

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

—THE ORGAN OF THE—
REFORMED BAPTISTS OF CANADA

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EDITORIAL

THE FORGOTTEN FRIEND OF CHRISTMAS

The Christian world is throbbing once again with the joyous spirit of Christmas. The familiar words of greeting and the usual bestowment of gifts will once again warm the hearts of kinsfolk and friends and strengthen the bonds of affection.

In the making out of our gift list, we are usually careful that we do not omit any loved one or friend to whom we feel we owe remembrance, but I fear that the One who is most worthy of remembrance, who should receive the richest of our gifts, is neglected entirely in our plans. Christ is too often the forgotten friend of Christmas. Father and mother are placed at the head of the list, and surely they deserve a lofty place in our affections; brothers and sisters are not forgotten, nor should they be; and it is delightful when our finances will permit us to include, with these, other of our kinsfolk and friends upon whom we desire to bestow gifts. But oh the tragedy when the Christ of Christmas is forgotten! Some people have no more room for Him in their heart's affections than did the Bethlehem inn-keeper in his place of lodging on that first natal day of the Saviour. It would be shameful for any son or daughter to neglect father and mother in the list of Christmas gifts; brothers and sisters, kinsfolk and friends would be deeply grieved if they knew that we deliberately and needlessly omitted their names in our Christmas shopping. But what of Jesus? What is His disappointment, what is His deep sorrow, when He discovers that we have not included Him in the list of those whom we love and to whom we desire to give?

Let us not be among those who will re-enact the tragedy of forgetting Him whose birthday we commemorate. Let us not exclude from our Christmas plans and pleasures Him who lived and died that such a glorious season of peace and plenty might be ours to enjoy. If you have hitherto kept Christ without in the courtyard of your life, open the inn-door of your heart and welcome Him. If you have previously withheld from Him the gifts which He is most worthy to receive, follow the guiding light of salvation's star to the cradle of heaven's king and there lay down at His feet the most precious of your gifts. He does not ask for those things that are beyond your

power to give. If the Saviour may make His own choice of gifts, His request will be, "Give me thine heart as a gift, make to me a present of thy life." If we have already welcomed Him into the inner chamber of our hearts, may we remember the holy significance of the Christmas day that He has given us and keep Christ in our Christmas. Let us not forget this chiefest of friends.

"Let us forget His mighty worth

As we commemorate His birth,

Oh Father help us all to say,

"Our blessed Christ was born this day."

SON OF THE MOST HIGH

By the Rev. Henry Burton, M. A.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest."—Luke 1:32.

St. Luke, whose Gospel is the Gospel of humanity, lingers reverently over the Nativity, throwing a variety of side-lights upon the cradle of the Holy Child. Already he has shown how the Roman State prepared the cradle of the Infancy, and how Augustus unconsciously wrought out the purpose of God, the breath of his imperial decree being but a part of a higher inspiration. Now he proceeds to show how the Shepherds of Judea bring the greetings of the Hebrew world, the wave-sheaf of the ripening harvests of homage which yet will be laid, by Jew and Gentile alike, at the feet of Him who was the Son of David and Son of man.

While the shepherds were "watching the watches of the night over their flock," as the Evangelist expresses it, referring to the pastoral custom of dividing the night into watches, and keeping watch by turns, suddenly "an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them." When the angel appeared to Zacharias, and when Gabriel brought Mary her evangel, we do not read of any supernatural portent, any celestial glory attending them. Possibly because their appearances were in broad daylight, when the glory would be masked, invisible; but now, in the dead of night, the angelic form is bright and luminous, throwing all around them a sort of heavenly halo, in which even the lustrous Syrian stars grow dim. Dazzled by the sudden burst of glory, the shepherds were awed by the vision, and stricken with a great fear, until the angel, borrowing the tones and accents of their own speech, addressed to them his message, the message he had been commissioned to bring: "Be not afraid for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people; for there is born to you in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The two heavenly bearers of good tidings to Mary and later to the shepherds brought identical messages from the MOST HIGH. Both make mention of the name of David which name was the keyword which unlocked all Messianic hopes. Both speak of the Child as a Saviour, both, too, speak of Him as the Messiah for when the angel calls Him the "Christ" it was the same "Anointed" One who, as Gabriel had said, "should reign over the house of Jacob for ever;" while in the last august title now given by the angel, "Lord," we may recognize the higher Divinity—that He is "the Son of the Most High." Luke 1:32 R. V.

Such then, is the triple crown the angel now bears to the cradle of the Holy Child. What He will be to the world is still but a

prophecy; but as He, the Firstborn, is now brought into the world, God commands all the angels to worship him. Heb. 1:6; and with united voice—though the antiphon sings back over a nine months silence—they salute the Child of Bethlehem as Saviour, Messiah, Lord.

No sooner was the message ended than suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying—

"Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased."

The Revised Version lacks the rhythmic qualities of the Authorized Version; and the wordy clause "among men in whom He is well pleased" seems but a poor substitute for the terse and clear "good-will toward men," which is an expression easy of utterance, and which seemed to have earned a prescriptive right to a place in our advent music. The revised rendering, however, is certainly more in accord with the grammatical construction of the original. In both expressions the underlying thought is the same, representing man as the object of the Divine good-pleasure, that Divine "benevolence"—using the word in its etymological sense—which enfolds, the germ, the Divine favour, compassion, mercy and love. There is thus a triple parallelism running through the song, the "Glory to God in the highest" finding its corresponding terms in the "peace among men in whom He is well pleased on earth," while altogether it forms one complete circle of praise, "the good pleasure to man," the "peace on earth," the "glory to God" marking off its three segments. And so the song harmonizes with the message; indeed, it is that message in an altered shape; no longer walking in common prosaic ways, but winged now, it moves in higher circles with measured beat, leaving a path from the cradle of Infancy to the highest heavens all strewn with GLORIAS. And what is the triplicity of the song but another rendering of the three august titles of the message—Saviour, Messiah, Lord? The "Saviour" being the expression of the Divine good-pleasure; the "Messiah" telling of His reign upon earth who is Himself the Prince of Peace; while the "Lord," which, as we have seen, corresponds with "the Son of the Most High," leads us up directly to the "heavenlies," to Him who commands and who deserves all doxologies.

But is this song only a song in some far-distant sky—a sweet memory indeed, but no experience? Is it not rather the original from which copies may be struck for our individual lives? There is for each of us an advent, if we will accept it; for what is regeneration but the beginning of the Divine Life within our life, the advent of the Christ Himself? And let but that supreme hour come to us when place and room are made for Him who is at once the expression of the Divine favour and the incarnation of the Divine love, and the new era dawns, the reign of peace, the peace OF God, because the "peace WITH God," through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then will the heart throw off its GLORIAS, not in one burst of song, which subsides quickly into silence, but in one perpetual anthem, whichever becomes more loud and sweet as the day of its perfected redemption draweth nigh; for when the Divine displeasure is turned away, and a Divine peace or comfort takes its place, who can but say, "O Lord, I will praise Thee?"—Light and Life.