

Christmas.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates."—Psalms xiv. 7.

Lift up your heads, ye gates!
The King of Glory waits
Upon the threshold of His world!
He comes, but not with pomp
Of clarion and trumpet,
And banners to the winds unfurled.

No ruthless monarch He
In war's proud panoply,
And bleeding nations in his train;
Great Rome's two-headed god
Had laid aside his rod,
When bounteous peace came down to reign!

Far o'er that sceptered land,
Where Caesar stretched his hand,
And votive incense dimmed the skies,
The Pagan on his knee,
Saw supereviti n fce,
And Faith's fair morning star arise.

So may it ever shine,
Into that soul of thine.
O reader of this simple lay,
And guide thy struggling feet
Into the calm retreat,
Through doubt and sorrow's darkest day.

Up, up beyond the blue
Of heaven's celestial hue,
Beyond the changeful things of time,
Swell'd the grand choir of praise
That they alone could raise
Where lips were touched with fire divine!

And soon the heavenly strain
Fell like the blessed rain
Upon the thirsty soul of man;
And angels on the wing
The gladdest tidings bring
He heard since Adam's race began.

Then fling the portals wide!
He comes, for whom they cried—
"Mercy on us, O David's son!"
To the regenerate earth,
On which Thou had'st Thy birth,
O Son of God! in triumph come!

—Selected.

The INTELLIGENCER premium is a valuable book.

Christmas-Tide.

Great events make great days; memorable events, monumental days. God himself, in whom are sovereignty and wisdom, has put important ideas in occurring signs and recurring seasons that men might see his hand, know his mind and own his goodness and power. The rainbow makes the very clouds radiant with the covenant promise. The Sabbath is resonant with the praises of creation and brilliant with the resurrection glories of redemption. Every seventh day to the ancient Church, every first day to Christians now, how full of instruction and sacred memories of cheering prospects and glorious hopes! The Mosaic economy abounded in these historic object lessons, the sacred seasons and appointed feasts. They taught dimly and yet authoritatively by the outward appearance what the Word now more clearly reveals, and the Spirit writes more distinctly on believing hearts. The days of the bread without leaven and the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover were divinely established schools and authorized instructors through all the generations of Israel. And so even in our own spiritual dispensation the bread helps us wonderfully to the idea of the broken body of our Lord and the wine to that of his spilled blood.

Not specially under divine command, as in the cases above cited, do we celebrate the joyful return of Christmas-tide year by year, or the glad season of Easter as such; but certainly by the common consent of Christendom and the uniform practice of the Church through all her centuries. So that while there may not attach to these celebrations of the Church the sacredness of a divine sanction or the authority of a divine command, there does attach the excellency of religious sentiment, the weight of a common conviction and the assurance and approbation of thoughtful piety and gratitude to God. The opportunities of these valuable occasions are unquestionably often lost, their ideas misapprehended, their lessons misunderstood or misapplied, their efforts despised, and their benefits neglected or cast away. But unfortunately all this may be said of the holy Sabbath and the holy sacraments. If that an institution or a custom is abused in this world is a proof that it is a worthless or bad institution or custom, then verily there is nothing good on the earth or among men.

That the birth of our Lord should be an occasion of rejoicing from year to year through all time is by no means wonderful. It would be wonderful indeed if the Christian Church had forgotten it; if it had passed away from the Christian traditions, and were to be found only on rocky entablature or in book. Who could think of a transaction more mysterious; more likely to be fraught with vast universal and eternal consequences; more of a study to angels and to men; grander in its origin; nobler in its design; or more stupendous in its results, immediate and remote, than that God, the Eternal, the All-

mighty, should veil himself in our flesh, descend to be a babe in Judea and grow up a child at Nazareth? The human mind is overwhelmed by the announcement; it is the pause of amazement to the soul that contemplates. What wonder that a fervid apostle, even at the height of a great argument, should exclaim: "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh!"

If we indeed accept in our innermost faith this great divine transaction as a reality, we must apprehend, at least in some degree, that to the mind of God there were potent reasons why infinite power, wisdom, holiness and goodness should bring themselves into so immediate contact with the confessedly fallen and sinful family of man. Here was a world in darkness: God in Christ came, a light. He brought down heaven's doctrines to shine upon the hearts of men. Here was a world morally insensible, spiritually dead; he brought down the reviving truth, and spoke it to the soul. Here was a world weak, poor, helpless, wretched, despairing; he brought down to earth strength, and wealth, and hope. We were in prison; he came to open the doors. We were blind, and deaf, and dumb; he pours eyesight on the blind, opens the ears of the deaf, toucheth the tongue of the dumb and filleth his mouth with singing. Why should not the world be glad? Why should not Christmas morn be joyous? Why should there not be giving of gifts and singing of grateful songs and abounding praises? Why should not families and Churches and nations be glad in the God of their salvation?

