

CHRIST IN EVERYDAY LIFE

EDWARD INCREASE BOSWORTH

Dean of Oberlin Theological Seminary

ASSOCIATION PRESS

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“What gets your attention gets you.” The purpose of this little book is to fasten attention each day upon some great thought expressed in a paragraph from the Gospels. The times demand men who carry into everyday life the ideals of Jesus Christ, and who hold Him in daily reverence as the One through contact with whom these ideals may in large measure be realized.

SECTION I

Beginnings

Sunday, First Week, Matt. 1:1, 17-25.

- 1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
- 17 So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations.
- 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy
- 19 Ghost. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was
- 20 minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which
- 21 is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.
- 22 Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying,
- 23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,
- And they shall call his name Immanuel;
- 24 which is, being interpreted, God with us. And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord
- 25 commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS.

These “generations,” stretching back across the centuries, with all their joys and sorrows, culminated in one whose very name, “Jesus,” suggests deliverance. He was a Deliverer who brought God Himself into the consciousness of His people—“Immanuel,” “God with us.” His deliverance was not to be deliverance merely from the uncomfortable consequences of wrongdoing, but from the wrongdoing that occasioned these consequences. He would save His people from their sins. His was to be a deliverance that would enable men to break away from the habit of sinning. He would finally take all the selfishness out of all men forevermore. The generations of His spiritual descendants are fully as significant as His

ancestral generations. They show that Joseph's forecast had something more than a mere dream as its foundation. Jesus ever since has been "God-with-us," one who actually saves men from the restless evil in their natures.

"The King of Glory standeth
Beside the heart of sin.
His mighty voice commandeth
The raging waves within;
The floods of deepest anguish
Roll backward at His will,
As o'er the storm ariseth
His mandate, 'Peace, be still.'"

Mrs. Bancroft.

Monday, First Week, Luke 2: 1-7.

- 1 Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a
- 2 decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be
- 3 enrolled. This was the first enrolment made when Qui-
- 4 rinus was governor of Syria. And all went to enrol
- 5 themselves, every one to his own city. And Joseph also
- 6 went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into
- 7 Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem,
- 8 because he was of the house and family of David; to
- 9 enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being
- 10 great with child. And it came to pass, while they were
- 11 there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.
- 12 And she brought forth her first-born son; and she
- 13 wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a
- 14 manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

A new life was added to the Roman Emperor's list at this time when "all the world was being enrolled." The new life that was listed with the rest on the Roman official's scroll in Bethlehem did not attract the attention of the Empire. Professor Dods has said that men were as little aware of His true significance "as the oxen with whom he shared his first sleeping-place." "They saw Him with the same stupid, unconscious, bovine stare." But this life that began so unostentatiously had something in it that was destined to make its advent the most significant event in all human history. Men are increasingly agreeing to date all other events in human history with reference to this birth in the manger. Every event is designated as happening in some year B.C. or A.D.

"How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given;
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

"O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray,
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born in us to-day."

Bishop Brooks.

Tuesday, First Week, Luke 2: 8-20.

- 8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock.
9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore
10 afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall
11 be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
12 And this is the sign unto you; Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.
13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
14 Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.
15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto
16 us. And they came with haste, and found both Mary
17 and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying
18 which was spoken to them about this child. And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto
19 them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings,
20 pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

God was moving among the humble folk. The heavens were dropping low, and singing their gladness into the hearts of common men working about stables and sheep-folds. The currents of a new life began to run through the great common stock of humanity. "The angels went away from them into heaven," but the new life in the manger stayed on the earth with men. It had come to stay until it should shape the common life of all the world into conformity to itself. During all of His days Jesus lived with the kind of men among whom He first appeared. He Himself for years worked at a trade. Art has often obscured this fact by picturing Him with effeminate face and delicate hands, a man to whom no one would think of offering a job at two dollars a day!

God help us to do our day's work to-day as He did His day's work.

Wednesday, First Week, Luke 2: 22-32.

- 22 And when the days of their purification according to the
 23 law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jeru-
 24 salem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the
 25 law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall
 26 be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice accord-
 27 ing to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of
 28 turtledoves, or two young pigeons. And behold, there was
 29 a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this
 30 man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation
 31 of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And
 32 it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he
 should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's
 Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and
 when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they
 might do concerning him after the custom of the law,
 then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and
 said,
 Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,
 According to thy word, in peace;
 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;
 A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
 And the glory of thy people Israel.

