

On Christmas Day

We hear again the song of reverence and good will and peace—the song “new-old, yet ever new,” the only song that has lived through the years, cheering alike to the young and the old, the sinner and the saint, the poor and the rich, the grave and the gay. It is a song of love and hope and faith. It expresses our loftiest aspiration and our warmest gratitude. It reaches from earth to heaven. Its echoes are heard in the darkest corners of the dreariest homes, and are caught up by the hosts that worship around the Throne of God. “Glory be to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will to men!”

Worship

Nothing is more becoming to mankind than worship. He who has no God can rise no higher than himself. He who continually adores an Infinite of Holiness and Beauty must grow to be like Him. Man advances towards the limits of his ideals. Such is the law of his being. To see God as truth is to become wise; to see Him as beauty is to become pure in heart; to see Him as goodness is to abound in deeds of kindness and mercy.

Strange too is it that man has power to create his own God. That man who yearns for faith and hope and love—the God of Christmas seems to satisfy. That man who looks for ease and luxury, will find a Being vastly different in His attributes. It may be that many of us have forgotten the God of peace and love and pardon, because our hearts have been set on lower aims. And it is in vain that, looking at evils around us, we should cry: “God give us men! God give us men!” For in the very nature of things we cannot get the men unless we first of all have God. There is no alchemy which can transmute the earthly into the heavenly, the material into the spiritual. Better far that we should cry: “Men give us God! Men give us God!” It is for us to choose this day whom we shall serve, and woe be to us if we choose the God of lust and pride and low ambition. To see the God of love and yield Him reverence is the only real need of this age and this people.

God in the individual life — how His presence would illuminate, transform and sanctify! God in the family—how He would bring peace and love and kindness! God in the state—how He would dispel injustice, wrong and misery! God in the church—how He would end formality and pride and unseemly rivalry.

Would you know the origin of worship? Go find the mother who is sweet and holy, womanly and kind; go find the father who is brave and truthful, considerate and just. Where you find these you get worshipping children. And worship of a sainted mother, of a noble father, is indeed a stepping stone to worship of the God and Father of mankind.

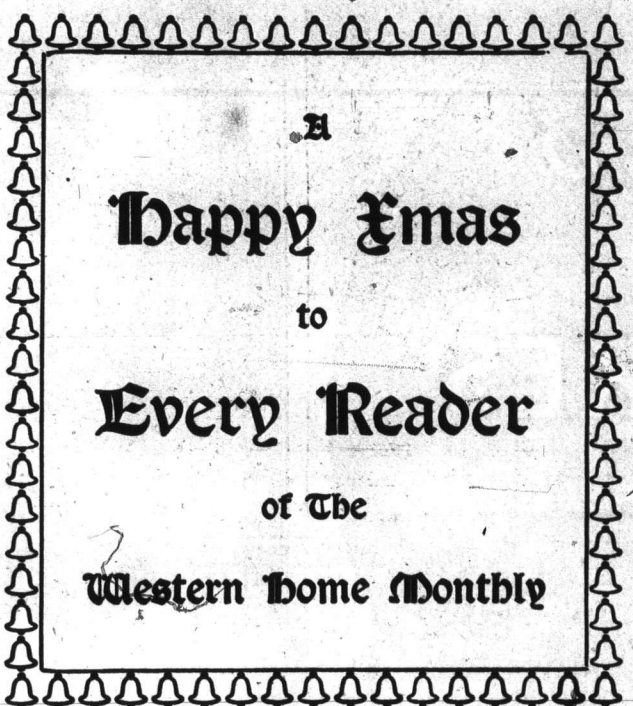
Good Will

When the heart is warmed by the indwelling presence of the Spirit of Love; when the will yields loyal submission to the Prince of Peace; when intelligence cheerfully admits His right to reign on Earth even as in Heaven; then in thought and word and deed will there begin the

manifestation of that good will which is the condition of all joy and happiness in the world of men.

Good will in the home! How it establishes right relations between husband and wife, between parents and children! How it banishes all selfishness and meanness and deceit—prompting each member of the little group to seek first the comfort of others, and impelling each to speak the truth in love! You have been in a home where good will reigned, and your visit there remains with you a blessed memory, or perchance such a home is now your own, and it is your most cherished possession. Value it then, my friend, above all earthly riches, and seek no higher delight, for God has nothing in this world to offer you that is so much to be desired.

Good will in industrial life! How it does away with recrimination and bitterness! How it promotes confidence and loyalty!



You know of a business in which employers and employees are ranged up in hostile opposition, you know of the lock-out and strike and all the sorrows and evils which follow in their wake. You know, too, of a business in which the lowliest worker honestly and cheerfully strives to give good measure, and in which the owner has constant regard to the welfare and comfort of his men. You know which business of the two is likely to thrive and which will come to an unhappy ending. And what is true of every individual industry is true in a national sense—industrial supremacy can not be attained by any people, unless the economic conditions which prevail are founded in justice and equity. Lasting success depends upon a co-operation that is conceived in friendship and good will.

Good will in the state! How it would sooth the animosities of parties, and gradually erase the distinctions of race and creed! How it would make possible those enactments which render it easy to live a life of virtue, and difficult to live a life of crime! Just to admit that my neighbor has the same rights and probably as much honesty as myself; just to concede that his judgment is possibly as sound as my own; just to confess that he is in all likelihood just as patriotic, as farsighted and as ready to further the public good—this would

hasten the day when each man, forsaking the more ignoble ambitions, would aim first of all at his country's good. Right here in Canada, right now in 1913, is it necessary for us to realize that more important than the affiliations of race and language, party and religion, are the bonds that unite us in a great national brotherhood.

Good will in the church! But why dwell on such a theme? The divine institution founded by Him who came to preach good will to men, should have in it nothing of pride and envy and ill will, for these are contrary to its nature. If at times we perceive tendencies and practices which lead us to suspect the presence of these evils, let us attribute it to the fact that religion is the greatest need of man, that it calls forth his greatest earnestness and zeal, and that, therefore, it naturally leads to intolerance and impatience. But we would that good will were so common that we could join with Scott in his notable remark: “Had it pleased the Almighty not to permit the varieties of worship, our observances would have been as distinctly presented to us as they are laid down under the Mosaic law.”

Peace

Now good will has, as its fruition, peace—peace in the home and society; peace in the nation; and peace in the world.

Never was peace needed more than now. Never was it more to be desired. The world is on the verge of a great war, and at the same time it is weary of war. Nations have seen their best and strongest sons slain in battle, while the weak and decrepit have remained at home to beget a race of weaklings. In the glorification of the masculine and more brutal virtues, the feminine graces, which make for sweetness and loveliness, have been neglected. It has been a losing business all around. The victors have fared almost as badly as the conquered. Well has war been termed “The Great Illusion.”

More fearful still is civil war—a war between parties, creeds or classes—a war between ideas. Every such war is a confession of inability for self-government; a confession of intellectual and moral weakness. Redmond with his insistence that Ireland be not divided, and Carson with his inability to see that the only way for a country to rise out of what he evidently believes to be ignorance and spiritual blindness is through the gift of self-government—both are taking the hard way to victory. The former should say: “We shall show you Ulsterites that we are able to be just and progressive and able to rule ourselves.” The latter should say: “We glory in the opportunity of leading you to a higher life.” That would be the way of peace.

In our own land we need peace. There is the clash of financial interests, the war-ring of creeds and races, the opposition of political parties—it sometimes seems that it is all war and nothing else. We long for a community in which there is no fault-finding and no room for it; no discord, because all is harmony in thought and action; no recrimination, because there is no injustice.