

CHRISTMAS AT THE DOOR.

Heavy and thick the winter snow
Falls on the frozen pane;
Wild winds over the house-top blow,
Turning the creaking vane.

"None will come to our house to-day
In such cold and stormy weather.
Mother, tell us a game to play,
Merrily all together.

"Or tell us a tale of Fairy-land,
Such as you've often told,
Where elves are dancing, a gleesome band,
'Mid trees of silver and gold."

"Children, over the frozenmoor
Some one is coming now,
Who'll tell a tale, when he's crossed the door,
Sweeter than all I know.

"Hark! I hear his step at the gate;
Soon will the summons ring,
Come, make ready our room of state—
There he is! Kling, ling, ling."

Christmas outside.

"Children, open the door, I pray,
Merrily come to meet me.
Many and many a house this day
Has put on its best to greet me.

"All your prettiest carols sing,
Welcome me in with joy.
For see what beautiful gifts I bring
For each little girl and boy.

"And list to the tale of Christmas-day,
How once in a lowly stall,
Meek and mild in a manger lay
The Lord and Monarch of all.

"Best of gifts for peasant and prince
Was this sweet Baby dear;
To keep you in mind of it, ever since,
I bring you merry cheer.

"And glad I come to each little child,
To fill its heart with joy;
For that dear Lord, so meek and mild,
Was once himself a boy.

"Then open your doors and make them wide—
Wider each little heart;
And the joy I bring you, whate'er betide,
Shall never again depart."

INCARNATION.

BY F. W. FABER.

WHAT a revelation of beauty is the mystery of the Incarnation! The highest angelical intelligence could not have conceived it without a revelation from God, and Scripture pictures the angels to us as ever bending over and looking into this mystery, to feed their love, their wisdom and their adoration out of the depths of its glory and sweetness. The Scotist school of theologians teach that the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity would have been incarnate even if Adam had never sinned, and that the Incarnation was already involved in the very fact of Creation. For if God created creatures in order to raise them toward Himself, He would unite Himself to them in the closest possible way; and that way it now appears is by the Hypostatic union, the assumption of a created nature to an uncreated Person. On this hypothesis Jesus would have taken a glorious and impassable Humanity and His "delights would have been among the children of men." Sin and the fall gave to the Incarnation its remedial character, with the passible humanity, the mysteries of the thirty-three years, and all the pathetic circumstances of our redemption. The Thomist School of theologians hold, though not unanimously, that if Adam had not sinned, our Lord would not have been incarnate, and that His coming was simply remedial, an outpouring of God's mercy to hinder the utter desolation which Adam's fall must otherwise inevitably cause.

Without venturing to decide at present between these two great schools of theology, I may say that there are many things to recommend the Scotist

opinion. So far as the forgiveness of sin is concerned, God could have absolved us from it short of the Incarnation, and even the mercifulness of the remedial character of that mystery is if anything more forcibly and touchingly brought forward in the Scotist view, as if sin so far from hindering this great mercy, only gave fresh pathos, and new tenderness to a gift we might have expected it would have frustrated altogether.

But whether we look at the Incarnation as a double mystery with the Scotists, or as a single mystery with the Thomists, what a boundless field of holy contemplation does it not open to us! The incomparable wisdom of the inventions of God's mercy; the way in which creation is taken up to the Creator; the depth to which He penetrated to gather up to His majesty the farthest outlying reasonable nature; the manner in which He accomplished it by the union of two natures in one Person; the unutterable wonders of a weak, tired, insulted, suffering, dying God—well may the angels desire to look into these things; and if it were not that the will of God is there will, they would envy us their younger brethren, because our dear nature, not their lofty and resplendent one, has been set down forever at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High.

When the lark mounts up to heaven to sing its morning hymn, the sounds of labor and the cries of earth, the lowing of the cattle, the rushing of the waters, and the rustling of the leaves grow fainter and fainter as the bird rises in the air. The wind waves the branches of the trees, but to the bird they wave noiselessly. The morning breeze bends the silvery side of the uncut grass, where its nest lies hid, till the whole field rises and falls in green and white waves like the shallows of the sea; but it is all a silent show. No sound reaches the secluded bird in that region of still sunshine where he is pouring out those glorious hymns of which we catch only the prelude as he soars, or the last precipitate fragments as he falls to earth from out his shrine of light. So is it with us in prayer, when we rise above our own wants or the outcries of our temptations, and soar in self-forgetting adoration toward the throne of God hidden in light inaccessible. The sounds of earth go first of all. Then the waving soundless show seems fixed, and still, and motionless, and diminished. Next it melts into a confused, faint-colored vision, and soon it lies below in a blue mist, like land uncertainly descried at sea. Then, last of all, the very attraction of earth seems gone, and our soul shoots upward, as if like fire its centre was above, and not below. Thus must it be with us now, for we have to rise to the Bosom of the Eternal Father.

