

HOW TO KEEP CHRISTMAS.

By Knoxonian.

The average Presbyterian does not go to church on Christmas Day. Most Presbyterians think if they attend church twice every Sabbath during the year they do very well. So they do. A man who goes to church regularly all the year round does not need to bring up his average by attending service on holidays and by putting on a spurt during Lent. Presbyterian people never were great on "times and seasons." They prefer keeping up a good average all the year round. They are right.

Christmas should be one of the happiest days in the year. There is no use, however, in a man or a family saying: "Now we will have a happy Christmas," unless steps are taken to make the day a happy one. No man can be happy by simply resolving to be happy. You might as well try to lift yourself over a fence by pulling your bootstraps. Suppose a family were to meet on Christmas Eve and pass a resolution that they would have a pleasant Christmas Day, the resolution would do nothing for them. Moved by Paterfamilias, and seconded by Materfamilias, that we spend a Happy Christmas. Fudge. That resolution would be as useless as the votes of 'hanks at the end of a tea-meeting. To make Christmas happy you must use the necessary means. Calvinists believe in using the means as well as in Foreordination.

Perhaps one of the first steps to be taken in the way of making Christmas happy is to buy some nice presents for the family. There are some people who object to Christmas presents or presents at any other time. They hold that by giving your wife and children presents you purchase their affection—you bribe them to love you. The man who makes that objection must stand on a very high moral plane. In fact he is so much above ordinary mortals that it is a wonder he is not translated like Enoch and Elijah. He is altogether too pure for this lower world. His logic, if applied all round, would put an immediate end to bowing, hand-shaking, kissing and all the other kinds of friendly courtesy by which we show our goodwill or love toward those around us. Living in the light of this severe morality, a man would have to say: "I can't bow to my neighbor, or shake hands with him, lest he may think I am trying to purchase his good-will." A husband would have to say: "I must not kiss my wife when I leave home, because that would be bribing her to think of me while I am gone. I must not bribe her in that way." As a rule, women like to see their husbands move on a high moral plane; but we venture to think there are few women who care to see their husbands so elevated above this world that they cannot give them and the children a nice little something at Christmas. The best of wives can stand a little of that kind of bribery and be all the better for it. And then there is room for the terrible suspicion that the man who is too good to buy a few presents for his family may not be prevented from doing so by his superior piety. Meanness may have more to do with it than piety. The man's heart may be very small and hard and selfish. Perhaps he has no heart at all. There are masculine bipeds who pass for men that have no hearts. It is a good thing, then, to give a few presents—not necessarily expensive, but just nice little reminders that almost anybody can procure. It doesn't hurt even a minister to take something of that kind.

The next step necessary to make Christmas happy is to begin the day in a happy frame of mind. That individual called by way of courtesy the head of the family may have been late in the place of business on Christmas Eve—presumably he was in the place of business. Having worked hard all day and until late in the evening, he may be the least bit crusty on Christmas morning. That frame of mind does not promise well. Get out of it as soon as possible. Think of all God's blessings since last Christmas. Try to solve this problem: "How much owest thou unto thy Lord? How much do you owe Him for home, food, raiment, reason, providential care, restraining grace, the hope of glory? How much do you owe Him for His goodness to the members of the family, for His goodness to those that He brought back from the brink of the grave, for His goodness to those that you would not bring back from the grave if you could?" Meditations like these should put a man in a good humor on Christmas morning. If not, there is something more seriously wrong than the dulness of his razor. His heart is wrong, or perhaps he has not got one, or it may be so small that no amount of meditation can enlarge it.

A woman who knows how to keep house, and who has had a decent Christmas present, won't keep the house in a turmoil all day by making the Christmas dinner. If she has been properly treated she can prepare a maximum dinner with the minimum of fuss. This contributor does not dare to discuss this point at length.

