

GOD'S REVIVALIST

December 2003

and Bible Advocate



the editor's view



LARRY D. SMITH

SHADOW AT THE CRADLE

“Calvary presided over Bethlehem. The mysteries of the Cross exercised an acknowledged sovereignty over the mysteries of the Crib.... *It is as natural for devotion to weep by the Manger as it is to weep by the Cross.*”

Frederick Faber was a poet and a saint, but frankly his words seem far too somber for us at Christmas. Calvary presiding over Bethlehem? Weeping at the manger? “Tis the season to be jolly,” we pointedly respond. “Fa la la la la, la la la la!” “Merry Christmas!” we shout to passing friends, as we string glittering lights across the porch, then go inside to polish heirloom silver for the feast or wrap trucks and dolls to nestle beneath the tree. “Weeping at the manger?” we ask again. Weeping at the cross we understand, for that was the bloody stake where Our Lord Jesus gave His life for us. On Good Friday, we shall keep our vigil there.

But it's Christmas now—the festival of His birth—and our smiles seem more fitting than our tears. Our thoughts turn quickly to Bethlehem and to the gladness which meets us there. For the Holy Child is stirring peacefully upon His bed, angels fill the skies with soaring melody, shepherds come running to the stable, and Mary welcomes us serenely in the lantern glow. “Joy to the world! The Lord is come!” If ever we should smile—indeed, if ever we should laugh—should it not be now at Christmas?

“Yes! Yes, of course!” Faber answers, as he joins us before the sacred drama which the Father has so lovingly displayed. Indeed, it is all so joyous, as he declares, that “no painter can paint it as it lies in the believer's soul and as the bells of Christmas wake it up in that gay winter midnight, which is brighter than a summer noon, because of the inward light by which the heart sees and worships.” To devoted, loving hearts, Christmas means exuberant celebration; and all throughout the holy Church, it is a feast and not a fast.

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the president's page

WE DIDN'T KNOW WHO YOU WERE

by Michael R. Avery, president

The early American spiritual, "Sweet Little Jesus Boy" has a profound insight running through its lyrics. The writer appropriately reflects the world's failure to recognize the incarnate Son of God when He says: "We didn't know who You were." The third verse proves to be even more remarkable. "The world treats You mean, Lord, treats me mean, too; but that's how things are down here. We don't know who You are." The writer deliberately shifts from a historical ignorance to a present-day failure to recognize the Son of God.

I've spent the last several months studying the gospel of John for the specific purpose of learning how to model the life of Christ in my own life. The revelations have been startling. As I looked for Jesus in John's narrative, the first thing I learned was that it's very easy to miss Him because of looking for the wrong thing.

The world completely missed Him on that first Christmas (John 1:5, 10). Their kings were born surrounded by pomp and circumstance. But Jesus came silently, in a stable, with only a few shepherds to pay Him homage. Their kings lived in palaces, dressed in splendor, dined with heads of state, and traveled in gold-plated chariots pulled by majestic steeds. Their vision of a king was one to be served, feared and honored from a distance. Jesus wore the garb of common men, had no place to lay his head, traveled by foot, rubbed shoulders with the poor and diseased, held children on His lap, and first revealed His glory at the wedding of a poor village girl. The very thought of a king dying on a cross to redeem His people and establish His kingdom was to the world foolishness.

His own people missed Him (John 1:11). The Jews were looking for a conquering warlord that would throw off the yoke of Rome, liberate their country, and return them to the golden age of Solomon. But Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world, spoke of going the second mile, turning the other cheek, and loving your enemies. The Jews watched in complete horror as He healed a Roman centurion's servant, talked to a Samaritan adulteress, stayed in the home of a tax collector and spent most of His time with a group of ignorant fisherman. For their Messiah to be crucified on a Roman cross as God's perfect sacrifice proved to be a huge stumbling block.

His disciples had problems recognizing who He was. Peter, speaking for the twelve, announced at Caesarea Philippi, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Jesus' response to that was to explain that being the Christ involved a cross. To which Peter replied, "Not so Lord." When Jesus washed the disciple's feet, Peter's paradigm of the Messiah came out again, and it was not one of self-sacrificing servanthood. Even after three years, His disciples saw His death and resurrection as the ultimate end rather than the consummate victory.

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DECEMBER 2003

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Letters should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, or e-mailed to revivalist@gbs.edu. Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of God's Revivalist nor those of the administration of God's Bible School. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense.

RICHEST OF JEWELS

I ran across your site while doing some research. I feel as if I have found a treasure chest, filled with the richest of jewels! Several of your good articles need to be printed and distributed in tract form to God's people. "Who Are Our Children's Heroes," "Wal-Mart Theology" and "What Is A Christian Wedding" are only a few of the ones that I need to distribute to the churches I serve.... God bless you in your wonderful work!!!

PASTOR LARRY G. HUNT

Fisher Street / Pleasant Grove United Methodist Churches, Jonesboro, Arkansas

WHEN BISHOPS WEEP

This is just a quick note to say thank you for the October editorial "When Bishops Weep," and for the good work that you do with the *Revivalist*.

TOM McCALL
Email

ARTICLES, TYPOGRAPHY, AND DESIGN

Please receive my thanks and appreciation for such a fine publication arriving on a regular basis. The quality of the articles and the description of life on the Hill as well as the typography and design of the publication are outstanding. I am interested in the work of God's Bible School and the raising up of your fine young people to carry on the Lord's work, and I receive a rich blessing when the chorus or orchestra come to Avon Park during their spring tour. The conduct and musicianship of the students, as well as the professional staff who accompany them, is a real inspiration to me and a splendid witness to God's kingdom.

THOMAS J. STOCKDILL
Avon Park, Florida

(continued on page 21) •



the world to win

Each month we publish brief "field reports" from missionaries around the world. Missionaries are invited to send us their newsletters and other information about their activities. GBS graduates are especially urged to respond, but we also wish to include others who uphold our vision and our commitment.

GUATEMALA

"Glen and Helen Reiff write, 'God's presence has been so real in our chapel services and classes at the Bible Institute this past month and a half. As usual when God is working, the enemy works overtime to destroy. Pray for some of our pastors who are facing grave problems in their homes and family life. Please pray earnestly that the tempter's power will be broken.'" —Ropeholders

NICARAGUA

"Word has come that the church in Managua was vandalized. Restroom fixtures are very expensive in Nicaragua. The thieves tried to steal the fixtures but did not have the right tools, so they smashed them to pieces. It will take about \$2500 to repair the damage and replace the fixtures. This is a major financial challenge to them and to us. Of course, they will supply the labor, but the economic situation is such that without help they will not be able to fix it in the foreseeable future." —Raymond Shreve (EWM).

