

Editorial

The Christmas Message

HOWEVER it may be at other seasons of the year, it is necessary at Christmas time for one who writes to get down to fundamentals. And the fundamentals are summed up in the life, the teachings and the actions of Him Who gave us the name of Christmas. It is eminently fitting at this season to recall some of the things with which the name of Christ is associated, rather indeed to refresh our memories with the thought of Him in His attitudes, His ambitions and His actions.

His attitude is summed up in those words which we learned in youth: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength and thy neighbor as thyself." Such an attitude to God and to man is the beginning and end of righteousness, the guarantee of peace and all true happiness, the ground of all that is eternal and abiding.

Christ's attitude to God and man explains His ambition, which was nothing less than to build up a kingdom on earth after the pattern of the Heavenly Kingdom—a kingdom in which life should abound and manifest itself in kindly loving deeds. Well did He know that in such a kingdom the noblest souls are not the proud and self-sufficient, but those with pure heart and poverty of spirit.

Nor is it strange that Christ's acts from the beginning and the close of His life were beyond reproach, for they were the outcome of His attitude and in line with His ambition. He was the only One who could say to His followers, "Follow Me." All others have been strong in advice and in intention. He was as strong in deed as He was gracious in His speech or pure in His motive.

Now when we wish each other a Happy Christmas we wish that into this world as into our hearts the spirit of love, which underlies attitude, ambition and action.

Christmas for the Individual

CONSIDER two lives that are bound to each other in love. How suspicion, envy and all ugliness whatsoever flee away! How sweetness, purity, unselfishness abound! No hard words, no evil thoughts, no mean actions! Love is the ground of all worthy personal relationship. It is for every individual to choose his own disposition and destiny.

Christmas in the Family

CONSIDER homes in which love reigns! What harmony, what cheerful obedience, what lovely self-denial! All around us are homes of this kind—homes perhaps poor in worldly gifts but rich in this one great heavenly virtue. The mother cares for her child with a love that beareth all things, endureth all things, believeth all things and hopeth all things, and the children return the love in countless little deeds of adoration and glad submission. Happy the father who can command loyalty and reverence from his children! Let him ask no other happiness. In all the Western prairies we are endeavoring to build up happy and prosperous homes. The Christmas message is to build upon the foundation of love, for it will abide when all other foundations are washed away. No superstructure, however gaudy, has a value unless planted on a solid foundation.

Christmas in the Community

CONSIDER the community. Was it not intended that it should be governed by the same laws as the family? Each member shall live for all and all for each. Each shall find his life in his service for others, for verily "He that loseth his life for the sake of the group shall find it." This is the true Christmas spirit and any community which possesses it may have Christmas all the year. There is a socialism which is rooted in force. It is anti-social and anti-Christian. There is a socialism the principle of which is voluntary service. That is the only socialism which can endure, for its spirit is faith and love. All up and down this land may be found communities in which there is discord, strife and bitterness. They have not yet sought to possess the Christian spirit. They have not received the Christmas gift. Family against family and clan against clan, yes, creed against creed, and tongue over against tongue. Is it not lamentable when the gift of peace and happiness might be had for the asking? And is it not wonderful that badness and ill-will continue to exist when one little Pollyanna or Rebecca might work a change? For it is true beyond telling that to-day as in the beginning of our era, one single life devoted to unselfish service, may transform a world.

Christmas for the Nation

CONSIDER that greater community, the nation. We often talk of the nation as Christian, but that is only a figure. It is only the individual who can be Christian, for it is only the individual who has a soul to think and feel and act. And yet not so. A nation may have a dominating spirit. It may be the spirit of dissension, unrest and anarchy, or the spirit of co-operation and brotherhood. This latter spirit is possible only when each citizen is true to the whole; it is altogether impossible where the strong attempt to live upon the weak, where the wealthy grind down the poor, when the few control the many. The Christian state is a democracy, and every attempt to create artificial class distinctions based upon wealth, occupation or creed, is in opposition to the Christian idea. And so the big interests, the combines, the secret trusts and profiteering in every form are unchristian.

The Shepherds' Wondrous Tale

From the Spanish of Gongora

It was the very noon of night, the stars
above the fold,
More sure than clock or chiming bell, the
hour of midnight told:
When from the heavens there came a
voice, and forms were seen to shine,
Still bright'ning as the music rose with
light and love divine.
With love divine the song began; there
shone a light serene:
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard,
or seen what I have seen?

I roused me at the piercing strain, but
shrunk as from the ray
Of summer lightning; all around so bright
the splendor lay.
For oh, it mastered sight and sense, to see
that glory shine,
To hear that minstrel in the clouds, who
sang of Love Divine,
To see that form with birdlike wings, of
more than mortal mien:
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard, or
seen what I have seen?

When once the happy trance was past,
that so my sense did bind,
I left my sheep to Him Whose care was in
the western wind;
I left them, for, instead of snow, I trod on
blade and flower,
And ice dissolved in starry rays at morn-
ing's gracious hour,
Revealing where on earth the steps of
Love Divine had been:
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard,
or seen what I have seen?

