

# All Hallows in the West.

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## CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

LOVE came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love Divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love Incarnate, Love Divine;  
Worship we our Jesus,  
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and Love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.

*Christina Rossetti.*

THE earth was held in the thralldom of sin. Strife and envy were abroad, and "darkness covered the earth" like a pall. Through this darkness the world could no longer see God. Yet God had not left Himself without witness. Heaven and earth were still bound by mutual charity, and earth's children—though hardly daring to look up to the Godhead in its awful purity and holiness—raised their eyes to heaven His dwelling place, and owned by that very upward glance, that voiceless cry, their right to be heard and to be helped.

Gone astray, soiled, polluted through and through by sin, sin of which perhaps we are unable to conceive the depth, dark Earth in her helplessness cried to Heaven; "Drop down ye heavens from above and let the skies pour down righteousness." Parched and thirsty, worn and weary, feeling the burden of sin greater than she could bear, the power of moral choice all but gone, the power of correspondence with Divine Grace almost, but thank God, not quite

lost, again and again: the yearning helpless cry was raised, from the moment the first father and mother of the human race saw with horror-stricken eyes God's pure earth stained with the blood of their son, slain by his brother's hand, the cry for help went up—"the voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the ground"—this, the first recorded prayer.

For thousands of years after, as sin and iniquity increased, consciously or unconsciously, out of the gloomy night the despairing voice of earth reached the throne of Mercy. "*Rorate cæli desuper, et nubes pluant justum,*" "Shed down dew from above, ye heavens, and let the clouds pour down a just one." Yea, One who should restore to earth the primeval perfection of man, who should show forth again the Image of God in earth's fallen race, through the Seed of Adam "Who was the Son of God."

Heaven replies generously, that as a result of the acceptance of Divine grace, earth herself should generate a Saviour. "*Aperiatur terra, et germinet salvatorem,*" "Let the earth open and let it bring forth a Saviour."

Then beneath the dew of heavenly grace the parched earth revived. The Angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth, "a city of Galilee," to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, "and the virgin's name was Mary."

Divine compassion had pierced the gloom, the wretchedness of sin, and the shadows began to disperse.

"Hail! thou that art highly fa-