

11-30-2003

Advent Devotional "Unto Us a Child Is Born"

S. Ray Granade

Ouachita Baptist University, granade@obu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/creative_work

Recommended Citation

Granade, S. Ray, "Advent Devotional "Unto Us a Child Is Born"" (2003). *Creative Works*. 40.
https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/creative_work/40

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Creative Works by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

Advent Devotional
November 30, 2003
The First Sunday of Advent
Unto Us a Child Is Born
Isaiah 9:2-6

So many facets of my life come together today. It is St. Andrew's Day, devoted to the patron saint of anglers, singers, unmarried women, and women who wish to become mothers. Andrew and his brother were the first apostles Jesus called; according to tradition, he evangelized parts of Russia and the Slavic world before being crucified on a saltire in Greece, from which cross he preached for two days before he died. He could well be the patron saint for my own life, and not just because of my Scottish heritage: my father and younger son both bear that name; I'm surrounded by singers, one of them in my family literally singing for her supper; some of my fondest memories are of angling with family and friends, particularly my father; and our two daughters wish to become mothers.

Today begins Advent, the season of preparation for a Child's arrival. The sixth verse of today's reading begins with those words which, for me, the joyous strains of Handel's *Messiah* always accompany: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...." One of our daughters is closer to fulfilling her wish of being a mother than is the other. Misty, our older son's wife, is expecting early next year. Our first grandchild is due, and it will be a son.

Today begins a new week. It is the Christian's Lord's Day, a holy day of rest set aside from life's routine. It holds within it the promise of renewal, of beginning again, of second chances and new

opportunities and grace, of respite from “confused noise” and the daily battle with the forces arrayed against our desire to become more Christlike which leaves our garments “rolled in blood.” The day promises what the Child promises—light, joy, and a casting off of burdens.

Today, as I muse about Andrew and women and newborn children and new possibilities and the joy that attends all those facets of my life, I also ponder names. The sixth verse ends with a projection of names by which the Child will be called: Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. I remember the conversations Ronnie and I had, the considerations we took into account, when we named our two sons. I think about the conversations going on in Stephen’s house as he and Misty consider what names to assign their firstborn. Most of all, I think about how associations ruin so many names for us. We wanted strong, vital names with family connections for our sons to bear, to live up to; we eschewed the popular and the trendy. But a few options didn’t make the cut because of connotations that sprang to our minds. We knew someone whose life militated against our using that name.

Today, as I think about Advent’s beginning and rejoice in the harvest of thoughts swirling through my head, the matter of names nags at my conscience. I think about those people whose lives led Ronnie and me to reject letting our child share their name. Have they any idea that their lives spoil their names for others’ mouths? It’s a common enough phenomenon. There will never again be English monarchs named Maude, or Stephen, or John, for those names connote civil war, destruction, and evil government. Yet Arthur and

Elizabeth are names with which to conjure, for although some people's lives spoil a name, those of others add luster and make theirs something of value, something to treasure.

Unbidden, one thought stills the others' dance in my head. As I await the birth of one child, I prepare to celebrate another's. I will share a name with each, one by birth and the other by His adoption. Will my life spoil for others the name that long-ago-but-present Child and I share? Will my life cause others to think of the Child's name with disdain, or even disgust? In short, am I truly as ready to celebrate my Savior as I am to welcome my grandson?

Ray Granada