

Sermons
New Testament
Galations
4:1-7

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Date written: Nov. 30, 1946

Theme: The significance of the Advent season.

Proposition: Observance of the Advent season is important.

Scripture: Galations 4:1-7

Text: Galations 4:4

Sources: King James version of Bible
George M. Gibson, The Story of the Christian Year,
Abingdon Cokesbury, 1946.

Places preached: Salem }
Epworth } 12/1/46
Pawliaton 12/8/46
Huntington, Va. 11/30/47
Evanston & Deumener, Wyo., Nov. 26, 1950
Grace Ch., Cheyenne, Wyo., P:15 + 11, Dec 2, 1956

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Stenica, up, Nov. 30, 1958,
P. 30 & 11-00 a. M.

Scripture: Galations 4:1-7

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world;

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Text: Galations 4:4

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

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Introduction:

1. Today is New Years day! At least, it is in the Christian year, for today is Advent Sunday, the first day of the Christian calender.

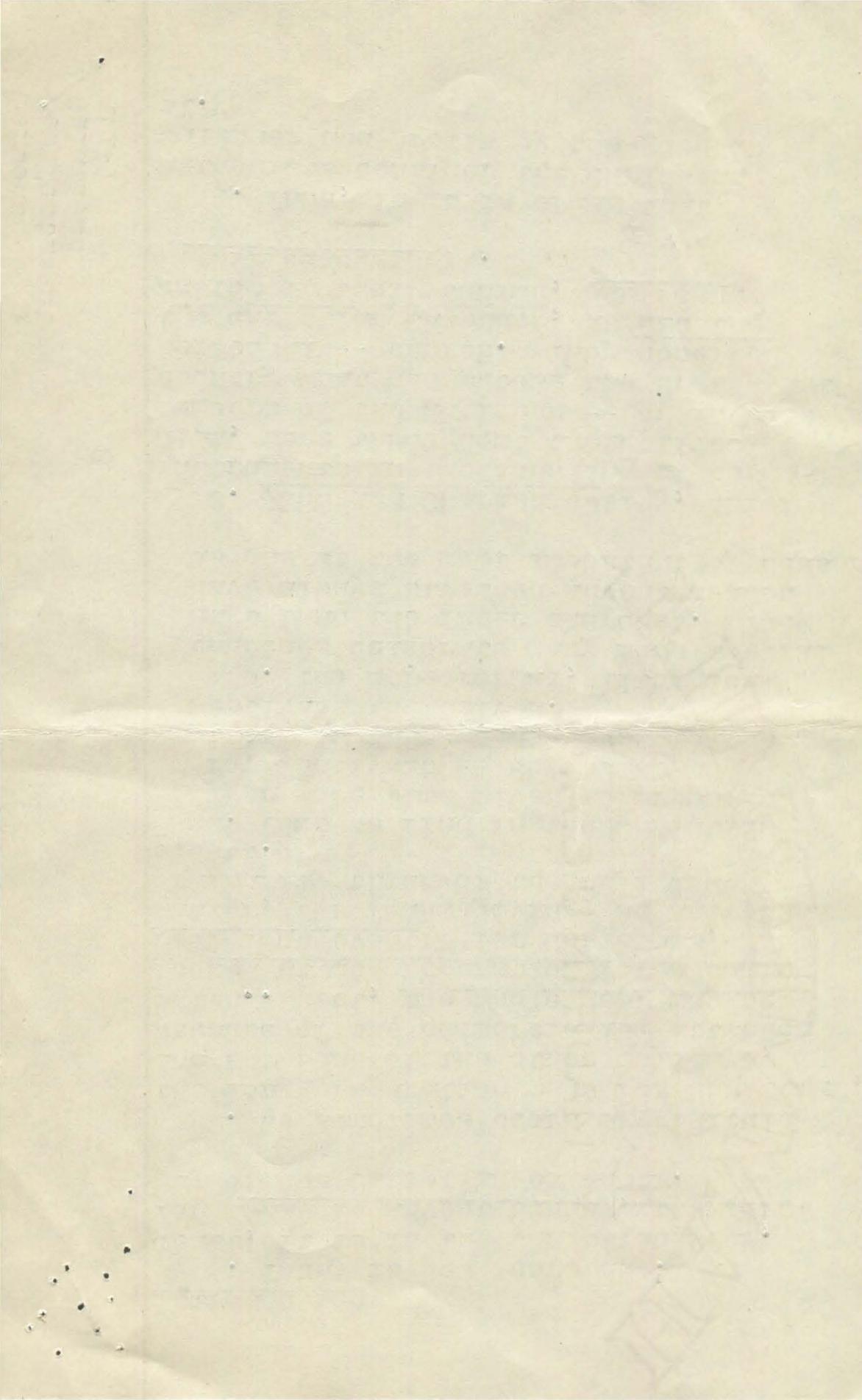
2. We sometimes scorn or ridicule the long preparation made for Christmas, and for some of the other holidays, because of the commercialism attached often. Yet, the whole year may be looked at as preparation for a coming religious event: for Christmas, for Easter, for Thanksgiving, as Americans ordinarily think of the religious events.

