

Christmas Eve.

REV. E. C. AVIS.

Night had fallen o'er the city,
Shadows lay across the plain,
Shepherds quietly were sleeping,
From the East were coming men.
In the manger of the stable
Lay the Babe of Bethlehem;
And the angels just above it
Saying, "Peace, good will to men."

O'er the stable and the manger
In which Christ, the infant, lay,
Stood a star and rained its fire,
Lighting up the darkest way.
And the shepherds each were hastening
And the wise men coming, too,
With their gifts—frankincense, myrrh—
Each his homage glad to do.

Bowing down before the manger,
Hearts with gratitude and love,
Worshiped they the infant Saviour,
Sent to them from heaven above.
Praised they then the God of heaven
For his priceless gift to them.
Wondrous hope of their salvation
Was the Babe of Bethlehem.

Shall we not, like them, rejoicing
Worship in the name of him
Who in centuries gone lay cradled
In the crib of Bethlehem?
Shall we not with great rejoicing
Unto God who lives above
Give to them our highest praises
For his wondrous gift of love?

Chicago, Ill.

Christmas as we Grow Older.

BY E. HARRUCK, D. D.

"Christmas comes but once a year," sang one of the old poets, intimating that it is one of the happiest of our holidays, and so full of good cheer that we ought to enjoy it all we can. Indeed, Christmas occupied the foremost place among all our holidays, and it has bound about its brow a chapter of very hallowed associations and we can almost as readily count up our years by Christmases as we do by birthdays. If Christmas comes but once a year, it comes quickly. It seems but yesterday we saw the forests ablaze in their coat of many colors, and the sumac, wind along the fence rows like a band of fire, while the roadsides were lined with asters and gentians, and the meadows aglow with the golden-rod, and to-day the world lies chill, the fields are covered with snow, and the frost king is abroad in the land. We pile high the fuel on the fire, so that we may have it warm within, even though it be cold without.

"Let us throw more logs on the fire,
We have need of a cheerful light;
And close round the hearth together,
For the wind has risen to-night."

There seems to be something in this season of the year that lends a charm to the festivities of Christmas, and which we would not enjoy at any other period. During the summer we linger amid the pleasant scenes of roadside, meadow and hill; but when the cold season comes we are driven within doors. We could never enjoy this festival in the fields and along the streams. We gather about the hearth where the blazing fire seems to kindle within our hearts a kinder feeling and a deeper love for home. Christmas is pre-eminently a home festival, though we may be fast losing the ancient aroma of the day. We may, however, be coming to a better and truer observance yet, in that we pay less attention to the outer, the gay and noisy festivity, and more to the inner and true spirit of the holy season.

There is no season or holiday that unlocks the memory as this, or makes the heart so tender. Even the flinty heart of old Scrooge, says the great novelist, grew soft, though it had been hard as adamant, as he remembered the Christmas carols sung at his keyhole the night before and which caused him to slide his hand into his pocket to feel for his wallet. If there is one day of the year when neighbors think kindly of each other, or when a gleam of sunshine steals over the miser's heart, it is this. There seems to be in the atmosphere the spirit of the song, "Peace on earth, good will to men." The old grow young again, the poor rich, the hardened tender, and the hearts of all beat high with expectation of

"The Christmas that yet shall be,
Of undying joy in that fadeless land,
Where shall fall no tears through the
countless years,
That are at the King's right hand."

It comes again. And we will celebrate it. We will sit by the fire and let the tide of thought roll in upon our hearts. We will think of the Christ-child who came so many years ago, and is even now knocking at our hearts for entrance. We will share in the festivities with glad, yet sad and tender hearts, as we think of the departed friends who in other years made bright the happy Christmas time. They are not forgotten. Forgotten? No, for to-day as we look out upon the quiet place of graves where they sleep so peacefully, they come marching before us, and we link

their names and memories with him who came as a precious gift to their glad hearts. They are not forgotten. They sit by our side. They sing the old songs, they speak the well remembered, tender words, and their memory will always be fresh in our hearts.

Whatever the day may be, we must never lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. It must ever rest as a background to all our joy and festivity. Let Christmas come. Let it be enjoyed. Let the home be bright and cheerful, and above all let the heavenly glow of a Christ-like feeling shine in our hearts, so that friend and stranger will see that we have the kindly spirit of the great Saviour who loved us. Though we may be homeless here, though no kind roof will admit us under its shelter to share its Christmas cheer, yet we know that beyond the snow-covered graves, beyond the stars which shine so tranquilly, we shall walk with the loved ones who visit us in our waking thoughts, and who come to us in our dreams. Thank God for this day. And if by our words we have cheered some soul, and have brought it into harmony with him whose day it is, if we have caused some kindly feeling to rise in any hard heart, and have taught it that all is not selfish in this world, our own Christmas will be the happier for it.—United Presbyterian.

Pray For Your Minister.

BY SMITH BARKER, D. D.