When Luke was looking up sources for his Gospel he learned of the citizen of Jerusalem who appears here. The story reads as if he were an aged citizen naturally expecting death, but possessing an inner conviction that he should not die until he had seen the Great Deliverer. On this day he was walking slowly through the temple colonnades, as on other days, but with an unusual sense of God's presence, when he came suddenly upon a humble father and mother, and a priest making the poor man's offering for a first-born son. His heart leaped within him, and before he realized what he was doing the babe was in his arms and he was talking like a prophet.

Simeon felt that he could peacefully leave the world because the Christ had arrived. If you are ever pessimistic, remember that the world is certain to be a success because Jesus Christ is living in it.

Thursday, First Week, Luke 2: 33-40.

- 33 And his father and his mother were marvelling at the
 34 things which were spoken concerning him; and Simeon
 blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this
 35 *child* is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel;
 36 and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword
 shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out
 37 of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one
 Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe
 of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a
 husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been

- a widow even for four-score and four years), which departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings
 38 and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. And when they had accomplished all things that
 39 were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.
 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

After the aged citizen had thanked God for the child he gave a message to the parents. It was a message born of long reflection over the condition of the nation and the nature of the work demanded of a Messiah. Many of the pompous religious leaders of the day would have to fall. Many who, like Simeon himself, longed for a righteous national life, but were disheartened, would rise with new courage. The Deliverer would necessarily be unpopular and suffer bitter criticism that would cut like a knife into the proud young mother's sensitive heart. But the real character of men would be brought to light. Their attitude towards the Deliverer would show what manner of men they really were.

O Lord, grant me this day some truer acquaintance with myself. If the result be humiliation, may I be raised up by Jesus Christ into a self-respect born of honest penitence.

Friday, First Week, Matt. 2: 1-12.

- 1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born
 2 King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and
 3 are come to worship him. And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
 4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of
 5 Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet,
 6 And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
 Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
 For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
 Which shall be shepherd of my people Israel.
 7 Then Herod privily called the wise men, and learned of
 8 them carefully what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out carefully concerning the young child; and when ye have found
 9 him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him. And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child
 10 was. And when they saw the star they rejoiced with
 11 exceeding great joy. And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell

down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

The rising, the falling, the mother's distress of which Simeon had spoken (Luke 2:34) began at once. The men from the East had risen up in devout hope. The Jerusalem great men, who would one day wet their hands in the Deliverer's blood, were troubled. The young mother would soon flee in fright from the country, holding her young child close in her arms.

These magians from the far East seem to have been astrologers, who, though perhaps not Jews, nevertheless worshipped Jehovah, and were familiar with the Jewish Messianic hope. They had interpreted some phenomenon in the heavens to indicate the birth of the Jewish Messiah. In some way God guided them to the infant King.

"They rejoiced with exceeding joy." We sometimes fail to feel the exultant joy we have reason to feel over the transformation of human society that Jesus is certainly producing.

Saturday, First Week, Matt. 2:13-23.

- 13 Now when they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek
14 the young child to destroy him. And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed
15 into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my
16 son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully learned of
17 the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,
18 A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
And she would not be comforted, because they are not.
19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying,
20 Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the
21 young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.
22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he

23 withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.

Herod's dark deed that looks so black and large against the white background of Jesus' infancy was a small village affair compared with the many gross atrocities that made his long reign infamous. The undiscovered Bethlehem child seemed to him to be a possible rival, and he struck out at it with all the savagery of selfishness. The distress in some scores of village homes was nothing to him! The child he struck at is, in His ever-widening, deepening influence, creating a sentiment that more and more abhors a selfish deed and makes happy homes. It becomes increasingly evident that God proposed to protect Jesus in childhood, in manhood, in death, and finally through Him to overthrow the selfishness of the world.

"They are dead that sought the young child's life" (v. 20) is a verdict that will one day be pronounced on all selfish opposition to Jesus and His great movement in human history.

Sunday, Second Week, Luke 2:41-52.

41 And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the
42 feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years
43 old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and
when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning,
the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his par-
44 ents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the com-
pany, they went a day's journey; and they sought for
45 him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when
they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking
46 for him. And it came to pass, after three days they
found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doc-
47 tors, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and
all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and
48 his answers. And when they saw him, they were aston-
ished: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou
thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee
49 sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye
sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's
50 house? And they understood not the saying which he
51 spake unto them. And he went down with them, and
came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and
his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.
52 And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in
favour with God and men.

