

CHRISTMAS EVE.

MOTHER, wash me clean to-night,
Wash my little hands all white;
Lay in curls my soft brown hair,
See my cheeks are rosy fair.
Make me pure and sweet to sight,
For the Christ-child comes to-night.

Wash me clean from head to feet,
Snowy nightdress, fresh and sweet,
I will say my prayer and rest,
With my hands crossed on my breast.
Perhaps the Christ-child on his way,
By my little bed will stay.

Mother, pardon me, I ask,
Naughty words and slighted task;
Let me go to bed to-night,
Pure and sweet and snowy white,
Then the Christ-child on his way,
By my little bed may stay.

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HAPPY DAYS.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 24, 1887.

MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Do you know that merry Christmas has come again?

Who is not glad to see old Father Christmas coming with his bunch of holly, and his sprig of mistletoe, and his shining, shining face, all wreathed in merry smiles? Ah! the children have been watching for him, and they are ready to welcome him to their hearts and homes.

Since he came last how many things have happened! Some sad things, but more glad things, have come into most lives. Have the sad things, the griefs, the losses, the crosses, made us more tender and loving and patient? And have the glad things filled our hearts with grateful love to the dear Christ whose coming has made gladness possible? What will the

Christmas mean to us this year? May it not mean more love, better service, sweeter cheer, through all the coming days to our Christ whose birth we celebrate?

"Just as the wise men deemed it meet
To offer him gold and perfumes sweet,
Let us lay our gifts at his holy feet,
Our gifts on the Christmas morning."

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT.

WHAT is it? It is a Person! "A person?" Yes, a real live person, as much so as papa, or mamma, or yourself. "A funny Christmas gift," you say. But mind, it isn't "a" Christmas gift. If it were, it might be a mere thing—a doll, or sled, or book, or box of candies, which would soon be gone. It is "the" Christmas gift, that is, it is the gift that makes Christmas, without which there never would have been any Christmas, and with which every day must be a Christmas.

"Christmas" is Christ-mass, that is, the mass or festival of Christ. And Christ is a person. "God so loved the world (and boys and girls are a big part of the world), that he gave his only begotten Son." Isn't a "son" a person? It's true then, isn't it? God so loves each one of you, no matter how selfish and naughty, that he has given you—not his love, but the Lover; not his love-letters (the Bible) but the writer; not his garments, (outward gifts, lands, houses, food, books, playthings, etc.) but himself, the Giver.

What is to be done with it? Well, dear one, what are you doing with the Christmas gift? Are you accepting him or rejecting him? Mind, he has been given to you. God "gave," not will give if you ask him. It would be a funny Christmas gift, wouldn't it, for which you had to beg and plead before you could have it? Real Christmas gifts don't come that way, do they? It would spoil half the delight, wouldn't it, if you even knew what gifts were to fill your stocking, much more if you had to beg for each one beforehand? So with the Christmas gift. It has been given to you without your asking—so that you're forced either to take him or to reject him. You don't mean to refuse any other gifts that may be given you this Christmas, do you? But are you going to take them and yet reject the Christmas gift? Now just let me whisper a secret in your ear. You have no right to take any other of God's gifts (and that means all things), without taking this gift. Why not? Because all these things have been given to you in Jesus Christ—the Gift. They be-

long to you in him, not apart from him, and for you to take them out of him, or without him, is to take what does not belong to you, and to take what does not belong to you is to—!

Why don't you take the Christmas gift? May be you think you've got to earn it before you claim it. But that isn't the way you get any other gift is it? Wouldn't your Sunday-school superintendent laugh at you if, when he was distributing Christmas gifts next week, you should hesitate to take your share because you hadn't earned it? "Earn it," he would exclaim, "why wouldn't be a gift if you had earned it? So just take this and enjoy it." And then if the superintendent himself had really taken the gift, he would probably tell you that you couldn't really take what he offered you without doing as he had done. To really take a gift, that is, to get out of it all that God puts into it, you must see back of it, and in it, the Gift. John 4:19

Or, may be, you think it is too big, too wonderful, a gift to be given to you. And your thought would be just right if it wasn't for that little word, "too." The Christmas gift is a wonderful gift to be given anybody, old or young. But not too wonderful to be given, because the Giver is so wonderful, and because he wants us all to know something of his wonderfulness. His very name as a child Saviour is "Wonderful." God says, 'Thou shalt call his name Wonderful.' But before he says that he makes the prophet say something else: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given!" Only those who take the gift know how really wonderful he is.

God says this wonderful gift is for you dear one, and he means it. Will you take it?

THE QUAIL.

I SHOULD like to know, Mr. Quail, how many aunts and uncles and cousins you have? There are quails all over the world. The quails in warm countries are called *home quails*. In other countries they fly from place to place. Sometimes they fly in great flocks along the sea-coast and over islands. But men watch for them, and shoot many of them before they get through the long journey. So, take care, little quail!

Why don't you perch on a tree? You don't know, except that it is a way with quails always to alight on the ground. You have cousins in China only four inches long—quarrelsome little creatures. I am sorry to say people there keep them on purpose to see them fight. We hear about you in the Bible. Boys and girls, can you tell me where?