

From Where We Stand . . .



The Christmas Story

St Luke — Chapters I and II

And the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.

And when she saw him she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

. . . And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar-Augustus, that all the world should be taxed

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, in-

to Judea, unto the city of David which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had been it, they made known abroad saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Across The Fence Row

"With 50 states and the U. S. Congress passing laws almost every day there has still been no improvement in the 10 Commandments To which we'll add Amen."

—New Rockford (ND) Transcript

Dare to be wise; begin! He who postpones the hour of living rightly is like the rustic who waits for the river to run dry before he crosses. — Horace

The chief constable of a small English town was also an expert veterinarian. One night his telephone rang. "Is Mr. Blank there?" said an agitated voice. Mrs. Blank answered, yes, and inquired: "Do you want my husband in his capacity of veterinary surgeon, or as chief constable?" "Both, Madam," came the reply. "We can't get our new bulldog to open his mouth, and — there's a burglar in it."

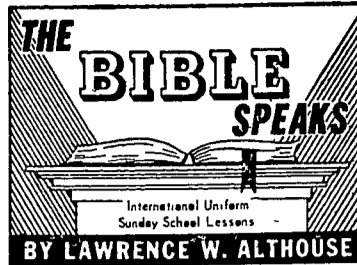
Debts: the certain outcome of an uncertain income.

Local Weather Forecast

(From the U. S. Weather Bureau at the Harrisburg State Airport)

The five-day forecast for the period Saturday through next Wednesday calls for temperatures to average near or below normal with daytime highs in the 40's and the overnight lows in the upper 20's. Normal high-low is 39-24.

Precipitation may total one-half inch or more as rain mixed with frozen sleet or snow about Sunday or Monday.



THE REAL JOY

Lesson for December 22, 1968

Background Scripture 1 John 1:14 Revelation 15:3b-4, 11:15b
Devotional Reading John 1:1-14

In the December 17, 1967 issue of the New York Times Magazine section there was an article entitled, "Singing Those Christmas Holiday Blues." For an increasing number of people, it said, "Christmas is the worst of times. For them, this is the season of mishaps, depression and anxiety."



Rev. Althouse

For evidence, the article cited records of the New York Police Department which indicate that the number of traffic accidents is always higher at this time of year than any other. The F. B. I. also reports that there is an annual Christmas season rise in the numbers of murders and negligent manslaughters, as well as robberies. The National Retail Association adds that December shows the highest incidence of bad-check passing, slow accounts overdraw, and applications for new accounts by "deadbeats." On top of all this, says the article, the most common symptoms of the holiday blues are family quarrels, excessive drinking, loneliness, and despair.

Joy gone sour

Another national magazine surveyed leading American magazines last Christmas and found that they all seemed to reflect the opinion that "Good cheer has given way to gloom; the champagne has gone flat." In one of these magazines, a psychiatrist offered this explanation: "There are those who feel they should have such enormous enjoyment during a holiday that they become depressed, anticipating their inevitable disappointment. Yes, having to enjoy themselves can be a burden enough to kill the 'enjoyment'."

Yet, Christmas is supposed to

be a time of joy, isn't it? Doesn't John say of the incarnation, ". . . we are writing this that our joy may be complete?" (1 John 1:4). Don't we sing "Joy to the world, the Lord is come . . ." Don't our Christmas cards speak of "joy" and our Christmas customs and decorations presuppose it?

The answer to all these questions is, of course, "Yes." But the joy which turns sour for so many at Christmas is not the same joy of which the scriptures and the carols speak. It is because people seek the wrong Christmas joy that they find it such a dismal, discouraging experience.

Secular Christmas

A local high school advertises a "secular Christmas program." "How can that be?" we ask. "How can you make a religious experience secular?" Yet isn't that what we have done with Christmas? Keeping only the name and the sentiment, haven't we made it mostly a secular celebration, divorced from Christ, oblivious to the meaning of the incarnation? Isn't it true for many that the creche is simply a symbol of a forgotten reality, a nostalgic reminder of how the holiday season got its name?

The objective of these secularized Christmas seems to be: enjoy one's self and have a good time, to be merry and gay, to be swept along in an atmosphere of good cheer and inexpensive good will. The order of the day: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we go back to work!"

Reason for joy

But one cannot be joyful for the sake of joy itself. There must be a reason or the joy will turn sour. John has a reason for his joy. He rejoices in the knowledge that God revealed himself and bestows the gift of eternal life in the coming of Jesus Christ. Through this one man, Jesus, we are made one with all other men and God himself. In this day of death and division, is that not something which has the power to inspire real joy?

If a man will truly consider the meaning of Christ's coming, he will find a joy that cannot be taken down with the tinsel and the tree.

(Based on outlines copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. Released by Community Press Service.)

Farm News This Week

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Herr Named Co-Chairman Of F & H Campaign — Page 1

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New County FFA President Has Project Diversity — Page 1

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NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent

To Provide Salt and Minerals

All species of livestock respond to liberal amounts of salt and minerals. The best way to provide this amount of salt is to provide free choice loose salt, this form of salt is better than the block salt because of greater consumption. The kinds of minerals needed will vary according to the animals and to the kinds of roughages being fed, however, most minerals should include both calcium and phosphorus. Free choice minerals separate from the loose salt is recommended.

To Prepare Farm Show Animals

State Farm Show is less than a month away. Exhibitors of all livestock should refer to the Pre-

mum List and prepare their animals to meet all show and health regulations. Copies of this Premium List are available from our Extension Office or from the Fair Show Office at Harrisburg.

To Practice Holiday Safety

The Holiday Season presents additional fire hazards with extra decorations and use of many extra lights and extension cords. Users of Christmas trees and evergreens for decorating are urged to keep the trees in water or moist sand and keep away from open flame. All members of the family should be instructed regarding the hazards of decorations in the home.

mium List and prepare their animals to meet all show and health regulations. Copies of this Premium List are available from our Extension Office or from the Fair Show Office at Harrisburg.