St. Joseph is kneeling by the Child in the Cave of Bethlehem. Let us draw near, and kneel there with him and follow his thoughts afar off. It is but an hour since that Babe was born into the world, and gladdened Mary's eyes with the divine consolations of His face. It was but nine months since he was incarnate in the inner room at Nazareth. Yet neither Nazareth nor Bethlehem were His beginnings. He was eternal years old the moment He was born. Time which had already lived through such long cycles, and had perhaps endured through huge secular epochs before the creation of man, was younger by infinite ages than the Babe of Bethlehem. The creation of the angels with the beauty and exultation of their first graces, the orderly worship of their hierarchies, their mysterious trial, the dreadful fall of one third of their number, and Michael's battle with the rebels, lie dim and remote beyond the furthest mists of human history. Yet the Babe of Bethlehem is older far than that. Indeed it was around Him that all angelic history was grouped. Hereafter He will spend a three years' ministry in Gallilee, and among the towns of Judah and Benjamin, yet, in truth all the history of man's world, from the times of paradise, had been His ministry. He preached before the flood. He gave His benediction to the tents of the patriarchs. He imparted grace, and saved souls, and wrought miracles in Jewry and in heathendom for some thousands of years. But now, by the sand-glasses of men, He is one hour old.

Bethlehem then was not His first home. The dark cave within, and the moonlit slope without,

are not like the scenery of His everlasting home. He is the Eternal Word. He is the first Word ever spoken, and He was spoken by God, and He is in all things equal to Him by whom He was spoken. He was uttered from Eternity, and the Father who uttered Him, or rather who is forever uttering Him, is not prior to the word He utters. His home has no scenery, no walls, no shape, no form, no color, no spot which can be loved with a local love. It is in the Bosom of the Father. It is amid the unlocalized fires of the Godhead. There in the white light, inaccessible through the brilliance of its whiteness, we confusedly discern the magnificence of a Divine Person. He is unbegotten. He is not a word whom any one could utter, for there is no one to utter Him, and He is beside adorably unutterable. He is not a Breath breathed forth of divine love; for there were none whose mutual love could breathe Him forth, and he is beside adorably unproceeding. The Word expresses Him, not because He utters Him, but because He is uttered by Him. The Holy Spirit is His fiery Breath, the Breath of the Father and the Son, coequal with them both, but with no procession from His blessed self. This Divine Person, whom we confusedly discern, is like a Fountain, a fountain of golden light flowing with uncreated waters. Yet the Fountain is not a fountain without its waters, and the waters are coeval with the Fountain. Out of Him flows the Son; from Him and from His Word proceeds the Holy Ghost, all coequal, coeternal, consubstantial. Yet He is the First Person, and gloriously without superiority or precedence. He is the sole Fountain of Godhead, yet it is the very glory of the fountain that its double streams are coequal with itself. He in His adorable sublimity is the unseparated inseparable Companion of the Two Divine Persons who are sent, and who send themselves. Him, without images, we discern in the breathlessness of our far-seeing faith. Him, without light, we behold in the darkness of His blinding majesty. Him, in His outstretched immensity we compass in the fondness of our adoring love. Him, in His nameless incomprehensibility, we sweetly understand in the knowledge that we are His sons. His Bosom, an abyss of unfathomable beauty, the shrine of unruffled peace, the furnace of the divine beatitude, is the home of the Babe of Bethlehem, His only native place.

Vain and weak men may darken counsel with words, and endeavour to set forth and preach another gospel, founded on their own imagination and carnal desires; but the solid foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will ever remain the same—plain, simple and attainable by all alike; namely, Christ Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man, who, by taking on Him our flesh, opened the way of approach to the Father and eternal life; by being conformed to whom, and living with and in Him, our right and title to eternal life is made sure. "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Every Christian believer, then, must recognize this fundamental fact, that in Christ Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, and in Him alone, lies his hope of everlasting life.

The present season is rich in gifts, hence we may be doing a service to our readers by referring to the firm of Messrs. Woltz Bros. & Co., the Toronto Jewellers, at 29 King Street East. The object of this firm is to introduce the most finished specimens of the Jeweller's art, and, by a careful discrimination, to discard the introduction of anything of an inartistic nature. The interior of the house is replete with the beautiful and the useful. Ornaments for the person, of exquisite workmanship, necklaces, lockets, brooches in filagree, and in etruscan gold, invite inspection. The watches, rings, seals, etc., etc., are many of them of great choice. Nor must the dinner services, tea, and other sets be omitted. Their handsome design and ornate appearance are strikingly conspicuous. In another column will be found Messrs. Woltz Bros. advertisement.