

THE CHRISTMAS THEME

PRESENTED WITH A NEW AND PICTURESQUE SETTING.

SUIT NEEDS OF MODERN LIFE

"Behold, I Bring You Tidings of Great Joy"—Earthly Parallels Which Lead the Soul to Appreciate the Glorious News of the Ever-Old Birth of the Little Babe in Bethlehem's Manger.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1904, by William Bailey, at Toronto, at the Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Los Angeles, Cal., Dec. 25.—In this sermon the Christmas theme is presented with a new and picturesque setting, and the preacher finds in it an application to the universal needs of our modern life. The text is Luke ii, 10, "I bring you good tidings of great joy."

Blessed, thrice blessed is the advent of the messenger bringing tidings of great joy! Benjamin Disraeli was welcomed back to England's capital by a surging sea of happy faces, which blocked the streets about the Lord Mayor's official residence as far as the eye could see, when he returned from the most famous of European conclaves of the representatives of many nations. Why? He came back with the memorable sentence upon his lips, "I bring back to you peace with honor." No wonder the English multitudes applauded their Premier wherever he went. Had Disraeli not brought back "peace with honor" Europe would have been convulsed with an awful international war. When the "Treaty of Ghent" was signed by the English and American commissioners on Dec. 24, 1814, the people of two nations were expecting that the war of 1812 would soon be terminated. The ship which bore the news, "Peace, peace, with honor," sailed into New York harbor covered with bunting. It was welcomed with the shouts of a cheering people and the booming of war guns, which were now to become the guns of peace. Of course many a tear was shed because Andrew Jackson had fought his battle of New Orleans fifteen days after the signing of that treaty, but those tears did not prevent the glorious news, which the ship brought from joyfully flying over the country with the wings of the morning. Everywhere the message met with glad acclaim, "Peace, peace, peace, with honor!" But though there have been many messengers of glad tidings, welcomed with joyful hosannas, no messenger of good tidings was ever so much needed as he who appeared on the first Christmas dawn of the world's history. That was the Christmas morn when Jesus lay sleeping, a little babe in the manger of Bethlehem of Judea.

Let me describe the events which preceded the advent of this angelic messenger. First, the topographic position of this angelic messenger. We are standing upon the Judean hills overlooking the little village of Bethlehem. This is sacred ground. Here Jacob mourned and would not be comforted. Here Benjamin was born and Rachel died. Here Boaz watched Ruth as she gleaned after the reapers. Here Samuel came to the home of Jesse to anoint David King of Israel. On the night of the nativity the Bethlehemites could almost see the lights of Jerusalem, only six miles away, and almost hear the chanting in the temple and the music in the palace of Herod the Great were it not for the height of yonder mountain, which obliterated those lights and stopped the echoing sounds.

On that first Christmas eve the cities and towns were crowded with men and women. The flat had gone forth that a census must be taken. Caesar wanted to know how many soldiers he could depend upon in the provinces, and how much tax they ought to be paid. Rome was then the mistress and the queen of the world. The Jewish census was to be on by families. Thus Joseph, the descendant of the great patriarch, David, headed toward the little village of Bethlehem, where once the future warrior as a shepherd boy tended his sheep, played upon his harp and practiced with his sling at

a mark until he could take that deadly aim which was to slay the mighty Philistine.

Joseph is now climbing the lime rocks upon which is built the town of Bethlehem. Footsore and weary and sad, his face is drawn and anxious. He is hastening along, dragging by the bridle a beast of burden, which, with the characteristic stubbornness of its kind, is holding back, merely because its owner jerks the head and wants to hurry along. The village is long and narrow. Most of the houses line the one principal street. Crowds of men stand upon the street corners or gather in large numbers and with vehement gestures whisper curses among themselves against Herod, who was building a heathen temple in honor of the Roman Emperor. The door of the inn is blocked with rustics who are trying to find lodgings. The owner of the hotel is insulting the people because they will not stop bothering him. It does not take a hotel clerk long to get ugly if he has more customers than rooms. Joseph stops and asks some bystanders where he can find lodgings. They all shake their heads and shrug their shoulders. Some ridicule him for asking such a question, when he can see for himself the crowds clamoring to get into the village hotel.

