

children will be asked to write to Santa Claus and make their wants known. These last will be taken charge of by the Association and every case thoroughly investigated. Every letter coming under the class of "needy child" will be sent to some person who will be expected to be personally responsible for attention to the request, using his or her own discretion as to the nature and value of gifts. Letters coming from children whose parents are found to be in circumstances which will ensure home attention, will receive merely a "letter from Santa Claus" in reply. The Association will not purchase or distribute gifts itself, and no officer or worker will receive any monetary reward for services. The operating expenses of the Association will be the cost of printed matter and postage. During December the headquarters of the Association will be the King Edward Hotel, and the office address given is 47 St. George Street, the Secretary being Miss F. M. Simpson. The Association is anxious to reach the public by as many avenues as possible, and some of our readers may be glad to co-operate in bringing Christmas cheer to poor little ones, while, on the other hand, our columns may be the means of letting the Association know of needy children. The idea is admirable, and deserves all possible sympathy and co-operation. Those who are willing to help are invited to apply to the Association, promising to take care of one or more children's letters, or else aid the Association in office work or on the Investigating Committee or in some other way. We gladly call attention to this interesting and truly Christ-like effort to bring joy to many who might otherwise be without Christmas cheer.

A. D.

(In the Year of Our Lord).

It is particularly significant that the modern world dates its own birth from the birth of Christ. A recent writer has suggestively remarked: "With the Advent of Christianity a new epoch of evolution opened for the world." We need only compare the world of to-day with that of the Emperor Nero to lead to the enquiry: What is the cause of the superiority of the present to former days?

The Advent of Christ was first and foremost a revelation of God. He Who had spoken partially and imperfectly in old times, spoke at last to the world through His Son. He spoke in the one and only language men could understand, the language of humanity, and thus we read that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Men saw in Jesus Christ the glory of God. This revelation set forth the everlasting love of God. This was the theme of our Lord's teaching and life, the love of our Father in Heaven. Even the familiar words by themselves are sufficient to prove this: "God so loved the world." It was not necessary to wait for the supreme proof of Calvary to see the love of God, for from the outset of Christ's life on earth He revealed the Divine affection in unmistakable terms. It is passing strange that any one could dream of suggesting that Jesus Christ came in order that God might love us. Quite the contrary, He came to declare the heart of God, and when He said "I and My Father are one," men were intended to learn something of the infinite love of God. As the Apostle Paul says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." And men saw in Christ the living proof of the teaching to which they listened. Then, too,

Christ revealed the Grace of God. Grace is love in attitude and action. It expresses the spontaneous movement of the Divine nature towards man. It represents as nothing else can do, the desire and determination of God to save and bless mankind. Grace is thus the supreme thought of the Gospel: "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." It is a definite and constant reminder that salvation depends not upon the ingenuity of man, but on the initiative of God: "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." It was Grace that gave the Lord Jesus Christ to live and die for us, it is Grace that brings us into the status of sonship, that leads us step by step in the way of life and enables us to continue to the end. All this was revealed in the coming of Christ, and it is this that makes His birth the birth of a new world. A new realm of thought was born in the revelation of the everlasting love and the unmerited grace of the Eternal Father.