ROMANIA

"I am writing to you from the official meeting place of the 'Love the Rock' Fellowship. It's my living room. Last year in the early summer, the teens and I put our initials together to see if we could come up with a name for our group. We chose a combination/arrangement of initials that sounds (but doesn't look) like "Love the Rock." "Love the Rock" will continue to meet on Wednesday evenings at my place, and each month we will have at least one meeting dedicated to each of the following purposes: helps for remembering our true Home and getting there (knowing and walking with God); helps for getting along with other (p19) •

Jesus Who?

by Louis A. Bouck



know and did not want to know. After all, was it quite decent to bring up such a topic except in church? Some were put out. "What do you mean, asking me such a question? Don't I have trouble enough without being bothered about religion?" Not religion. Christ.

There's a difference. But one man answered, "He is a divine Saviour." How did he know? He was a Christian. Converted folk know who Jesus is. Nicodemus didn't. He had not been born again. He had stopped with church membership and church office.

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." A teacher. Men of wisdom, teachers are. Well-informed, thinking people. Pays to listen to them, but not to swallow whole everything they say. "Neither accept nor reject, but weigh and consider." That is the "scientific attitude." But we cannot apply it to Jesus. We bow to the scientist, the philosopher, the teacher. But we must kneel to Christ. No other posture seems fitting in His presence.

How can we be sure who He is? Simple. If we are willing to do the will of God, He said we shall know. Certainty comes not by brilliance but by obedience. Uncertainty about Jesus gives us away. It is the tell-tale mark of disobedience.

Evidence? Well, there are the miracles. He healed the sick, cast out demons, even raised the dead. Some of the prophets did such things, too. "Who is this?" (p14) •

"How do you tell them apart?" The girls were identical twins. "It's not hard if you're acquainted. Now, this is Mabel. Mabel, will you please..." Mabel began to smile.

"You are Mabel, aren't you?" "No, Ma'am. I'm Marie." Some did know the twins apart, but most were never sure.

Many never bother to get acquainted well enough with Jesus to be certain who He is. Some are prone to strange delusions.

"It is John, whom I beheaded. He is risen from the dead." Superstitious guilt said that. Herod had resented John's rebuke and had murdered the outspoken preacher. The penalty: Herod could not recognize Christ the only Saviour. Sin always brings moral and spiritual confusion.

"What do you think about Jesus Christ?" To rouse interest in the revival meeting, the pastor and the evangelist went about town asking folk that question. Most did not



Ben Durr, Jr.

SECOND THOUGHTS

a deeper look at Scripture

INTIMIDATED BY A BABY!

"... Herod was troubled ..." (Matthew 2:3)

I will admit that I can be intimidated easily. It may not show on the outside, but I often feel intimidated by people who are bigger or smarter than I am; by people who have been financially successful or people who are famous; and by people who—for any number of reasons—appear to be “larger than life.” But there’s a class of people around whom I never feel threatened or self-conscious—people around whom I never worry about making a good impression. You may have guessed that I am speaking of babies! Small children are simply not threatening.

Babies don’t judge us by our looks, or our dress, or our age. They don’t intimidate us with their size or their political power. But that was not King Herod’s reaction to the Baby the wise men told him about. Now, don’t miss the irony of Herod’s part in the first Christmas drama. He was a king. A man of power. A dictator. A man of the court. A man who rubbed shoulders

with the political powerbrokers of the day. A man in whose presence others trembled. A man whose decree could move armies, build palaces, beckon servants. This man of incredible power is intimidated...by a Baby! Don’t you find that ironic?

Matthew 2:3 informs us that Herod “was troubled.” Instead of bringing out the best in Herod, this Baby brought out the worst in him. Instead of gentleness, this Baby drew out of Herod’s heart harshness and hatred. “Herod seeks the young Child to destroy Him,” the angel warned Joseph.

Why did Herod feel threatened? Because a band of star-gazers showed up out of nowhere one day and said they were looking for a Child who had been born “king of the Jews.” And, you see, that’s what Herod was—King of the Jews. Here, standing before him was a group of travelers looking for One who (in Herod’s thinking) was going to

move him off his throne. Not exactly good news for a politician!

You see, the Baby was essentially threatening to take away Herod’s scepter, a symbol of independence and sovereignty. Thus, Herod’s part in the Christmas story reminds me that this season is not really about lights and tinsel, Christmas plays and gift exchanges. When it is all boiled down, Christmas is about the scepter. At the end of the day, Christmas forces us to ask the age-old question of who Jesus is and how we should relate to Him. And that inevitably brings us to the scepter of our life and who will control it.

Herod gripped the scepter, even at the cost of innocent lives. Others have relaxed their grip, surrendered to the Baby and, in so doing, experienced the true meaning of Christmas. This season, will you seize or surrender the scepter of your independence and sovereignty to the Baby who asks for it? ■

Ben Durr Jr. is a pastor and member of the faculty in the Division of Ministerial Education, God’s Bible School and College.



many benefits are available to you...

when you make a special gift

...before December 31

Many individuals are unaware of the substantial benefits available for gifts made at year end.

- Potential tax savings from charitable deductions
- Increased income from non-productive or low-producing property
- Avoidance of capital gains tax on highly appreciated property
- Income tax deductions this year for gifts actually made in future years
- Personal satisfaction in knowing that you are involved in a worthwhile mission

Let's look at some of these advantages.

Giving from Cash Flow

You can receive an income tax deduction by giving cash. This is most beneficial to God's Bible School and College. And many times, it is the easiest way for you to give.

Gifts of Net Worth

But your cash flow may not be sufficient to make the gifts you desire, and to receive the tax deductions you need. Charitable deduction tax savings are available when you make gifts of property...insurance policies which you

no longer need...stocks, bonds, mutual funds...real estate...tangible personal property related to our exempt function. Each of these gifts will provide a tax deduction this year, if the gift is completed before December 31.

Avoidance of Capital Gains Tax

The property you have available for giving may have substantially appreciated in value.

If you sold the property, you would pay a tax on the difference between what you paid for the property and what it is worth today. This is called a capital gain, and is taxed at both the federal and state level. However, if you contribute the property rather than selling it, you can receive a charitable deduction for the full value of the property, and avoid the tax on the gain.

Increased Income from Your Charitable Gift

Many of our friends have fixed-income investments which are producing income at lower than current market rates. Others have property which is

paying little or no return. However, high appreciation keeps them from selling the assets and investing to achieve a higher return.

Charitable gift annuities have maintained a high rate of return. Many individuals find this a more attractive investment. Or property can be placed in a specially designed charitable trust, providing a substantial income tax charitable deduction. The property can then be sold by the trust, avoiding tax on the capital gain. And the trustee can invest in high income producing assets, resulting in a considerably higher income.

May We Help?

We want to help you with your year-end planning. We have available a special planning report, *How to Maximize Your Year-End Giving*, to provide more detailed information on each of these planning concepts. And we would like to make a copy available to you at no cost or obligation.

If we can provide personal assistance to you in any of these areas, please telephone our office at 513-721-7944, ext. 223. —Rev. Jack Hooker, Vice President for Advancement, God's Bible School and College, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45202. jhooker@gbs.edu. ■



1. A large crowd enjoyed Homefest. A number of student organizations set up booths with a variety of things for sale.

2. Members of the class of 1978 attending their 25 year reunion.



The old saying, "there is no place like home" is certainly true. For our alumni, GBS was home for several years. Homecoming is a great time to come back to campus, meet former classmates and friends, and enjoy the GBS atmosphere. What a joy it was this year to have a number of our alumni come back to the Hilltop!