Joseph turns and looks at his young wife seated upon the beast of burden which he is leading. She has a beautiful face, a sweet face, a loving face, a pure face. She is Mary the virgin. Finally some man, more sympathetic than the rest, seeing Joseph's troubles, points him to a khan, or public stable, and says, "Perhaps you may find room there." Mary's strength has almost given out when they enter the low archway. Joseph tenderly lifts her down from the beast of burden. Some one kicks the oxen to make them arise because they are taking too much room. Even here space is at a premium. After the kind-hearted hostlers have thrown some straw into the stone crypt or manger Mary is placed in the humble couch among the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle and the neighing of the horses whinnying for their oats.

This is the most important of all nights. It is awfully solemn. All history will hereafter date itself from or toward this scene—A.D. and B.C. Upon the Judean hillsides the alighted sheep are running hither and thither, looking for their shepherds. Animals intuitively know when something unnatural is about to happen. The cattle can smell the blood long before they are driven into the slaughter houses to be killed. When the South Carolina earthquake shook Charleston a few years ago the dogs crouched at their masters' feet, and the birds hovered around, uttering shrill cries of fear, as though human beings alone could protect them. The horrible picture of Dore's flood, where a lioness with her whelps trembles upon a rock by the side of an affrighted woman holding in her arms a babe, is not a zoological absurdity. Animals in times of danger naturally seek the protection of man. There is a strange silence brooding. The shepherds anxiously grip their staves and prepare for an unseen battle, which they feel sure is about to come.

Suddenly a star breaks from its fastenings and begins to tumble through space. On and on it comes like a meteor. With frightful velocity it heads toward this planet, ready to plunge into it, as the human foot might crush an insect, as ocean liner might run down a fishing smack or a large express engine crash into a hand car. The terror-stricken astrologers see it flying toward the earth. Suddenly it stops and seems to be watching something that is happening in the little village of Bethlehem. The angel who once stood at the garden of Eden's entrance now unsheathes his sword and cuts the curtain of the night in twain. The waves of light rush down and push the darkness to the right and to the left. Great multitudes of angels begin to sing. As the glory of God shines around the prostrate shepherds there sounds forth the voice of an angelic messenger, saying, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy! Such was the advent of the angelic messenger. Such was the message which he brought to the shepherds on the first Christmas morn, announcing the birth of the little Child who lay in the manger.

Why did this message of my text "bring good tidings of great joy? First, Christ came as a Saviour in

a sin-cursed race and a condemned world. He came as an earthly ruler might come to a condemned murderer about to expiate his crimes with his life, bearing news of pardon and liberty. He came as a loving mother or father might come to a son who had been bitten by a poisonous serpent, with an antidote for the deadly virus. Thus Christ came. By his vicarious sufferings he took upon himself the condemnation which was due us for our sins. He came as a Saviour, that the human race in him might live with him forever.

Some people seem to think that the birth of Saviour must be the time for outward manifestations of joy, but of sorrow, "Saviour" is a pathetic name," wrote Joseph Parker. "It is not an official title, it is not an image you can robe in scarlet and bow down before, on account of its majesty and haughtiness. Saviour is an angel with tears in his eyes, with arms mightily as the lightnings of God, but a heart all tenderness. 'Saviour' is a complex word. It has in it all human nature, all divine nature, all the past of history, all the possibilities of prophecy, all the mystery of apocalypse, a tenderness outraging the love of woman, a majesty humbling the haughtiness of king." But, though the word "Saviour" may be a pathetic word when we think of all the sufferings Christ had to endure on account of our sins, yet it is a joyful word when we think how we are to be redeemed on account of those divine sufferings. And, furthermore, when we know that Christ to-day in heaven is glad that he was able to suffer for us in order to save us, what a happy day Christmas is to us! It is the day when the redemption of the world through the birth of God's Son in the manger?

The Nativity, in the next place, meant joyful tidings, because by the incarnation of the Son of God in the body of a little babe the human race was able to grasp the great doctrine that God was a God of love and not a God of hate or a God of indifference. It is one fact to preach truth; it is another to preach truth so that it is understood by the common people. It is one fact to talk about God as a spirit; it is another to talk about God as Christ, who was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and who was tempted as we are tempted. God was the same God before the first Christmas morn as he is to-day. But since Jesus Christ came to earth we, the common people, have been able to understand him in a way we would never have been able to do without the incarnation.

Let me illustrate how the beauty of God's love is simplified in Christ's life: Charles Lamb, with some of his bosom friends, were met together one evening in a London house to talk on literary topics. During the conversation some one said: "Think if Dante was to come to life again and enter this room! How we would welcome the man whose feet had trod the dery pavement of the inferno whose eyes had pierced the twilight whose lungs had breathed the still, clear air of the mount of Purgatorio, whose mind had contemplated the mysteries of glory in the highest heavens!" "Suppose," said another, "Shakespeare was to come to us to-night, or Milton or Homer or Virgil?" "Ah," said Lamb, his whole face brightening, "how I should fling my arms up! How we would welcome those things of thoughtful men!" "Suppose," said another, "Christ was to come, what would we do?"

With that Charles Lamb's face changed instantly and he said, "Of course we would fall upon our knees and worship him." Ah, yes, Charles Lamb was right. No man can look upon or study the face of Christ without clearly and simply grasping the great truth that God is a God of love and not a God of hate.

But again we learn from this angelic messenger of the Nativity that he not only spoke his message of good tidings, but he told it in perhaps the darkest time of the world's history. We have read how sin and debauchery and despotic tyranny have run riot in certain countries. But at no time in all the world have sin and evil despotism been seated upon a higher throne than during the year in which Jesus was born. We know that at this time Rome was in the grip of the Caesars. But perhaps some of us do not know that Rome's colonies at this time were in the grip of men more fiendish, if possible, than any of the leaders in the Roman capital. And in all history there was not to be found a more blood-thirsty and merciless tyrant than was Bloody Herod, governor of Judea.

A short time after Jesus was born, in order to satisfy a jealous fear, Herod ordered all the little boys in the region of Bethlehem to be slain by his soldiers. Think of a ruler having such power as that and being able to use it in such a manner! The slaughter of those baby boys was only a small part of Herod's infamies. Herod's whole reign can be tracked with bloodshed. Herod brutally slew his wife's brother Joseph and her mother and his wife. He slew every man who dared to lift a voice against him in his kingdom. Then in order that his death might be a time of national mourning, we learn from Josephus that he gave orders for the chief men of the Hebrew nation to be gathered in the hippodrome to die on the same day on the night of his own death. If the people, as he knew, would not bewail his death he took measures to insure their sorrow for another cause. He would not have the night of his death a period of joy and rejoicing. Such a man was the ruler of Judea in that day. Ah, yes, there never was a darker or a more hopeless time in Jewish history than when Jesus was born. Thus we find the Hebrew people longingly—oh, so longingly—looking for a Messiah at this time.

My brother, as Christ came to Jerusalem at the darkest time of Hebrew history, can he not come to you this Christmas Day, even though it may be in the dark days of your life? Is it dark for some of you? Is your life sad with sin, sad with sorrow, sad with bitter disappointment? Do you need a Saviour now? "The whole thought and idea of all that is told about Christmas day," wrote Dean Stanley, "suggests the consoling, cheering thought that, however gloomy our lot, however distressed our portion, the Almighty God has not forsaken us." Even in the darkest hours of our lives Christ will come to us as he came to Bethlehem in the darkest hours of Hebrew history. Are we going to reject Christ as Pilate and the Jews rejected him? Having accepted the glad tidings of great joy that Jesus came to save, shall not you and I on this glorious Christmas Sabbath Day start forth to announce, as did the angelic messenger, that Christ has come to save all who will believe on him and be saved? Can any man hear this good news and not want to spread it abroad? Can we fully realize that though Christ we sin live and yet not want to go forth to herald the tidings that Christ has come to save our neighbors as well as ourselves?

