

## A Christmas Message.

"Good will be in thy heart,  
To all who thee surround."  
Thou sit in darkness this Christmas Eve,  
I know that the world is fair;  
And the musical chime of the Christmas  
bells  
Will ring on the morning air.  
And thou I have neither gems nor gold  
As tokens to place before you,  
I will not repine, for Love greater than  
mine  
Its gifts and its grace throws o'er you.  
And I will arise and rejoice to-day  
In the world's glad and loving giving,  
And will sing a song in my heart away  
For the untold richness of living:  
For the courage of Hope and the beauty of  
Love,  
For the Faith that faileth us never;  
For the Peace on Earth and Good Will  
toward men,  
And the Star that shineth forever!

## A Visit to Bethlehem.

Behold! It is Christmas—the birth-day of your Saviour and mine. The memorial of the birth of Jesus Christ is the crowning festival-day in the world's calendar. It has been called the "festival of festivals," the "thanks giving day of the universe." There is no absolute certainty as to the precise time when this great event took place. We are not careful to know whether or not the popular tradition which assigns our Lord's nativity to the 25th of December is correct. It is the reputed day when in Bethlehem a light shone and a King was born whom we call Lord and Christ. Let us, on the threshold of this day which the Christian world agrees to set apart and celebrate as the birthday of Immanuel, make a pilgrimage to the city of David. "Come, now, let us go unto Bethlehem." We reached the little town perched upon a gray ridge of limestone rocks, in a pelting February rain, and rode through its steep, slippery and narrow streets to the village khan. The Bethlehemites gathered around us, and the handsome faces of the women, who are remarkable for personal beauty, reminded us of Ruth, the beautiful Moabitess and ancestress of David. The well-developed forms and noble bearing of the young men recalled the youth who "was ruddy and of a beautiful countenance." For the inhabitants still preserve in some marked features the traditional beauty of the house of David. It is recorded of the great artist, Mr. Holman Hunt, who spent his life and strength over "The Shadow of Death" and "The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple," that before painting these immortal pictures he went to Palestine to study every detail, every accessory, on the spot. He spent much time in Bethlehem, examining types of faces, and painted the interiors of carpenter shops both here and at Nazareth. What a household word this little Judean town has become; and all because of Him who was born there! "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, 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 centre of absorbing interest is the Church and Convent of the Nativity. The church itself is the oldest monument of Christian architecture in the world, and the forty-four pillars that stand in seven rows were taken, according to tradition, from the porches of the Temple at Jerusalem. With what strange emotions do we descend the flight of marble steps and enter the rock-hewn Chapel of the Nativity. The sacred grotto is thirty-eight feet long, eleven wide, and two deep. Near the eastern end is a white marble slab, with a silver star set in the centre, encircled by sixteen everburning lamps, and surrounded by the inscription: *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est*—"Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary."

Do we, then, actually stand on the very spot where the Virgin brought forth her first-born son? There is scarcely a doubt about it. The grotto has all the appearance of having been the cellar of a caravanserai which still, according to Oriental custom, serves as a stable. The word rendered "manger" in Luke is of uncertain meaning and means a place where animals were fed. Into this cattle-enclosure, where were the horses, mules and camels, Mary and Joseph had to take refuge "because there was no room for them in the inn." There is little doubt that this rude limestone grotto, devoid of every comfort, was the humble nativity of the King of saints. Justin Martyr, who was born at Shechem and who died A. D. 166, tells us that the scene of our Lord's nativity was "a cave at Bethlehem." We traversed a long, winding, subterranean gallery until we reached

another cave or rocky chamber about twenty feet square and nine feet high, where the great St. Jerome spent the last thirty years of his life in study, fasting and prayer. He settled in Bethlehem A. D. 386 in a cave close beside the one in which his Lord was born. His allusions to the sacred spot are most touching; from such holy ground he could not be tempted away. There he made his famous translation of the Scriptures into the Latin Vulgate. Wonderful spot! Scene of amazing condescension! The Babe of Bethlehem was born in so low surroundings as the very cattle that are accustomed to be folded in such caves. The Lord of Glory passed by the thrones and palaces of kings and descended to the lowest level of humanity, that He might lift you and me and all our race up, up to the radiant glory which He had with the Father before the worlds were. How near one is brought to the Child Jesus while standing on the very spot where He was born!