1. Sounds of the past — a reunion trio.
2. Alumni of the Year — Richard and Carol Lee — long time missionaries to the American Indians.
3. Brandon Hilligoss sings a solo with the choir during the Friday night concert.
4. 50 year graduates return to the Hilltop.
5. Alumni President Dennis Joslin presents the Staff and Faculty Award to Mrs. Sheila Wolf.





Eleven holiness missionary organizations shared in presenting the call of the ripened harvest fields. The Holy Spirit used the plenary sessions and workshops to focus on the vital issue—our responsibility is inescapable. Each challenge closed with many kneeling at the altar in response to the call. Will you help us pray that from God’s Bible School will go an increasing number of God-called, Spirit-filled, trained workers into the harvest? May one of the



STEVE STURTEVANT

MISSIONARY CONVENTION CONSIDERS ‘CALL TO HARVEST’

For the two days of the GBS 2003 Missionary Convention, October 21–23, the Mt Auburn Hilltop became the vantage point from which teachers, students, staff and visitors viewed the harvest fields of the world. The announced theme of the Convention, “The Call To Harvest,” became a summons that demanded an answer. From our back doors to the far corners of the earth came the call for the message of deliverance from sin with which we have been entrusted.



JOHN PARKER

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, vital statistics, significant events scheduled throughout the “Revivalist family,” and brief news notes from across the holiness movement. An item for inclusion in the “Revivalist Family” must be submitted within four months of the event which it reports and should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202; or revivalist@gbs.edu.



LOGAN ANDREW MARSHALL

BIRTHS

To **Mark and Kristin Bird**, Cincinnati, Ohio, a daughter **Megan Elizabeth Bird**, born October 19. Both parents are professors at God’s Bible School and College.

To **Aaron** (‘98 BA in Th) and **Lanee (Carpenter)** (‘01 BA Ch Mus) **Marshall**, Arlington, Indiana, a son **Logan Andrew Marshall**, born August 28, 2003.

To **Roger** (‘95 GBS HS) and **Susie Wilson**, a daughter, **Victoria Catherine Wilson**, born September 20, 2003, North Gower, Ontario.

DEATHS

The Rev. Howard L. Bartlett, 87, was reared in Pennsylvania. Converted at age 17, he graduated



TOM KISER



THE SHREVES



STREET MEETING ON FOUNTAIN SQUARE

songs of the Convention be our heart-cry:
Lord, send me anywhere, only go with me, Sever every tie save the tie that binds me closer to Thy heart. —Reported by Anita Brechbill

CONVENTION ENDS WITH PUBLIC WITNESS

GBS's fall missionary convention was climaxed by a public rally at Fountain Square, downtown Cincinnati. Under the direction of Professor Mark Bird, 40–50 students, along with Professor Tim Crater and his wife Tonya, witnessed their Christian faith as hundreds of people passed by. The two school quartets set up their public address systems on the plaza stage and sang beautifully. Tom Kiser, inner-city missionary from New York City, set up a prayer station close by, and he and some others took prayer requests from passersby. Eric Himelick and David Cassity gave (p12) •

from God's Bible School and College, then served in the U. S. Air Force in the South Pacific during World War II. He graduated from Asbury Seminary and in 1949 joined the Memphis Conference of the Methodist Church. He traveled and ministered internationally, taught for a time in a Bible school, and pastored various churches in the South. He is survived by his wife, Marie Vernon Bartlett; a daughter, Mary Jasin; a son Paul Wesley Bartlett, and six grandchildren. Funeral services were held August 16, 2003, in Covington, Tennessee.

The Rev. Howard Beecher, Sr., 108, died October 3, at Lawrenceville, Illinois. He attended Nazarene Bible colleges and later God's Bible School. He ministered for about 70 years in Indiana, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois, spending his last 20 years of ministry as a Sunday school teacher and pulpit supply. He was a member of the Oblong, Illinois,

Wesleyan Church. His wife Chrystal Sylvia White preceded him in death. Survivors include his daughter, Ima Ruth; a daughter-in-law Beulah Beecher; three grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren; and a sister, Esther Hufford. Funeral was in Decatur, Illinois.

The Rev. Willard H. Case, 87, died September 20, 2003, Chillicothe, Ohio. For over 50 years, he served as an ordained minister with the Churches of Christ in Christ Union. In the early 1940's he attended God's Bible School until he was drafted into the military service during World War II. After discharge, he completed his education, then he served as pastor of several churches. He also traveled in evangelistic work with his longtime friend Colen Rhoads. He is survived by one brother, Stanley B. Case, and other relatives. Funeral services were held in Bainbridge. (p12) •

• (p11) sketchboard presentations between songs. "I was encouraged especially with two reports of men who prayed, one in response to a sketchboard presentation," reports Dr. Bird. "One threw his cigarettes into a trash can, and said he was through smoking. A phone call was made the next day, and he was holding true to his commitment. Another man who prayed has since attended Vine St. Chapel."

**JARON BOVARD
OCTOBER
"STUDENT OF
THE MONTH"**



Jaron Bovard, a junior enrolled in the Division of Intercultural Studies and World Missions, has been named GBS "Student of the Month" for October by the Office of Student Affairs. A native of Rising Sun, Indiana, Jaron was reared in the church, but "started getting serious about serving God

the summer before my freshman year of college at a youth camp in Pennsylvania," as he reports. His plans are somewhat indefinite, but he would like to do "some short-term mission trips, maybe do some teaching, and teach a young peoples' Sunday school class." "I have enjoyed attending GBS," he adds. "It has helped me spiritually because of the Biblical teaching and being around Christian people who live Christian lives."

OPTOMETRIST GIVES FREE EYE EXAMS

On October 30 Dr. and Mrs. Douglas Wine visited the GBS campus and donated a day of their time and talents. Dr. Wine, an optometrist from St. Mary's, Ohio, graciously brought his diagnostic equipment and gave free eye exams to students and staff. He also donates a portion of his time each year as a medical missionary. In this way he serves the Lord with his God-given talent. Thank you so



much, Doug and Clarinda, for your investment in the health of the campus family. —Jack Hooker, Vice President for Advancement.

Briefly Noted: Craig McLaughlin has resigned from the maintenance crew at GBS in order to give more time to Christian ministry and establish his own business interests....

Prayer is requested for Mrs. Virginia Hyatt, wife of veteran staff member Floyd Hyatt. Mrs. Hyatt continues to suffer serious health problems. ■

REVIVALIST FAMILY

continued

• (continued from page 11)

Leona R. Mefford, 91, of Martinsville, Indiana, died October 9, 2003, at Hobe Sound, Florida. She was the widow of Dr. Alvie I. Mefford, whom she married May 9, 1930, and who predeceased her in 1999. A devoted housewife and gracious Christian lady, Mrs. Mefford attended Whitehall Holiness Church, Whitehall, Indiana, and Baptist Tabernacle in Martinsville. Survivors include a daughter Rosella Knuth McConkey; a brother and a sister; ten grandchildren; 43 great-grandchildren; and 20 great-great grandchildren. Funeral services were held in Martinsville with her son-in-law, the Rev. Howard McConkey, officiating.

