surely the time has come to leave the mint and the cummin and embrace the weightier matters of the law.

Some will probably cry that this is simply the social gospel. But it is not. It is part of the gospel of the kingdom. To be sure it is not the whole of the gospel but, nevertheless, it is a crucial part of it. **This** existence, not only the world to come, is important because the Kingdom of God has broken into this history. This life is not merely a bus stop where we wait for a ride to heaven. The kingdom that has come must reveal its principles in the here and now. Of course we must preach the signs, and the judgment and the glorious second advent. This is crucial to our task. But it is not our whole task. We must not fail to grasp the staggering impact of Christ's words. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN YOUR MIDST!** (Lk 11:20 margin) The Eschatos has come. □

*All who have read **Jesus Christus Die Eschatos** by Adrio König will recognize my indebtedness to him.

Jesus: The Man Who Lives

reviewed by Calvin W. Edwards

Jesus: The Man Who Lives, Malcolm Muggeridge, published by Fontana/Collins, London, 1975, 190 pages.

There is always something attractive and appealing about a literary work on the life of Christ. To have recreated before one the scenes from the life of our Savior is a rewarding and enriching experience. And while Muggeridge's book is far more than the story retold with a few embellishments, it will reward those of us who like to contemplate again the story of Jesus.

Muggeridge is perhaps the best known journalist and radio and television commentator in England. Educated at Cambridge, he has served distinguished roles as journalist for such noted publications as the **Evening Standard** and the **Daily Telegraph**, and as editor of the famed **Punch**. So, apart from the value of the book for what it says about the person of Jesus, it is also a testimony to the faith of one of the world's most esteemed thinkers and writers. The birth of this faith and the conversion of this onetime cynical secularist is told in Muggeridge's earlier book, **Jesus Rediscovered**.

Muggeridge has written much more than the "mere" story of Jesus. He has brought his brilliant mind and lucid pen to bear on his topic and constantly delights the reader with the depth of his insights and the profundity of his wisdom. For example, when he tells the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, he takes it as an opportunity to discuss the Christian view of death. "Death had haunted the pagan world; as something to be dreaded, stoically faced, put out of mind, despairingly embraced; at best, in the manner of Socrates, greeted with noble resignation: 'The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways — I to die, and you to live. Which is the better, God only knows.' Jesus audaciously abolished death, transforming it from a door that slammed to, into one that opened to whoever knocked. He made death, as

Bonhoeffer joyously said on his way to be executed, for a Christian a beginning, not an end. It was the key to life; to die was to live" (p. 100).

Jesus is a book where many readers will want to underline the underlining! One of its joys is that it is so masterfully written. The book is full of gems.

"It has become abundantly clear in the second half of the twentieth century that Western Man has decided to abolish himself. Having wearied of the struggle to be himself, he has created his own boredom out of his own affluence, his own impotence out of his erotomania, his own vulnerability out of his own strength; himself blowing the trumpet that brings the walls of his own city tumbling down, and, in a process of auto-genocide, convincing himself that he is too numerous, and labouring accordingly with pill and scalpel and syringe to make himself fewer in order to be an easier prey for his enemies; until at last, having educated himself into imbecility, and polluted and drugged himself into stupefaction, he keels over, a weary, battered old brontosaurus, and becomes extinct" (pp. 34-35).

The book is divided into three sections. The first deals with the advent of Christ, the second with his mission and message, and the final one with his death and particularly his resurrection. Not every detail of his sacred life is dealt with, but there is certainly a careful treatment of selected episodes which serves well to tell the story of the person and work of Jesus Christ and as the basis for the author's digressions into Christian theology.

