

How Are You Going to Celebrate the Saviour's Birthday?

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Now comes the time which should be the gladdest of all the year, the time which we keep as the advent of him who came to bring peace and great joy to this sin-cursed world. How shall we show our appreciation of the greatest and gladdest event in all history?

Alas, how often it is celebrated, even by Christians, entirely in feasting and gluttony. Many Christians spend more on a Christmas feast than they spend for foreign missions in a whole year. Many allow brandy and wine to be used for flavoring cookery, etc., or brought even in stronger forms to their tables? How our blessed Savior must be grieved by the way in which we keep his birthday! It has been carefully estimated that \$125,000,000 is the amount spent on gifts and feasts in America. What a small per cent. of this is spent in a way to make the world, or some one in it, brighter and better.

A missionary in Africa writes of the way in which Christmas is kept by native Christians there, and truly they put to shame many in this Christian land. How are you going to keep this joyful yet sacred season?

Savior, on this day of days,
Let us offer grateful praise;
Rightly may we keep thy birth—
Dearest blessing known to earth.

May our hearts o'erflow with joy,
May our hands find sweet employ,
Helping weary ones along,
Filling saddened hearts with song.

May our eyes be quick to see
Ways, dear Lord, of pleasing thee;
May this birthday, Lord, of thine,
Hallowed be with love divine.

Graces and Their Causes.

Each Christian grace has its particular causes. Would we possess the graces? Then we must attend to causes.

For example, faith is a grace; its cause is hearing the word of God. Would any of us have saving faith? Then we must hear 'and heed' the Word of the Lord.

Abiding in the love of Christ is a Christian grace; its cause is keeping His commandments. "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love."

Knowing that the Christian religion is a divine reality is a special Christian grace. Its cause is the doing of the will of the Lord. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself."

Rest of soul is a precious Christian grace. Its cause is Christian meekness. "I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls." Restlessness and worry of soul cannot touch him who is meekly and confidently reposing his all in Jesus Christ.

Joy, also, is a Christian grace, the cause of which is loyal service for Christ—service rendered to Him by doing good to others, by helping them in time of need, and by aiding them both materially and spiritually. Christ found supreme joy in going about doing good, and we can become partakers of His joy by doing as He did.—Religious Telescope.

Thomas Fuller, a quaint old writer, tells how startled he was once at a narrow escape from throwing down a beautiful crystal hourglass. And then he thought to himself, "How foolish I am to care so much about this measurer of time, while I am all the while throwing away time itself!"

Our Young People

"NUMBERING OUR DAYS."

Topic for Dec. 29. Psalm 90.

Taking the Census.

One of the most important events of any decade in the history of our country is always the taking of the census. It shows us many things. It tells us whether we are gaining in population, and how much we are gaining, and from what source. It tells us whether we are gaining in wealth, and how the additional wealth has been made. It tells us how our schools are getting on; it gives us many facts about the condition of labor; it shows us whether the general health is better, and whether the people on the average are living longer. It would be hard to name any part of our life that is not in some way touched by the census.

In the same fashion, I think, it is a good thing for the Christian often to stop and take a census of himself. What sins have now the dominion over me? he may ask. Am I getting the better of them? What graces do I possess? Is my faith in them increasing? How many friends have I? What am I doing for them? Does prayer mean more or less to me than it used to mean? Is my Father's house becoming a place of increasing blessing? Am I growing more unselfish? more brave? more faithful? These are some of the questions a Christian census-taker will ask.

Now the value of a census depends entirely on how honest the answers are, and how accurately they are set down. It is possible to cheat on ourselves badly, and make ourselves believe that the kingdom of our souls is getting on gloriously, when it is really on the point of spiritual bankruptcy. And certainly the most silly cheat of all is to cheat one's self for eternity. "Know yourself," is a wise old Greek maxim; but it would have been far wiser if it had been: "So know yourself as to better yourself." That is what our meeting is for: to night: to come to know ourselves; to take a census of ourselves; to look back over the past year and then forward over the new year, and see how we can do better. May God help us so to number our days on earth that we may spend an eternity with Him in heaven.—C. E. World.

Daily Readings.

Mon., Dec. 23.—The year gone. Ps. 103: 8-18
Tues., Dec. 24.—My progress. Rom. 6: 1-4; 1 Cor. 13: 11
Wed., Dec. 25.—The lessons of time. Eccl. 3: 1-12
Thurs., Dec. 26.—Using the days. Ps. 89: 47, 48; Hos. 10: 12; Col. 4: 5
Fri., Dec. 27.—In the year to come. Ps. 71: 1-5; Luke 11: 1-4
Sat., Dec. 28.—What shall I resolve? 2 Tim. 2: 15; Heb. 10: 19-25
Sun., Dec. 29.—Topic. Numbering our days. Ps. 90.

Christ Watches the Flame.

How do you make "smoking flax" burn! You give it oil, you give it air, and you take away the charred portions. And Christ will give you, in your feebleness, the oil of His Spirit, that you may burn brightly as one of the candlesticks in His Temple; and He will let air in, and take away the charred portions by the wise discipline of sorrow and trial sometimes, in order that the smoking flax may become the shining light. But by what

soever means it may be, be sure of this, that He will neither despise nor neglect the feeblest inclination of good after Him, but will nourish it to perfection and to beauty.

The reason why so many Christian men's Christian light is so dim is just that they keep away from Jesus Christ. "Abide in Me and I in you." "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." How can the temple lamps burn bright unless the priest of the temple tends them? Keep near Him, that His hand may nourish your smoking dimness in a pure flame, leaping heavenward and illuminating your lives.—Alexander MacLaren, D. D.

The Casket of the Soul.

BY REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D. D.

In God you find the security for your immortality. No other power can hold a man; no other being has capacity within which to hold what we mean by spiritual manhood. Only God can be the casket of the soul. Where is my spirit hidden? Into what treasure-house have I really put my true self? Who holds me, claims me, directs me? If myself, then I am guilty of the most palpable and mischievous paradox; if any one meaner than myself, then I am guilty of the most ridiculous absurdity and trifling. If I have deposited myself with God, then I know that thieves cannot break through or steal, moth nor rust can corrupt or canker; all will be well; come what may to sun and moon and stars, fall what may of blight and curse on the green fields that have grown for me my daily food, I will abide in the tabernacle of the Most High.

No Answer.

In "Daniel Quorn and His Religious Notions" Daniel tells of staying with a gentleman, a very religious kind of a man, and of his family prayer in the morning, that he might be kept from sin, and might have a Christlike spirit and the mind that was also in Christ Jesus, and that we might have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. It was such a good prayer that Daniel thought, "What a good kind of man you must be!"

But all through the day, in the house and in the field, he found him scolding and finding fault with everybody and everything. At length Daniel said:

"You must be very much disappointed, sir."

In answer to the puzzled inquiry he reminded the farmer of his morning prayer and the specific things he asked for—the Christlike spirit, the mind of Jesus, the love of God shed abroad in the heart.

"He did not like it very much," said Daniel, "but I delivered my testimony, and learned a lesson for myself, too. We should stare very often if the Lord should answer our prayers."—S. I. cited.

What is our confidence that the kingdom of God is advancing? Simply the sure word of God. He has declared that he will establish his church, and that all people shall come into it. He will fulfill his promise He who makes all thin s work together for his purpose or grace is now fulfilling it.