

Mrs. J. M. Irvine 4-43
Route 4 - Staunton, Va

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

*A Presbyterian monthly magazine devoted to the
statement, defense and propagation of the
Gospel, the faith which was once for
all delivered unto the saints.*

"Entered as second-class matter May 15, 1942, at the Postoffice at Weaverville, N. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879."

Volume I — Number 8

DECEMBER 1942

Yearly Subscription \$1.00

THE OBJECT OF FAITH

By Rev. J. C. Bridges

A GREAT COUNTRY CHURCH

By Rev. John R. Richardson, D.D.

BAPTISM

By Rev. John Scott Johnson, Ph.D.

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH VERSUS A UNIVERSAL ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

By Rev. John C. Williams

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

By Charles C. Dickinson

THOU BETHLEHEM

By Rev. Samuel McPheeters Glasgow, D.D.

IMMANUEL

By Rev. L. T. Wilds, D.D.

THE CONVERSION OF GENERALISSIMO CHIANG KAI-SHEK

By Rev. Melton Clark, D.D.

SECURITY

By Rev. Robert F. Gribble, D.D.

WHAT CHRISTIANITY OFFERS TO THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

By Rev. C. Darby Fulton, D.D.

EARTH'S GOLDEN AGE

By Dr. J. P. McCallie

Political Activities Of The Federal Council Of Churches

By Charles C. Dickinson*

The November 23 issue of The Washington Post carried a full page advertisement signed by the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax and showing as its "constituent organizations," The Federal Council of Churches, together with the Church League for Industrial Democracy, Townsend Plan, The American Civil Liberties Union and several other radical organizations asking for the abolishment of the poll tax.

We have a capitation or poll tax in West Virginia but it costs a large part of that collected to pay for the advertisement of those who do not pay. We feel that if a man is not willing to pay a dollar or two for the privilege of living in the United States with his family he should not have the right to make laws for those who comply with the law and pay the dollar or two, but that is not the thing about this advertisement that concerns me as a member of the Southern Presbyterian Church. These are the things that concern me:

1. Was this advertisement authorized by a representative of the Southern Presbyterian Church, and if so, did he have the authority of our General Assembly to vote for it?

2. Does the Southern Presbyterian Church, as a member of the Federal Council of Churches, want to publicly associate itself with the radical un-American organizations I have named above and others of the same ilk?

3. This question of poll tax is purely a political question. Does our Southern Presbyterian Church want its church courts to become political forums?

It is too late now to do anything about this advertisement, but our Church will have another meeting of the General Assembly, and it would seem that if the Federal Council of Churches is to continue to be the spokesman of the Southern Presbyterian Church in political matters, the chosen representative of its Presbyteries ought to be given a chance to discuss these political questions on the floor of the General Assembly in order that our representative on the Federal Council may know the views of his constituents on this and other political questions with regard to which the Federal Council undertakes to represent us; moreover, if democratic processes are to prevail, there should be unlimited debate on this and similar questions, and the delegates ought to come with the understanding that they are to stay two or three weeks and even longer if we have to wait until the acrimony of such a debate becomes sufficiently quiescent for a season of prayer and repentance to put their hearts in shape to discuss the primary purpose of the Church—the salvation of souls.

This war is bringing about a spiritual awakening and a golden opportunity for our Church to reap a rich harvest of souls, if we will stick to the historic faith of our Church and avoid any alliance with those who question that faith, or may bring politics into our church courts. This is the earnest prayer of a layman.

*Elder in the Malden Presbyterian Church, Malden, W. Va.

Thou Bethlehem

By Rev. Samuel McPheeters Glasgow, D.D.

"And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." (Matt. 2:6.)

"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 from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2.)

The heart of the world is thinking again about the Gift from the heart of God. Few factors in life can make the heart so tender as does its thought of God's unspeakably gracious Gift—the Bethlehem Babe. There is nothing more helpless than a little babe. New-born animals are far more capable of self-protection than is the new-born man. As one who fathoms the deeper things of life has said: "We can not conceive of a more helpless person than a new-born infant coming into a world like ours with all its swiftly moving currents of life." And when we find that someone has provided a mother's arms, and a mother's breast, and a mother's heart for this tiny, helpless little life we may be certain of two things: First, that that provision is born of a heart of love and of wisdom; second, that a heart that has made this provision will make all necessary provisions for those who

may be the objects of His love. And we know that this heart is the heart of God.

Not only is the world made tender by the coming of the Bethlehem Babe, but the world can be made unselfish as it bows and worships at the manger crib. As we pause there in quiet adoration for a little while, there are at least three great fundamental truths that emerge from the birth of Christ, in the City of David centuries ago and prophesied by Micah seven centuries before it occurred.

I. When Christ Is Born In Bethlehem, The Humble Are Exalted. A New Principle.

Life is re-valued all along the line in the light of Bethlehem. The prophet recognizes it as a little homely village of a simple shepherd people, unmarked by the splendor and glamour of ancient Samaria, or of magnificent Jerusalem; and far from the busy commercial roads that crossed at Capernaum. Yet God is purposing to take this quiet spot and focus the mind and heart and songs of the centuries upon it. The humble are exalted.