Why? Because he is your minister, chosen by you and the church to which you belong to minister to your spiritual needs, as your physician is your doctor to look after your physical wants. You have chosen your pastor as your helper to assist you in the development of your religious life, hence you have a personal interest in what he says and in his prayers. He is not and cannot be to you as other ministers are. He may not be so eloquent or so much of a man, but the fact that he is your pastor, chosen to be your teacher and leader in the spiritual life, places him in altogether a different relation to you than any other preacher can be. If you are a sincere Christian you must be more interested in his whole life, in what he is as a man, in his teaching and in his spiritual power, for he is the messenger of God to your soul,—God's means of grace to your life, the one man who if you are right and he is right is to have more to do with your conceptions of truth, with the direction of your religious activities and your growth in grace than any other man. You have chosen him as your spiritual adviser and the opener of the word of God to your soul, therefore by all the interests of the spiritual life, you are to feel a special interest in him and pray for him as you desire and seek your own Christian development.

It is not a mere sentiment which has always made the good minister revered and loved as no other man is. It is a natural, honest and reasonable interest in respect for and devotion to one who stands as the messenger of God to the soul. The consecrated, spiritual pastor will always be thus honored. Sad the day for our churches when this interest in and love for the sincere pastor shall be no more. Not priest-feared but pastor loved is one of the most sacred relations on earth and which should lead the Christian to daily pray for his minister because he is his minister.

Why? Because your minister is your servant. As a Christian and a church member you are interested in the advancement of Christ's kingdom and the growth of the church in the community in which you live. As a member of the church you are responsible that the gospel should be preached, the poor and the sick visited and Christ carried into the homes of the unsaved. But you are a busy person and have neither the time nor the qualification for the work which needs to be done and you unite with others in securing the services of one whom you believe to be a qualified and good man to do this work for you. Your minister is thus your servant, doing your work for you, preaching the gospel, not only to you, but for you, visiting the poor and the sick for you, comforting the sad and laboring with the unsaved for you, so that his work is your work, his prayers your prayers, his calling from house to house your calling. He is your representative, your agent; hence in proportion as you are interested in the prosperity of the church and in the salvation of the community, you will feel a personal interest in all his labors. A good, loving, faithful deacon once said, "I do not listen to your sermons for myself alone, but I listen for the whole congregation and for all the community," and the good man seemed to feel as much interest in all the pastor did as though he were doing it

himself. Such is the true relation of the minister to the church members. His work is the work of the church, therefore pray for him as you would pray for yourself were you in his place. Pray for him as you would have him pray for you. He is your servant; follow him with your prayers.

Why? Because your minister is a man with like passions as other men. He needs grace and wisdom and faith and strength, that he may rise above the common temptations of life and above the peculiar social, mental and spiritual temptations of his callings, for while the ministry of the gospel has many exaltations, advantages, strengths and joys which make it the highest of all callings, it also has its special temptations, against which the true minister struggles and in conquering of which he is made strong. He has a temptation of the intellect over the spiritual, of the merely professional over the personal, of the formal over the intense, of the general over the definite. There may be no temptation to immorality, but there is a terrible temptation to professionalism. Therefore pray for him, that his heart may be kept warm and his consecration intense and his spirituality constantly on fire, that his example may be pure and his words have power and he ever rise to the spiritual dignity of the office.

Why? Because the more you pray for your minister, the more his words and prayers will bless you. A prayerful heart will be a sensitive heart and a receptive heart. These two things have more to do than any thing else with the power of the means of grace upon our souls. When you have prayed for your pastor, then his common sermons will have uncommon power over you, and his common prayers will become uncommon inspirations to your lives. A man who prays most for his pastor gains most from his pastor. Pray for your minister because he is your minister, because he is your servant, because he needs your prayers and because it will bless your own life.

The Existence of the Soul.

Professionals of the materialistic sort are wont to contend that science, especially that of the physiological branch, contradicts the doctrine of the existence of a human soul. Their contention has been that the most careful investigation and experimentation have demonstrated that thought, perception, and all the functions of mind are but the results of the action of material forces upon matter.

In opposition to this materialistic teaching of the materialistic school the following from that high authority the Phenological Journal is quite timely, scientific and convincing. It says:

"One of the strongest proofs of the existence of the soul is seen in the fact that at no two consecutive moments of our lives does the ego feeling rest upon the same matter or energy."

"The systems of waves within my brain will all have radiated away many times before this paragraph is completed. The matter giving out the energy will pass away as waste, and the arteries bring back a new supply. For days, weeks, months and years matter and energy will thus pass while the identical consciousness will persist, and can be traced through every change precisely as energy can be traced from matter to matter."

"To say that energy is a two-sided entity, one side of which constitutes sensation, is against the fact. The energy my body has to-day is not that of yesterday. Yesterday's energy has all radiated away and carried both its sides with it; but the same consciousness remains."

Yes, and consciousness, love, memory, etc., are functions of the soul, not of matter. Many years ago, in Ohio, a man by the name of Martin, a member of an infidel club lay dying. Overwhelmed with a keen sense of his lost condition, he wildly, loudly exclaimed, "Oh, my soul! My soul! My soul is in hell! My soul is in hell!"

