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## THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS is essentially a children's festival. As the one unique event of all history it represents the apotheosis of childhood. The down coming of the Son of God meant the uprising of the childhood of the race. The descent of Godhead meant the ascent of manhood. "The Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger," appeals to us by His own essential humanity, and reveals the eternal heart of the All-Father towards all His children. "A Saviour which is Christ the Lord" assures us of deliverance, salvation and eternal life. "Great joy," because Jesus came as a little child. "Good tidings," because this helpless Babe was the Mighty God. God came down to earth that His little ones might rise up to heaven. Well may the world rejoice and be glad.

The true spirit of Christmas is shown by what this Divine Infant came to do, and what He came to do is best disclosed by His own words when as a man He made known the import of His mission. "Life" was His expressive word. He came that we "might have it more abundantly." "Love" was His motive. Because He loved He came. Life and love! Whoever ministers to others in the spirit of love, for the cultivation or conservation of life, has the true spirit of Christmas. How shallow and vain, how utterly unworthy of the season are some of the ways and means by which the illustrious holy day is turned into a degenerate holiday.

Not with self-indulgent plan, but with self-sacrificing purpose came the Divine Visitant from the heavenly home to the earthly hovel. By the perpetuation of His purpose

through those who profess to follow Him, the existence of every hovel should be made impossible, and the earthly home become in some measure a counterpart of the abode of the Heavenly Father. Only by the operation of the true Christmas spirit, evidenced first by the Divine originator of the season, can the distresses of humanity be relieved by being made non-existent, because impossible.

Not to dole out Christmas charities to the poor; but to reconstruct the whole environment in which they struggle for a bare existence, is the only adequate aim of the truly Christian Church. Anything short of this is compromise.

In what way do our Christmas presents minister to life? In arranging and planning for the day soon to dawn upon us with all its holy memories and heavenward tendencies, shall we be satisfied with mere passing pleasures for the gratification of present desires, or seek to contribute something of permanent value to the characters, experiences, and destinies of those with whom we may be called to mingle?

Not what we accumulate in the way of material gain but what we assimilate in inward spirit makes us rich. Not what we give of worldly substance only, but what we impart of fellowship, cheer, inspira-

tion, and heart's ease, will add most to the possessions of those whose lives we daily touch. Give because you love and you shall have abundance because the operations of love mean a larger life. Thus may we teach our children by the very force of our own example. Thus may we all enjoy and demonstrate the true spirit of Christmas.



"ON EARTH. PEACE!"