

“Covered thick with other clay,  
Which her own clay has covered, heaped and pent,  
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent.”

The fatal spirit of discord has been abroad in the world. It has entered the charmed precincts of the family circle, and even the hallowed courts of the house of God. The richest legacy promised by our Saviour in His benediction pronounced upon His disciples the same night that He was betrayed, is that pre-figured in the angels' song: “Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.”

What a blessed time will it be when that sacred promise shall receive its full accomplishment; when the Prince of Peace shall reign in every land, in every home, in every heart; when all the warring passions of mankind shall be hushed to everlasting rest; when righteousness and peace shall kiss each other, and sorrow and sighing shall flee forevermore away!

But this salutation embraces also “Good-will to men.” This is the key-note of God's dealings with our race. He is not, as many seem to think, stern and unforgiving, vindictive and austere. His mind and will toward us are benevolent and kind. His words are words of gentleness and love. Even the warnings and threatenings of His law are but the barriers placed around the pit of perdition for our soul's protection. His heart is a heart of loving-kindness and of tender mercy. He approaches the race with the language of entreaty and forgiveness. He stretches forth the sceptre of pardon that guilty sinners may draw near and touch it and live.

Let us, therefore, draw near at this advent season and accept the priceless boon He offers in the unspeakable gift of His dear Son. Let us bring the offering of a penitent and loving heart. Let us consecrate ourselves to His service, live for His glory, and ever seek to promote peace on earth and good-will to men. At peace with God, reconciled through the blood of His Son, and at peace with all mankind, let the law of love be in our hearts, and words of kindness on our lips. And let our good-will be manifest in good deeds. The idle sentiment will be profitless and vain.

“The flighty purpose ne'er is overtook  
Unless the deed go with it.”