

GUEST EDITORIAL

IMPORTANT NEWS RELEASE!

Never was a message of such import as that which was given by the angel to the glory encircled, startled, wondering shepherds on the Judean hills, when "good tidings of great joy was released to all people. The hour strikes in the council room of eternity, Heaven invades the earth, the plan of human redemption unfolds — a Babe born that night in Bethlehem was the One destined from all eternity to be "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The desire of all Nations had come to earth in lowly guise to be the Saviour of mankind.

How wonderful were the promises given before and attending the birth of Christ! The sages and prophets since the world began told of One who should deliver us from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us, and now, the "Bright and Morning Star" had risen and the "Dayspring from on high" had visited us. The work of the Deliverer began and would never cease until He should reconcile all things unto Himself and the last enemy would be destroyed. In Him the weary and heavy laden of earth, the broken-hearted, the guilty and those that were perishing were to find salvation, yea, and all that their hungering hearts longed for.

Strange and varied has been the reaction to this great NEWS. "To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God." "Blessings abound where'er He reigns, the prisoner leaps to lose his chains, the weary find eternal rest and all the sons of want are blessed." But all have not believed the message of the Christmas angel. Unbelief has sadly marred the pages of human history and has taken its toll in frustration, misery, despair and woe. The One divinely chosen and appointed to be the Saviour of mankind has been "despised and rejected of men" and they have sought out and slavishly followed their own saviour and deliverers, only to stumble and fall and fail of their hopes. Ah, and they are still doing it. Wealth, force, worldly wisdom, feverish competition, supermen—now this and now that, but they forsaken have the Fountain of Living Waters and have hewed for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water and therefore their thirst is not quenched. For there is only one Name given among men whereby we must be saved.

Nineteen and a half centuries have rolled away since that most important news was flashed from heaven upon a world of woe — that the Babe of Bethlehem was ordained of God to be a Prince and a Saviour. Millions of true believers are now found throughout the earth who at this season will rejoice in the import of this glorious news, but many millions more still grope on in darkness and unbelief. When will the world accept its Lord and Saviour? What will it take to bring the world to his feet like the humble, adoring shepherds of long ago? Whatever it will take is on the way—the end of the age draws near — the nations of the world are forging the weapons of their chastening — for the time must come when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, and Christ shall reign without a rival over all the kingdoms of earth.

May He who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" hasten the Day. Till then may we be found faithful in keeping the message before our fellows and hastening it to those who have never yet heard.

CHRISTMAS AND THE HOME

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of all the parents in America. Some of us have been trying to say all along that Christianity is more than a creed and more than a code. It is a life. It is a life that can be lived only as one gives up his old self-centered pattern of living and opens his personality to Jesus Christ. It is a life that will never make a profound impression on other people unless there is consistency in it.

This means, from the point of view of our discussion, that parents who deny God and scoff at religion are not the only ones at fault in the current breakdown of American family life. Equally to blame are parents who say they are Christians but who fail to exemplify in their home conduct and in their vital loyalties to the Church the spirit of Jesus Christ.

There are fathers—shoals of them — that never think of sitting down with their boys and reading to them, or with them out of the Holy Bible and out of the finer things in English literature. They never go out with them for a game of ball, or a ramble through the woods, or a ride into the country. They never "pal" with them and thus build an intimacy and an understanding that will be more valuable to the lads than a fistful of government bonds. I plead with you, fathers, that you will pitch in, by the help of this Master and Redeemer of life, and fight the battle of the home against the sinister and cruel forces that are out to destroy it.

The battle of the home! We have seen how Jesus represents in Himself the struggle against violence and cruelty. We must now see how He represents another and very different phase of the struggle within the family circle. Let's call it the battle with misguided love. No one could ever say that Mary did not love her son, but the day came when, apparently, she tried mistakenly to stand in the way of His life-work. Perhaps there were fears that He might be wrong about His consciousness of Messianic mission. Perhaps she shrank from the ridicule that He would have to bear, and the family as well. In any case, the day arrived when Jesus made a strange reply to those who informed Him that His mother and brethren had come to see Him.

"Who is my mother?" he asked, "and who are my brethren?" Then, gesturing toward His disciples, He said, "Behold my mother and my brethren."

Most of us, I suspect, would be willing to testify that the subtlest temptations which come to us are not those caused by our enemies who hate us, but rather those which are caused by our loved ones who are fond of us. In their misguided affection they would hold us for themselves instead of surrendering us up to God and His will.

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Consider, finally, that this Christ of Christmas bore the burdens of the home. Tradition has it that Joseph died when Jesus was still young. His last appearance in the Biblical record is when the family made the trip to Jerusalem at the time Jesus was twelve years of age. It is believed that, following Joseph's decease, the burden of responsibility fell heavily on Jesus' shoulders. What He became to His mother in those years of her widowhood can be appreciated only by those mothers who have been called upon to turn from an open grave and to face, alone, the task of bringing

up a family.

Today I want to appeal to the mothers and fathers, the sons and the daughters, who are conscientiously and courageously carrying the burden of family responsibility. You have observed that it is the home in trouble that gets the publicity. The spot-light of attention is rarely focused on the quiet, harmonious, intelligent, affectionate families that may be found along almost any street in America.

Fathers, bear the burden of the home with hearty courage and with prayerful hope.

Mothers, carry your load of responsibility with a love that never turns to hate and a patience that never gives up the task.

Sons and daughters, give honor to whom honor is due. Shun laziness and selfishness as you would shun a rattlesnake. Help carry your end of the load.

And never forget that none of us can bear the burdens of home as those burdens should be borne unless we have welcomed Jesus Christ into our hearts.

Christmas and the home! For Christ's glory, let us reflect the beauty of home. In Christ's name, let us fight the battles of home. By Christ's strength, let us bear the burden of home.

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

To God the Father it Meant Giving His Son . . .

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

To God the Son it Meant Leaving Heaven's Glory to Become a Servant Obedient Unto Death . . .

"Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8, R.V.)

To the World it Means that God has Provided a Saviour . . .

"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" (Luke 2:10, 11). Christmas hails the birth of Him who was born to die—to die in the sinner's stead, to purchase the redemption of his soul. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

To You It Means that God Offers You Eternal Life as a Gift . . .

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

—Tract.

