

A Happy Christmas to You.

A happy Christmas to you!
For the Light of Life is born,
And His coming is the sunshine
Of the dark and wintry morn.
The grandest Orient glow must fail,
But his great light,
So full so bright,
Arise for thy heart to-day,
His shadow-conquering beams shall never
pass away.

A happy Christmas to you!
For the Prince of Peace is come,
And his reign is full of blessings,
Their very crown and sun.
No earthly calm can ever last,
Tis but the hallow before the blast;
But his great peace
Shall still increase
In mighty, all-rejoicing sway;
His kingdom in thy heart can never pass
away.
—Frances Ridley Havergal.

A Christmas Gift to Humanity.

A Christmas gift to humanity? What may it be? We have planned our pledges of love, our little remembrances of affection to dear ones, our tokens of regard to friends, our charities to the poor and unfortunate—but what have we done, or what can we do, for God's great humanity in general, on this glad anniversary of the Saviour's birth?

"A Christmas gift to humanity?" does the reader ask, in astonishment. "What can I do for humanity in general? Nothing, of course—nothing more than I have done for humanity in particular. How is it possible that I should make any gift which would affect the whole race?"

But pause a moment. Consider if it is not possible for one person to injure humanity in general, to do it some evil, during this blessed holiday season, which should be well-nigh universal in its effect? Suppose, for instance, one should commit some heinous crime, which should be published all over the world, shocking, corrupting, poisoning men's minds and hearts. Would not the evil influences of this man affect practically the whole race? And if one man can injure all humanity, he certainly must be able to do it good as well; because if evil were so much more potent and pervasive than good, there would be reason to think that God's power were less in the world than the power of Satan. We cannot consistently admit that the influence and effect of good are naturally less than the influence and effect of evil, or that a single vicious and harmful act perpetuates farther than a good and loving one. Therefore it must at least be possible for an individual to affect humanity for good; distinctly and positively, no matter how unlikely it may seem, when the vastness of humanity is viewed from the stand-point of the individual.

And yet it is not by great and signal acts of goodness on the part of a few elect individuals that humanity can be most benefited, at this blessed Christmas season. We have in mind another kind of gift—a gift which, by reason of its inherent expansiveness and diffusiveness, becomes a much more potent and precious blessing to the race than any act, which is limited to the individual performing it, could possibly be. Would you indeed make a Christmas gift to humanity, a gift more significant and valuable than any which could be purchased by money? Then take the following simple and explicit pledge:—

I hereby promise to do all in my power to increase the happiness of John Jones from Dec. 25, 1891, to Dec. 25, 1892.

Simple enough, is it not—clear, definite and particular? Yet by living up to this pledge you will be conferring a gift upon all humanity, not upon any single individual. For observe how the principle works. Your life begins to shed its reflected sunshine upon John Jones's life. Now happiness, sympathy, love, are the kind of emanations which you cannot stop with your fingers, any more than you can stop sunbeams. They go glancing on from heart to heart, just as sunshine gleams from hill to hill. If you succeed in making one other person truly happy, how can he keep it to himself? His happiness will ray out into other lives, by the divine, never-failing law of sympathy. John Jones in his turn becomes a joy-maker and gift bringer. Though still retaining in his own life more happiness than you brought him, he passes on your Christmas blessing to some other, who in his turn becomes a messenger of joy, and communicates the divine contagion to a fellow-being.

Where does it all end? It does not end—that is the blessedness of it. Happiness is a gift which is inexhaustible. You have seen a plant in the window, with all its leaves turned toward the light, drinking sunshine till it was full of the wine of life. And yet are the sunbeams that fall upon it absorbed? Do they lose anything of their life-giving power, no matter how

deeply the plant drinks of them—no matter if a thousand plants drank of them all day long? That is the quality of true happiness, the happiness which springs from the sympathy of soul with soul. It cannot be worn out or consumed. It spreads from life to life, warming, and renewing, and strengthening wheresoever it falls.

