

fundamental principle of the Christian religion is exemplified in the gift. All the forms of the day's celebrations are protestations against selfishness. Christ constantly insisted upon self-denial, self-restraint and self-subordination. One's duty to others is variously enjoined in the Scriptures. Therefore the Christmas-gift comprises the essence of the religion He taught—a religion which, instilling charity into the hearts of men, was to make all men happier through the efforts of each individual to make his fellow happier. The modern method of commemorating the Advent is entirely fitting, even though we give ourselves over to the Good Genius of the Christmas-tree, with only incidental regard to the bells that “knoll to church.” The most important observance is that beneath the branches of the gift-bearing evergreen when all hearts grow young in the atmosphere of good-cheer and loving-kindness. It is there that each one sees the happy results of his own beneficence, and finds his full reward in the consciousness of the pervading gladness. Such is the blessedness of practical Christianity; such the beautiful outcome of a religion intended to solace, to ameliorate and to compensate—a religion of a Master who finds His most grateful worship in the kindly acts of His children “one to another.”

Here, in America, the sprites and elves and genii of ancient love have not thrived in the popular fancy. Even such superstitions as the Puritans brought over were forgotten or ignored by their children. The occupation of the New World kept their minds too busy with the duties at hand to allow them to ponder upon the supernatural. The American with each succeeding generation grew more practical-minded, and the Christmas fairies slipped into oblivion along with the faith in the

divine right of kings. Kris Kringle survived because he was a convenient appropriation, and because, perhaps, he was such an extravagant old fellow, whose largess was quite in harmony with the somewhat prodigal American disposition. But he alone has survived. He alone has any sort of actuality to the American child. Cinderella and Queen Titania and all the rest of them are read of and enjoyed, but without much faith in their existence. They are contemplated rather as charming creatures of admitted unreality. But St. Nicholas is still expected, and eyes are shut to his mythical nature, despite base-burners and registers and furnaces. Force a child to a confession of belief or unbelief in his reality, the decision would probably be in the negative; but the delusion is fondly cherished, notwithstanding. He is, as remarked, such a delightful convenience. He invests the Christmas-tree with just enough mystery to give exquisiteness to the pleasure of its unveiling—and long may he live to defy the image-breaking spirit of the age! He is the embodiment of good-cheer; the genial instrument of impartial benevolence. He does not object if all his gifts bear the signet of father or mother, uncle or aunt, neighbor or friend. He is quite above such trivial incongruities. The sentiment of mutual good-will remains. Such is his mission; such was the mission of the angels who sang to the shepherds of Judea.—*The Christian Guardian.*

Use thy youth so that thou mayest have comfort to remember it when it has forsaken thee, and not sigh and grieve at the account thereof. Use it as the springtime which soon departeth, and wherein thou oughtest to plant and sow all provisions for a long and happy life.—*Sir Walter Raleigh.*