If possible there should be a family gathering on Christmas Day. Happy is the family that can gather round the Christmas table in unbroken numbers. Happy is the household that can meet at least once a year. To many this is impossible, but where it can be done the members of the family should endeavor to meet. The associations and memories of that annual meeting help many a boy to resist temptation during the whole year.

So much for the positive side of the Christmas question. Now let us put in a few don'ts.

Don't worry about business on Christmas Day. You may not have made as much money during '07 as you expected, but that cannot be helped now. You may worry enough to spoil your dinner or check the digestive process, but worrying would not change the balance to the amount of one cent. Therefore, don't worry.

Don't indulge in any amusements that leave a sting behind. Perhaps some young reader would like to know if dancing is included. All amusements that leave a sting are included, and probably you know how it is yourself about dancing a good deal better than this contributor knows. If dancing leaves a sting then don't dance.

Don't indulge in anti-Scott beverages. That is our advice. We don't keep a conscience for the regulation of our neighbours' conduct as some men do. We use our own conscience for regulating our own conduct—not the conduct of our neighbors. But we may be allowed to ask all good men if they think Christmas cannot be made happy without the use of wine. We know that it can.

To the thousands of good men and women whom "Knoxonian" has had the honour and privilege of speaking to in these columns during the past year, he, from his heart of hearts, wishes a Happy Christmas in the best sense of the word. To the many homes that his papers have entered he wishes the best blessings that our Heavenly Father can bestow. Friends one and all, may those who meet you and greet you next Christmas Day meet you in the home above!

When soon or late you reach that coast
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May you rejoice, no wanderer lost,
Your families all in heaven.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

Mr. Robert E. Speer says: "This same Jesus who once gave so liberally is now in want." Whatever His children want He wants, whatever they suffer, He suffers. The only real work we have in this life is our Father's business and that business is to relieve want, care and suffering. One of the most common wants and easiest to supply is that of cheerful morning greetings. Christmas Day would lose much of its value were the words, "I wish you a merry Christmas," stricken out of our conversation. Every one who hears that wish feels happier and every one who says it is happier, for the wish itself goes a long way towards bringing about happiness. The Christmas spirit of 1907 can permeate the whole year to follow by meeting this long-felt want of cheering greetings and happy wishes.

"It was only a glad 'Good morning.'
As she passed along the way;
But it spread the morning's glory
Over the live-long day."

—Philadelphia Westminster.

COMFORTABLE WORDS.

By Rev. Joseph Hamilton, author of
"Our Own and Other Worlds,"
"The Spirit World," Etc.

The late cold snap reminds us that there are other worlds where there is perhaps no Christmas, and no Christmas weather. Mercury and Venus are two worlds that are nearer to the sun than we are by a good deal. Still, we must remember that heat is not produced solely by nearness to the sun. Much depends on the condition of the atmosphere. We know that from this cause we can have a cold day in summer, and a warm day in winter. So it may be that Mercury and Venus are not much hotter than the earth.

Then we have Neptune, the most remote world from the sun that we know. In fact Neptune is twenty times as far removed from the sun as we are. What a cold world it seems to be. And what a dark world. Judging solely from its distance from the sun it would seem to have only a dim twilight. But then, its inhabitants are used to it, just as our fathers were used to tallow candles, and thought them a great invention. It may be that this world of ours is only a twilight world as compared with some. When in the evening you turn on the electric light, what a change. So it may be with different worlds.

But we may be sure that the inhabitants of all worlds are fitted for the worlds they inhabit, just as the many kinds of animals that live in this world of ours are fitted for their environment. The universe is full of wonderful adaptations. These adaptations could not come by chance, or mere law. They are effected by infinite wisdom and Power. "There lives and moves a soul in all things; and that soul is God."

"Our Own and Other Worlds" is a fascinating illustrated book, on sale at all bookstores. The price is \$1.25. It would make a splendid Christmas or New Year's gift for either old or young. The Epworth League took a special edition of 1,500 copies.—Editor.