

enjoyments, and urgent needs, physical, intellectual and moral of the great mass of their fellow-creatures. And it is not too much to say that this altruistic or philanthropic spirit has grown side by side with the nobler conception of Christmas-keeping, as a day, not of mere mirth and Jollity, or even of mere ceremonial observance, but, more especially, of "thinking on the things of others" of the expression in act of that "love which is the fulfilling of the law," and the every essence of Christianity, though it is so often left far in the shade behind creed and doctrine and ritual. And among the influences which have led up to this nobler conception of Christmas, we cannot but recognise that of Charles Dickens remarkable little book, "a Christmas Carol," which gave forth the true note of Christian altruism, and largely helped to inspire the great English public with a higher ideal and a higher love of Christmas.

Now this higher ideal has made for itself an assured footing, wherever the hearts of men beat true to its dominant note, in forest and wilderness as well as where the Christmas chimes ring merrily out from tower and steeple; even as the old familiar hymn, "Hark the herald angels sing" echoes all round the world, wherever the English tongue is spoken. Even Presbyterians have yielded to the blessed spirit of "Christmas present" though, once upon a time, they "took a scunner" at it, and very naturally too, when it was forced upon them at the point of the bayonet, by that "sanctified person, King James!" Yet none, even those who still frown at the Christmas commemorative service, so sweet and appropriate, take kindly enough to the Christmas turkey, the family gathering, the Christmas tree, or Christmas stocking, and all the little devices with by means of which we seek to give to the little ones happy associations with Christmas-day! But the best Christmas joy we can give them after all is the "joy of doing good," the happy learning of the lesson, divinely taught that "it is more blessed to give than to receive!" Some of the children who learned this lesson years ago have never forgotten it, but have been practising it ever since. Let not even the children be selfish in their Christmas pleasures! Let them be taught to look upon it as an opportunity of *giving* rather than of *getting*, of giving the little loving service, if they can give nothing else. And for us older ones, why cannot this blessedness of making others happy be continued all through the year? Why should we all have a spasmodic fit of doing good, every twenty fifth of December, and then forget the lesson all the rest of the year? Why is not the command to love our neighbor as ourselves, with all its practical results, just as binding on December twenty-sixth, or January twenty-fifth as on the day we call Christmas? Yet we cannot keep even Christmas truly, unless we have the Master's own spirit of giving, giving *ourselves* not less than our goods, which is of the very essence of the Christian life. And when that final judgment comes which shall tear off all disguises and show us to ourselves as we *are*, and not as we should like to *appear*, we shall see that it is only in this spirit and essence of following Christ in giving ourselves for others, that we can enter then "into the joy of our Lord," with ever increasing fulness into the spirit of "a happy Christmas!"—FIDELIS.

### An Advent Hymn.

The Christmas stars shine clear and bright  
As on the first glad Christmas night,  
But where are gleams of angel wings,  
Where the celestial choir that sings  
A carol to the listening earth,  
Glad tidings of the heavenly birth,  
With which the hosts celestial ring,  
And where is He, the new-born King?

He cometh still, as light of day  
O'er purple hill-tops far away!  
No sudden flash of dazzling light  
Darts through the shadows of the night;  
But even while our waiting eyes  
Are looking for the glad surprise,  
We find that, ere we know, the day  
Clear on the hills and valleys lay!

He comes, but not to outward sight,  
With herald angels robed in light,  
And choirs celestial ringing clear;  
Yet comes He still, in Christmas cheer,  
In loving thought, in kindly deed,  
In blessings shared with others' need  
In gentle dews of peace and love,  
That drop, in blessing from above!

In humble thoughts of penitence,  
In comfort known to inward sense,  
In consciousness of sin forgiven,  
In love, the earnest here of heaven;  
He comes, though not to outward ken,  
To reign a King in hearts of men,  
In all things pure and just and true,  
The Christ to-day is born anew!

And though in human form, no more,  
We see Him as He walked of yore,  
At even, on the hill side gray,  
Or in the city's crowded way,  
Still may we see Him, dim or clear,  
In every heart that holds Him dear;  
In every life that owns His way,  
The Life Eternal lives to-day!

Not only where the Minster towers  
Bear high their fretted marble flowers,  
In vaulted aisles, whose echoes long  
The chants of ages past prolong,  
But 'neath the humblest pine-roof reared,  
'Mid stumps of virgin forest cleared,  
The Babe who in the manger lay  
Is near to bless the Christmas Day!

Yet still His waiting Church below  
Looks onward to the brighter glow,  
When all the dim and scattered rays,  
United in one lambent blaze,  
Shall crown the holy brow that bore  
The crown of thorns and anguish sore,  
And His own ransomed earth shall ring  
With anthems to her conquering King!

FIDELIS.

### The Incarnation the True Type of Evolution.

In the truest sense of the term we may say that the Incarnation of the Christ was an evolution from humanity. He was born of a human mother and so was truly a man, yet he gave abundant evidence of being much more than a man. He came into the world with the mental and spiritual heritage that formed the portion of every Jewish child from its environment, minus the sinful tendency common to man, but He had also a wealth of moral and spiritual energy which lifted Him far above His own and all preceding generations. Like other men He had dominion over nature, but beyond that he showed a control of it altogether, without precedent in the history of mankind. In one way the scene had been all prepared by a long course of events for His appearing, but when He did appear He was greater than all the forecasts of Him, and greater than any climax to which they might be expected to lead up. He was all that by any of the known laws of heredity—the race might be counted on sooner or later to produce, that and something more of which it gave no real promise. The ultimate problem in His case is the ex-