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Merry Christmas

Christmas 1946.
We shall soon hear again the bells
and the carols, the greetings and the
laughter.
This is a very happy season.

No other time or occasion has so
great an effect upon the discipline
and dispositions of men and women.
There is something about it that
touches human hearts as nothing else
can. There is much evident kindness
and goodwill. Men become brothers
for a season in the name of the Holy
Nativity.

The wonder of each Christmastime
is, that its essential keynote is not
grandeur but simplicity.

Christianity was born on a night
so long ago in distant Bethlehem. The
religion of the Christ Child has trav-
elled far since then and along many
roads. The very simplicities are sig-
nificant to the wondrous story of the
night when Christ was born, are still
the unchanged essentials of our holy
faith.

That first Christmas found a hand-
ful of faithful shepherds gathered at
the manger in a lowly stable. With
them, adoring, stood the Virgin Mo-
ther and Joseph the carpenter.

No crowds . . . No fanfare . . .
No proclamation.

In the generations which have fol-
lowed, men have sought to praise
their God by the many wonders of
the works which they have wrought.
Spacious churches of exquisite beauty
and design; mighty organs, blending
the ancient harmonies of music mas-
ters; magnificent bells, fashioned that
their pealing might call the sons
of men to worship; all these things
bear witness to men's great gladness
in the knowledge of their Lord.
They help provide the "atmosphere"
for the proper keeping of a modern
Christmas.

Vested choirs and clergy in their
robes of priestly office, with moving
dignity and solemn ritual, lead the
modern pilgrims along the Christian
road that brings them to a new-
found Bethlehem.

Bells . . . Music . . . Proclamations.
It would sometimes seem that the
old simplicities have been done away
with but in very truth this is not
so.

The vaulted naves of splendid
churches take the place of the crum-
bling stable; marble Altars form
the modern manger but simplicity
remains and humility still triumphs
amidst the glories which men have
made for God. It is not in any of
these things that the Presence of
Christ is denoted but in the sacra-
mental Bread.

BREAD . . . We are back again
at the simplicities of the first Beth-
lehem. Bread is not only the staple
food of man, it is his simple food.
It can be found in the cupboard of
the poorest home as well as upon the
table of the richest man. It meets
a universal need. It is thus, in the
very simplicities of life that men
find God. The story of the Birthday
of Jesus Christ is again retold, when
men receive Him under the simple
veil of sacramental Bread.

This thought brings to our mind
a little poem.

"A Baby in a box of straw
Was all of God the Shepherds saw;
But they had heard the angels sing,
And so they worshipped Him as
King.

The Christ-Child comes to us instead
Within a little house of Bread
And as the shepherds worshipped, we
Adore Him, in this mystery.

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