



The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

"And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness."

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A Joyous Christmas To All

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given"—Isaiah 9:6.

THE UNSPEAKABLE CHRIST

W. E. Smith

Text: II Cor. XIX:15. Thanks be unto God for His "unspeakable gift."

The proximity of Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day to each other is a striking feature in our calendar. But Paul seems to join the two in one in our text; "Thanks be unto God for His **Unspeakable gift**". Here is a good text for either a Thanksgiving message or a Christmas meditation.

Paul was the master of a great vocabulary. The greatness of his intellect, the bigness of his heart and the genius of his rhetoric enabled him to marshal words of the deepest meaning. All his natural ability, his acquired culture, crowned by plenary inspiration, are wonderfully revealed when he discoursed on the person of Jesus. But when he has gone as far as mind and heart can carry him, in his eulogy of Christ, he stops as it were, and as much as says, words cannot express it all; "Thanks be unto God for his **Unspeakable gift**"!

As we gather today by faith around the manger cradle of the Christ child, with what praise and adoration do we come! Like the shepherds from the hills and the Wise men from the East, we come to worship him. But we see in him far more than they saw. The background of their lives and their lack of historical knowledge make us marvel at their seeing in that little babe born in a stable, one that was worthy of their gifts and worship. They were inspired by a special illumination, that went beyond the angel's message and the heavenly chorus, or the guiding star. God opened their eyes to see in the birth of Jesus something that was hidden from men for thirty long years to come.

But with all the historical knowledge we have of Jesus, in the Gospels—a bit of his earliest days, his ministry climaxed by his death and Resurrection, and all his unfolding in the Epistles, especially those of St. Paul, we stand by the little babe in the manger and see in him a mystery that words cannot fully describe, and if they could that would make

it harder for us to accept him as saviour and Lord. "Great," said St. Paul, "is the mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, believed on in the world and received up into glory."

A child begotten and born according to the established laws of procreation presents an unexplainable mystery. But an established law makes it only an ordinary event. But here is one who being in the form of God thought it not a prize to be grasped at to be equal with God, but emptied himself of it all, and came down to be born of a peasant mother under conditions that have enabled vile men to question the moral purity of that mother, and submit to most of the conditions of physical, and mental limitation during his childhood, and the physical limitations were his during his ministry that led to Calvary's brow. Nearly two thousand years have gone by since the Judean hill blazed with the glory of the Upper world and shepherds heard music by a choir from the throne of God. But the birth of Jesus that was noticed only by a few at that time, in a little world where a small distance or a little mountain secluded groups of people from the rest of the world, is today commemorated by all peoples, in all lands, of all colors and myriads of tongues.

We may wonder why a birth so divinely attested and so recognized by shepherds and Wise men was not followed by special interpositions of divine power. Jesus was subject to all the laws that governed babyhood, boyhood and young manhood. When Herod threatened his life, God could have sent one angel who could have destroyed Herod and all his host. But we see that holy pair taking that child in whom "the hopes and fears of all the years" met, and fleeing into Egypt. And when they come back finally to Nazareth and Joseph settles down to his carpenter trade, and other children were born into the family, we wonder why the children of that home and the people of the town failed to see in Jesus something supernatural. But nothing is said of it. Only once did the divine shine through and that when Jesus, twelve years of age, met the learned doctors in the temple and con-

founded them with his questions and answers. At home in Nazareth he attended the synagogue services, and his heart must have been grieved with the formality of the devotions and the wrong interpretations of the Scriptures. But never once do we read of his saying anything that attracted special attention.

When he entered upon his ministry even his brothers did not accept his claims to the Messiahship. Even the mother despite the marvellous illumination she had at the annunciation, when she was told of the Christ she was to bare, and she burst forth in that most eloquent effusion that ever fell from woman's lips, seems to have gradually come to recognize in Jesus all that had been told her.

Truly, the "foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Wise men after the flesh would never have conjured up such a Christ. They would have filled all his days with supernatural splendor and power. Even in his ministry the true humanity of Jesus was most evident. He might have compassed all Judea in a heavenly chariot, but instead he walked, his body felt the pangs of weariness and hunger and the sun beat down upon him with its merciless heat. Because of his submission to such physical limitations, many refuse to see in him the divine son of God; His teachings such as man never heard before and his miracles, climaxed by his resurrection from the dead, fail to convince them. They call him a good man, a great teacher but do not bow before his throne and crown him Lord of all. The mystery of the incarnation is too much for them. Cold reason brings up against the stone wall of carnal unbelief.

This man who never confessed sin, or admitted ever making a mistake, who received the worship of men with evident approval and pronounced their absolution from all their guilt, who claimed unity with the Father and his own preexistence with him in glory; who stilled the tempest and raised the dead and proved himself to be the ruler of all the forces of nature and the conqueror of Satan and all

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