The incident shows what the early and fundamental enthusiasms of Jesus were. The House of Jehovah and the great teachers who gathered there were the center of

His keen, boyish interest. They seemed to make Him forget His parents and the homeward journey. He was for three days away from His parents without seriously missing them.

On the Nazareth hills He had already learned to walk in trustful companionship with His heavenly Father. He wondered that His parents should look for Him in Jerusalem anywhere else than in His Father's House. Yet this uprising sense of belonging to God alone did not develop into the spirit of unwarrantable independence sometimes characteristic of the transition from boyhood to manhood. He went back to a life of cheerful obedience in the Nazareth home, a strong, wholesome, winsome boy (v. 52). It was in the common life of the home and its neighborhood that He found God.

"The Lord is in His holy place
In all things near and far,
Shekinah of the snowflake, He,
And glory of the star.
And secret of the April wind,
That stirs the field to flowers,
Whose little tabernacles rise
To hold him through the hours."

Mrs. Browning.

Monday, Second Week, Matt. 3: 1-6.

- 1 And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching
- 2 in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, Repent ye; for the
- 3 kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was
spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying,
The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight.
- 4 Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and
a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts
- 5 and wild honey. Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and
- 6 all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan; and
they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confess-
ing their sins.

A weird figure in the sparsely settled section of Judæa began to cry out to passing travelers that God was about to begin His kingdom and that the nation must reform. It was a message that aroused both terror and hope, for while the hope of God's kingdom was the glory of the Jew, the kingdom was to be preceded by Jehovah's terrible judgment. The man in the wilderness resembled in rough dress and stern message their hero-prophet, Elijah, whose reappearance, it was commonly supposed, would precede the judgment and the new kingdom. People remembered,

too, that Elijah disappeared in about the same region in which this man now stayed. And so the city people flocked out to him.

May our eyes be opened to see the on-coming kingdom, and we be driven to repentance by the purifying power of its insistent opportunities.

Tuesday, Second Week, Matt 3: 7-12.

- 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
8 Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and
9 think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these
10 stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn
11 down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and *with* fire:
12 whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

The searching eye of the prophet noted in the crowds many long-robed Pharisees and some of the prominent Sadducees, the latter, perhaps, from the priestly family. They were probably there to inspect somewhat officially this remarkable religious movement. The prophet handled them roughly. He attacked directly their smug satisfaction with themselves. They felt that God certainly would never deal severely with distinguished men like themselves, the leading citizens in a nation sprung from Abraham, the righteous friend of God! But the prophet assured them that there would be severe judgment and that it would begin at once. The Judge Himself was among them in disguise. He was like the orchard keeper who had for a moment laid his ax at the foot of the tree while he made a final inspection of its branches! Separation, destruction, salvation, were the words that rang out over the crowd!

O Lord, help my spirit into genuine penitence that will prepare me for any crisis in this day's life.

Wednesday, Second Week, Luke 3: 10-18.

- 10 And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must
11 we do? And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none;

- 12 and he that hath food, let him do likewise. And there
 came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto
 13 him, Master, what must we do? And he said unto them
 14 Extort no more than that which is appointed you. And
 soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we
 do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man,
 neither exact *anything* wrongfully; and be content with
 your wages.
- 15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men
 reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply
 16 he were the Christ; John answered, saying unto them all
 I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he
 that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am
 not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the
 17 Holy Ghost and *with* fire; whose fan is in his hand,
 thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather
 the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up
 with unquenchable fire.
- 18 With many other exhortations therefore preached he
 good tidings unto the people.

Luke describes in some detail the character that the prophet's earnest soul longed to see in the nation. Its essential elements were sympathy and honesty. The man with extra food and clothing was to have sympathy with the man in need. The publicans were to be honest in their collection of taxes. The soldiers were to be reliable guardians of the public interest, not using their power to treat men unfairly. There must be a disposition on the part of all to give everybody a fair deal, not simply because of a cold-blooded determination to do right, but because everyone was sympathetically interested in everyone else.

When the people caught the prophet's idea it is not strange that he seemed to them to be preaching "good tidings" (v. 18), and that they began to look earnestly for the Great Leader who would infuse such a spirit into the people.

"When shall all men's good
 Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
 Lie like a shaft of light across the land
 And like a lane of beams athwart the sea
 Thro' all the circle of the golden year?"
 Tennyson, "The Golden Year."

Thursday, Second Week, Matt. 3: 13-17.

- 13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto
 14 John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and
 15 comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him,
 Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all
 16 righteousness. Then he suffereth him. And Jesus, when
 he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: