

the Christmas spirit. Men and women, boys and girls, are fairly tumbling over one another in their efforts to bring gladness and good cheer into one another's lives. Get into line. Keep step with the throng. Move forward."

And the Editor felt better, and was about to thank the good old man, when he said, with a rippling laugh, "There now, no thanks; I've had a bit of a rest, and if my little sermon has done you good, just pass it on to your readers, and someone may be the better for it. Good-bye."

With soft steps the gentle-hearted old man quietly slipped out of the room, the door creaked behind him, and the Editor awoke.

## MAKING CHRISTMAS



As a great religious festival, the most significant in the history of the nations, the most pregnant with meaning, and freighted with possible blessing as no other ever was or can be, Christmas is already made. The day is fixed, and as surely as the twenty-fifth of this month becomes present and actual, Christmas Day will be accredited with its due place on the calendar. But the recurrence of the date set for the festival does not constitute Christmas. It takes more than passing days to make Christmas Day real. It must first dwell in the heart before it can be realized in truth or its exact meaning be explained. We first make Christmas, not by the outward observance of the day so much as by the inward consciousness of its spirit. The original Christmas was made for man by sacrifice prompted by divine love so vast, immeasurable and unconfined, that it sent the Eternal Son of God from the ineffable glory of the heavenly mansions to the lowly estate of a Galilean peasant home. From glorious palace to humble stable, from throne of power to manger of poverty, He came on mission of mercy and grace, that He might secure real and abiding happiness to the fallen sons of men. The first Christmas was made by the union of the divine and the human, by the transmission into the hearts and lives of humanity of some of the ruling spirit and motive principle of heaven—the first Christmas was made by making others happy. And it has been so ever since. Unselfishness is its character-

istic principle, sacrifice its prefalling motive power. Christmas is made in the heart, and only as the hands move in loving service to the inward promptings of affection can they make a genuine Christmas.

Much of so-called Christmas joy is superficial and evanescent. It cannot be otherwise until men and women, boys and girls, know the moving impulse that prompts unselfish devotion to the happiness of others. This comes only in proportion as we surrender ourselves to the dominance of the Spirit that lived in the heart of God and was made manifest through the ministry of His Son. There can be no genuine Christmas without Christ, and not His name so much as His mind and motive make the festival. The name stands for the Man Himself, and it takes all that name represents to fill the day with hallowed joys and make it fruitful of blessing. Therefore Christ's spirit and purpose must move us if we are to make the day all it might be.

In a general sense there is more of this Christ-spirit abroad among mankind than ever before. More people will know in 1910 the import of Christmas than in any previous year, and for that we all give thanks. But real, abounding and abiding happiness might be increased many times over were Christians to thoughtfully grasp the full meaning of the day. A thoughtless Christmas is an unreal, unprofitable and Christless holiday. A thoughtful study of the season and a prayerful effort to grasp its purport and manifest its spirit will ensure a truly happy and profitable holiday.

Let such prevail in the home-circle above all places. For Christmas may be easily marred there. Let the family gather. Bring the absent ones back for the re-union around the old home hearth, and let the well-laden table minister to the physical needs of each. But that is not all, nor is it the most important or valuable factor in celebrating the day. The helpful ministry of loving words must not be forgotten. Greetings to the absent ones should surely be sent with their messages of hope and good cheer. Over ocean and continent, across mountain range and boundless prairie, into crowded city tenement, or to the lone settler's humble shack let the cheering messages go.

But we must not think only of our own kindred. They may be first, but must not monopolize our ministry. We must emulate Him who "went about doing good." How full of glorious meaning these words! Jesus came to do incalculable, indescribable good to human kind, and the continuance of His mission by His followers of to-day is vital to true Christmas happiness.

Making Christmas after such a heavenly pattern is not an easy thing perhaps, but it is the secret of the greatest possible gladness. The transient mirth that is characteristic of so much of the ordinary holiday festivities soon passes away, and not infrequently the resultant effects of the season's merriment are not the most beneficial kind. But the spirit of Jesus would make Christmas joy universal and permanent and ensure not only one happy day a year but would turn every day into a day of gladness and heaven-born beneficence. The aim of all true Christian philanthropy is not simply to relieve human misery and heartache for a day, but to remove permanently the causes of such distress. The social message of Jesus is not to be read in the light of a mere passing mood that prompts to occasional deeds of kindness; but it must be interpreted in the steady luminous glow of a constant spirit of benevolence that secures the daily habit of good deeds. We would not depreciate the disposition to make even one heart for one day a happy one; but we fail to read and understand aright the message and mission of the Christ if these do not mean that His followers are to make it the one controlling purpose of life to freely dispense blessing as the regular practice of every day. So we make Christmas as we first take in and then give out again of His motive spirit of love that prompted the greatest gift of salvation unto life eternal. Think much these coming days of what Christmas means, pray much that you may possess its true essential spirit, work much that you may give to others that which will make them abidingly happy, and so adding to the sum total of the world's goodness and relieving it of some of its distress you will make a Christmas worth while, enjoy the day as never before, and want to repeat the kindness many times over as day succeeds day. Only by such a method can the heart of humanity be illumined with the true light of the Sun of Righteousness, only so can Christmas joy and gladness be spread over all the year and every day be in spirit and plan a Christmas day. Let us learn to make not only a Christmas once a year, but *Christmas all the year.*