The civilized world has grown larger than it was on that first Christmas morn. The geographical map has undergone many changes. Great exploring parties have discovered new continents. The farthest lands have been found to be inhabited. During the life of the ancient wise men and the shepherds, there were comparatively few of the inhabitants of the world who heard of Christ's name. Millions of the inhabitants of the world to-day have never heard of Christ's name. A large part of the remainder is entirely indifferent to the teachings of the gospel. Therefore to the Christians Christmas Day ought to be the most opportune of days for proclaiming the Saviour's mission. Every home, every street corner, every family gathering should be a place where the deeper, holier purposes of Christ's life are to be explained by those who have felt the love and the mercy and the tenderness and the hope that have come to the believing hearts that have gathered about the manger.

So may this Christmas Day find the love which binds man's heart to man as well as man's heart to God. May God save us all not only on account of the love Christ bears us, but also on account of the saving Christian love which our fellow men. On this glorious Christmas Sabbath morning can we not feel the good tidings of great joy means that Christ has saved us? And then, with wondrous love for our fellow men, cannot we, like the twain in the Brazilian legend, be so concerned for the welfare of others that we are ready even to die that they may be saved, ready at the risk of health and life to carry the good news of salvation to those who have never heard it or in the home land to devote our means, our time and our labor to the task of proclaiming the glad tidings of great joy which have come to all people?

May this be the happiest and gladdest Christmas of our lives. May it be the time when we see anew the face of Jesus and tell of his love, his redeeming love, wherever we may go. I wish you one and all a "Merry, Merry Christmas."

HAVE HAD THEIR DAY

Old Fashioned Medicines For Catarrh No Longer In Vogue.

For many years past the usual treatment for catarrh diseases was with local douches, sprays, inhalers and light remedies composed principally of alcohol, all of which never cured but simply gave the temporary relief and stimulation.

A thorough cure can be made only by the treatment which removes the catarrhal poison from the blood. A new remedy which meets the requirements and which so far has been remarkably successful in curing catarrh is Stuart's Catarrh Tablets.

These tablets act upon the blood and mucous membrane only. They can hardly be classed as a secret patent medicine as they are composed of such valuable remedies as blood root, Hydrastin, red gum of Eucalyptus tree, and astringent, antiseptic combined in tablet form, which cure by eliminating from the blood and mucous membrane the poisons of catarrh.

Stuart's Catarrh Tablets are large, pleasant to take and are taken internally, allowing them to dissolve in the mouth, thus reaching the throat, trachea and finally the stomach.

If desired they may also be dissolved in water and used as a douche. In addition to the internal use, but it is not at all necessary to use a douche: a few of them dissolved in the mouth daily will be sufficient. However, when there is much stoppage of the nose a douche made from these tablets will give immediate relief, but the regular daily use internally will cure the whole catarrhal trouble without resorting to the inconvenience of a douche. And further says that "probably the best and certainly the safest remedy at present on the market is Stuart's Catarrh Tablets, as no secret is made of their composition and all the really efficient catarrh remedies are concentrated in this tablet."

Dr. Bennett stated "that the internal treatment of catarrh by means of pleasant medicated tablets is rapidly taking the place of douches and local applications," and further says that "probably the best and certainly the safest remedy at present on the market is Stuart's Catarrh Tablets, as no secret is made of their composition and all the really efficient catarrh remedies are concentrated in this tablet."

A grateful thought toward heaven is of itself a prayer.

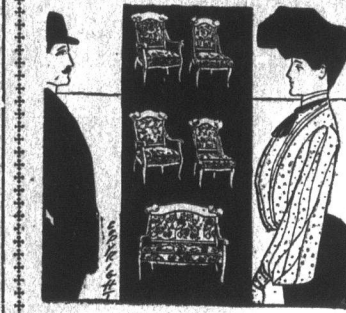
It never is waste of time to take time to do a thing well.