The Rev. Dr. Jesse Roland Mitchell, 91, former professor, dean of theology, and college pastor at God's

Bible School and College (1953-1956), died July 4, 2003. Known as "J.R." in later years, he received ministerial training at Kingswood Bible School in Kentucky and at Owosso College in Michigan. He preached his first sermon at age 17 and his last one six weeks before his death. In the intervening years, he served as pastor, professor, evangelist, and district superintendent. A retired ordained minister of the Kentucky district of the Wesleyan Church, he lived for the last 21 years of his life in Wilmore, Kentucky. In 1934 he was married to Naomi Finch, who predeceased him in 1981. They were the parents of four children. In 1982 he was married to Ruth Lashbrook, who survives. Funeral services were held in Wilmore with burial in Fairmont, Indiana.

Ruth Ellen Dotson-Trees, 83, Warrington, Indiana, died September 20, 2003. She attended God's Bible School 1934-1936 and was a longtime member of the

Archives

CHRISTMAS VACATION ON THE MOUNT OF BLESSINGS, DECEMBER 1926

by the late Alice "Mom" White

A big Christmas tree had been given to the school to help keep the boys and girls who remained on campus during the vacation from being homesick. It was placed in the Music Room in the front of the Memorial Building [known as the girls' dorm parlor in later years], and was soon beautifully decorated with lights, strings of popcorn and many other little things. There were presents for each one who would not be receiving other gifts.

At last Christmas Eve came. At seven o'clock all the

girls gathered there, and a little program was rendered. Then there were handed out nearly 200 gifts. All merrily opened their packages and rejoiced over them. There was such sweet fellowship, and all were glad that they were on the Hill for Christmas.

The next morning at eleven o'clock a crowd of the boys met around the tree. They had a good time in prayer, and then nearly sixty presents were given to them. One thing noticeable—all seemed to receive the very things that were needed in school life. The day was spent in playing and singing, and the sound of prayer was heard from several rooms.

At four o'clock the bell rang, and we all gathered in the simply, yet beautifully, decorated dining room. The tables were laden with a good dinner, and with bowed heads we rejoiced and gave thanks for the Gift of all gifts. Of course, it was not long until there was the sound of joyful testimony, as different ones spoke of the preciousness of Jesus, and the larger vision they were getting of what it meant to truly serve Him.

Sister Peabody gave several greetings which had been received from some of the dear former students. At each plate was a piece of holly which was sent by three former students who are teaching in a Bible school in the East. After a joyful time around the tables, the students went out to the different missions in personal visitation to make someone else happy.

Every evening we gathered and had a good prayer meeting in behalf of the students who were home or in revivals. ■

Warrington Church of the Nazarene. She and her husband owned and operated Trees' Trailer Sales in Warrington, and for more than 15 years she also owned Trees' Realty and Insurance Agency. A frequent visitor to camp meeting and a faithful supporter of GBS, Mrs. Dotson-Trees recently established the R.G. Flexon Memorial Scholarship to aid foreign students. She is survived by her husband, Everett, two daughters, 13 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

CORRESPONDENCE

"Rev. Harry Reid and wife and my Aunt Josephine Patterson brought me to GBS in 1955. It was in the revival with T. W. Commadol and wife that I was saved there and made my choice to Go with God. These forty-seven-and-a-half years have been wonderful.

Thanks to GBS for its wonderful teachers and for helping me learn to let God be the center of my life."

—Joan Bronson, Boiling Spring, South Carolina

"Thank you for the *Revivalist*. It is a great joy to read about the work of school. I was a student in 1949-50. Richard was a student 1950-51. We have been pastoring 54 years for the Lord. Please pray for us. We need a divine touch. We are planting another church for the Lord. —Doris Prendergrast, Spartanburg, South Carolina.

I enjoy the *Revivalist*. It keeps the fire burning in my soul. I knew the late Rev. M.G. Standley [GBS president 1911-1950] personally. I was born in Africa and worked with Rev. Rome Strickland in mission work in Johannesburg, South Africa. I am 92 years young! Glory to God! —Rev. Oral I. Lehman, Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

(continued on page 19) •



Dear Phil

AVOIDING DECEPTION

“How does one avoid being deceived by false prophets, as it says in Matt. 24:4, 5?”

Jesus answers this question in Matt. 24:27, “For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be” (nasb). Anyone who claims to be Christ (24:5) or says he knows where He is on earth (24:23, 26), even if that person does miraculous things (24:25), is a false prophet. When Christ comes again in power, the whole world will know it (24:27, 30), because it will be sudden and obvious like lightning.

Let’s broaden the question just a bit and ask, How can we avoid being deceived by the enemy of our souls? The devil deceived Eve into thinking that it was not wrong to eat the forbidden fruit. As a result she sinned, thinking that she was not sinning (1 Tim. 2:14). Paul indicates that it is possible for us to be deceived like Eve was and expresses his concern over this in 2 Cor. 11:3, “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the sim-

licity and purity of devotion to Christ” (NASB).

There are two keys to avoiding deception. First, you must know God’s Word. If you do not know what God has said, you are susceptible to being deceived. Jesus gives the second key in John 7:17 where He tells the Jews, “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.” In other words, Jesus is saying that only if the Jews were willing to do God’s will would they be able to discern whether what Jesus taught was the truth and not a lie. This principle applies to us as well. If we want to know whether something is truly from God or not, we must first be willing to do His will.

We can know that we are willing to do His will if we are currently doing all that God has asked us to do. If we are not walking in all the light that God has already given us, then we are obviously not really willing to do His will. That is a fearful position to be in, for it opens us up to the enemy’s deception.

Stay immersed in the Word and walk in all the light God gives you, and you won’t have to worry about being deceived.

Your friend,
Philip Brown ■

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THE PRESIDENT’S PAGE continued

- (continued from page 3)

But you don’t have to miss Him. Those who were in tune to God’s redemptive plan and activity recognized Jesus right away. Simeon and Anna recognized Him as God’s means of salvation when He was still a babe in His mother’s arms. The Wise Men worshiped Him, John the Baptist announced Him as the “Lamb of God,” and the woman of Samaria said to her friends, “Is not this the

Christ?” Even a Roman Centurion who witnessed His crucifixion said, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

If Jesus were reincarnated among us today, would we be prepared to recognize Him? Or have we created a Jesus so much to our own liking that we would never know the one walking through the pages of our New Testament? This Christmas season, go back to the gospels and look for Him. You will be awed by what you find. ■

JESUS WHO? continued

- (p5) The crowd from Jerusalem raised the cry. The Galileans proudly answered of their local boy who had made good, “This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth.”

A prophet. Men of power, the prophets. But men. Men who sometimes failed. In time all of them died. Prophets deserve honor and respect but not adoration, worship, surren-

der, absolute trust. This is due to God alone.

