

Christ is Victor

NOV/DEC 2002

“The Saviour of the World”

“And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.” Luke 2:34

Joseph and his wife Mary marvelled at the things that were spoken of Him. Event after event was bringing to them a new revelation of the babe and a new sense of responsibility. A great son is a great responsibility. The parents must be spiritually alert and qualified. Do not think that these parents became extraordinary men and women all of a sudden. Much went into their training. A home of this quality cannot be created all of a sudden. Their ambitions and desires were heavenward. The make-up of their youth was very different. Do not take the home life of Jesus as that which was created all of a sudden. The parents were simple people. The growth and achievement in life will depend on the foundation that is laid in the days of youth. After a careless youth, you cannot build a spiritual home. I marvel at the simplicity and greatness of Mary and Joseph! How sublime, dignified and holy is the story of this home. There is a great wealth for a Christian in this story.

... “SAVIOUR” CON’T ON PAGE 2

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“He Gave His Only-begotten Son”

Christmas draws near again, with all its tender associations and mighty meaning. Over against the saddening spectacle of our war-scarred, sin-strangled world, let us reflect again, with simple-hearted gratitude, on the wonder of wonders, in the text of texts, John 3:16.

“He gave His only-begotten Son.” The measure of love is always its willingness to give; its capacity for sacrifice. If we would measure the love of God, we must measure it by Calvary. Someone has thus written of love:

*Love ever gives,
forgives, out-
lives;
And ever stands
with open hands;
And while it lives
it gives;
For while it gives it
lives;
And this is Love’s pre-
rogative
To give— and give— and
give.*

This is certainly true of the love of God. It is revealed in its giving, and is thus seen to be beyond all measure. We can never know the costliness of Calvary to God, nor can we ever measure the love that lay behind it. All we can do is to fall back on that elastic particle, “so”: “God

so loved... that He gave His only-begotten Son.”

This we know: such is the oneness of the Father and the Son, that, in giving the Son, the Father gave Himself; for “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). The Lord Jesus is not merely an agent through whom God

sends the message that He loves us. He is God Himself who actually came to earth loving us. He does not merely declare or expound the love of God: He is the love of God incarnate.

What adverbs we may unite with that particle “so”! “God so loved”— so fully, so freely, so sublimely. But when we proceed to the counterpart of that particle “so”, in the words, “that He gave His only begotten Son”, and when we reflect on the mysterious fact that the Father gave up the eternal Son, not only to the fathomless woe of

Calvary, but to the incorporating of our human nature itself into his divine being, by a real human birth, so that He is now the Son of Man for evermore, as well as God the Son, we can only exclaim, “God loved so unutterably...” Language indeed breaks down. We are lost in wonder, love



... “SON” CON’T ON PAGE 4

There was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. We do not hear of him before this. He must have been a quiet man. He was just and devout. For 400 years there had been no prophet in Israel. This man was expecting a great fulfillment of God's Word. Every man who reads the Word of God and meditates on it will have glimpse into the mind of God. Development of psychic powers help one to thought-read others. Prayer not only helps us to thought-read other people but also to thought-read God. Prophecy is nothing but looking into the thought of God. When your heart is purified and you fill it with the Word of God, you will look with God into the future. You will have a certain spiritual magnetism, which will attract people to you. How happy Simeon was when he took up Jesus into his arms. Christ has come as a Saviour to the world. It was a light to lighten the gentiles. This old man prophesied the sorrow the mother would have to face. Simeon seemed to see the anguish of the Cross. After a glorious ministry for three-and-a-half years Jesus would be hanging on the Cross. I do not know how this mother bore it.

Studying the Word of God will give you the right kind of spiritual development. There is a spiritual development that brings self-glory. Beware of it! Such a thing does not happen to those that study the Word of God. Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel. We must pray and look forward to the strengthening of the church. The church must become strong and effective. Our churches must develop in the proper way and produce great men of God. Do not think only

of yourself. You must first secure your spiritual life. Then you must expect God to do great things in the church. Whenever we preach, people must prostrate themselves before God. Individuals, families and churches must turn to God.

Simeon came by the Spirit exactly when Jesus came into the temple. That is how the Spirit guides. Spiritual life is a privileged life. The world is hungry for people who can prophesy. When you prophesy people will worship God. They will know that God is speaking through you. When you grow in spiritual life and in your prayer life God will give you such power that people will be convicted even as they approach the place where you stay. You will be so charged with divine power. Simeon was charged with the Spirit of God. His prophecy was used to strengthen the faith of a family that could not understand the events that came so fast and so wonderfully into their life. The quality of your spiritual life should be of a very high level.