Muggeridge is sensitive to the cynical attitudes toward religion in the modern world. He extracts the essential theological core from concepts that modern skeptics may wish to disregard and faithfully urges his readers to accept them. When discussing Christ's reconciliation of those whom Adam had estranged, he comments, "even today, when Adam is considered to have disappeared

without trace on Darwin's **Voyage of the Beagle**, the symbolism remains valid" (p. 58). Having made this concession to those who doubt the historicity of the Genesis record, he promptly goes on to retain the Adam-Christ, Old Man-New Man terminology. This tough-nosed journalist is not bullied by critics.

Perhaps most impressive of all is the author's ruthless honesty. Don't his words here express a baring of his soul — words with which most of us can identify, but which few of us can confess to having uttered: "I have often, myself, sat in darkness, and cried aloud for the Holy Spirit to deliver me from the fantasies that gather round a parched soul like flies round a rotten carcass in the desert. Likewise, sat tongue-tied, crying out to be given utterance, and delivered from the apprehensions which afflict the earth-bound. And never, ultimately, in vain...the Comforter needs only to be summoned" (p. 162).

This book will have special value for the one who finds himself troubled with doubts about Jesus and Christianity, for it is written with the modern non-Christian in mind. The author assumes very little, rather, he sets out to persuade. Undoubtedly it will bring every reader into the presence of our Savior once again, and that alone makes the book worth reading. But for some it will help them make, for the first time, the confession with which Muggeridge closes his book. "Either Jesus never was or he still is. As a typical product of these confused times, with a skeptical mind and a sensual disposition, diffidently and unworthily, but with the utmost certainty, I assert that he still is" (p. 190). □

New Office Building

As I type this note, the "rough inspection" of the building has just been completed. Those in the building industry will understand this expression as referring to the inspection that permits the interior finishing work to proceed.

The insulation was installed yesterday and today. The sheetrock is being hung now. As soon as the weather clears the grading, curbing and paving of the driveway and parking lot will take place — hopefully within two weeks.

Final details for the interior design — floor covering, wallpaper, paint, tiles, furniture, etc., will be decided upon next week.

We anticipate few delays between now and moving in, probably early in May.

Thank you for your wonderful support in this important project. A recent visitor to our present office exclaimed, "I don't know how you stand it in here. I could never work in an office as cramped as this." Our auditor said she'd never before had to work under such conditions! We are grateful for what the Lord has provided for us thus far in this office, but the time has come to move on. Each of us at GNU wants to thank those who have made the modern new office possible.

Coming Gospel Congresses

Smuts van Rooyen will join with the Christian Fellowship Church at Bellevue (Seattle) for a seminar on the weekend of April 22 and 23. This program promises to be a very popular one.

'Close Encounters with Christ' is the title of a series to be conducted in Sacramento, California, and Chattanooga, Tennessee in late July. The GNU ministers will be preaching along with other guests.

After these congresses in the United States, Smuts will be flying to Europe to hold meetings in

Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and England. Preliminary plans are presently being made by gospel believers in Scandinavia and they will arrange local advertising.

Please pray for all these programs as plans and arrangements are made.

Radio Broadcasts

The number of responses from the Good News Unlimited broadcasts has increased approximately 250% over the past twelve months. More and more persons have discovered Dr. Ford's program and are becoming regular listeners. This growth is also due to the expansion of the number of cities in which the program is broadcast. Some of the stations reach into several States, with a very wide coverage. Latest to be added is CHYR in Leamington, Ontario. This is the number one

station in the market. The broadcast may be heard in the Essex and West Kent counties of Ontario and also in the United States — in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Flint and Ann Arbor.

Share by Publishing

The editor of **Good News Unlimited** is always ready to receive high quality manuscripts for possible publication. If you have a gift for clear expression of insights from the Bible, why not send your material to us.

No guarantee of publication can be made, but careful consideration will be given to your submission. Authors will be remunerated at a reasonable rate. Send double-spaced, typed manuscripts to: The Editor, Good News Unlimited, P.O. Box GN, Auburn, CA 95603.

In Australia & New Zealand

New Zealand Welcomes Dr. Ford

The weekend of March 25–27 saw Dr. Ford visiting New Zealand. Friday night and Saturday he held meetings in Christchurch, in the South Island. With almost 100 present, some described it as 'the best Sabbath we've ever had'.

On Sunday he flew north to Auckland, to an even larger congregation, and experienced the same warm, welcoming response he has had at all his other gatherings during the present series.

Following the Auckland meeting some folk came to him with spontaneous donations amounting to \$1,000 for the support of the newly established New Zealand office, located in Christchurch. This was established and continues to operate as a result of the enthusiastic, voluntary efforts of Brian Murphy.

Through the medium of Radio Rhema, Dr. Ford is reaching out with the gospel message to an ever-increasing number of appreciative folk in New Zealand, and a good and growing work is being done there. The first program went to air in June 1982. Up to December 31, 258 tapes were posted out. A number of Bible study groups and cottage meetings are using these as an aid to the understanding of the scriptures.

Perth & Adelaide Meetings

While Dr. Ford was ministering in New Zealand, Noel Mason and George Masters were presenting their messages in Adelaide and Perth. Again, appreciative groups enjoyed fellowship and dialogue with these men.

This was indeed a homecoming for Pastor Masters, who is a West Australian. He stayed over a short while to holiday with his family, then

returned to the States together with Pastor Mason in early April.

Dr. Ford is enjoying a much needed rest with his family in sunny north Queensland, and will be returning to the USA in early May.

Anyone wishing to contact Dr. Ford while he is still in Australia may phone him on 079 737 318, between 8 am and 9 am. He requests that out of courtesy to those making the phone available, calls be restricted to this hour each day.

John Ankerberg TV Show

The video cassette containing the three half-hour John Ankerberg TV interview programmes with Dr. Ford and Pastor Walter Rea is being well received. Remember, you can hire this for showing to a group in your home for just \$15.

Tape of the Month

The April Tape of the Month contains two sermons. One from Desmond Ford entitled 'The Only Answer to Trouble', and one of Calvin Edwards presentations at the Orlando Seminar, 'Love, Alienation's Antidote'. These two messages will inspire you and broaden your understanding of God and the Christian life.

On the May tape, Smuts van Rooyen addresses the question 'How Can I Know That I Know?', while Noel Mason deals with 'The Supremacies of Life'.

Donors of \$25 or more per month (or an equivalent amount in one sum) will receive these tapes automatically. Others may join the Tape of the Month Club for one year with a donation of \$42, or request any one particular tape for a donation of \$3.50.

Why not build up a good Tape Library of your own, and share these cassettes with others after you have listened to them!

'Special' on Seminar Tapes

We are happy to announce a 'special' on tapes of the March meetings. These are being offered at \$2.50 each (instead of the \$3.50 which is usual). We hope this will enable many who were not able to be present, to enjoy and benefit from the messages delivered; and also make it easier for those who have heard these presentations to purchase a copy to lend to friends.

The cassettes offered are as follows:

Desmond Ford:

- 1 The Gospel that Unites and Divides
- 2 The Cross and the End

Noel Mason:

- 3 A Blind Alley of Eschatology
- 4 Jesus, the Early Church and the Sabbath

George Masters

- 5 The Prodigal Son
- 6 Include Me Out (i.e. My Two Pet Hates)

Those who forwarded \$3.50 each for George Masters two meetings, as requested last month, will receive an additional third tape, so that they are not penalised for their promptness but gain full advantage of this special offer.

Theological Manuscripts

Copies of the theological papers presented by the GNU ministers at the GNU-GC meeting in San Francisco, January 14-17, are still available. A \$10 donation will cover our photocopying and postage costs. The packet also includes 35 pages of correspondence and documents relating to the preliminary arrangements for the meeting and the events following.