The danger at such a time is that the true import of the day is not considered, its nature and design apprehended, or its duty appreciated or done. If indeed Christ came to bring us light, what right have we to revel and rejoice in the works of darkness? This were surely a scorn of his coming, a rebuff to his love, and an ungrateful rejection of the light he brought down from heaven. If for us he humbled himself to Bethlehem, as he did ultimately to Calvary, where is our justification for pride or contempt of our fellow? This were surely a contempt of his mission, and a denial of his work. If he gave himself for us that through him the Father might freely also give us all things, how dare we shut up our bowels of compassion against brethren of the flesh, refusing even at the Christmas-tide, to relieve their necessities, to clothe the naked and feed the hungry, to lift up the fallen and visit the sick? "If a brother or a sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" True Christmas joy abides in and arises out of Christmas duty, Christmas sympathy and helpfulness, Christmas obedience and love. In such a way we can truly wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and many returns.—*Guardian*.

The INTELLIGENCER is the friend and helper of masters, Sabbath school workers and parents.

The Message of Christmas.

We have read somewhere in medieval literature a legend that ran somewhat as follows: An infidel knight, in the wilderness of his mad, heaven-defying infidelity, determined to test by the method to which he was best accustomed the reality and power of God whose existence he denied. So going out into the field armed as for combat, he cast his glove upon the ground, after the manner of the ancient challengers, and cried out to the heavens, "God, if there be a God, I defy thee, here and now, to mortal combat! If thou indeed art, put forth thy might of which thy pretended priests make such boasts!" As he spoke his eye was caught by a piece of parchment fluttering in the air just above his head. It fell at his feet. He stooped to pick it up; and found inscribed upon it these words: "God is love." Overcome by this unexpected response, he broke his sword in token of surrender, and kneeling upon the fragments, consecrated his life henceforth to the service of that God whom he had just before defied.

This is the message which this Christmas season brings to every heart that will look up to see the word that floats just above the head, or will stoop down to pick up the word that lies at the feet. The answer to all Heaven-denying infidelity, to all reckless unbelief, to all cold unconcern, is the divine Advent message, "God is love." This is the word that floated out upon the air that first

Christmas Eve in the angel's song, startling the sleepy shepherds from their drowsiness. This was the message that fell all unheeded on the ears of the guests of that little hostelry at Bethlehem, when the inn had no ears for the word and it was left to the lowliest of the low in the stable. This was the message which the star had for the wise men, who were wise enough to follow it afar on that long and hazardous journey in order to learn what was its meaning. This is the message which the heavens have repeated ever since to the earth—sometimes listening, sometimes indifferent, to the shepherds who have responded, "Let us go and see this thing which has come to pass;" sometimes to a Herod who has only listened that he might plan how to destroy both message and messenger; sometimes to scribes too busy with their ritual and traditions, to pay any attention to such a message—so simple and so inclusive; sometimes to a Jerusalem that has been stirred for the moment, only to turn to other matters and forget the nine days wonder.

For our many readers there can be no better Christmas greeting than the wish that they may hear and comprehend this message of the season—this word which the Spirit whispered to the heart of the mother, which the angels sang, which the wise men saw in the star, which the Christ brought down to the manger in the stable—that God is love; and, hearing and heeding it, may anew give to him the life which by his love he has redeemed and made his in the ownership of infinite love. So may the "Merry Christmas" be the herald of a Happy New Year; happy with a happiness which no sorrow can destroy, which time shall only ripen, which tears shall only water and which death can only gather into the eternal harvest.—*Christian Union*.

No paper in this country has ever made such an offer to subscribers as the INTELLIGENCER now makes.

Church-Strategy.

BY REV. Z. WARNER, D. D.

Jesus made Jerusalem the base of his ministry. Being the metropolis of the best form of religion in the world, it was the best adapted to his purpose. Soon after his ascension, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome were in the hands of the apostles. This revealed their marvelous forethought and strategy. Popular localities were seized as centers of church-extension. The spot on which God looks with the deepest interest is the one most crowded with people. He feels that in such a place there is more work to do. The apostles never abandoned any place after taking possession of it; and the reason is found in the care with which they selected methods and localities. There was nothing done at random. There were no retreats. They were so near to God and so unselfish in personal plans that it was easy for them to go and work in the way God desired.