Friends, will not each of you try to make this Christmas gift to humanity? Will you not take the pledge to try and increase the happiness of one other soul during the year that is to come? Be sure your gift will never cease giving itself—not this year only, but every year; it will go on forever, making life after life purer and better, more hopeful, more courageous, more sympathetic, because you have lived and loved.

And what will be the reflex effect upon yourself of making this universal Christmas gift? Your own life will be enriched and enlarged. You will be happier than you have ever been before. Vaster possibilities of loving and blessing will open before you, and you will bless the day when you began to let the sunshine of your life flow over into the life of John Jones.

But what if you have no sunlight to give, do you ask? What if your life seems so cold and sad and empty that there is nothing in it fit to offer your brother? Ah! the way to get sunlight is to give it. The way to be happy yourself is to make others happy. Try it and see—or, if you have not faith enough to try it as an experiment, ask those who have tried it, and abide by their experience. The world is full of those who have been rescued from misanthropy, which is moral death, by philanthropy, which is moral life. Indeed, even those who are said to be constitutionally happy and cheerful, are so by virtue of their sympathetic natures. A selfish and wholly reserved person is seldom happy—at least, until his cold habit of mind is changed and he comes into sympathetic touch with others. Giving is always the condition of receiving, in this mutually dependent world of ours. If we would enjoy the highest good of any kind, we must give abundantly of this same good to others.—*Zion's Herald.*

"Peace On Earth."

The angles sung out this proclamation in the hearing of the amazed shepherds, because "the Prince of peace" was born. For thousands of years the world has been crying out for such a Prince. Sin had so effectually demoralized the human race, and so perverted the human passions and instincts, that battlefields were the chief topics of historic narration, and victories, defeats, carnage, slaughter, and death were the incidents with which the historians regaled their astonished readers. Nations demeaned themselves as if the chief end of man was to make war upon, plunder, enslave, and murder his fellow-men.

Patriots had exerted their abilities in the direction of giving wholesome laws and stable government to the race, sages had formulated civil codes and moral precepts, philosophers had striven to ascertain the deep, underlying principle of human nature on which hinged man's greatest good, but all to no avail. The marshaling of armies, the shock of battle, the slaughter of thousands, the overthrow of empires still went on. The earth was a battlefield: mothers reared their sons to be slain in the arena or on the field of carnage, and not to live happy, useful lives, and die of old age, honored and revered because of their many benefactions.

But when the Prince of peace came a system was inaugurated which, though the very opposite of what man's wisdom would have devised, was founded upon the deep, philosophic necessities of the case—was in exact harmony with the instincts and propensities of the human soul as a free moral agent. This system, though requiring much time to complete its work, constituted a reformatory leaven, which, when once introduced, would work until the whole is leavened. It is the leaven of "peace and good will." It not only brings peace to the hearts of him who receives it, but it makes him a peaceable and a peace-loving man; yea, more—it makes him a promoter of peace and good will among men. It stirs his soul a holy love for peace, and sets him to work earnestly, enthusiastically to promote peace in the individual soul, in the community, in the church, in the family, in the world.

This, then, is one of the specific effects that the observance of this Christmas festival should have upon all. It should make every one an earnest promoter of peace; for only in this way can we truly manifest our loyalty to the Prince of peace and our appreciation of his great condescension in coming into the world to establish peace.

How then, can every one do this important work? We answer:

1. By complete surrender of himself to God, and thereby becoming at peace with him. This is the first and most essential step. All the other steps will follow if this one is surely, completely, honestly taken. No one can be a promoter of peace in the true sense without being truly at peace with God; and to render this possible, to make an atonement and effect a reconciliation, and thereby establish peace between God and every penitent, believing sinner, the Prince of peace came into the world.

2. By persuading others to surrender to the Prince of peace. This requires personal effort among his neighbors. He must go to them, tell them what the Prince of peace has done for him, personally plead with them to surrender themselves to Christ, assuring them that to do so is joy, peace, and eternal life, and to refuse to do so is strife and trouble and eternal death. Oh, how badly this personal solicitation from house to house in the interests of the kingdom of the Prince of peace is needed to-day.