— N. Daniel

"All Your Need"

A lady in London went one day to Paddington Station to bid good-bye to a friend who was leaving the city. After the train pulled out, the lady then proceeded homewards. She boarded a bus, and a moment or two later, the conductor asked for her fare. To her dismay, she found that she had lost her purse. The conductor intimated that she had better alight.

It was a hot morning. She was miles away from home. What was she to do? Turning into Hyde Park, she sat down on a seat. She was in an awkward predicament indeed, but— there was God! She would tell Him about it!

ment indeed, but— there was God! She would tell Him about it!

Opening her pocket Testament she carried in her handbag, she read Philippians 4:19: *"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

Her 'need' at that moment was six pence. She closed her eyes, and in the Name of Jesus claimed the promise; immediately she had the assurance that her need would be supplied. How, she did not know, and that did not matter— God knew!

She began to trace letters on the gravel with her umbrella. She traced the text, *"God is love."* As she was writing the last letter 'e', her umbrella point turned up a six pence! Her heart gave a big thump! Her need was supplied! And she bowed her head and thanked God.

She rose and hastened to catch a bus. When the conductor asked for her fare, she gave him the six pence. He examined it closely.

"It's all right," she explained, *"It has been buried in the ground. I lost my purse and needed six pence to take me home. I asked my Heavenly Father to send it to me, and He did. I was writing in the gravel in Hyde Park, God is Love, and my umbrella turned up this coin."*

The conductor looked astounded. *"I wish,"* he remarked, *"God would answer me like this! But there! I am not what I used to be I don't go to any church on Sundays now. I used to sing in our chapel choir at home. I'm married now and we spend my off-Sundays in the park."*

"Oh," said the lady, *"do come back to God. Get right with Him. God is love."*

There was no time to say more. When the bus neared the spot at which the lady

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was to alight, she whispered to the conductor as she passed on her way out “*Get right with God. I will pray for you.*” She kept her promise and prayed daily for the man and his wife.

One morning, some three weeks later, the lady was going to Kilburn by bus. She handed the conductor her fare, without looking at him.

“Excuse me, ma’am,” he said, “are you the lady who has been praying for me?”

In a moment, she recognized the man. “Yes,” she replied, “I am.”

“Oh,” he said, “I am glad to see you. I have not forgotten your story of the six pence. Best of all, I have got right with God and my wife is now converted. We have taken our little boy to the chapel and dedicated him to God.”

He told the good news with such real joy that the lady’s heart overflowed with gratitude to God.

— Selected

“A Gift of Life”

In 1910, a terrible plague swept through the former Czechoslovakia during the Christmas season. It was diphtheria, and it devastated the little Czech village of Velky Slavhov. Nearly half the village contracted the infectious disease, and many of the victims were less than ten years of age. Whenever a member of a family would show symptoms, a large black “X” would be swabbed on the doorpost of the house as a warning that it had been quarantined.

There was an “X” painted on the doorpost of the home of Jano and Suzanna Boratkova. In little less than a week, the young couple, parents of three, found themselves childless. Their oldest child, a five-year-old daughter, had been the first to go. And even as Jano was working in the wood shed, pounding together a coffin for her, his two sons were dying.

As the two young boys breathed their last, Suzanna broke into agonizing sobs. She cleaned and wrapped the two boys for a final time and carefully laid them in hand-made pine caskets. She and Jano lifted the coffins onto the wagon and started the slow journey through the biting December cold and the foot-high snow toward the graveyard. They passed by house after house marked with an “X,” but they didn’t have the strength to offer sympathy or encouragement. They were too wrapped up in their own grief.

The young couple laid their children in freshly-dug graves and struggled through the Lord’s Prayer. Then they trudged back to the wagon and returned home. No one was there to meet them. It was too dangerous, for the house was quarantined. It was a frightening, dark little tomb. Little high-heeled brown leather shoes were still lined up against the wood stove, as they usually were when the children were tenderly in bed. But now the beds were empty, the house was cold, the shadows deep and cold.

Jano himself was sick. “I won’t see another Christmas,” he said, wheezing and coughing. “I don’t think I’ll see the New Year in, either.” He pushed away the soup and bread, for it was too hard for him to swallow. The diphtheria had tied a noose around his neck, allowing neither food nor sufficient air to sustain him. Suzanna gathered some kindling and lit a fire for the night, sure that her husband was about to die. The snow was starting to fall again, and she paused to gaze through the window. Her mind went to a verse of Scripture— Psalm 121:1, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth.”

