



DECORATING THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS.

**DECORATING THE CHURCH.**

It is a beautiful Christmas custom in England to decorate the churches and houses with holly whose bright crimson berries show in beautiful contrast with the dark green glossy holly leaf. Our beautiful picture on this subject shows a couple of girls thus decorating the pulpit of the old parish church. The holly needs to be very daintily handled, for its sharp prickles will pierce the skin, but the young folk generally have plenty of help and consider it fine fun.

**A TIME FOR MERCY AND HELP.**

You have doubtless read the articles in this paper telling how Christmas is observed around the world. You have noted that the people of whom our correspondents write have caught the true Christmas spirit that of giving. Christmas originated in a great gift. It was one which made heaven very poor. God gave his only Son. But if the gift of Christ made heaven poor, it made earth rich. Through him we have redemption and everlasting life. Blessings upon blessings have already come to humanity, and will come world without end. God so loved the world that he gave his Son. And the Son so loved the world that he gladly gave himself. We are his followers. Hence we his spirit of compassion and self-surrender!

Christmas is a giving time. Naturally so. The custom is good, and should be encouraged. But society has ordained a kind of giving which is not real giving. In

it are the germs of self-interest. Gifts are bestowed upon those whom we expect to bestow gifts in return. That is not the Christ spirit. It is small. It is mean. It is of the earth earthy. The ideal Christmas giving is bestowing blessings upon those who sorely need, and who are unable to bless us in return. What a time for mercy and help! Everybody should join that department just now. There are many needy people in your village or city this year. Poverty pinches. Half-fed bodies shiver in the biting cold. How many are standing on the verge of despair! Oh, let us pity them, and carry them help! —*Epworth Herald.*

**The Pearls, Pure and Fair.**

EVERY year is a pearl, dear,  
Perfect, and pure, and fair,  
That God lets grow within your life,  
Trusting it to your care.

And death is the golden clasp, dear,  
That fastens the pearly chain,  
And it shines with a clearer lustre  
If the pearls are white through pain.

Some of the chains are short, dear,  
And some are of many strands,  
But every one returns at last  
To the Master Workman's hands.

So watch your precious pearls, dear,  
And keep them ever bright,  
That with the crown-jewels they may glow  
At last to the infinite light.

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