



— Editorial —

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The first Christmas service was not held in a great cathedral or in a pious church. Neither was it held in a Christian home. It was an open-air meeting on the hillside of Judea. And, it was a praise service. How could it be otherwise? Luke 2:8-17 gives this account of the service:

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

"And the angel of the Lord said unto them, fear not: 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 heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men".

It was an insight into this scene which caused Nahum Tate, in 1696, to write this well loved Christmas carol. "While shepherds watched their flocks by night All seated on the ground; The angel of the Lord came down, and glory shown around . . ." It seems quite evident from the scripture that shepherds were the congregation at this first Christmas service. The preacher was an angel. The theme of his message was, "good tidings of great joy."

You might have noticed from the scripture that the first Christmas Hymn was, "Glory to God in the Highest . . ." It was sung by a special choir—A heavenly host. I am assuming that it was the theme of the message which brought this music from heaven. Such music is only repeated when this Christchild is born in our hearts. The scripture points out that, "There is great rejoicing in heaven over one sinner which repenteth."

This first Christmas service was an impressive service. As soon as the benediction was pronounced the shepherds made plans to share the message of joy. Notice their response to the message of Christmas. "And it came to pass as the angel was gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe, lying in the manger." I like that—As a result of the first Christmas service, they found the Babe. They found Jesus. This is Christmas indeed!

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IF I HAD NOT COME

Bobby had read in his Bible lesson with daddy just before bedtime the words, "If I had not come." When he awoke Christmas morning there was no stocking or holly wreath. He went for a walk and found factories busy at work; and he went to the orphanage and found only a vacant lot. Then he went to his church and found a "For Sale" sign on it with "If He Had Not Come" written at the bottom. Again he found these words over a gate post of an empty lot, where he went to find a hospital. Disconsolate, he ran home and picked up his Bible, but all the last part of the Book had blank pages. He awoke,

and lo, it was a dream! Do you wonder he slipped down to his knees and said, "Oh, dear Jesus, I am so glad that you did come. Help me to tell others about you."

—Misionary Monthly

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION CONTEST

Beginning January 1, 1962, The Y. P. Association, under the direction of Douglas MacCallum, will sponsor a Scripture Memorization Contest. A special list of scriptures is being prepared by Rev. E. W. Tokley.

The contest will be conducted somewhat similar to the Bible Quiz. Each team will have two members. Each society may have as many teams as it wishes. There will be four play-offs for each team. There will be no competition in the first two play-offs. That is, each individual team will endeavour to accumulate as many points as possible without any opposition. The last two play-offs will be in competition with other teams. When all four play-offs are completed the top eight teams will compete at Beulah Camp for the grand championship.

Throughout Canada and the United States, there is a new interest in Bible study. What better way could the Bible be studied than by memorization?

We expect to have a wonderful response to this contest. Pastors and youth presidents will you begin now to encouraged your young people to join this scripture memorization contest?

Merle Smith

"UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY—"

O what a day!

Foretold in ages long since past;

By many prophets oft forecast:

God's promises the world outlast—

O what a day!

O what a Gift!

From God the Father up in heav'n,

To sinful mortals Satan driv'en,

A Saviour, Christ the Lord, was giv'n—

O what a Gift!

O what a Babe!

A Child asleep on Mary's knee,

Yet true Incarnate God was He,

With "goings forth" eternally—

O what a Babe!

O what a love!

Born purposely for men to die,

To save them, bless, and glorify,

And bear them to His Home on High—

O what a Love!

What shall we do?

E'er this glad Christmastide is gone,

Accept Him now, and love Him on,

His soulful praises e'er prolong—

This let us do.

—R. E. Neighbour

"God can give Himself to us only in the measure in which we give ourselves to Him."