a. Thus we find in the Christian year more time given to preparing for festivals -- Christmas and others -- than we do given to the festivals themselves.

b. The more formal, "liturgical" churches celebrate many more special days than the freer churches. They have always stressed Advent Season as one of the most important of ~~season~~ seasons.

3. John and Charles Wesley, chief instruments in the founding of Methodism, were throughout their lives, members of the Anglican -- or in this country what has become the Protestant Episcopal -- church. They observed the Christian Calender, as was the custom in their church, and found significance in it.

4. Thus, it is in order that Methodists consider the Christian Calender and profit by the good in it.



5. Today, ~~the first~~ Sunday in Advent, is the beginning of one of the most important seasons of the Christian calendar. It is well to consider its significance.

I. The founding, or history, of the Advent Season.

1. As our text tells us, Jesus came in the fulness of time. That is, preparation was made for him before he came on earth; a lot of preparation over a long period of time. Advent season is a recognition of this fact.

2. Advent first appeared in Gaul and in Spain, sometime in the 5th. century, and seems to have begun locally as a congregation felt the need of preparation for Christmas. Thus a variety of customs arose, as they did around Christmas, and were later harmonized into the present scheme, as were the Christmas customs.

3. Now the beginning of Advent season is generally described as the "Sunday nearest St. Andrew's Day," which falls on Nov. 30. It ends on Christmas Day.

4. As a Protestant observance, the Advent season has a rightful place. Martin Luther retained most of the Christian calendar as practiced by the Catholic Church from which he broke away, and with it he retained Advent Season. Luther even added anthems and hymns for use at the time of Advent. As already seen, the Wesley's and early Methodists also observed the season.

5. II. The ideas and methods of observing Advent Season.

1. Advent is usually thought of as being a period of spiritual preparation for Christmas, as Lent is thought of as being such for Easter.