I hasted to a low-roofed shed, for so the
Angel bade;
And bowed before the lowly rack where
Love Divine was laid:
A new-born Babe, like tender Lamb, with
Lion's strength there smiled,
For Lion's strength, immortal might, was
in that new-born Child;
That Love Divine in childlike form had
God forever been:
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard, or
seen what I have seen?

It is a serious problem this, the most serious of all problems, that of evangelizing the people, not that they may profess a common faith nor submit them, selves to a common ordinance, but that they shall accept and practise a common form of conduct. Oh, it is wonderfully fine to live among a people who have lost their individual wills in the higher national will. It is the grandest thing in the world to see men placing their lives on the altar of their country. Sacrifice in any form is Christlike, and never more so than when it takes the form of ardent patriotism. There are many joys in life, but all joys are not of the same order. The highest and best, because the noblest of joys, is that which accompanies sacrifice. Then this year, though tears may fall, let the hearts of Canadians rejoice. Where so much is lovely and holy there is occasion for gladness. Were it all selfishness and greed and strife, not all the gold in the Yukon could make our smiles other than cheap artificial mimicry. All true smiles come from the heart. All true joy is born of love.

Christmas in the World

CONSIDER this old world, grey in its years, yet red with the blood of butchery. It is not like the world He came to give us. There is not peace and good-will among the nations. His will is not being done on earth even as it is done in Heaven. Yet surely the law of international life differs not from the law of the smaller group. Each nation must find itself in the welfare of others. A land that lives for itself alone is hopelessly damned. We can test ourselves at this time by applying such a standard of action. Britain and the United States, where do they appear to-day? With no thought of gain for themselves they are standing for the rights of the little nations and the freedom of the world. That is the Christian attitude. War for conquest is a horrible thing, but war to prevent wrong-doing and to guarantee liberty to the sons of man is righteous and glorious. Just as in the community public opinion arrays itself against wrong-doing and compels its cessation, so in this war of nations the world-conscience finds itself aroused to protest against an unruly and a brutal element. Unfortunately words are no deterrent. Germany can outbid the whole world in the matter of talking. It is necessary to use another weapon. Even a Christian parent deems it right and proper to use the asylum and even the straight-jacket for such as are demented. There was never a dementia more dangerous than the megalomania of Prussia. Not in hatred of the German people but in hatred of the principles for which they stand do we wage this war and fight to the death, in the assurance that out of death life will come. Unless there is a death there cannot be a resurrection. On the wrecks of the old world of inequality, tyranny and pride will arise a new world in which righteousness, peace and equity shall prevail—and over it shall float the banner of love.

The Christmas Call

AND so it comes about after the centuries of strife and pain that the same voice is yet pleading with the sons of men. "Go about your Father's business: Love your neighbor as yourself: Bear ye one another's burdens: Let each man find his life in the losing of it." This is the Christian call and it will not fall upon deaf ears. It will be responded to by individuals and communities and nations, and in time will be echoed around this pain-wracked world. Then will the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of His Son, Who came to us that first glad Christmas morn.

A Message to Farmers

NOTHING is more cheering than to note the change in the tone of all current magazines when reference is made to Christmas and to Him Who gave the day its name. Adoration is the first step towards religious observance, and in all places among all men the Galilean is now honored as never before. Consider the following from the pages of an agricultural journal. It is in line with what is being expressed everywhere. No longer are the religious magazines the sole preachers of religious truth. Christianity is becoming part of the common life. It is not something which exists apart from all other thought and activity. Here, then, is the message from a farmer to farmers. It would be difficult to find anything more beautiful in its simplicity and directness. "May the Hope and Peace of the Blessed Christmas Time enter into the hearts of all our readers.

Sing a song of Christmas,
Sing with all your might;
Break the old world's slumber.
Drive away her night.
Love alone makes Christmas,
Love makes Christmas cheer,
Then sing a song of Christmas
And sing it all the year.

Things cannot bring people joy. They may make them comfortable, but there is a vast difference between comfort and happiness. Christmas is far other and more than merely a time of exchanging gifts. It is an event set deep, not only in the history of men, but in their faith, their worship and their way of life. Christmas has given to life a diviner meaning and a kindlier habit. God so loved the world. Christ so loved us, and we must so love our fellowmen. Love was the light which radiated from the far-away Bethlehem star, and that light has never dimmed, but despite all contradicting circumstances, grows stronger and brighter with each succeeding year. Haven't you a more intense desire this year than last to make some one happy, to help alleviate pain and want, to give some little child a good time, to give some aged person a pleasant memory to ponder over when days are dark and dreary, that show that you are developing the Christ Spirit, the spirit of Love? Christ came to show and to teach us Heaven's thought of our life and how it should be lived. A devotion of ourselves to the way of life that the Man of Nazareth taught us is the only Christmas offering that is at all worth while. That is the only true thankfulness. May Love, the spirit of Christmas, speak to us every one, and enter and abide, manifesting itself in us throughout the coming year.