

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE

"Let no man despise thy youth"—I. Timothy 4:12

THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

How mysterious were those early Christmases! All the older folks were very busy doing a lot of things, while we were hurried off to bed as soon after supper as possible, so that Santa Claus would know we were being good. How slowly the hours dragged by, and even after everything in the house was quiet we lay awake hoping to see Santa when he came, but at the same time half frightened for fear he would come. Then the long night would seem to run quickly away, leaving us blinking our eyes as we tried to realize that at last Christmas day had arrived. After the first grand rush and some of the first excitement had subsided, the rest of the day, when we were not eating, was spent unwrapping parcels, searching for more hidden things on the tree, and trying to see what made the toys go. Christmas was undoubtedly the biggest day in the year.

It is this element of suspense, of expectancy, of mystery, that gives Christmas its unique flavor, a certain amount of which lingers with one no matter how old he becomes. There is always that eager enjoyment that comes from unwrapping a curious looking bundle with one's name on it. However, as this joy of receiving becomes more matter of fact, there is added to it the pleasure of seeing someone else unwrap a parcel which you have carefully tied up in secret. There always is and always will be that peculiar kind of satisfaction which comes from the surprises of Christmas. Without this spirit the mere exchange of gifts would be perfunctory, and Christmas would lose much of its charm.

There was a great deal of this same element surrounding the first Christmas. The shepherds were taken unawares and thrown into a panic when the heavenly host made the wondrous announcement of Christ's birth. But as soon as they sufficiently recovered themselves they hastened into Bethlehem that they might "see this thing which is come to pass." Mysterious things were taking place in that little town that night. "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." When the wise men saw the star they knew from prophecy that it signified the birth of the Christ, but they were not satisfied to know that he was born; they wanted to see and worship him. They were curious to see him, and were led on and on by what they expected to find in the path of the star. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

When both the shepherds and the wise men found Bethlehem's Babe, they found a treasure of which they were able to learn but little as they knelt there beside him, but a treasure that has been unfolding wondrous mysteries ever since. That babe grew to be The Man of Galilee who continually astounded the multitudes by his miraculous powers as He healed the sick, raised the dead, calmed the troubled sea, and multiplied the loaves and fishes. They thronged about him because of his miracles, and went from his presence speechless because they could not answer the wisdom with which he spoke. They delivered him to Pilate to be crucified, and nailed him to the cross, not knowing him nor his mission to earth.

Christ ever remains a hidden mystery to those who do not believe. He is as one who was

summoned but did not come; or as one who came and was not recognized. "He was in the world—and the world knew him not.—But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Christ came as the universal gift, and the moment one believes in and accepts him, he begins to unfold—to reveal himself in all his beauty and power. Paul the apostle expressed it when he spoke about "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:—which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory." What exultation, what joy, was ours when we first tasted of pardoning grace!—that grace which so miraculously, so mysteriously, yet so assuredly made us new creatures in Christ Jesus. We walked in a new light, that is not of this world. We had one by our side "that sticketh closer than a brother". He became to us "The Rose of Sharon", "The Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star", the One who is "altogether lovely".

But this is only the beginning of the wonders which begin to unfold to us, for "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" Paul again tells us that the purpose of Christ in the heart is "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God". There are ocean depths of his grace to fathom, mountain peaks of his love to scale, and Canaan lands of experience to explore. There is manna in the wilderness, cooling springs in the desert, corn and wine in the land, and honey in the rock. There is "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness".

"O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Wealth that never can be told;
Riches exhaustless of mercy and grace,
Precious, more precious than gold."

"O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Who would not gladly endure
Trials, afflictions, and crosses on earth,
Riches like these to secure."

HARVEY J. S. BLANEY,
Editor Y. P. Page.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Within our homes the candle flames are bright,
The while Thy stars illuminate the night.
Oh, Father, help us mortals here below,
To keep within our hearts the sacred glow
Of sparks which thou hast sent us from above
From Thy divine, eternal, flame of love;
That we, to this enshadowed world may bring
That "Peace, Goodwill" of which the angels sing.

RHODES BURDETT

SCATTER CHRISTMAS CHEER

Is your Society making any special plans to spread Christmas Cheer? It is one of the things in life which increases the more it is scattered around. Is everyone in your community going to be well supplied with everything that goes to make up a Merry Christmas? Perhaps you can find some little girl who will have to go without a doll because her daddy has been out of work. Or perhaps some little boy is facing a Christmas

without the prospect of any toys. Sometimes just a bag of candy and nuts will bring cheer to some youngsters who may be disappointed because their Santa was too poor to come this year. Or perhaps someone you know is going to have to spend Christmas in bed because of sickness. A few extra greetings would do a lot toward making the day more cheerful for them. Or again, some aged person may be unable to get to church to hear the Christmas music, and feel that maybe this will be their last Christmas. Nothing could be more acceptable to them than to have a group of young people come in and sing some Christmas Carols.

There are many ways in which to scatter Christmas Cheer. Look around and you will find them. But whatever you do, don't let Christmas be 'shut up' in your homes—keep it on the move. Plan to make someone else happy. Make your own Christmas mean more by taking it to someone who needs some of the real spirit of the Babe of Bethlehem.

MY CHRISTMAS

By Ruth Frerichs.

My Christmas is such a friendly day:

It glows with comradeships;
It bears a host of tender smiles
Upon its fresh, sweet lips;
It brings the purest harmony
Of nightingale and dove;
It comes with a warm, firm handclasp—
For Christmas to me means Love.

My Christmas is such a happy day:

It rejoices in all that's good;
It sings with sincere devotion
Of a world-wide brotherhood;
It takes to shy, wistful childhood
A greeting, and welcome toy;
It fills from its plenty other's cups,
For Christmas to me means joy.

My Christmas is such a sacred day:

It comes with love divine;
It comes with a beautiful friendship
That is gracious and good and fine;
It comes with that hope transforming
Which for all the world sufficed;
It comes with a glorious challenge;
For Christmas to me means—Christ.

Westchester, N.S.

Dear Young People's Societies:—

After passing through a period of depression, our society is again on the up grade. We have a flourishing Junior Group who hold their service early Friday evening with good attendance and interest. In the absence of Sister Helen Doyle, Brother Sanders has been in charge of this work.

The Senior Group meets later Friday evening, and our meetings are interesting and helpful. We have recently added several new members who will be a great help and blessing to the work. The first Friday in each month is given wholly to Missions, and we feel fortunate in having Brother Sanders to help in these services. He has given us some interesting talks on the African work. We have also taken up the lives of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament. Every verse where we are instructed to "Take heed" was taken up.

Besides the regular offering we have several members who have pledged to the Self-Denial Fund. Our Society has suffered a severe