

Christmas Missionary Meeting

Subject for December 26th

"Peace on Earth, Good-will to Men"

BY REV. DR. CARMAN.

SUGGESTED HYMNS: "Epworth Praises," 62, 66, 90, 113, 116, 119, 148, 150, 165, 180.

MANY things in the Bible show clearly that the Holy Scripture is a message from our loving Heavenly Father to the children of men. The self-evidencing power of this Book of God, and from God to us, is a solid ground of Christian faith, as well as of human reason and the common sense of mankind. Our theme, these sweet and precious, strong and tender, words, could be a voice only from heaven. This thought is not man's thought. The wish, the praise and the prayer are not the praise and the prayer of man, except as they are breathed into his heart by the Spirit of the Lord.

We start, and sing, and shout, with "Glory to God in the highest," because we ourselves and every good thing we have are from God. It is the triumph of the Psalmist over again, multiplied many fold, and sounding as with a trumpet louder and clearer: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name!" God, the Lord, is the author of our redemption and the source of our salvation, and we must come into right relations to God our Father and Christ our Saviour by the light and peace and joy of the Holy Spirit before we can truly know what it means to exclaim with whole heart, "Peace on earth, good-will to men."

When our own sins are forgiven, then, and not till then, can we truly understand these words, "Peace on earth."

"A Challenge to the Church"

BY THE EDITOR.

WOULD you understand what this challenge means? Read over again Matt. 2: 8-20. Study, first, the situation as it appeared to the angel messenger. Then take your stand among the shepherds and seek to feel as they felt the obligation of the occasion, the supreme duty of the hour. So you will naturally come to the present call, and if the work of the first Christians has not been completed, will realize that it is your work to perfect it as far as in you lies.

What was the occasion that aroused the enthusiasm of the angel messenger, stirred to loftiest strains of praise the heavenly chorus, and moved the shepherds to investigate and then declare the "tidings of great joy"? Verses 19 and 21 tell us clearly: "Tidings of a 'Saviour'!" Therefore, joy! But the Saviour is also "Lord"! Therefore, "great joy"! And the Saviour is born, not for the shepherds only, but for the salvation of sinners universally. Therefore, tell the message! Spread the news! The shepherds tested the tidings, verified the message, and declared the good news. Their action challenges us. The blessedness of the Saviour's birth and mission were not local nor circumscribed. He was more than a Jewish Messiah. He was to be universally known, and His power declared among all people. But knowledge of His coming to earth could be known only as one living voice testified of it to another. The angel began the testimony. The heavenly choir attested its genuineness. The shepherds witnessed to its truth. And so the long line of witnesses began. The

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE!

JESUS was born that He might live a human life, but He was also born that He might die. There have been representations of Christian truth that have erred in putting the latter too exclusively at the end of the Incarnation; but the present tendency is all in the other direction. Therefore, the full truth needs to be insisted on very persistently now. If we let Jesus teach us the purpose of the nativity, we cannot escape from the recognition of His Cross as clear before Him from the beginning of His earthly life, and from the eternity which He left to enter into the region where there are beginnings and endings. As His birth was His voluntary coming, His death was His voluntary going. He 'gave' His life, no man wrenching it from Him. He died because He would, just as He was born because He would. He would be born because He would die. The cradle and the Cross must be thought of together. We might say that the wood of the latter was taken from the manger.

"So our Christmas thoughts and joys will not go deep enough unless we embrace birth and death in one act of faith, and blend our reverence to the Child whom the Magi adored with praises and trust fixed upon 'the Lamb that was slain.' Calvary interprets Bethlehem; and Bethlehem would not have been honored over by angel-singers, nor be worthy of being visited by loving pilgrims till the end of time, if it had not been meant to lead to Calvary. No benefactor or philanthropist or great religious teacher only, could establish such claims on the grateful memory of the world, as that his birthday should be a festival throughout the ages. But since that day commemorates the coming of the Son of God, who came not only to minister but to die as the world's ransom, no remembrance can be too vivid, nor any gladness too great."—DR. ALEXANDER McLAREN.

'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' Justified by faith, pardoned, we have peace with God. "My peace I leave with you," said the blessed Christ.

We must have realized to some extent, at least, how sin disturbs our peace; how an evil heart of unbelief is often like the troubled seas. Such a heart weakens us for any and every good work. Such a heart has only darkness for the understanding and distress for the soul; and by it we are deprived of moral and spiritual power. How, then, can we love our fellow men as Christ loved us? How can we go forth in the Spirit of Christ and labor and pray: "Good-will to men."

Ah! how much of unrest there is in the world! How our evil desires, our warring passions and our wicked deeds keep everything about us in perpetual turmoil! How the nations of the earth that know not Christ are vexed and burdened! How they stumble on in darkness! Is there no peace? Is there no light? Is there no guide? Is there no rest? Yes! Yes! Our Saviour came from heaven with words of peace and good-will for all men. He is joy in sorrow and light in darkness. He is strength for our weakness and rest for our weariness. The world may be full of tribulation and trouble. The millions of men may be perplexed, cast about and sore-broken. But listen to the angels' song, the music from the skies; listen to the Bethlehem benediction; the Christmas carol for the world and the Church. Shall not the Church universal sound far and wide this note of victory? Why should not the angels so herald the Father's Son, the Incarnate Lord? Why should not the Church hasten with the glad tidings to all people? Why should we not beat the swords into ploughshares, the spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more?

message has not yet been carried "to all people." Nor can it be, without messengers to carry it. Everyone who knows is obligated to tell those who do not know.

There is the challenge! You know! Others do not! They should know! Will you tell them?

In imagination, put yourself in the angel's place. This heavenly herald comes on his glorious mission. He knows somewhat, at least, of what is behind; he also anticipates what is before. The throne of glory from which "Christ, the Lord" has descended is known to him. The lowly manger-bed in which the Holy Babe is lying is known to him. And does he not see the kingdom that is to be established in the future? It was a real transaction, and it was to be a real witness that the message he first brought is carried to all for whom it is meant.

Until we can participate in some such spirit of willing partnership in the stupendous events transpiring in the process of world-enlightenment, we cannot fulfil the mission that is ours. It is a vital duty. The call involves more than the giving of money. It demands life. No one can properly take up the challenge by simply giving a few dollars into the exchequers of the church. No one can do the work by proxy, or hire another to sound Messiah's praises for him. The obligation is upon us all to *call*. To those far away, to all those near by and to those far away until the "all people" have heard the "good tidings," and are privileged to share in the "great joy."

How far are you telling it?

How many live witnesses are in your League?

Lives! Consecrated, active, enthusiastic, witnessing for Jesus, are in demand. League, will you take up the challenge?