The Advent of Christ was also the vindication of man. Our Lord was born of a woman; He became human; He toiled with His hands. How much we should like to be able to get behind the curtain that veils the hidden part of His life at Nazareth. And in becoming man, He has vindicated those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, for in the coming of Christ we have God's answer to the question, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" One way by which He vindicated man was in showing his individual value. In the parable of the Lost Sheep the shepherd was concerned about the one that was missing, although "there were ninety and nine that safely lay in the shelter of the fold." In the parable of the Lost Silver, the woman was anxious about the one coin; though there were nine still available. In the parable of the Prodigal Son the father kept looking out for the one who had wandered, although there was another son at home. And for this reason the angels of God are represented as rejoicing over even one sinner that turns to God. In the light of our Lord's birth and life, man can never be regarded as a cypher. Then, too, Christ glorified womanhood and motherhood, especially in an age and amid surroundings where both were disregarded and even despised. His Mother was with Him in His infancy, women were associated with His ministry, they were last at the Cross and first at the tomb. Further, He vindicated children and found a place for them in His Kingdom. Even yet, we have not sounded the depths of that wonderful Word which tells us that children are already in the Kingdom, while adults have to become like little children in order to enter therein. He desired to have children near Him, even though His disciples were of a very different mind; and He declared that the angels of the children always beheld the Father in Heaven. As we consider these things it is impossible not to see that an entirely new world has been revealed to us in regard to the value, the purpose, and destiny of man. If we would know the value of a single soul we must look at it in the light of the Incarnation, for in that we shall find the supreme sanction of all effort on behalf of human life.

The Advent of Christ was also the condemnation of sin. By sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, God condemned sin in the flesh. In His earthly life, our Lord was able to show that there was no necessity and no excuse for sin. His deadliest foe could not accuse Him of sin: "I find no fault with this Man"; His own challenge remains unanswered to this day: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin"; while those who were with Him constantly affirm with one voice that "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."

But above all, in His death on the Cross, the condemnation of sin reached its culminating point. Men were enabled to see as never before, what God thought of sin, and the absolute incongruity of sin and holiness. It is impossible to consider fully and properly the Incarnation apart from the Cross, for our Lord "came into the world to save"; and thus the Advent was the gateway to the Crucifixion. From the time of Calvary, a new conception of sin, a new idea of holiness, and a new revelation of the glory of forgiveness came into this world. While the life of Christ stands for an example, His death represents an expiation, and thus, even at Christmas, we cannot get far away from the Cross, as the secret source of every spiritual blessing.

This subject has also a very definite bearing on what is known as the Virgin Birth, and we may consider this in one or other of two ways. We can either start at the beginning, and assume it; or we may review the past from the resurrection, and deduce it. That is to say, we may argue the sinless life from the Virgin Birth, or we may argue the Virgin Birth from the sinless life. The latter is at once the more convincing and the more attractive, for when once we behold the perfect life, it is impossible to avoid believing in the Virgin Birth. And in this came a new idea of God's faithfulness, and a new conception of life's infinite possibilities.

Not least of all, the Advent of Christ was a guarantee of righteousness. Thus far we have been considering the retrospective side of the truth concerning Christ, but there is a prospective side as well. He who has come will come again; and while it is not for us to enquire into times or seasons, we have to live in the earnest expectation of His coming. The new world has been born; the old evolution has been arrested; Jesus Christ has come, and life can never be again as though He had not come. But much remains about which we may feel perplexed, and yet not be without hope. In the midst of conflict, when civilization seems collapsing, we hold fast the confession of our hope that there will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. We still look for a Saviour; we still wait for our complete redemption; and meanwhile, we are confident that He will perfect that which concerneth us. Turning our gaze from things around us, we look up to Jesus and expect Him as our King, no longer despised and rejected, but glorified and adored. We anticipate and hasten forward to that time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

The main task that remains is the translation of these new ideas into life, their conversion into glowing realities. The birth of a new world does not come home with power to the individual until he is able to talk of the new birth of his soul. There are many who have two dates from which to date our history; the year of our birth, natural history; and the year of our new birth, spiritual history. Whether we can exactly name the latter date or not is, perhaps, of comparative insignificance, but it is not a matter of indifference that we know and experience the light and life that Christ, by His coming, has brought. A modern writer has said that "Christ has given a new calendar of time to the soul." When we think of its personal application, B.C. "describes the days before Christ appeared to our faith, to turn darkness into light." On the other hand, A.D. stands for the present dispensation in which Christ is at once the Revealer of God, the Redeemer from sin, the Restorer of light, and the Realization of hope. The supreme question for every one at this Christmas season is: Is it B.C. or A.D. in our personal experience?