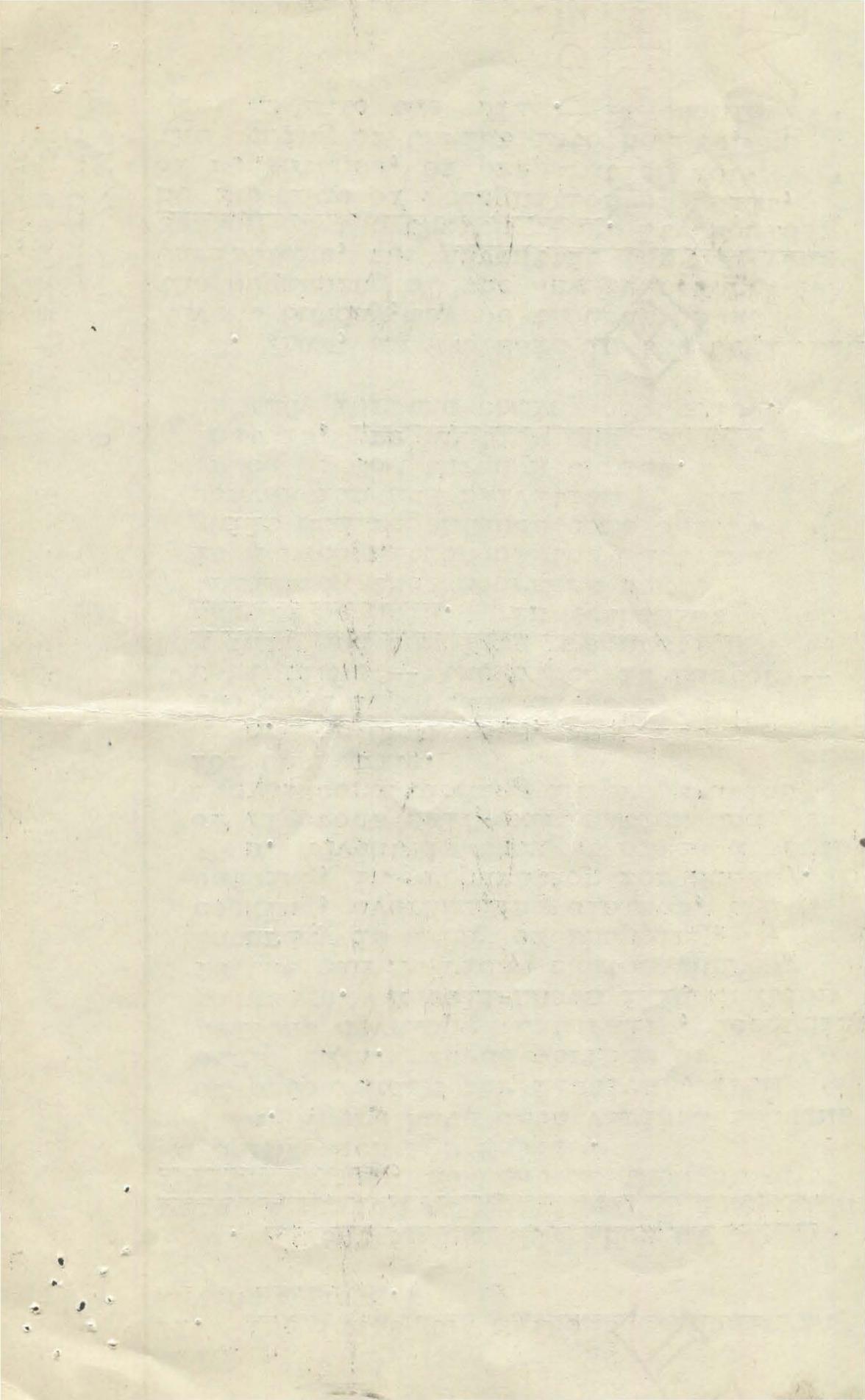
a. There have been various seasons of preparation for festivals from early days. These periods or seasons developed naturally, according to usage. A well-known illustration is the old American custom whereby Saturday is a day of shopping, cooking, overhauling clothes, and bathing, in preparation for Sunday.

b. Advent is thought of as a period of rigorous self-examination and mental conditioning in preparation for Christmas.

c. For Christmas, one of the two most important dates to all Christians -- the other is Easter -- a full and complete preparation should be held. In Methodist tradition the "mourners bench" is a recognition of the fact that guilt and repentance come before conversion and salvation by the grace of God through Christ.

5 That is, preparation must always be made for the coming of Christ.

2. Thus, as was said in the beginning Advent Sunday, may be thought of as the beginning of the New Year for Christians, for Advent is the new year season of the Church year. It should be the time of recognition of guilt, of repentance, of preparation for the coming of Christ into hearts, as well as into the world. It should



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be a time of putting away old bad habits and resolving to be more like Him who comes on Christmas. In other words, Advent should be to the Christian all that we think of when we use the term "New Year." It is "the vestibule to the temple of His presence."

3. All rituals emphasize the doctrine of the Incarnation, and each Sunday has its separate emphasis: the coming of Christ is proclaimed in the Creation, Bible, Prophets, and by John the Baptist.

4. Anthems have been written for Advent. Purple, or violet, is the color of penitence and is used in the season of Advent (as in Lent).

III. The significance of the Advent season.

1. It looks forward to the coming of Christ as a babe.

2. It looks forward to his second advent, when he shall reign over the whole earth.

3. It symbolizes his continual coming into hearts that "prepare Him room."

4. The Advent Season looks backward and forward: back to creation and forward to the New Creation.

5. The whole church year is linked hand in hand with the Creed ... every article of the Apostles' Creed has its fitting day. Thus, Advent:

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- 7.
- a. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth" (First Sunday in Advent -- Creation).
 - b. "from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." (same)

6. An old writer has summed up the meaning of Advent well. Don Cabrol said of Advent:

"It is the near approach of the Son of God in the flesh, for which one must prepare oneself with greater watchfulness, and by the practice of works of charity; it is the voice of the prophets announcing the Messiah who comes; it is the world awaiting its Redeemer, sighing as the parched ground for the dew of heaven; it is St. Paul exhorting the faithful, awakening them from their sleep upon the vigil of the Coming of Christ; it is John the Baptist, the last of the long line of prophets, who cries in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." "