About a mile from Bethlehem—a ride of fifteen minutes or so—is a kind of plain called the Shepherds' Field where, amid a grove of olives, stands a little neglected chapel called 'Angelus ad Pastores'—the 'Angel to the Shepherds'—occupying the spot where stood the 'Tower of the Flock,' to which tower of Migdal Eder the prophet Micah had looked with Messianic hopes. As we looked upon those fields, how there came to us thoughts of that night, surpassing all other nights in wonder, when as the shepherds watched their flocks, that lay on the hillsides like snowdrifts in the late spring, suddenly the whole heavens were filled with splendor, and 'the glory of the Lord shone round about them.' The light grew brighter, until it took the form of a shining angel, and they heard the words: 'Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.' Then, as if the skies must burst to disclose their joyous minstrelsy, like a mighty orchestra, 'a multitude of the heavenly host' poured forth the *Gloria in Excelsis* until through all the balconies of light and galleries of the stars, from throne to throne, from the hills of earth to the 'mountains of myrrh,' from cherubim to seraphim, was heard the rapturous refrain: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men."

The star of Bethlehem is the morning star of redemption, the star of hope rising on the world's long night. From the hills of the city of David we look out upon a new world. The history of nineteen centuries is but the apocalypse of Christmas. The Advent stands at the head of all the unfoldings of the kingdom of peace, the movements of good-will among the nations, and whose culmination shall be a new brotherhood among men, and "glory to God in the highest." This Babe, born in an obscure place, is now lifted up before the eyes of the universe as the centre of all history and of all thought. Then let the Christian world ring the bells of holy joy over this most memorable event! Let us be glad this Christmas jubilee. What is our personal experience of Christ? Has there been a double incarnation? Is He born in our hearts? Is He still in the cradle, or has He grown? The Christ of two thousand years ago is no longer a babe in any historical sense. Oh, that the Christ formed in us may be more and more developed, until we stand complete in His likeness! Hail, Christmas, queen of festivals! Hail, Child of Bethlehem, Redeemer of the world!—Dr. Johnson, in *Z. Herald*.

## The Blessedness of Ministering.

There is no joy upon earth sweeter than the joy of ministering to others. In one of those times of intercourse with His disciples, when Jesus said many things which have never been written, but which left an influence upon their hearts which we feel as we read what they have written concerning Him, He said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." St. Paul reminded the people of this word of Jesus. He must have been told it by one of the twelve who heard Him say it; and by his own life of self forgetful service he proved the truth of the saying. In all His teaching the Lord Jesus unfolded eternal principles. He was not arbitrary or dogmatic in His doctrine. He did not affirm in the Beatitudes that certain persons were blessed because He would have it so, but because in the nature of things it was so. Men might try every way possible to their imagination to be blessed, but they never could arrive at the goal they sought except through the seven beautiful gateways of the Beatitudes. Just so He taught that to be greatest and happiest among men is to be as He Himself was among

Sour tempers sweetened by the use of K. D. C.

them, "as one that serveth." Not because He arbitrarily lays down a law that he who would be greatest must be servant of all, but because in the very constitution of things, in the constitution of God Himself, the law is essential and eternal. Unselfish loving, unfailing outpouring of kindness and beneficence, have always made the joy of heaven; and wherever these qualities most fully possess human hearts, there earth is nearest like heaven. It is not then a matter of regret that we live in a day when great demands are made upon our time, our sympathy, our means for the helping of the needy. We may well be thankful for the privilege.

Who can tell what bearing our training here in the sweet ministries of love may have upon our capabilities to be God's messengers of blessing in the hereafter? We do not know what He may have for His redeemed people to do in the eternities. No lagging years of inglorious ease are they! But years of glad service without weariness, with larger capacities, with clearer vision, with the perfection of joy of which we have now a little foretaste, as we follow Him who went about among the common people doing good.

There is danger perhaps in the great pressure of things to do, in our many charities of this day, that we may lose the real blessedness of ministering. Just as soon as we get, like Martha, cumbered with much serving, the very sweetest charities become a drudgery. We have seen exceedingly careworn looking persons rushing from committee to committee, from entertainment to lecture, for "lawest charity's sake," heavily laden with tickets, weary with responsibility, laboring over the problem as to whether the project on hand will "make" or "lose" for the treasury. It is a question if such ministering is very "blessed." Sincere it is, doubtless; and far be it from us to underrate the real, unselfish service rendered in these ways by most efficient workers in all our boards of charities. But why lose the sweetness of the service in the hurry and rush of performing it? If we must needs be on many committees, the making of which there seems to be no end, let us keep the blessedness in the dull routine by remembering another word of the Lord Jesus, how He said: "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." That motive always in view may lift even the selling of tickets above the common-places, and keep the soul serene amid the tumult of committees.