Radio Broadcasts

New Zealand

Radio RHEMA
2XG Wellington, 1503 AM
9-9:30 p.m., Friday

Radio RHEMA

3XG Christchurch, 1503 AM
9-9:30 p.m., Friday

Australia

2SER-FM, Sydney
107.5 FM
8:30-9 p.m., Sunday

SPBA-FM, Adelaide

89.7 FM
9-9:30 a.m., Sunday

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Liberty

Sirs:

It is good to receive **Good News Unlimited** from time to time and keep up to date with your activities.

I was particularly interested to read in the January issue the sequel to the meeting you had with SDA leaders last July. If the outcome of the further study which has been arranged is a recognition of the liberty of interpretation (subject to acknowledgement of the authority of Scripture), nothing could be more welcome.

With all good wishes for a blessed Easter: truly the Lord is risen.

F. F. Bruce
Buxton, England

A Great Ministry

Sirs:

I thank you most sincerely for the cassettes I received recently. They happened to be the very thing I needed at the time. I never cease to be amazed at God's timing!

This is a great ministry that you are involved in, and my fellow Bible study members wonder if you have a catalog of your tapes and whether you have music tapes. In fact, some idea of the material you handle would be greatly appreciated.

God's peace and blessings on you and your work.

Agnes Sklenars
Hamilton, New Zealand

Joy Unspeakable

Sirs:

Thank you, thank you, thank you! You men have had a part in bringing me out of deep darkness, despair and fear of God and helping me catch a glimpse of the unspeakably wonderful gift of God in

Christ. I have listened to tapes by Dr. Ford for over three years and by the other men more recently. I have been a very dull student and very slow to get the point of what you are saying. I have had many doubts and much confusion about issues in the church and the gospel you preach but through it all I have been drawn back to what you were saying because you lift up a God who really loves me. (Even this so inadequately expresses all I would say.)

I have been a Christian for approximately fifteen years. Ten of those were spent in seeking to serve the Lord with earnestness but failing miserably and burdened with almost constant guilt and fear of God. A mental condition was made much worse by this load of fear and guilt so that I could not even function, but you have had a part in telling me the good news. Jesus loves me, even me, and died in my place and for all my sins. Jesus loves me — sinful, faulty, weak, erring though I am. This knowledge is bringing me health and joy unspeakable. Keep telling people that Jesus loves them too. God bless you with more and more of his Spirit. You help people to see how loving and worthy our God is. I know I have just caught a glimpse of the love of God in Jesus, yet I stand in great awe of it. What unspeakable joy it will be to see him face-to-face and know him as he is.

Thank you for sending me the Tape of the Month recently. You are most generous and kind. No doubt others feel as I do that all our gifts to you should go to further your work, but you have chosen to give us a love gift, so "thank you." I can just ask the Lord to bless the funds you receive that they may be multiplied as the loaves and fishes, and that you would have the funds you need to carry on your work.

Mary Jean Murray
Dansville, New York

Never Been So Happy

Sirs:

God bless you all. For a long time I have been dissatisfied with my church; it is nice to know that at last Christ is being elevated to His rightful place in the plan of salvation, and many have been made aware of the gospel. I can say in all sincerity that I have never been so happy in my religious experience as now. May others see light in the tunnel also. My prayers are with you all.
Shirley Blandford
Tamborine Mountain, Qld.

Keen to Learn

Sirs:

I would be very interested in receiving your tape 'Today Forget Tomorrow'. I am a non-practising drug addict who has only found the Lord in the past few months. One of the themes of the programme I am working on is 'One day at a time'. I am very keen to learn as much as possible.
Name supplied,
New South Wales.

No Guilt

Sirs:

We have just received the February issue of your magazine and words cannot express what the articles have done for my husband.

He was rejoicing yesterday as he realized that he does not have to carry a guilt feeling. I have tried to tell him this many times but not until he read what you had to say did he finally feel the burden of guilt lifted.

God bless all of you and this ministry.
Anthony and Mildred Maurice
Rutherford, New Jersey

Good News Unlimited

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