Suddenly she saw someone approaching, a peasant woman tramping through the snow, a red and purple plaid shawl draped over her hunched shoulders. A kerchief was wrapped around her head, and her long skirt was a bright display of cotton and linen patchwork. In one hand, she held a jar of

clear liquid. She approached the house and knocked on the door.

Suzanna cautiously opened the door. “We have the plague in our home,” she said, “And my husband is in a fever right now.” The old woman nodded and asked if she could step inside. She held out her little jar. “Take a clean, white linen and wrap it around your finger,” she said. “Dip your finger into this pure kerosene oil and swab out your husband’s throat, and then have him swallow a tablespoon of the oil. This should cause him to vomit the deadly mucus. Otherwise, he will surely suffocate. I will pray for you and your family.”

Then, having left her folk remedy against diphtheria, she turned and left. Suzanna followed the woman’s instructions, and early Christmas morning, Jano retched up the deadly phlegm. His fever broke, and Suzanna entertained a flicker of hope. There were no presents under the tree that year, but an old woman with her jar of oil was a gift of life. Jano recovered, in time. The Lord gave the couple more children. In the 1920s Jano and Suzanna emigrated to America— with eight children, which included a set of triplets and two sets of twins.

It’s a story that has been handed down through the generations of that family, the little peasant woman who came on Christmas Eve bearing the gift of life. Jesus, too, came on Christmas bearing the gift of life for hopeless, grieving dying people. He came for Jew and Gentile. He came for you and me.

— Selected

REALITY CHECK!

“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.”

JOHN 3:16

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and praise.

Yes, Christmas draws near again. In our thinking of it, we must never isolate Bethlehem from Golgotha, or the Cradle from the Cross. Apart from the Incarnation there never could have been the Atonement; and apart from the Atonement there never would have been the Incarnation: and apart from the infinite love of God there neither could nor would have been either. Orion and Pleiades may be wonderful to us in their flaming magnificence and immensity; but the greatest thing we know about the Creator is just this: *"God so loved... that He gave His only-begotten Son."*

— Sidlow Baxter



M-45
(The Pleiades)

“The Old Monk”

Corrie Ten Boom used to tell a story about an old monk who sang a Christmas song every Christmas Eve for his brothers in the monastery, and for visitors who would come from the village for the special services. His voice was very ugly, but he loved the Lord and sang from his heart. One year the director of the cloister said, *“I’m sorry, Brother Don, we will not need you this Christmas. We have a new monk who has a beautiful voice.”*

The man did sing beautifully, and everyone was happy. But that night an angel came to the superior and said, *“Why didn’t you have a Christmas Eve song?”*

The superior was very surprised. *“We had a beautiful song,”* he replied. *“Didn’t you hear it?”*

The angel shook his head sadly. *“It may have been inspiring to you, but we didn’t hear it in heaven.”*

“You see,” Corrie would say, *“the old monk with the rasp voice had a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, but the young monk sang for his own benefit, not for that of the Lord.”*

— Selected

“The Oriental Manger”

Britisher Geoffrey T. Bull, missionary to Tibet, was cold, exhausted, and hungry. He had been seized by Communists following their takeover of China in 1949, and his fu-

ture was bleak. His captors drove him day and night across frozen mountains until he despaired of life. Late one afternoon, he staggered into a small village where he was given an upstairs room, swept clean and warmed by a small charcoal brazier.

After a meagre supper, he was sent downstairs to feed the horses. It was very dark and very cold. He clambered down the notched tree trunk to find himself in pitch-blackness. His boots squished in the manure and straw on the floor. The fetid smell of animals was nauseating. The horses sighed wearily, tails drooping, yet the missionary expected to be kicked any moment. Geoffrey, cold, weary, lonely, and ill, began to feel sorry for himself.

“Then as I continued to grope my way in the darkness,” he later wrote, *“it suddenly flashed into my mind. What’s today? I thought for a moment. In traveling, the days had become a little muddled in my mind. Suddenly it came to me. ‘It’s Christmas Eve.’ I stood suddenly still in that Oriental manger. To think that my Saviour was born in a place like this. To think that He came all the way from heaven to some wretched eastern stable, and what is more to think that He came for me! How men beautify the cross and the crib, as if to hide the fact that at birth we resigned Him to the stench of beasts and at death exposed Him to the shame of rogues.*

I returned to the warm, clean room which I enjoyed even as a prisoner, bowed to thankfulness and worship.”

— Selected

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WHRI 19 Metre band 15.355 MHz
- Des Moines, IA:** 1460 (KDML)
Sat. 7:30 am, Sun. 11:00 pm
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- Council Bluffs, IA:** 1560 AM (KLNG) Sun. 8:00 am
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