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THE MAN WHO MISSED CHRISTMAS

Christmas time means many things, and too often the spiritual side is forgotten. This week Lancaster Farming offers as a Christmas editorial the invocation given by the Rev. Delmar R. Probst, Mount Hope Methodist and Wesley Methodist pastor, at the annual Christmas banquet of Farm Women's Society 15:

Text: Matthew 2: 1-3

During the latter part of the war, an American airman stationed in England, spent a leave with friends who lived in the vicinity of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Hearing a rumor that the King and Queen were to visit the city, the airman set off by bus in the hope that he might catch a glimpse of the royal couple. As the bus entered the city, he remembered the letter which the postman had given him as he left to catch the bus. It was from home, and so engrossed was he in its contents that he was quite unaware of the excitement of the people in the bus as it pulled up opposite the City Hall.

There in full view of all the passengers were Their Majesties, busy inspecting Civil Defense units. It was only as the bus was pulling away that the airman realized what was happening. But it was too late. By the time he had alighted at the next stop and rushed back to the City Hall, the inspection was over. The Royal family had driven off.

"To think I was so near the King and Queen and then did not see them," he remarked afterwards in a tone which can well be imagined.

For centuries men have kept an appointment with Christmas. Christmas means fellowship, feasting, giving and receiving, a time of good cheer. To miss Christmas is a tragedy. Yet, how many of us are like the first man who missed Christmas! His name was Herod. He could have gone with the Magi but he stayed at home, and missed Christmas.

It is possible to miss Christmas today by making it a secular event without any religious significance. The real meaning of Christmas and the relevance of the coming of the Saviour is quite overlooked. Why?

For the very same reasons that kept Herod away from Bethlehem.

I. Herod did not really believe the Scriptures.

His Biblical scholars quoted Micah 5:2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting," and Herod sent the Magi to Bethlehem, but did not go himself.

Perhaps he thought they were on a "wild goose chase." He had his doubts about it. Maybe he did not think a great deal of his Theologians. He seemed interested enough, in a casual way, but not sufficiently to go with the Magi.

How many people are like that today? People hear the Bible read and listen with interest, as they would to an essay or a poem, but it never occurs to them that it is God's Word to be applied to their own lives.

II. Herod had wrong motives.

Herod missed Christmas because he had wrong motives. He was an able ruler and did much for his country. Often misunderstood and badly let down by those he loved, he had become crafty, cruel, suspicious. He did not rejoice when it was rumored that the Christ might be born. Immediately he thought of himself, and how it would affect his standing on the one hand with Rome, on the other with people. He had held the kingdom for 30 years, and he was determined to continue to hold it.

His jealousy caused him to miss Christmas.

We too will miss Christmas if our motives are wrong, if we think only in terms of material gain.

III. Then Herod was not prepared for it.

Although God was preparing the world for "The fullness of time," and there was an air of expectancy abroad, Herod does not seem to have been aware of it. Perhaps he had heard and did not treat it seriously. He might have been preoccupied, so that the announcement of the Magi took him completely by surprise, and consequently he missed what might have been the greatest experience of his life.

May the commemoration of the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ — this year — prove to be the greatest experience of your life because you have given him your heart, (your best gift), and He will have given you the assurance of eternal life!

Hence you will not miss Christmas!

Voice Of Lancaster Farms

AND FARM FRIENDS

(Readers are invited to write comments on Lancaster Farming, about current events, or other topics. Letters should be brief, and must be signed. Names will be withheld if requested. — Editor).

GOOD JOB

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — I have just seen a copy of Lancaster Farming and I congratulate you on the good job done on the District 4-H Baby Beef and Lamb Club show and sale. Sincerely yours, Edwin H. Rohrbeck, Editor, College of Agriculture.

INTERESTING

PARADISE — We like your paper very much. So many little interesting things to read. We don't miss one little item. Would like to subscribe for one year. — Mrs. J. Earl Rice.

FARMERS OWN

LITITZ — I was very pleased to read recent copies of Lancaster Farming and I am glad to see the farmers of Lancaster County now have their own newspaper. Congratulations and put my name on the charter subscribers' list now. — Daniel Landis.