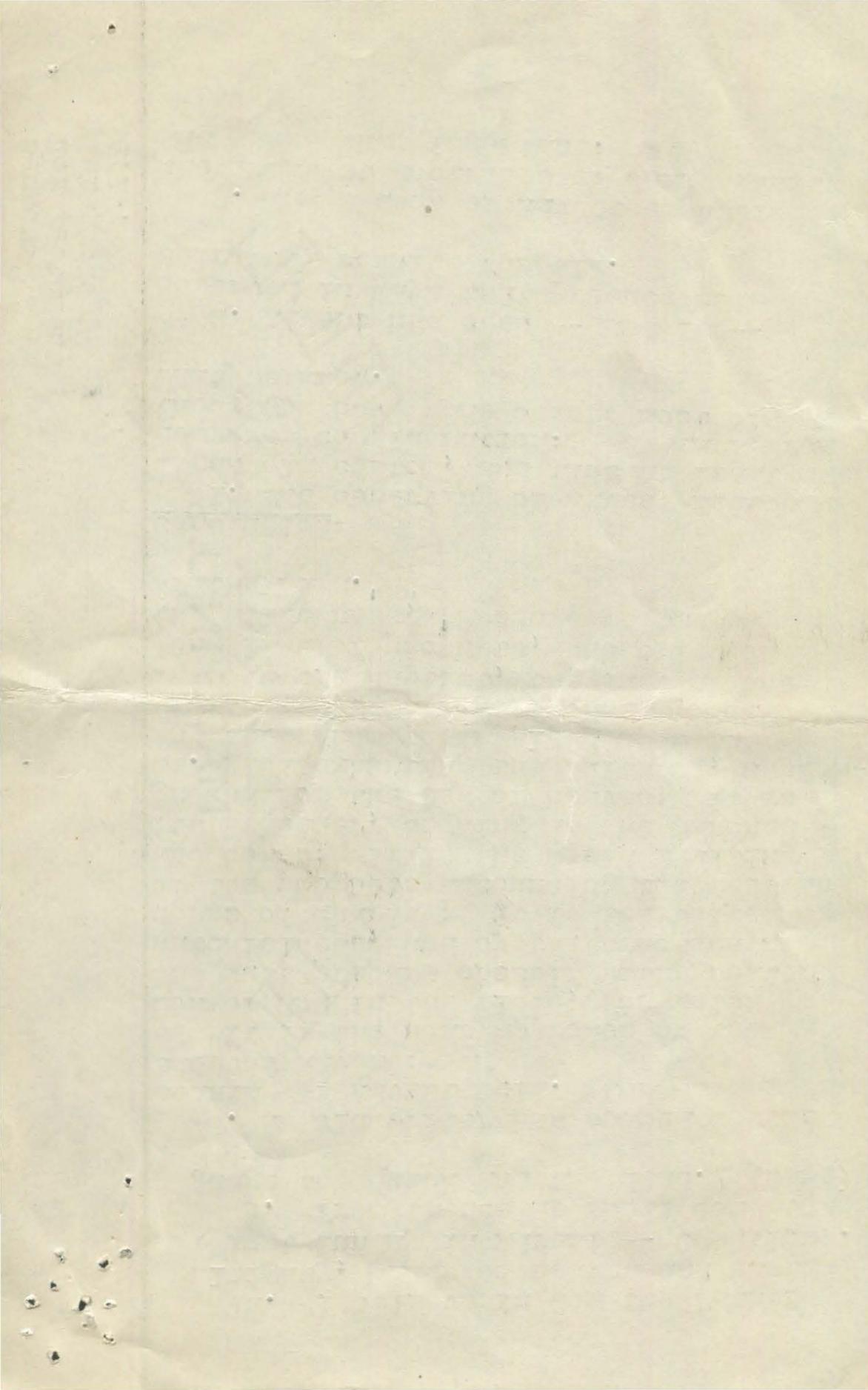
Conclusion:

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1. The observing of Advent Season is an old custom, and thus at least deserves consideration: we learn from those who have gone before most of what we know.

2. Advent has been -- and is -- observed in ways that produce much spiritual results for all.

3. The Season of Advent emphasizes the greatest doctrines of Christianity and makes them important.



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4. Thus, it is well-said that
observance of Advent is important.

Let's not wait till Christmas. Let's
prepare ourselves in advance for a
real spiritual blessing. This is the
Season of the Advent of Our Lord.

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