Mary, a maiden of royal descent, and Joseph, likewise with purple blood in his veins, are both of them poor, and unmarked by any human standards of majesty. He is a carpenter and she a simple

artisan's wife. The first attendants about the humble manger crib are the skin-clad shepherds who have left their midnight fire and their sheep in answer to the angels' song. Later, wise kings of the Orient, who bring their royal gifts to this Child, find themselves prostrated and bowing low in humility in His Presence. Yes, all events surrounding the coming of this Christ Child are declaring that the humble shall be exalted. God is at pains to use human means that are thought to be utterly inadequate in order that men may know that the power and glory are all His.

You remember that one of the marks of the ministry of Christ was that the poor had the Gospel preached unto them, and concerning these glad tidings the Record says: "The humble shall hear thereof and be glad."

Slip back with me for a few moments through history and note its constant confirmations. Few in this generation will remember that it was Pope Leo, X, who was the head of the great Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century when there arose a leadership in Germany that shook the very foundations of that corrupt organization: In striking contrast, there is scarcely a child of us who does not know that Martin Luther, the humble German monk hazarded every human possession in order that he might be true to God and to the Gospel of Grace. The name of Martin Luther has become a byword, a synonym of glorious freedom and an urge to Holy living in all succeeding centuries. The humble are exalted.

While there is some fluctuating romance about Queen Mary of the Scots, a pretty face and a pernicious character; thousands in old Scotia and throughout all the lands that love righteousness and that exalt Christ remember to honor the name of John Knox, a humble preacher and a fearless heart of that day. The humble are laid hold on by this Bethlehem Babe and lifted to peaks of honor.

While men think of Pontius Pilate with mingled pity and scorn, millions bow the knee and the heart to the humble Christ Whom he selfishly and in cowardice condemned.

Augustus Caesar sits upon the throne in the "eternal city" and his sway is felt throughout the known world. A little Babe is born. His home is humble, his cradle is a stable's manger, his land in a distant subject, Roman province. The centuries roll. Augustus, his might, his majesty, his splendor, and his greatness fade, and he is hidden away in the dust-covered volumes of history: but millions upon millions enshrine in their hearts this Babe, His Gospel, His glorious Salvation, and would gladly suffer the loss of all things in order to exalt His Holy Name. The humble are exalted.

II. A Ruler Is Given. A New Order.

Yes, the prophet, and Matthew who quotes the prophet, are both explicit in declaring the Lordship of this new-born Babe. He is to be "Governor." What a word for a world chaotic, driven in a thousand conflicting directions and torn between endless appeals! Into such a world fundamentally rent with discord a God-given "Governor" comes; yea, God Himself comes as Governor; a Ruler is given. A new order.

An eminent clergyman from England some years ago was talking most earnestly to one of the greatest laymen of America, and they discussed the current issues of the day in relation to the deeper spiritual life of the American nation. Finally, at a lull in the conversation the American layman, who was indeed a seer with a clear eye, said to the eminent Englishman: "The supreme

need of America is an Emperor." The English clergyman, astonished at such a statement, said: "What! An emperor for Democratic America?" "Yes," repeated the thoughtful Christian layman, "an Emperor, and that Emperor is Christ." A new order.

On every side today we hear a union of voices confirming this mighty diagnosis—America's supreme need is that some hand true enough, wise enough, and holy enough, may order her affairs, compose her discords and harness and guide her mighty potentialities. You remember that Christ, when He stood before Pilate, and was accused of being an aspirant for the throne and, therefore, a rival of Caesar, was asked by Pilate whether He was a King. To the question, apparently so fraught with danger to His cause, Jesus replies, in effect: "Yes, I was born to be a King." And then He ventures a great spiritual statement in this strange presence and tells Pilate that His Kingdom is not one with earthly metes and bounds, with armies and navies and legislatures; that His Kingdom is the Kingdom of Truth, as wide as the needs of a broken world, and as boundless as the love of God. A Ruler is given. A new order.

Jesus came as Teacher, came to offer Himself a sacrifice for the race, to bear the sins of many, and to make intercession for the transgressors, and He also came to compass the race and to govern and guide the human heart. He came to be the King indeed. A new order.

Right marvelous it is how the years have given recognition to the royal Lordship of Jesus! May I quote for you the reputed statements of the great Napoleon that are applicable just here? "Christ speaks and at once generations became His by stricter, closer ties than those of blood; by the most sacred and most indissoluble of all ties. He lights up the flame of love which consumes self love which prevails over every other love . . . I have so inspired multitudes that they would die for me—but after all my presence was necessary, the lightning of my eye, my voice . . . I could never impart it to anyone. None of my generals ever learned it from me . . . now that I am at St. Helena, now that I am alone, chained upon this rock, who fights and wins empires for me, who are the courtiers of my misfortune, who think of me? . . . Such is the fate of great men . . . So it was with Caesar and Alexander, and I too am forgotten . . . Across a chasm of 1800 years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy; He asked that for which a philosopher may seek in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother; He asks for the human heart; He will have it entirely to Himself; He demands it unconditionally, and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful! Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I myself have founded great empires; but upon what do these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus, alone, founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him . . . I think I understand something of human nature; and I tell you all these were men; and I am a man; none else is like Him. Jesus Christ was more than a man."

Ah, yes! A Governor, a King, A Shepherd, is given in Bethlehem on that wonderful night centuries ago! A new order.

III. An Endless Regime Is Established.

A New Principle, a New Order and both permanent. Micah hints at the eternity of this Christ saying, "Whose goings forth are from of old, from

everlasting" (or from ancient days.) There is the exaltation of the humble, the leveling of life, the lifting of the race to heights to which no other philosopher or philosophy has ever been able to bring it, and there is the giving of a right royal Ruler, who shall rule in righteousness and in love, and this lifting and this Lordship mark an endless regime. Ah, what it means to have something else permanent besides the drab defeat that has marked the course of the race through the wearily passing centuries. What a light is kindled in the hopeless, fearful eyes of mankind by such a sublime permanency! The old prophet Isaiah says: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the

Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7.)

Concerning these things so precious the sure prophecy of God declares, "there shall be no end" "to establish it from henceforth even forever."

As we gather in spirit about the manger of the Christ-child this Christmas Season, and as the light of many centuries forms a halo about Him, and as our souls sense the sublime beauty, the matchless sacrifice, the holy peace of this sacred place, and of this Divine Life, the whisperings of God steal on our ears that here is One who hath been fashioned "after the power of an endless life;" As the ages past blend their voices in glad praise for this gracious Gift of Heaven, so we can look down the coming endless centuries and see and sense the stately steps of this One Who exalts the humble, and Who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, as He passes on His way forevermore—through endless ages; the Matchless One.

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Immanuel

By Rev. L. T. Wilds, D.D.*

Christmas is undoubtedly the most joyful time of the year. There are the joys of the child's thrill in the coming of Santa Claus, the Christmas tree with its bright decorations, the air filled with the music of Christmas carols and hymns, the home-gatherings of loved ones, and the love gifts to one another. All of these joys come even to those who are not Christians. But for the Christian there is a joy that is over and above all of these. It is the joy that comes with the grasping of the deep and tremendous significance of the supreme event of all history that Christmas commemorates.

We shall endeavor to see something of that significance as it is presented to us in one of the names given to Him whose birthday we celebrate, the name "Immanuel." In Matthew 1:22,23, we read: "Now all this came to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us." Now all such Bible or Hebrew names are significant or have a meaning, being combinations of Hebrew words. The "el" of such names is the abbreviation of the Hebrew word "Elohim," which means God. For example, Samuel means "asked of God," and he was so called because he was given in answer to his mother's prayer; Daniel means "my judge is God"; and Immanuel means "with us God." And so, Jesus with us is God with us. It was a name that was applied to no other in the Bible, for no other but God is worthy or capable of bearing that name. For one thing, that name declares to us that

Jesus Is God.

Time forbids our considering other proofs of the deity, or God-nature of Christ: His godly teachings and godly deeds and godly character and godly life and godly death and resurrection. It is enough for us who believe, that the Bible many times clearly and distinctly calls Him God. This name, Immanuel, calls Him God. "And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6.)

John 1:1, clearly using "the Word" of Christ, says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Christ Himself, who is "the truth," allowed Thomas to address Him, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28.) The Apostle Paul declared that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9.) And does he not declare God and Christ to be one and the same in Titus 2:13, "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"?

Since Jesus is God, what then was His birth in Bethlehem of Judea? It was the supreme event of all history, the time when God clothed Himself with human flesh to live here visibly among us, in order that we might know Him better and love Him more and in order to be our Saviour, "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Or as John says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." See also Philippians 2:5-8. We quote the following from Dr. Joseph Fort Newton. "What a story—telling how, in a tiny town, in a stall in a stable, under a singing sky, at 'the end of a way of a wandering star', God was born a Babe, bringing a new pity and joy into the life of man, dividing time into before and after! Once aloft and aloof, cloud-robed and shrouded in awe, God drew near, striving to enter our fleeting life, trying all doors, and finally making Himself small as a little child and lying down on the doorstep of the world, until the world, moved by the cry of a Babe, opened the door that has been barred to threats and thunders, and took the Child in.—God did not come a giant to little folk; he took our tiny shape and let us hold him in our arms. If there were no Christmas, our idea of God might be august and awful; it could never be homey and happy. A God who revealed himself only in suns and systems would remain remote; he could never be intimately near. Such words as 'eternity' and 'infinity' chill our spirits and make our minds reel. They tell of a God who sits in silence on the far away hills of wonder, dim and unapproachable, a dweller in the distance. But