



The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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"FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN."

Unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Isa. 9-6.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, 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. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. And 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 and good will toward men."—Luke 2:8 to 14.

OUR CHRISTMAS SINGING

"And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

This brief part of the Christmas story as told by St. Luke would teach us a number of important things relative to our Christmas services, yet important at all times.

First, in the light of its setting, it would show us THE PLACE OF SACRED SONG IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP. That, I suggest, because the story of which the text is but a part, gives us the picture of a spiritual service. It records the first Christmas service, and the text itself states that the angel singers shared in that service, and contributed to its outstanding success. This sacred record gives us heaven's pattern. It tells of divinely appointed and inspired singers as well as preacher, and that should impress us with the importance of sacred song in Christian worship. That by no means lessens the importance of God sent and God anointed preachers and preaching, but it does stress the important place and ministry of singers and singing. Not with the emphasis on what we call "special numbers" and "talent," although they too, have an important part and ministry. Particularly am I thinking of inspired, worshipful congregational singing, and its most helpful contribution to the blessing and success of every service.

JOY TO THE WORLD!

"Joy to the world the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and angels sing.

Joy to the world the Saviour reigns;
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love."

—Isaac Watts

Second, the text would show us THE PURPOSE OF SACRED SONG IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP. It should be understood that the singing of sacred hymns and songs must be purposeful.

Those first Christmas singers would teach us that our singing ought to be an act and expression of worship. It is written of them that they were heard praising God, and singing "Glory to God in the Highest." Their singing was worshipful. It was God glorifying. While it was sung to men, it was also addressed to God. It was meant to magnify God, and to centre people's thoughts worshipfully upon Him. And in that the angel singers set us a pattern for our Christmas services, and those throughout the year.

But further, those same singers would teach us that our singing should be, often at least, an expression of the will of God. But for the thought just considered, instead of the purpose of sacred song in Christian worship, one might have put, the preaching of sacred song. The reason, to emphasize the fact that much of our singing at least, ought to be a message. Our singing ought to be preaching. Think again of those first Christmas singers and their words, "On earth peace, goodwill toward men." With those words they made known something of the will of God to those listening shepherds. They sang of God's redeeming purpose. Truly it can be said that their message was as much heaven sent as that spoken by the angel preacher. What a change there would be in

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JESUS' NAME HIGH OVER ALL

1. Jesus! The name high over all,
The name to sinners given;
It scatters all their guilty fear;
It turns their hell to heaven.
2. Oh that the world might taste and see
The riches of His grace!
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace.
3. His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim;
'Tis all my business here below,
To cry "Behold the Lamb!"
4. Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
"Behold! Behold the Lamb!"

THE NATIVITY

When Jordan hushed his waters still,
And silence slept on Zion's hill;
When Salem's shepherds through the night
Watched o'er their flocks by starry light.

Hark! From the midnight hills around,
A voice of more than mortal sound,
In distant hallelujahs stole,
Wild murmuring o'er the raptured soul.

Then swift to every startled eye,
New streams of glory gild the sky!
Heaven bursts her azure gates to pour
Her spirits to the midnight hour.

On wheels of light, on wings of flame,
The glorious hosts to Zion came;
High Heaven with songs of triumph rung,
While thus they smote their harps and sung:

Oh Zion! Lift thy raptured eye;
The long expected hour is nigh;
The joys of nature rise again;
The Prince of Salem comes to reign.

See Mercy from her golden urn,
Pours a rich stream to them that mourn;
Behold, she binds with tender care,
The bleeding bosom of Despair.

He comes to cheer the trembling heart,
Bids satan and his hosts depart;
Again the Day-star gilds the gloom
Again the bowers of Eden bloom.

Oh Zion! Lift thy raptured eye;
The long expected hour is nigh;
The joys of nature rise again;
The Prince of Salem comes to reign.

—Thomas Campbell

The King's Highway Wishes All Its Readers A Joyous Christmas