“Who am I? What do you say?” It is Jesus’ challenge. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!” Peter knew. Not through reasoning. By revelation. He was doing the will of God; he had heard from heaven.

Have you? ■



We Believe In Christmas

By Dr. Mark Bird

Professor, GBS Division of Ministerial Education

When I was very young, I heard a rather interesting Christmas song several times on Christian radio. One phrase was sung over and over: “*The birds and Mary had a baby boy / The birds and Mary had a baby boy....*” At least that’s what I thought was being sung. But what the vocalists were really singing was this: “*The Virgin Mary had a baby boy.*” That, of course, is what Christmas is all about—there was a little boy born of a virgin, and that little boy was God Himself, the creator of the woman who held and rocked Him. The virgin had conceived by the Holy Spirit and had given birth to the only person in the universe who was ever both God and human. This divine baby boy grew

up to give His life so that we might be forgiven of our sins. When we celebrate Christmas, we are celebrating this wonderful news! In fact, the name of Jesus means “The Lord saves.”

JESUS IS FULLY HUMAN

It’s not hard to demonstrate that Jesus was truly and fully human. He was conceived in a mother’s womb, as were we all. He grew up; learned and developed as a person; got tired, slept, and was tempted, and did about everything else an ordinary human does, except commit sin. Then finally He experienced death, which is a destiny we all will share. Jesus was not simply a materialized spirit. He truly identified with the human race, for as the Scripture says, He became one of us (John 1:14).

JESUS IS FULLY GOD

But the Scripture is just as certain that He also was fully God. Consider these proofs from the Word of God:

Jesus claimed to be God. He said, “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8). This was a clear identity with the I AM of the old Testament, the same I AM who sent Moses to deliver the children of Israel (Exod. 3:14). Jesus also said, “I and my Father are One” (John 10). His opponents started to stone Him for saying this, because they understood Him to be saying that He was equal with God. Did Jesus tell them, “No, you misunderstand me. I am not really God?” No, He accepted their interpretation of His words. He was teaching that He was equal with God the Father.

Jesus did acts which only God could do. When Christ was on earth, He forgave sins (Mark 2), and He gave eternal life (John 10).

These are things which only God can do. He also resurrected Lazarus after He had said, “I am the Resurrection and the Life” (John 11). This was a divine action accompanied with a divine claim to be the “Resurrection,” because it is only the power of God that can raise anyone from the dead. Jesus claimed to be this “Life-Giver” and then gave Lazarus life, showing that He was who He claimed to be.

Moreover, Jesus created everything, according to John 1. And He holds everything together, according to Colossians 1. If Jesus created everything and upholds everything, then He is God!

Jesus possessed the attributes of God. According to Revelation 22:13, Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. This means that *He is eternal*. In John 17, Jesus refers to the glory that He shared with His Father before the world began. He existed in eternity before anything was created.

His disciples told Him, “Lord, you know all things,” and Jesus didn’t correct them. This certainly indicates that *He is omniscient*. He also said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18). And he said, “I am with you, even to the end of the world” (Matthew 28). St. Paul states in Eph. 4:10 that Jesus fills all things. These statements indicate that Jesus is not restricted by His humanity. In His deity, He can still be everywhere, for *He is omnipresent*.

Jesus accepted worship as God. The Wise Men worshiped even when He was a child. The disciples fell down before Him and worshiped Him (Matthew 28), and Thomas fell down before Him also, calling Him “Lord and God” (John 20). Remember that Jesus told Satan (Matthew 4) that only God was worthy of worship. If Jesus were not

God, He would not have accepted the worship of others.

JESUS—FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN—IS ONE PERSON

What we know about the relationship of the two natures of Christ is based on the clear teaching of Scripture that Jesus was fully God and fully man, yet only one person. From ancient times, the Christian Church has taught that the divine and human natures of Jesus existing in the one person are (1) **immutable**—they never change; (2) **indivisible**—they cannot be divided; (3) **inseparable**—they will always be together for all eternity; and (4) **unconfused**—the two natures remain whole; that is, there is not a third nature that developed from some type of mixture of the divine and human natures.

Both the human and divine natures are manifested in Christ, yet He lives and acts as one person. During His earthly mission, He acted in His humanity while He acted in His deity. Whenever Christ did anything, He was acting as the God-man, even though one or the other nature may have appeared to dominate at any given time. Jesus was always the God-man, and every action He participated in has to be understood in light of His full humanity and full deity.

Yes, we believe in Christmas! “The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,” and that little boy was God Himself, the creator of the woman who held and rocked Him. We worship Him who is our perfect Saviour, the God-man who grew up to give His life so that we might be forgiven of our sins. This is wonderful news, for this is what Christmas is all about. ■



Because of His great love for fallen mankind, Jesus willingly laid aside his glory and laid aside His "form as God," and took upon Himself the "form of a servant." This does not mean that Jesus laid aside His deity. He could not do that. He was God and would always be God. But He did lay aside His exalted position, His glory and splendor, and became a true human being. Remaining truly and completely God, Jesus chose to become a man—beginning His human existence as all humans do, through human conception and birth. The only difference between Jesus' conception and our conception is the fact that the Holy Spirit became the Agent of conception in the womb of a young woman who was a virgin. Jesus was truly human—not super-human—in all respects except one. Jesus did not partake of our fallen nature. He entered this fallen world, like Adam did before his fall, with a sinless human nature (1 Cor 15:45, 47).

Yes, Jesus "humbled himself." He put our needs before His own rights. Further, He chose to enter the human arena in "the form of a servant." He set aside all of His self-rights—His right to be recognized as the Creator of the world, His right to be treated with honor and respect, His right to be loved—and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

His self-humbling and self-denial is the pattern for us in all our interpersonal relationships. Jesus pleased not Himself (Rom. 15:3). He put the needs and concerns of others over His own personal needs and concerns. By virtue of the bond that exists between those who are united in Christ Jesus, we are to think about each other and conduct ourselves as Christ did toward us.

As an incentive to be Christlike in our attitudes and behavior, Paul reminds us of Jesus Christ's exaltation to world rulership. The implication is that if we take the road of humility with Christ, and learn to be Christlike in our attitudes and behavior, someday we will also be exalted and glorified with Him (1 Pet. 5:6; Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:11).

CONCLUSION

Charles Wesley penned, "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see / Hail the incarnate Deity / Pleased as man with man to dwell / Jesus, our Immanuel." This Christmas, will you choose to "have the mind of Christ"—learn to think about yourself and others as He did? In order to do this, you must be willing to humble yourself to serve others. In light of His supreme example (Phil. 2:5-11), let us demonstrate in all our relationships the "A, B, C's" of the Christian life—Christ-like attitudes and behavior.

- sermon outline by DR. ALLAN BROWN



* James B. Torrance. *Worship, Community and The Triune God of Grace*. Inter Varsity Press, 1996, p. 32.

"COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE
IN PREACHING"



Christmas: A Time to Review the "A, B, C's" of the Christian Life

Scripture: Philipians 2:1-11

INTRODUCTION

Philipians 2:1-11 reminds us that one of the reasons Jesus came to earth was to teach us the "A, B, C's" of the Christian life. "A" is for "attitude." "B" is for "behavior." "C" is for "Christlikeness." Christmas is a wonderful time to review them.

Our Scripture informs us that when we begin a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, we become members of His family. As such, we are to love each other, be kind to each other, and learn to live in harmony with each other. In spite of our cultural, economic, educational, and racial differences, our Heavenly Father provides us with four resources to enable us to do this (Phil. 2:1).

After reminding us of these four resources, Paul tells us to assume personal responsibility for our attitudes and actions and to be sure we promote loving unity (Phil. 2:2-4). Our passage closes with the supreme example of Jesus, for the primary ingredient necessary for Christlike attitudes and behavior is to adopt "the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5-11).

Let's think together about these three truths: our resources; our responsibility; and our representative, who shows us how to develop Christlike attitudes and behavior—the "A, B, C's" of the Christian life.

I. OUR FOUR RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING CHRISTLIKE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR (Phil. 2:1)

If we have been born again (or "from above," John 3:5, 7), we have been adopted into the family of God (Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:15) and have received four resources that enable us to be tender, loving and kind in our personal relationships. The "if" clauses are assumed to be true.

A. We receive encouragement from Christ. (1a) — "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ..."

Each of us is given the encouragement that comes from being united with Christ. Jesus sought us when we were wretched sinners. He was willing not only to be our Saviour but wanted us to be part of His family. This should bring great encouragement and a godly sense of our value as people. As our appreciation of

these truths grows, it should impact our thoughts, actions and reactions toward fellow Christians as we view them as God views us!

B. We receive comfort from Christ's love. (7b) — "if any comfort of love..."

He loved us when we were unlovely. He still loves us though we are often slow to learn how to return such wondrous love. The more we meditate on His love, the more He can help us to learn how to love others.

C. We receive the help of the Holy Spirit. (1c) — "if any fellowship of the Spirit..."

We have entered into partnership (*koironia*) with the Holy Spirit and therefore have all of His strength and transforming power available to us ("fellowship of the Spirit"). We are not asked to demonstrate Christlike attitudes and behavior through our own will power or strength. We can continually draw from the inexhaustible resources of the Holy Spirit, who will remind us of our own frailties if we are impatient or critical of fellow Christians.

D. We receive gentle treatment from God. (1d) — "if any bowels and mercies..."

Each of us receives tenderness and compassion from God in spite of our weakness, our ignorance, our slowness to "catch on" to what He is trying to teach us, and our periodic stumblings ("bowels and mercies"). His goodness to us is designed to teach us how to be patient and kind to others.

Too often we try to manage our relationships in the home and in the church according to our own wisdom, skills, and abilities. Thus we find ourselves emotionally depleted, sometimes irritated, and often discouraged because of unexpected conflicts and difficulties. We must learn to utilize our four God-given resources through prayer, faith, and the power of the Spirit.

II. OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN DEVELOPING CHRISTLIKE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR (Phil. 2:2-4)

God wants us to view other Christians with an attitude of cooperation, rather than one of competitiveness or combativeness, and to develop a compassionate concern and a positive attitude toward them.

A. Develop an attitude of cooperation (2:2) — "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

An attitude of cooperation requires that we learn to think about one another with understanding compassion. Paul told the Philippians that he, as their model (Phil. 3:17; 4:9), was "thinking" (*phronein* Phil. 1:7) charitably toward them. He looked for and majored on their strengths, not their weaknesses or shortcomings. The verb for thinking (*phroneo*) is used twice in verse 2, stressing the need for proper thinking as a prerequisite for Christlike conduct. The only way to be "likeminded" is to be willing to listen to others and try to see the situation from their perspective. We have only begun to understand the other person's point of view when we can honestly say, "If I accepted the same basic premises that they do, I would feel very much like they do on this issue."

B. Do not be competitive or combative (2:3) — "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

A major factor which destroys personal relationships is "strife." Apart from the grace of God, we automatically focus on our own feelings, dislikes, and preferences,

forgetting that as servants of the Lord we are forbidden to strive or quarrel with each other (2 Tim. 2:24a). Rather, we are to ask for God's grace to enable us to put the needs and wants of other Christians ahead of our own. We are to be patient when wronged and long-suffering when dealing with difficult people (2 Tim. 2:24b, 25). In our families and our churches we are called to renounce the world's attitude that we should stand up for our rights and assert our own feelings and views.

Another cause for the destruction of personal relationships is "vainglory"—the desire for personal recognition and credit. Our goal ought to be God's approval, rather than man's (2 Cor. 10:18). What we do is to be for His glory, not our own (1 Cor. 10:31). In lowliness of mind (genuine Christlike humility) we are to esteem others more highly than we esteem ourselves (2:3b).

C. Develop a compassionate concern for others (2:4) — "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

One of the greatest obstacles to unity is self-centeredness. We want others to understand how we feel and how we would handle a situation rather than sincerely trying to understand how they think. We are commanded to put others' feelings and their good above our own. Paul said, "Don't think only of your own good. Think of other Christians and what is best for them" (1 Cor. 10:24). It is obvious that this is not a natural reaction. Just in case we think that such commands are impossible, let us look at the attitude and behavior of Jesus, our great representative, who by personal example teaches us how to view ourselves and our relationship with others.

III. OUR REPRESENTATIVE WHO TEACHES HOW TO VIEW OURSELVES AND OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS (Phil. 2:5-11)

We are commanded to pattern our thinking after the thinking of Jesus. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). To understand the impact of this command, we need to think about who Jesus was before He was born in Bethlehem.

A. His position prior to His incarnation. (Phil 2:6a) — "Who, being in the form of God..."

We are directed to the role Jesus had as a member of the trine Godhead before His incarnation. Jesus, who is God the Son, the second member of the divine Godhead, existed from all eternity "in the form (*morphé*) of God." Further, since the trine Godhead is holy (Lev. 11:44) and is love (1 John 4:8), it appears that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit co-indwelt each other in mutual holy love. The early church spoke of this relationship as a "perichoretic unity," a relationship of mutual love, mutual self-giving, mutual deference, mutual "indwelling," and mutual glorifying.* In addition to this perichoretic unity, Jesus enjoyed all the glory and praise of the angels of heaven since he was in Majesty co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit.

B. His decision to become the God-man. (Phil 2:6b-8) — "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found, even the death of the cross."

Jesus did not consider His "form as God," which is referring to his position within the Godhead with all its glory and honor, as something He had to hold onto.



• (continued from page 13)

NOTICES

Darrell W. Underwood, a former GBS student, now of Valparaiso, Florida, describes **Modesty's Clothing Store**, a new business enterprise which he has begun: "Modesty's Clothing Store sells modest clothes to virtuous women. Soon we will provide a wide selection of women's clothing via the Internet and a catalog. What we have can be found at our online store, www.stores.ebay.com/modestysclothingstore."

