

Heartsease.

Mark ix., 36.—“Jesus took a child and set him in the midst of them.”

The lesson of “the little child!” Is not this what each Christmas teaches us? As the old, old story of “God’s wondrous love in saving lost mankind” begins again to sound in our ears, as we begin once more to trace the life of God’s dear Son from Bethlehem to Calvary, are we not reminded that God’s first step in the working out of His salvation for us poor sinners was to take a little Child and set Him in our midst? He took His only begotten Son and set Him in the midst of this miserable and sinful world in the stable of the inn at Bethlehem. It was the first step of the way, whose end we see not fully yet, the way which we are still treading.

How far beyond all human plans or thoughts is God’s loving purpose! Who, as they gazed on the Infant Jesus in His blessed mother’s arm, conceived or could have conceived all that that little Child was to do and to be for us? As we look back after the experience of nineteen centuries, we know something of what was meant by the birth of Jesus, and of the joy of Christmas. If the question is asked of us:

“Who is this so weak and helpless,
Child of lowly Jewish maid,
Rudely in a stable sheltered,
Coldly in a manger laid?”

we can answer, as those who know the truth revealed by God:

“’Tis the Lord of all creation,
Who this wondrous path hath trod;
He is God from everlasting,
And to everlasting God.”

We can render thanks to God for His “unspeakable gift”; and can join, as Christians of every age and generation have done, with the angels in their hymn of salutation to the newborn Saviour—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.”

What a wonderful lesson to all men is the lesson of the “Little Child!” Innocence, purity, reverence, dependance, obedience, humility—these, and such as these, are seen in the example of the Holy Child, Jesus. And He enforces the lesson with His own words: “Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” If we are to follow Him to the right hand of the Majesty on high, we must begin our journey with Him at the cradle of Bethlehem and become little