There is a simple and suggestive story called "The Cup of Loving Service." A boy stood shading his eyes with his little hand, gazing up the steep, rough road which wound about a mountain. Behind him was a small house set in a patch of grass and garden, with every sign of poverty, yet with evidences of carefulness and content. Presently from a peg in the shed adjoining the house, the boy took a pewter mug, a tin pail and cover, and a coarse clean cloth from the next nail, and hastening to a spring near by he filled his pail with the clear, cool water, covering it carefully from the hot noon tide sun. Then he bound the cup to the belt at his waist and began the toilsome ascent of the mountain. Presently he found a traveler, overcome by fatigue and heat, prostrate upon the ground. Taking some cool water in his cup, he pressed it to the fainting lips. Revived by the draught, the traveler asked, "What angel of mercy sent you to me, child, in this forsaken wilderness? How did you know I was weary and thirsty? Give me another cup; never was draught so sweet!" And then he offered his little succorer a coin. The boy drew back. "O no, sir," he said, "this is the cup that mother says is without money and without price, and although we are very poor, sir, God has been so good to us; for He has given us a beautiful spring which is always running beneath the rock right by our home, and mother says we must always feel so thankful for it, and we must not forget the verse somewhere in the Bible which says, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' O no, sir, I could not take your money. You see, this is the cup of loving service, mother says, and we must fill it and share it with those who pass by and are very tired and thirsty. If you will look at it, you will see what mother wrote upon it a long time ago."

"Yes, child, I can read the words, 'Ready for loving services in the name of Christ.' Child, suppose the spring should cease to flow?" "How could we do without the spring, and the cup never lifted down and filled? But, O I am sure the spring will always run, sir," eagerly answered the boy. We cannot here follow further this beautiful story of

The clergy have tested the K. D. C. and pronounced it the best.

loving service; but may not our hearts be like this little, homely, useful cup, always bearing the inscription, 'Ready for loving service in the name of Christ,' filled every day afresh from the fountain of living waters, the eternal love of God, carrying refreshment to many a weary traveler along the steep and rugged roads of human life.

## A Christmas Meditation.

Every life has periods with each its peculiar character. That is a melancholy life of which this is not true. Each life has periods in which one is filled with happiness in passing through them, and others that one rejoices when they have been passed through. Such periods come in childhood, in youth, at the time one is getting an education, or is in some occupation. This was peculiarly true of Jesus, because his was the most simple of all lives. Strange things have often been conjectured of those few days—between the resurrection and ascension. Some have dreamed that then he prepared the constitution for the Church. This period in Christ's life answered to some things in our lives. It helps us to look forward to a time when we shall be complete in him. He anticipated the ascension. He was standing just upon the mountain top of his ascension. But a little before he had been in the valley with his disciples. This brightens the incarnation for us. Christ is with us. Our lives may be lived in the presence of Jesus. We may see Christ in his full manifestation. Indeed, we see Jesus depart bearing all his experience into the eternal life. No experience of Christ ceases to represent some of the experiences of his disciples in the world. Every one, although seeming temporary, is reaching on down to our times and to us. Christian experiences correspond to these experiences of Christ. Some may never have realized it, but their lives are spent in expectation. Others live perpetually in the Gospel. They never have reached on to the immortal life of Christ. They are over walking with him up and down the streets of Jerusalem and over the hills of Galilee and Judea. Others are always looking at his death. They seem to have an infinite consciousness of that profoundly sympathetic death. They never seem to be able to get beyond that. But here we listen to the present words of a present King. There is a rare beauty in these days; but larger, better days are coming. Study the twenty-first chapter of John's gospel. Christ stands in the sunshine. Mary, listening to his voice, cries out "Rabboni." But he says "Touch me not." I like to think of these words in connection with those remarkable words spoken before his crucifixion, "Greater works than these shall ye do." As if he anticipated the day when all power was to be given him. He would not let man be satisfied with what he should do for their lower lives. Richer blessings should be given them after he was glorified. He desired to give men the higher things which their souls really needed. Do we not all, in a measure, understand this? You have a friend for whom you wish to do the highest and best things. But he says, "I do not care that you do the great things for me, but do this lesser thing." Much of the Christian religion is but perpetuating Christ to man. We are too often satisfied with the lesser things. But we ought not to be, for he is saying to us, "Let me do the celestial things for you."—Phillips Brooks, D. D.