3. By doing all he can to promote peace in the community. And the most effective way to do this is to persuade the members of the community to surrender to the Prince of peace. Having done this they readily gladly strive to obey the golden rule: and where the members of a community do this, in that community there is sure to be peace. Every one who has truly surrendered to Christ is a peace-maker.

4. By promoting peace in the church. The psalmist's benediction on Jerusalem was, "Peace be within thy walls; and this is the devout prayer of every one who has surrendered to the Prince of peace. He is truly solicitous for the peace of the church; he prays for the peace of the church; he labors to promote the peace of the church. That peace may reign in the church, he is kind and considerate of the interests and preferences of others, and willingly sacrifices and foregoes his own rights and privileges, as did his divine Master, to promote peace in Zion. He carefully avoids being critical fault-finding ways, deplores and bemoans the backslidden condition of the church, but instead, takes all such matters to the Lord in his closet, and having presented them there in his prayer, comes forth so strengthened and guided by the Holy Spirit that he knows just where to take hold and work so as to restore the backslidden members. No good does come or can come of those whining, complaining prayers, speeches, and sermons spread out before only the faithful few who are always present. The ones who should receive the drubbing are not there.

5. By striving to establish peace in the family. Christianity is the only religion that makes a pure, peaceable, happy family possible. If the Prince of peace reigns in the heart of the husband and wife as he ought to reign, then the family they stand at the head of is a family of peace. Despite the troubles, trials, and misunderstandings that Satan and frail human nature cause to arise from time to time there will be a solid, abiding peace in that household. The parents cherishing a sacred love for each other and their children, and the children loving and honoring their parents, and all sustained and cheered by a well-founded hope of a blissful immortality, there can but be peace in such a family. And this is the kind of family you find wherever the Prince of peace reigns supreme in the hearts of the parents and children: and to aid in establishing of this peace in the homes of the world is the high privilege of every true lover of the Prince of peace.

6. By doing all he can to aid in extending the kingdom of the Prince of peace throughout the world. Millions have not yet heard the song of peace the angels sung. If all who have heard it would, during the next five years do all they can to aid in sending the good news to them, at the end of that period the Gospel would be preached in every city, town, and village in the world. The doors of the nations of the world now stand open to receive the messengers of the Prince of peace. All that is needed is the money to send them. If one half the amount expended by Christian parents and the Christian churches in giving gifts to each other, in sending the Gospel to the heathen, all those in Christendom who receive presents would still have an abundance, and a million dollars would be added to the missionary funds of the churches. Dear Christian friends, giving gifts on Christmas day, do not forget to give something toward spreading and establishing the kingdom of the Prince of peace from the rivers unto the ends of the earth.—*Telescope.*

The Crisis of Christ's Coming.

The birth of Jesus Christ into our world we recognize as the grandest event in its history. His advent runs as a golden thread through all the ages. His assumption of our nature has honored humanity, brought us into closest relations with Deity, opened the way for our restoration to and exaltation in the divine image. But, while a multitude whom no man can number will gain inconceivable blessings through Christ's coming, there are those who, we have reason to fear, will be losers therefrom. The aged Simeon declared: "This Child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel." His coming makes a crisis in men's lives, whether Jews or Gentiles. To many of his own nation who saw Christ in the days of his flesh he was a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." Deaf to the voice of prophecy, clinging to tradition and custom, resisting all innovation, the coming of Christ instead of elating depressed them. They augmented their guilt and condemnation. Those who received Christ found in him a new and noble life. In the belief of the divine testimony concerning him the acceptance of his atoning sacrifice and willing and unreserved obedience to his commands there is a raising power. "He came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to those that believe on his name." For all nations Christ is the Light of life. It is, however, possible for men to be blinded so that "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." Christ has come to bless men, but they can reject and despise the highest good.