A number of the members of the infidel club were present. One of them, then a young man, was afterward the Rev. Cyrus Jeffries, and gave an account of the incident in the presence of the writer, he having witnessed their brother's awful death.

Thinking to divert the mind and relieve the agony of the dying man, one of them said to him, "Why, Brother Martin, if you have a soul it is still in your body." "I know it," shrieked the dying infidel, at the same time snatching violently on his breast; "I know it, but there is hell!"

"Thus he died," said Mr. Jeffries, "but his terrible death broke up our infidel club, and his agonizing shrieks rang in my ears for months and years."

Ah, yes, the human soul exists, and must exist, happy or miserable through

all eternity. The Almighty God created it. Only he can annihilate it, and He has said to it, "Live forever."

Reader, where will your soul spend eternity? Would it go to heaven or to hell if you were to die now? There are but two places, and your soul must spend eternity in one of them. Which shall it be, heaven or hell? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."—Religious Telescope.

Giving Gifts and Paying Debts.

The Christmas-gift custom is worthy of commendation and perpetuation. When properly observed, it cheers hearts, brightens homes, and causes many a discouraged one to 'take heart again.'

That the custom is sometimes abused is only too true. The rich remember only the rich in the distribution of their gifts and in spreading their feasts. This is not well. How much better it would be if, in keeping with our Lord's suggestion they would remember the poor, the destitute, the afflicted, the worthy toilers, the pure, honest shop-girls, who eke out a stunted living on their stunted weekly salaries.

But the fact that the gift-giving custom is abused, and that many in straitened circumstances, at Christmas-time, for the sake of apeing the manners of the affluent, overreach themselves, contract debts, and thus burden themselves for months to come, merely for the sake of making a display in the matter of gift-giving—all this is not a valid objection to the custom. It is only in keeping with the propensity of our fallen nature to abuse every good thing and power the Lord has given us. Even that crowning gift, free will, next in value to the gift of his Son, was abused, so as thereby 'death, with all our woe,' was brought into the world.

But about the worst abuse that can be perpetrated in Christmas-gift buying is to use money in that way that should go to paying honest debts. To do this is doubly pernicious and sinful if the money is due poor people who are dependent upon their daily toil for their living. To purchase Christmas presents and not pay the wash-woman; to make expensive gifts to the well-to-do, and not pay what is due him who, by his faithful toil, has put money into the hand of his employer, and for want of which he is not able to provide a 'Merry Christmas' for his family—no act can be more reprehensible than that.

All the little debts due the poor should be paid before there is thought of buying Christmas presents. Thoughtfulness and diligence in this direction may bring Christmas cheer into many a humble home.—Rel. Telescope.

If You Catch Cold.

Many things may happen when you catch cold, but the thing that usually happens first is a cough. An inflammation starts up in the bronchial tubes or in the throat, and the discharge of mucus from the head constantly poisons this. Then the very contraction of the throat muscles in the act of coughing helps to irritate so that the more you cough the more you have to cough. It is, of course, beyond question that in many cases the irritation started in this way results in lung troubles that are called by serious names. It is in this irritated bronchial tube that the germ of consumption finds lodgement and breeds.

Great numbers of people disregard cough at first, and pay the penalty of neglect. Cough never did any one any good. It should be dispensed with promptly. Adamson's Botanic Cough Balsam is a well known remedy and is the surest and quickest cough cure known to-day. It soothes the irritated parts and heals them, then the cough stops of its own accord. The action of this medicine is so simple that it seems like nature's own provision for curing a cough. Every drug-gist has it. 25 cents. Be sure to get the genuine, which has "F. W. Kinsman & Co." blown in the bottle.

Occasionally a small boy tried to keep clean so he won't have to be washed.

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Every man knows a lot of other men that he would like to class as strangers.

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Two men never come to blows unless they are angry and foolish at the same time.

A Son Of God.

Henry M. Stanley tells that once in the heart of dark Africa a native was dragged before him by some of his followers for stealing a gun. Stanley looked at the gun; it clearly belonged to his expedition. The poor man who had it was frightened at the mention of Stanley's name, and could hardly find his voice or say a word only, "I am a son of God, I would not steal!"

This he repeated again and again. It was all he could say.

Stanley was interested, and it dawned on him that this man was probably one of the converts of some of the missionaries laboring in that region, and accordingly he gave him the gun, and allowed him to go, while they pursued their way.

At the next station where they stopped they found the gun waiting for them.

It appeared that the gun had probably been lost. This man had found it, and when he was set free he at once went with it to the missionary for instructions, and by his direction it was sent where Stanley would get it.

But what a light must have touched that darkened son of Africa, who, though brought up in all villainess and theft and sin, had come to realize the glorious dignity of a divine paternity, and say, "I am a son of God, I would not steal!"

How many there are in civilized lands whose ideas of the grandeur of divine sonship are not as clear as his! Let us pray that we may know how much it means to be sons of God, and knowing this that we may walk worthy of our calling, as children of the light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. "Beloved now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;" and though "the world knoweth us not because it knew him not," yet it is for us to know him and know ourselves as his children and his servants, who by our lives and conduct should adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.—H. L. H., in The Christian.

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