HITHER AND THITHER

The Rev. Rodger Moyer and the Rev. Alvie Jarratt were re-elected on the first ballot as General Moderators of the Bible Missionary Church at the denomination's fourteenth General Conference, August 17, in Springdale, Arkansas. During the conference, General Moderator Spencer Johnson "preached with energy and passion. He warned of the dangers of compromise," according to *The Missionary Revivalist*.

"Indiana Wesleyan University has bought University Plaza, a strip shopping mall that is located a few blocks south of the IWU campus. The purchase includes a 125,000 square-foot building plus about 22 acres of adjoining land..." according to *The Wesleyan Advocate*. IWU will use the mall for offices, storage, and possibly the main campus post office.

The Campinas Central Church of the Nazarene in Brazil now registers over 3,000 members, claiming that on average it adds 300 to its membership every six months. In September the congregation purchased nearly 24 acres to build a 6,000-seat sanctuary and educational facility in the northern part of the city. ■

• (p4) travelers (knowing and getting along with people); hints regarding the way music influences us and the invisible world's involvement in good/bad music" —*Andrea Whiteman (Hope International Missions)*.

RUSSIA

"Here in Vyborg Christian Center our new children's center, "Kovchek" ("The Ark"), is continuing. Please pray that we will be able to carry on the successful programs with children from the community and the children's home that was begun this summer despite the departure of some of our best youth workers. We also have ongoing contacts with other children's homes in our region." —*Richard Grout, Russian Lifeline (Hope International Missions)*

TIBET

"John Knight (EFM) requests prayer about an invitation authorities have extended to him to start an orphanage in Tibet. Not too long ago they warned Joshua Wang that John

Knight should never come back to that country. Brother Knight says the conditions they set forth for the orphanage 'are not to our liking,' but requests prayer that God will reveal whether this should be regarded as an opportunity." —*Ropeholders*

UNITED STATES

"We blew our old record of 120 on Sunday with a combined English/Spanish crowd of 138! On only our third Sunday on the road, our bus had over 35 riders. We are well on the way to filling it up! Our after-school Bible club has taken off with a bang. Eight children prayed to receive Christ at the very first meeting! We are already facing some opposition in this arena, but the law is on our side. Establishing a community of faith in this area is vital. Just evangelizing the community is not enough. We must be concerned enough to sink our little boat with theirs, to enter into the struggles of our brothers and sisters in the inner city and to make these struggles our own." —*Eric Himelick (Inner-City Indianapolis)*. ■

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• (continued from page 4)

THE WESLEY TRICENTENARY

This year we've been celebrating Wesley's birth for the entire year at our midweek services. May we please have permission to copy and distribute the articles from the Wesley Tricentenary issue [Sept. '02] of *God's Revivalist* in our continuing celebration of Wesley's life?

BRUCE OLSON
Faith Community Church
Springfield, Illinois

In general we are pleased to give permission to reprint most articles appearing in God's Revivalist, provided that appropriate credit is given. However, such requests are handled on a per-item basis. —Editor

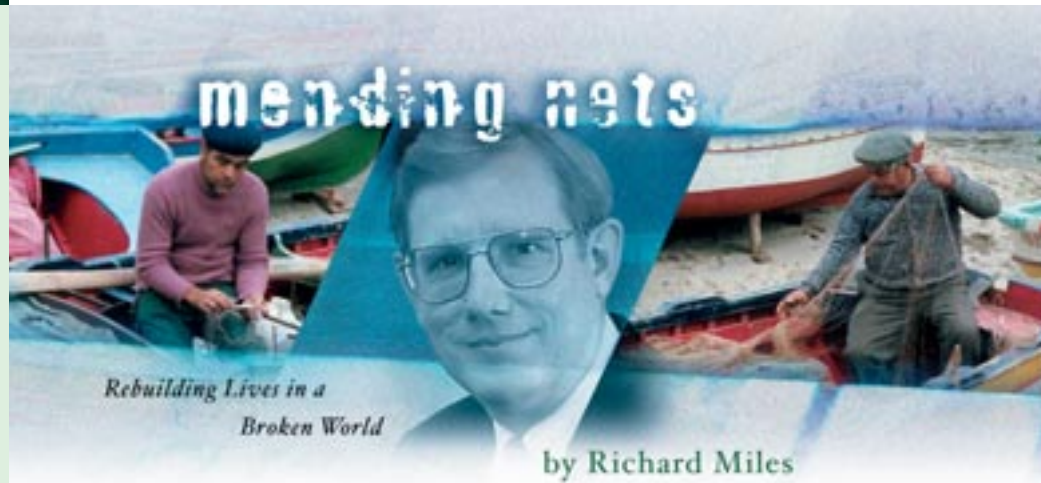
I congratulate you that in highlighting the many facets of Wesley's incredible life, you have managed to avoid any hint of hero-worship. But the record makes abundantly clear that we owe him a tremendous debt which can be paid best by seriously studying his message and methods, repenting of our neglect of them, and, with "strangely warmed hearts," going forth to make a vital, eternal difference in this 21st century. For, as you so skillfully have made clear, Wesley's message is God's message, and his methods, springing from his genius for administration, gave the soul of the Wesleyan revival the solid framework which, under God, caused it to endure. I cast my vote for a serious review of this framework of accountability and balanced truth.

ANITA BRECHBILL
Email

A GARDENIA IN A GARBAGE CAN

We truly enjoy the *Revivalist*. It is akin to finding a gardenia in a garbage can, a breath of fresh air in a dank tomb, a cool spring in a desert! Keep up the good work. God bless!

KENNETH A. WOLF
Fremont, Ohio



THE MEASURE OF YOUR WORTH

I feel worthless! As a Christian, am I supposed to feel this way? After all, God is the only one who is good.

It's true that in the ultimate sense, God is the only One who is good; and if innate goodness determines our worth, we are all bankrupt. Thankfully, however, our worth is not determined by that original quality which we all lost through sin. Consider some other measures, however, that will reassure you of your great worth.

You are of great worth because of what God has paid for you! In purely human terms, economic value is determined by what a customer is willing to pay for an item. We must take care when teaching heavenly lessons with earthly illustrations, of course; but still the Bible does this often. Think, then, of how much God was willing to lay down for you. The highest price ever paid was what He willingly gave for you and me and for all sinful people. How dare we feel worthless when He offered up His Son for us! Don't view cheaply what God values highly!

You are of great worth because of your value to others! We often determine worth by something's importance to others. Applying this spiritually, think how God gives us worth by including us in His great redemptive work for others. Yes, the God of eternity, your Creator and your Redeemer, has called you to do His work! This means you have incredible purpose and meaning. How then can you feel valueless?

You are of great worth because of what you possess! In human relationships we usually establish worth by what one owns. Think of all you possess—the Spirit of Christ who is in you (Rom. 8:9) and eternal life (Jn. 3:15) through Him. Remember, too, that you jointly inherit whatever the Father gives to Jesus (Rom. 8:17).