LIKES WOMEN'S PAGE

BAREVILLE — Please enter our subscription for one year. Check enclosed. Thanks for publishing pictures of local interest. I'm sure everyone enjoys seeing their neighbors' pictures and even themselves sometimes. Maybe you could print more local events and activities of the churches in Lancaster County. Keep it a clean paper and you'll continue to receive subscriptions as many do not like to subscribe to other papers with all their worldly activities. Keep it a "homey" paper. — A Reader.

(Editor's note: There are several hundred churches in the County, more than 250 ministers in one association. Some of these serve more than one church. Hence any undertaking of church news would be impossible. We're trying to provide as much agricultural news as we can, and space is limited. Thanks for your letter. — EJN)

CONTINUE — AS IS

BAREVILLE — Received two copies of Lancaster Farming. Hope you will continue, as it is. Am sending check for \$1.00 along in this letter. — A Reader.

NEW SUBSCRIBER

NEW HOLLAND — Please enter my subscription for one year. Enjoy paper very much. — Rev. George D. Carnshaw, Jr.

ENJOY LF

DENVER — Please put these two names on your mailing list for one year. We sure enjoy your paper. — David E. Reed.

HE'S PAGE ONE NEWS

MILLWAY — Find enclosed one dollar for one year subscription to your Lancaster Farming. I have been to visit my brother-in-law, and he had a boxholder copy, and showed me a picture of myself feeding my broilers, in the Dec. 2 issue. I like the reports of the Lancaster Poultry Exchange, therefore I think I should receive your paper, not knowing I was enough in politics to have my picture on the front page. — LeRoy D. Horst.

(Editor's Note: Politics? No, Mr. Horst, it was just a newsworthy photograph by our friend Grant Heilman up at Lititz. — EJN.)

GOOD THING

GORDONVILLE — Please put the above ad in your paper three times, and enclosed find \$1.00 for the first subscription price. I think it is a good thing for about everybody. Do you expect to keep it clean of liquor and cigarettes? — M. G. D.

50 Years Ago

This Week on Lancaster Farms

(This Week In 1905) By JACK REICHARD

Unemployment in England reached an all time high in 1905. It was reported that hundreds of thousands had nothing to do or to eat. American observers in England noted that regardless of the depression the game preserves of the nobility were being enlarged and vast areas of fertile land enclosed and devoted solely to the propagation of game for the sport of the lord and barons. The Americans suggested the breaking up of the enormous reservations and putting the hungry to work so they could raise food to eat. Observers pointed out that "such conditions in America would bring insurrection".

In Maine it was reported that many remnants of fine orchards existed on old and abandoned farms in that state. With the abandonment of the farms had come reforestation on most of the land, increasing wild game. In 1905 many bear were killed in that section, all found in the old apple orchards.

Six million bushels of macaroni wheat grown in this country were exported to Europe in 1905, the first wheat of the variety ever sent out of the United States.

A farm newspaper columnist commented: "The fact that a man works on a farm is no excuse for his going around looking like a

tramp. The standing of a man is bound to depend somewhat on his personal appearance. Otherwise he would have been made like a monkey".

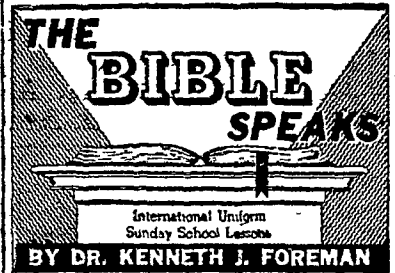
Rural citizens were reminded of the new law concerning the election of township supervisors effective with the new year of 1906. Instead of electing supervisors yearly, townships in the State of Pennsylvania were decreed by law to elect three supervisors in February — one for one year, one for two years and one for three years; and annually thereafter one for three years.

Kherzon oats, imported from Russia to Nebraska, were reported giving an increased yield of 15 bushels per acre over other varieties in that state.

At Lancaster Henry Eschbach, aged 5, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Eschbach, set himself on fire. The boy had been playing with matches at a rabbit pen and set the straw on fire. His screams attracted the attention of John W. Brucker, who also suffered severe burns in the rescue of the child.

NO TROUBLE AT ALL.

Waynesburg Pa. — Lawrence Mylan entered the hospital here complaining of abdominal pains. The pains were traced to a thermometer that had been lodged in Mylan's small intestines for 33 years.

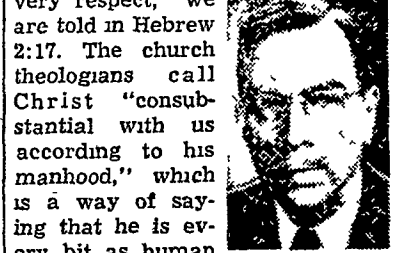


Background Scripture: Luke 3 21-22, 4:42; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 28:29; 10:21-22, 11:1-13. Devotional Reading: John 17 13-24

Man of Prayer

Lesson for December 18, 1955

SOME people will try to tell you that we can learn nothing from the fact that Jesus was a man of prayer. He was so different from us, they say, that we must no more try to imitate him than to imitate Einstein. This is not the way the New Testament looks at it, not the way Christian theology looks at it. Jesus "had to be made like his brethren in every respect," we are told in Hebrew 2:17. The church theologians call Christ "consubstantial with us according to his manhood," which is a way of saying that he is every bit as human as we are. Without sin, to be sure. The only prayer for forgiveness which he ever uttered was on behalf of others, not himself. If even the sinless Son of God was a man of prayer, surely we who are so imperfect and sinful need prayer even more; and we can learn about prayer from him.



The Motive of Prayer One thing stands out: Jesus' motive or motives for praying must have been far stronger than the motive of most of us. Jesus would go without sleep or rest in order to pray. He, a man who had many friends and loved to have people around him, would draw from all human companions, would go far into the hills, would climb a high mountain, just in order to find a place where he could pray without interruption. In short, he took a great deal of trouble to pray. We take less trouble, because we don't feel the strong desire that he felt. But why? What was his motive? It is not so mysterious that we cannot give it a name, though it is too profound for us to fathom it to the depths. It was his heart's desire for close and closer shar-

heart and life of the heavenly Father. Jesus shows no sign of needing to "get right" with God. He was in full harmony to his life's end. But his prayers were an expression of that harmony. The piano tuner makes the strings of the instrument ring, true; but the musician then brings out the beauty that is there when all is in tune.

The Manner of Prayer

Dr. W. D. Chamberlain has written a book for plain Christians called "The Manner of Prayer," based on the Lord's Prayer. This is no place to borrow many pages from that fine book. Yet a word should be said about the manner of Jesus' prayer in general. We know that he used to attend the synagogue meetings, and we know that in those meetings formal (what we would call "printed") prayers were used, in which no doubt Jesus would join. But we hear a great deal more about his private prayers, and we can be pretty sure that for these occasions he never took a prayer-book with him. His prayers were personal, individual, they were free, and many of them were fully private, strictly between himself and His Father. This much is clear for our own prayer-practice: whatever formal prayers we may use in church, or whoever may be praying there for us (and with us, if "leading" in prayer means anything), this can be no substitute for personal, private prayer. We must never be tied down to any formula, as if God were something like a bureaucrat who would not consider a communication not in proper form! God wants to know most of all not how we say it but how much we mean it.

The Matter of Prayer

What things is it right to pray for? We can be sure of this much at least: It is always right to pray for the kind of thing which is in harmony with the "Lord's Prayer." (Incidentally, the fact that this prayer appears in more than one form in the gospels shows that it can hardly be right to insist on one set form of words.) Things not mentioned in that prayer, perhaps yes; but things out of line with it, no. Let the reader consider which of these objects of prayer are in line with the Lord's prayer: A promotion in one's job? Greater spiritual strength? The cure of an afflicted loved one? Foreign missions? An unborn child? The President of the United States? The elimination of a rival in love or business?

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