

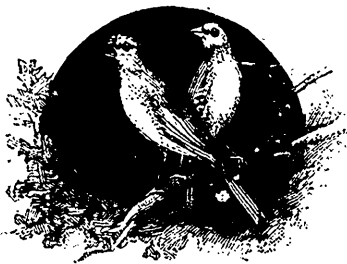
celebrate a common agreement amongst men to hold a certain opinion, but a day on which we declare our belief in a fact, before which all others pale. God has sent His Son to be born of a woman. God has taken man's nature into His own. The Word is made flesh. God's Son is incarnate. This fact, the fact of the Incarnation, is the very keystone of Christianity. Tear it away, if you can, from its surroundings, and the whole edifice is in ruins. If Christ Jesus be not God, our faith is vain, and Christmas Day is nothing.

Because, then, of this fact we rejoice to-day. True, much Christmas joy is earthly and carnal, or merely family or social, but what a substantial base there is to it all! For now in Christ heaven and earth are one. Christ has bridged the gulf. The God-Man is "the Way" between. Now in Christ we are united one to another; one way to go, one bridge to use, we stand on equal terms; "Sirs, ye are brethren."

My second point is this: What is the cause of this fact? Why did the Son of God become Man? St. Paul tells us in the text. It was the kindness there was in God's heart. It was His love towards man. Kindness and love intertwining with each other were the cause of Christ's coming. Because of these God sent His Son. God had showed much love before. He had been forbearing and forgiving, but He had never shown love like this. He had never proved the kindness and love of His heart as He did when He sent His Son, and spake to men by Him. As is the light of the sun to that of the morning star, so is the light of Christ Jesus to all others before or since. God has a kind heart; we know He has, because of Jesus Christ. God is loving to man; we know He is, because He sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. Now we have learned why Christ was born at Bethlehem. A child can understand it, for a child knows what kindness and love mean. Grown men and women cannot fail to see it either, for kindness and love move even hard hearts. Say what we will, we can say no more than this. The kindness and love of God's heart moved Him to send His Son to become man for us.

My third point is this—viz., the duty laid upon us in consequence of God's goodness. What shall we do? What shall we be, by reason of this fact in which we believe? The answer is ready. Be kind, tender-hearted, one to another; be generous; be forgiving. That is our message to-day. Kindness and love brought Jesus Christ to Bethlehem, as on this day, and He, all through His life, was generous and forgiving. Let us, this Christmas, cultivate these graces. Away to-day with grudges and hard thoughts. To-day seek peace and ensue it. Throw oil on disturbed waters.

Avoid everything that may vex and annoy others. Peace, peace, I say, in the Name of God. And then, too, as you come to Christ in the Holy Communion of His precious Body and Blood, remember your friends far and near; those that are in the flesh, and those that have fallen asleep in Christ. Remember, also, those who have hurt you by word or deed, and pray for them with earnestness and humility. So may you hope that the sweet odour of the peace of God will be spread around you. God will grant the peace if Jesus Christ to be ministered unto you, and you, too, will be a minister of peace to all around. "The Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace."



## RESURRECTION.

1 COR. XV. 49.

**T**HE image of the Heavenly!"  
Oh, say what may that be!—  
The vesture of immortals,  
The garb of victory!

The mystery of morning,  
The touch of Heavenly skill;  
The fashioning of spirits  
Unto God's perfect will!

A hint, a thought, is whispered  
Where blossoms break the sod;  
Behold in their expansion  
The pleasure of our God!

From lowly seed upspringing  
A mystery we see,  
Nor dimly guess, while hidden,  
The body that shall be.

And winged life, which flutters  
From out ignoble tomb,  
In summer life, may wait us  
From unbelieving gloom.

The spirit life within us  
Shall flutter from each bond  
Of mortal thrall, expanding  
In nobler life beyond.

Nay, more; the Spirit's vesture  
Shall bear in noble wise  
The impress of the Heavenly,  
The garb of Paradise.

CLARA TWHAITES.