Let me add some additional counsel. Accept yourself as imperfect, knowing at the same time that you are still very useful. Share your gifts unselfishly in helping others. Don't help others for what you get out of them, but simply learn the value of giving. Accept the value of your uniqueness and avoid comparing yourself to others. This is not fair to them or to you. Take care that you cherish God's creation because despising the creation may lead to despising the Creator.

Be sure that you confess any sin in sincere repentance and that you are living victoriously by faith in God. Truly believe and then accept God's gift of forgiveness and personal salvation. (p23) •

• (continued from page 2)

Yet there is a darker theme which weaves its way throughout our festive ones. For though Bethlehem “seems to be a place of pure joy, and fountains of joy stream from it daily over the whole earth, there is a deep sorrow in it also—a sorrow so universal that it makes all its brightness pathetic,” as Faber reminds us. “Although in the hearts of men it must lie in light forever, a thundercloud can hang even over Bethlehem.”

That thundercloud is the shadow of the cross, and that shadow was to darken the Saviour’s journey all the way to Calvary. Not all the sweetness of His infant sleep could obscure the shame which He was to bear so painfully for us; and at the crib as surely as at the cross, He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). Those vivid pictures of Jesus’ birth and childhood painted by St. Matthew and St. Luke are filled with pathos too deep for words, for they portray and portend the deeper agony which awaited Him.

These pictures loom before us now in jarring contrast to our cherished atmosphere of Christmas cheer. For we see Him rejected at Bethlehem, where “there was no room for them in the inn”; and we peer into the darkness of the borrowed stable where he was born, remembering the darkness of the borrowed tomb where He would be buried. We behold the manger, built for beasts and not for babies, and we recall His impoverishment and dereliction.

Another writer carries even further the sad and symbolic associations. “An ox and an ass surrounded His crib at Bethlehem; two thieves were to flank His Cross on Calvary. He was wrapped in swaddling bands in His birthplace. He was again laid in swaddling clothes in His tomb—clothes symbolic of the limitations imposed on His Divinity when He

took a human form.... He was already bearing His Cross—the only cross a Babe could bear, a cross of poverty, exile, and limitation. His sacrificial intent already shone in the message the angels sang to the hills of Bethlehem.” “*Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord*” (Luke 2:11).

We hear Simeon extolling Him, “the glory of Thy people Israel”; but we catch our breath as he prophesies the sword which would plunge into His mother’s heart when He was lifted up to die. We catch a glimpse of Mary and Joseph fleeing with Him

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to refuge beneath Egypt’s broiling sun, then shudder as Rachel’s screams for her slaughtered children penetrate our ears. We watch the Holy Family take up their lowly home in little Nazareth, and we worship Him who “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:7–8).

One “thing is true of all these pictures,” as Dr. Faber reminds us. “The shadow of Calvary rests upon them all. Everywhere the sunlight is

intercepted. There is not a patch on one landscape on which the unimpeded sun may sleep, as on a bank of flowers. The shadow is universal. Denser here and thinner there, it is unequal, but it is [everywhere]. The Passion is the Unity of the Infancy. Calvary gives its character to Bethlehem.... Everywhere there was a shadow, and it was one shadow—the shade cast by Calvary, a low hill, indeed, but tall enough to cast a shadow that should gird the globe and come round to rest on the same dear height from which it was thrown.”

The famous painter Holman Hunt once portrayed that threatening shadow. Our Lord is painted as a stalwart youth amid the tools and shavings of the carpenter shop. As he stretches his tired body, it casts a shadow on the wall; and His arms are in the same position as they would be when the Roman soldiers would nail Him to the cross. That shadow lengthened as he began His public ministry and as He taught and healed in the months thereafter.

Always His central message was the kingdom in which He would rule over us, as Dr. Earle Cairns asserts, but always His central mission was the cross on which He would die for us. “*From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day*” (Matthew 16:21).

For a moment we gaze into the tiny manger we have placed upon the mantle, and we push the kneeling shepherds a little closer to Mary, Joseph, and the Babe. In reverie now we see the thundercloud which gathered over Bethlehem, and we trace the cross which overshadows it. “He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” we whisper; and now tears begin to glisten in our eyes. “We hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we

esteemed him not... But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:3, 5).

Weeping at the manger? Now we understand; and yes, now we shed our tears for love of Him who shed His tears for love of us. How often He wept we cannot know, but three times in Scripture we catch glimpses of our weeping Lord. Near Lazarus' tomb, He wept with stricken friends (John 11:35). Over Old Jerusalem which would crucify Him, He wept for the judgment which so soon would destroy it. And in the shadows of Gethsemane, He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears..." (Hebrews 5: 7). At the same time, however, it was "for the joy that was set before him," He "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

Tears and joy! Here is the paradox of Jesus' life, and here also is the paradox of ours. But for us, as for Him, the tears are only for a little while; but the joy shall be forever. After all, that is the meaning of the manger as certainly as it is the meaning of the cross. One stands at the beginning of His life, and the other at its end; and both unite in the great redemptive purpose which sent Him to us. **Tears and joy!** Here also is the paradox of our Christmas feast. We smile, as we wipe away our tears, knowing all the while that in the sorrows which life shall offer us, we shall weep again. Yet the Jesus of the manger is also the Jesus of the cross; and He is also the Jesus of the final glory; and as wise old Faber reminds us once again, "the hour will come when the kind hand of Jesus himself in his Father's house shall wipe [those tears] away forever." ■



By Anita K. Brechbill

WHERE LAMBS WERE BORN

"...great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh... (1 Tim.3:16)

The stricken angels watch as He lays aside His robe of glory, leaves the Father's bosom, and begins the descent into our world of woe. The Plan, made before the foundation of the world, is about to be unveiled. Joy begins to sweep the angel hosts as the word is passed along, "Redemption for fallen man!" The skies above the Judean hills blaze with light as a multitude of the heavenly host praise God, and an angel announces, "This day is born a Saviour."

But, in a stable? This is the place where lambs are born, not kings. But it was not a mistake. The King of Kings was also the Lamb of God. He chose His birthplace. He did not let His exalted position stand in His way. He clothed Himself in a robe of flesh made from the dust of the ground. He humbled Himself. The greatest honor of our existence is to follow in His steps. ■

Anita Brechbill, Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania, is editor of *RopeHolders* and a regular contributor to the *Revivalist*.

MENDING NETS continued

- (p21) Cultivate a personal loving relationship with God and others. Live an obedient and disciplined life. Confidence grows best in the soil of an undisturbed clean conscience. Involve yourself in a loving supportive community of faith.

Indeed, you are not worthless! Just ask God (1 Pet. 2:9-10)! ■

"Mending Nets" explores God's readiness to "mend" the breakdowns which so often mar our lives. It is written by the Rev. Richard Miles, GBS Vice President for Student Affairs. He invites our readers to send questions to be addressed in this column. His email address is Mendingnets.@gbs.edu



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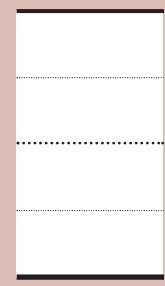
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