We shall greatly err if we allow ourselves to imagine that the "falling" and "rising" of humanity connected with Christ's advent had its limitation to the period of his earthly sojourn. "This Child" even yet is set for the "rising and falling" of men. Heathenism proves that the further men are from Christ the deeper is their degradation. Any form of Christianity, though greatly perverted, tends, nevertheless, to raise men above the level of heathenism. Not alone, however, does the knowledge of Christ raise men who have been reared in barbarism or sunk in grossest sin in civilized lands, but those who have had the heritage of the most refining culture as they feel the touch of Christ will advance in character, have richer sympathies and make a nobler use of their powers. In Christ is the turning point of the destinies of the race. He is still as influential as ever. It is as men yield themselves to him and obey his commands they rise. It is as they reject and disobey that there is degradation and ruin. Dignity and happiness can only be secured by a willing and glad submission to the "Holy Child" born in Bethlehem.

Christian Courtesy.

It is a fallacy to suppose that manners are matters merely of social life; they belong to a man's whole life—his public as well as his private life. They have infinitely more to do with the success of public men than is usually supposed. They affect especially and profoundly the pastoral character and success. It is a great thing to be a true evangelist; but can you be completely so without obedience to the injunction of one who was more than an evangelist, who was an apostle—"Be courteous?" A public man who outrages good manners may not be altogether a moral nuisance, but he cannot well be a salutary moral power in the community. His best theoretical instruction, if he be a public teacher, may not compensate for the continuous, insidious, demoralizing influence of his manners on his habitual hearers, especially on the incipient character of children and youth. The public teacher should, above all things, be as Cicero insisted in regard to the orator, a good man; but, next to this, he should be a genuine gentleman. This phrase ordinarily has a somewhat ambiguous application; we need not say that we are not using it in its equivocal, conventional sense. We use it in the sense of the apostle's command, "Be courteous"—maintain your manners, he would say.—*Christian Work and Consolation.*

God's Note.

Many years ago a young man heard the call of God, saying, Go preach my Gospel. He had no education, and thought that he ought to obtain one before he attempted to preach. But he was poor and had no friends. He had only five dollars in his pocket, and the institution to which he desired to go was five hundred miles away and there was no way for him to get there except to walk. A person who knew him

asked him where he was going, and he stated his purpose, saying he had five dollars, in his pocket and God's note. "God's note!" What is that? He answered, My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus: riches, but does that mean dollars? He thought it did, for it said, all your need. On the strength of God's note, on he went and length he became Dr. Cummings, the eminent President of the N. W. University for a number of years. Reaper, how much do you count God's note for? How far will it carry you? How many difficulties can you surmount? It looks as though it might be enough to carry any soul through to glory. Try it.—*Phil. Standard.*

TEMPTATION would not so often overcome men if they did not parley with it. Our Lord held no argument with Satan. He answered him at once by quoting the word of God. Often Christian people allow themselves to ask whether there can be a compromise when a doubtful thing is suggested to them and give place to Satan as a wily advocate while he pleads for evil, and so they are overcome. Our true plan is not to argue or discuss but to ask, What saith the Scripture?

THE LOGIC OF IT.

See here, young fellow. You say you will not become a Christian because so many professors of Christianity are inconsistent. If you follow out your logic you will be a confirmed old bachelor, and you are likely to die in the poorhouse. You will never marry because there are so many unhappy marriages, and you must never try to do any business because so many have tried business and failed.—*Epworth Herald.*

IN THE ENGAGEMENTS of questionable propriety which sometimes give doubt and trouble to young Christians, we often hear them say, "Is there any harm in doing this?" Why not take as an answer, "Is there any harm in letting it alone? And this suggests also the way of looking at another question, which sometimes causes young persons to hesitate in the matter of first acknowledging Christ: "How much will we have to give up if we become Christians?" But why not look at this way: "How much we are going to gain by taking Christ!"

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"Last spring I was taken down with la grippe. At times I was completely prostrated, and so difficult was my breathing that my breast seemed as if confined in an iron cage. I procured a bottle of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, and no sooner had I begun taking it than relief followed. I could not believe that the effect would be so rapid and the cure so complete."—W. H. Williams, Cook City, S. Dak.

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