IT HAS THAT CLEAR LIQUOR

so appreciated by Japan tea drinkers

"SALADA"

Ceylon Natural Green Tea will displace Japan tea just as "SALADA" Black is displacing all other black teas. Sold only in lead packets. By all grocers. Given the highest award and gold medal at St. Louis Exposition, 1904.



Handsome Is as Handsome Does

Applies to FURNITURE as well as anything else.

The Elegant Lot of Parlor Suites We've just received is handsome, and does most beautifully furnish a room. You'll be attracted by the new styles we're showing, and especially so by the ridiculously low price we're selling at.

A Fine Parlor Suite for only \$15.50. Others for \$17.00, \$23.50, \$25.00, \$30.00 to \$50.00.

THE McDONALD FURNITURE CO., Limited

Our Specialties!

Whole Wheat Flour
Graham Flour
Gluten Grits

"Beaver" Flour, Manitoba Flour, Crushed Oats, Rolled Barley, Coarse Grains and Millfeeds of all kinds.

Windsor and Rice's Fine and Dairy Salt Windsor Grainer Salt \$1.00 per barrel.

Woolen Goods of the Best Quality.

T. H. Taylor & Co., Ltd.

PHONE 1.



FOR BUILDING PURPOSES you cannot find a more complete stock of LUMBER

in this section than you will find at our yards. We have the variety to meet every demand; the grade to meet the approval of the carpenter, contractor or individual. Compared to others our stock is a little head in quality and a little behind in price. Favor us with your orders.

The Blonde Lumber & Mfg Co's LIMITED. Builders and Contractors.

BUY YOUR COAL NOW

We handle Coal and Wood, Wholesale and Retail. All orders receive prompt attention Tel. 253. Cor. William and G.T.R.

SERLING & KOVINSKY

Robert Riddell & Sons

Blacksmith and Machine Work

SAWS GRINDED while you wait

Shop on King St., opp. C. P. R. Depot, - Phone 363

WE HAVE ON HAND A LARGE SUPPLY OF LIME, CEMENT, SEWER PIPE, CUT STONE,

etc. All of the best quality and at the LOWEST POSSIBLE PRICES

J. & J. OLDERSHAW

A Few Doors West of Post Office.

Coal AND Wood

Order your COAL and WOOD from J. GILBERT & CO.

We have the best to be got at lowest market prices. Orders promptly delivered.

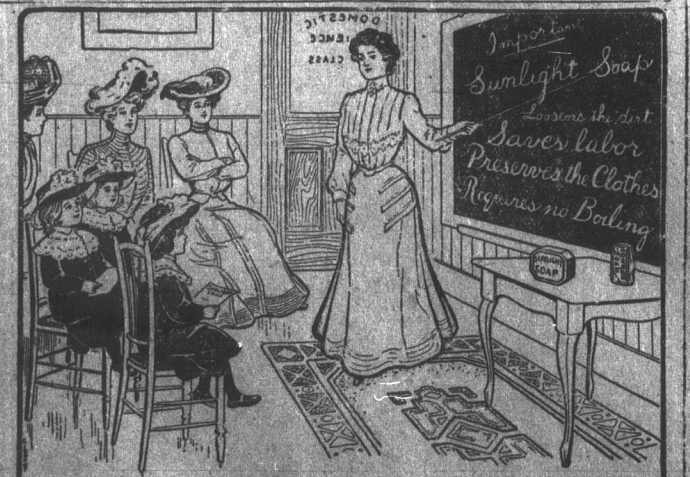
OFFICE and YARDS Queen St., near G.T.R. Crossing. PHONE 110.

Lime, Cement AND Cut Stone.

We keep the best in stock at right prices.

JOHN H. OLDERSHAW,

Thomas Street, Opposite Police Station...



SUNLIGHT SOAP

ASK FOR THE OCTAGON MARK

Sunlight Soap washes the clothes white and won't injure the hands.

LEVER BROTHERS LIMITED, TORONTO.