## Doubt is Weakness.

After months of wonderful experience, with many proofs of the guidance and faithfulness of God, His people stand on the borders of the promised inheritance. It lies in sight; a land of brooks, of honey from the rocks, of bread without scarceness. It was all secured to them by a title deed whose validity none could question; for God, "because He could swear by no greater, had sworn by Himself," that if they would keep His covenant He would surely bring them in to possess it (Num. xiii, 17-33).

And yet, with the possession full in view, the promise of God was not enough. They must have human testimony in order to believe. O, the astounding impertinence of unbelief! So they sent men from every tribe, who, when they returned, brought a report such as might be expected from the spirit in which they went. "Yes, it is a good land—but," O, the 'but' of timidity and doubt! "There are giants there, and walled cities, and, moreover, the sons of Anak; and we looked to them like grasshoppers."

Who told them how they looked to the Canaanites? When we think the giants of evil consider us helpless before them, the thought comes of our

own timidity. So far from our seeming "like grasshoppers," the fact is that when God's people really set themselves with courage against any form of evil, there is a great stir in the enemy's ranks and a combining of forces for strength, because they know that even "one saint with God" is a majority against all the hosts of darkness.

These explorers also brought back some fruit of the land, which proved that all that the Lord had said of it was true. It was a specimen such as one cared not to carry alone. Have we had a foretaste of our heavenly inheritance? Has ever a cluster of heavenly fruit refreshed us? Has ever a blessing so great that we have sought another to share it with us been given as a specimen and proof of the "things which God has prepared for them that love Him?" (Eph. i, 14). And yet, do we doubt (Heb. iii, 17).

## Expect the Holy Ghost.

Expect the Holy Ghost to work in, with, and for you. When a man is right with God, God will freely use him. There will rise up within him impulses, inspirations, strong strivings, strange resolves. These must be tested by Scripture and prayer, and if evidently of God they must be obeyed. But there is this perennial source of comfort. God's commands are enabling. He will never give us a work to do without showing exactly how and when to do it, and giving us the precise strength and wisdom we need. Do not dread to enter this life because you fear that God will ask you to do something you cannot do. He will never do that. If he lays aught at your heart, he will do so irresistibly, and as you pray about it, the impression will continue to grow, so that presently, as you look up to know what he wills you to say or do, the way will suddenly open, and you will probably have said the word or done the deed almost unconsciously. Rely on the Holy Ghost to go before you to make the crooked places straight, and the rough places smooth. Do not bring the legal spirit of "must" into God's free service. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. Let your life be as effortless as theirs, because your faith shall constantly hand over all difficulties and responsibilities to your ever-present Lord. There is no effort to the branch in putting forth the swelling clusters of grapes—the effort would be to keep them back."—F. B. Meyer.

## Random Readings.

Discretion of speech is more than eloquence.

No man can hate another without hurting himself.

Time's road is straight; no cross road catches up with him.

The surest way not to fail is to determine to succeed.—Sheridan.

## When Others Fail

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It is only the soul in need who knows how precious are the promises of God.

God has filled the world with teachers for those who want to learn.

The glory of God should be the motive that actuates the Christian to do or not to do, to be or not to be.

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Totally Deaf.—Mr. S. E. Crandell, Port Perry, writes: "I contracted a severe cold last winter, which resulted in my becoming totally deaf in one ear and partially so in the other. After trying various remedies, and consulting several doctors, without obtaining any relief, I was advised to try Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil. I warmed the Oil and poured a little of it into my ear, and before one-half the bottle was used my hearing was completely restored. I have heard of other cases of deafness being cured by the use of this medicine."



When my little girl was one month old, she had a scab form on her face. It kept spreading until she was completely covered from head to foot. Then she had boils. She had forty on her head at one time, and more on her body. When six months old she did not weigh seven pounds, a pound and a half less than at birth. Then her skin started to dry up and got so bad she could not shut her eyes to sleep, but laid with them half open. About this time, at the earnest request of friends, I started using the CUTICURA REMEDIES, and in one month she was completely cured. The doctor and drug bills were over one hundred dollars. The CUTICURA bill was not more than five dollars. My child is now two years old, strong, healthy and large as any child of her age (see photo.) and it is all owing to CUTICURA. Yours with a Mother's Blessing, MRS. GEO. H. TUCKER, JR., 335 Greenfield Avenue, Milwaukee, Wis. Sold throughout the world. POTTER DRUG AND CHEM. CORP., sole proprietors, Boston. Mailed free, "All about the Blood, Skin, Scalp, and Hair." Baby Blemishes, falling hair, and red, rough hands prevented and cured by CUTICURA Soap.

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