God uses strategy in the work of foreign evangelization by sustaining the most aggressive and enterprising nations to lead in that work. England, Germany, and the United States are doing nearly all that is being done to give the gospel to the heathen. Especially is this true of the first and last nations named. The centers of the heathen world are being seized, and this insures the control of outlying territory. Are we nearly old enough as a church to use strategy in our work? Have we the intelligence, the courage, and the consecration to do so? We should decide this soon. There is "a ridge of opportunity that we should occupy" before it is seized by some one else. We have a mission in the cities, and we must take it up while we may. This is the way to commerce: Let our people consecrate their children and property to the Lord in a better sense than ever. If they educate sons and daughters, be sure to do it in our own schools. Buy our own publications first. Cease to give money to outside interests until all church-interests are thoroughly cared for. Abandon angry discussions; cease being divided; concentrate all thought and purpose on an effort to do something worthy of the kingdom of God. Pray the Lord to raise up and endow good leaders—men who are brave, strong, prudent, and aggressive. They are needed if we extend our work beyond where it now is. There is much in good leadership to animate the Church and give direction to its energies. No thoughtful man doubts the fact that our church must broaden its work and take an advanced position. There is higher ground for us to occupy. There must be re-organization in the missionary, church-erecting, and educational work of the church. We must write our own theology. There is no good reason for us to con-

tinue to borrow. We should make known to the world what we believe. Young men entering our ministry should know what they are required to believe and teach.

This would be church-strategy.—*Rel. Telescope*.

The Pawnbroker's Window.

There is more philosophy of life to be learned at a pawnbroker's window than in all the libraries of the world. The maxims and dogmas which wise men have chronicled, disturb the mind for a moment as the breeze ruffles the surface of the deep, still stream and pass away; but there is something in the melancholy grouping of a pawnbroker's window, which, like a record of ruin, sinks into the heart. The household goods, the cherished relics, the sacred possessions affection bestowed, or eyes now closed in death had once looked upon as their own, are here, as it were, profaned; the associations of dear old times are here violated; the family hearth is here outraged; the ties of love, kindred, rank, all that the heart clings to, are broken. It is a sad picture, for, in spite of the glittering show, its associations are sombre. There hangs the watch, the old chased repeater, that hung above the head of a dying parent when bestowing his trembling blessing on the poor outcast who parted with it for daily bread; the widow's wedding ring is there, the last and dearest of all her possessions; the trinket, the pledge of love of one now dead, the only relic of the heart's fondest memories; silver that graced the holiday feast; the gilt framed miniature that used to hang over the quiet mantle; the flute, the favorite instrument of a dear son, surrendered by a starving mother to procure food for the remaining offspring; the locket that held a father's hair; or, gloomier still, the dress, the very covering of the poor, is there, waving like a flag of wretchedness and misery. It is a strange, sad sight. To those who feel a right, there are more touching memorials to be seen in a pawnbroker's window than in all the monuments in Westminster Abbey.—*Mrs. C. B. Wilson*.

Self Control.

A child by his fretful ways makes the house a purgatory until his mother's patience is exhausted. Then she boxes his ears, and so makes him realize, not that she can govern him, but that she cannot govern herself. A man burned down his house by trying to govern his stove, before he had learned to govern himself. The weather was cold and the coal would not burn. He shook out the ashes. He grew hot and red. The lever slipped and bruised his fingers. It slipped again and bruised them worse. Then the grate stuck fast. He caught the lever with both feet, and jerked it viciously. Of course the stove was upset, the hot coals rolled upon the floor, and he shouted for assistance. The stove cared nothing for his temper. It obeyed its own laws. When the man lost his temper, he could not perceive those laws. But the safety of his house depended upon his obeying them. The laws which govern the human spirit are as inexorable, and far more occult and complex, than those which govern stoves. He can better afford to burn up twenty houses than one home. Yet often have I been called to help put out the fire when the parent's temper had upset the child.

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Mind.

1. Mind your tongue. Don't let it speak hastily, cruel, unkind, or wicked words.
2. Mind your eyes. Don't permit them to look on wicked books, pictures, or objects.
3. Mind your ears. Don't suffer them to listen to wicked speeches, songs, or words.
4. Mind your lips. Don't let tobacco foul them; don't let strong drink pass them; don't let the food of the gutter enter between them.
5. Mind your hands. Don't let them steal, or write any evil words.
6. Mind your feet. Don't let them walk in the steps of the wicked.
7. Mind your heart. Don't let the love of sin dwell in it. Don't give it to Satan; but ask Jesus to make it his throne.

Let Your Light Shine.

One of our exchanges gave the following illustrative anecdote:

"I have a friend, Judge—, an excellent man, eminent in his profession. Once a year, or oftener, he was visited in the way of business by a gentleman from Texas, and a cordial friendship sprang up between the two, founded on esteem.

"During one of these annual visits at the conclusion of business, the Texas gentleman said:

"Judge C—, we have known each other many years. I have the highest regard for you as a man of honor; I have no doubt you have an equal regard for me. In all this acquaintance I am ashamed to confess I have never inquired whether you are consecrated to the service of the Master I love, nor do I know." The Judge was completely broken down. "God forgive me," he cried. The ice was broken. The two Christian brothers, with flowing tears and clasped hands, begged each other's pardon, and there, on their knees, upon the dusty office floor, they held a blessed prayer-meeting, one never to be forgotten by either of the participants.—*Golden Rule*.

Shoes For The Baby.

The first baby when she needs her first pair of shoes hears this from her proud and happy father:

"And does it want some 'little shoe-ums' for its 'little feet-ums'? Well, papa shall get it all the 'little shoe-ums' it wants, so he shall."

When the order for the second pair comes he seems a little surprised and says:

"What! Has papa's little girl worn out its pretty new shoes so soon? She is a little rogue, so she is, to kick out her shoes so."

Before the child is a month older her toes are to be seen through her third pair of shoes.

"What!" cries papa, when he is informed of the fact. "Well, I'd just like to know how in thunderation that youngster kicks out her shoes so fast. She wears out more shoes than I do. She'd break up a bank president at this rate."

And when the order for the fifth pair comes papa observes:

"Well, if this don't beat the Jews! I'd like to know if I've got to get that young one a pair of shoes every day of her life. I'm tired to death of this thing, Clara. If she wants another pair of shoes this month she can take the pennies out of her bank and buy 'em. I won't."

Poor papa!—*Texas Siftings*.

Taking up a reproach against a neighbor is a dangerous business. One cannot follow it and go to heaven. Persons have been killed recently by handling old shells that had been dropped twenty-five years ago, during the war. If you should happen to plow up o e, you had better bury it again. If people bring to you reproaches against their neighbor, carry them no farther. If they lay them down at your door, leave them there till they die. Positively refuse to have anything to do with them. You take them up at your peril. They are an unclean thing, which we are not permitted to touch. Scandal-mongers should find no market for their wares at the house of a Christian. They may offer to give them to you; but you should spurn all such offers, as you would an offer to give you the small-pox or the yellow fever.—*Free Methodist*.

Home Hints.

GINGER SNAPS. One cup of molasses, one cup of white sugar, one egg, one tablespoonful of vinegar, one each of ginger and soda. Mix hard.

CREAM PIE.—One cup of sugar, one egg beaten well, two cups thick, sweet cream, one teaspoonful cornstarch, flavor with vanilla. Bake in one crust.

CUP CAKE.—Two eggs, two cups of flour, one cup sugar, one-half cup butter, one-half cup sweet milk, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one teaspoonful vanilla.

WAFFLES.—A half-cupful of rendered suet mixed with a pint of sweet milk, a yeast cake, one egg, one-half nutmeg and flour to make a batter. Bake in waffle irons.

BROWN BREAD.—One cup of sour milk, one cup of molasses, 1½ cups each of flour and cornmeal, a little salt, teaspoonful of sugar, teaspoonful of soda, steam three hours.

For a cough, boil one ounce of flaxseed in a pint of water, strain and add a little honey, one ounce of rock-candy, and the juice of three lemons; mix and boil well. Drink as hot as possible.

Observe a method in the distribution of your time.—*Bishop Horne*.

It is not our beliefs that frighten us half so much as our fancies.—*O. W. Holmes*.

Every noble life leaves the fibre of it interwoven forever in the work of the world.—*Ruskin*.

O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.—*Psalms cv. 1*.

We cannot be earnest about anything which does not naturally and strongly engage our thoughts. Far more than mere talents or acquirements, enthusiasm and energy in work carry the day.—*Dr. Tulloch*.

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