

A Christmas Blessing

By Rev. Dr. Howard Outfield

MAY the blessing of the light that shown at midnight come to the hearts that are shadowed and the homes that are dark.

May the blessing of the Manger Cradle come to that innumerable company against whom the doors of hope and peace and rest are shut.

May the blessing of the Holy Child come to every one who has forgotten that thou, O God, art his father and that all men are brothers.

May the blessing of the Guiding star come to those who wander in the night and cannot find the homeward way.

May the blessing of the Stable come upon all hearts, wakening a kindly sense of kindred with every living thing that walks the field and forest or wings the air or passes along the paths of the seas.—New York World.

Christmas Observance

THERE is very little of the right motive in commemorating the birth of Jesus the Savior. The spirit of the modern Christmas is to have a good old time, feasting and business activity, with the Holy Child Jesus a figurehead.

Such is a very great offense to Almighty God. An offering to God in the spirit of righteousness, by humility, worship, mortification, in self denial and good works, should be the first duty in celebrating Christmas.

Really a number of hours similar to Lent ought to be considered, after which would come the feast and rejoicing.

Respectful thankfulness to the Lord God of Hosts for his love and pity for a sinful race in his priceless gift of a Savior—such would be a fitting grace before partaking of the good things and many blessings that he has pleased to bestow on all people. What would a person think in giving a reception and supper to have the guests hasten to the dining hall and devour the food without giving the honor and respect due to the host first? Almighty God is treated in a similar manner in celebrating the modern Christmas.—George Cashel in Philadelphia Press.

The Old Christmas Hymns.

Happy is the man or woman who, having left behind the schooldays and the home gatherings, still sings the old hymns and joins in the readings of the Christmas chapters in some simple church service designed to perpetuate the true spirit of the day.

Mother Mary



Soft, soft, so sleeps the little stranger;
Croon, croon in tender notes and mild!
Lovingly beside the lowly manger
Broods the Mother Mary o'er the Child.
Hush, hush, for far away lies danger!
See, see how winsomely he smiled!
Yearningly beside the lowly manger
Bends the Mother Mary o'er the Child.
Time, thou art the ruthless ranger,
And yet we all must needs be reconciled,
For still for us beside the lowly manger
Leans the Mother Mary o'er the Child!

—Clifton Scudder in Almslee's.

Christmas Carol

What Child Is This?

1. What Child is this, who laid to rest, On Ma-ry's lap is sleep-ing? Whom an-gels greet with an-thems sweet, While shep-herds watch and keep-ing?

CHORUS.
This, this is Christ the King; Whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing: Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Ma-ry!

2. Why lies He in such mean estate, Where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear! for sinners here The silent Word is pleading: Nails, spear, shall pierce Him through, The Cross be borne, for me, for you: Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, The Babe, the Son of Mary!

3. So bring Him incense, gold, and myrror, Come peasant, King to own Him; The King of Kings, salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him. Raise, raise, the song on high, The Virgin sings her lullaby: Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The Babe, the Son of Mary!

A Christmas Prayer

By Very Rev. Michael J. Lavelle

SAVIOR of the world, humbly and lovingly we greet thee, this Christmas morning, thanking thee for all the blessings brought by thy coming and asking the grace that we and all mankind may appreciate them better and make them more truly our own with every year that passes by. Make us faithful, noble, industrious, temperate, sincere. Send forth thy spirit that we may be recreated and the face of the earth may be renewed. Make us able to sing with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."—New York World.

The Season Of Peace

THE whole air at the first Christmas was tremulous with joy. It was a time for holy song, for inspired psalm, for seraphic song. Let joy come still to our homes and hearts. Christ gives a brightness and beauty, gladness and glory, to the whole circle of life and duty. Come, Lord Jesus! There shall be room for three in our homes. Once there was none in the inn, but only in the stable. Now our best is thine. Only honor us with thy beneficent presence.

Let us away with strife at this season. Now is the time to speak kindly words. Let us not carry into the new year the enmities of the old. Let not the harsh notes of contention come into the heavenly song of peace.

Christ came to give peace, and from heaven's throne today he bends to give peace to all who trust him. He was the only person ever born into the world who had his choice as to how he should come. He might have come as man, as did the first Adam. He came a babe. He inserted himself into our race at its lowest and weakest point. If he were to lift the race he must get under it. He glorified the cradle; he glorified boyhood; he sanctified motherhood.

But Christ must be born in each heart in order that we may have a true Christmas. Are we rejoicing in the gifts of human love? Shall we be mindful of him who is the "unspeakable gift?"—Rev. Dr. Robert S. MacArthur in Homiletic Review.

Blessed Christmas Day.

Oh, blessed day which giv'at the eternal life To self and sense and all the brute within! Oh, come to us amid this war of life—To hall and hovel come! To all who toll In senate, shop and study, and to those Ill warned and sorely tempted, Come to them, best and blessing, Christmas day! Tell them once more the tale of Bethlehem, The kneeling shepherds and the Babe divine, And keep them men, indeed, fair Christmas day.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH



Child Jesus comes from heavenly height To save us from sin's keeping, On manger straw, in darkness night, The Blessed One lies sleeping. The star smiles down, the Angels greet, The Oxen kiss the Babe's feet, Hallelujah, hallelujah, Child Jesus!

Take courage, soul in grief cast down; Forget the bitter dealing, A Child is born in David's town To touch all souls with healing. Then let us go and seek the Child, Children like him, meek, undefiled, Hallelujah, hallelujah, Child Jesus!

—Hans Christian Andersen.

O CHRIST! THE CHILD!



You little children in whose eyes The undimmed light of heaven glows, Whose dreams are bright of paradise, Whose thoughts are whiter than the snows, From holy lips and undefiled Breathe your soft prayers like Christ the Child. And you whose thinning locks are spent With unreturning autumn's rime, Whose forms, like wind worn trees, are bent Beneath the heavy storms of time. Take Christ the Child to be your guide Past the dim shoal where shadows bide. Oh, saving hands; oh, thou that bears An earthly mother's lullabies, Who sharest all our doubts and fears, Whose bosom trembles to our sighs, Teach us thy gospel pure and mild! Make us like thee, O Christ the Child!

—New York Tribune.

A Christmas Carol for Children

Good news from heaven the angels bring, Glad tidings to the earth they sing To us this day a child is given To crown us with the joy of heaven.

This is the Christ, our God and Lord Who in all need shall aid afford; He will himself our Saviour be, From sin and sorrow set us free.

To us that blessedness he brings, Which from the Father's bosom springs; That in the heavenly realm we may With him enjoy eternal day.

All hail, thou noble guest, this morn Whose love did not the sinner scorn In my distress thou com'st to me; What thanks shall I return to thee?

Were earth a thousand times as fair Beset with gold and jewels rare, She yet were far too poor to be A narrow cradle, Lord, for thee.

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child! Make thee a bed, soft, undefiled, Within my heart that it may be A quiet chamber kept for thee.

Praise God upon his heavenly throne Who gave to us his only Son: For this his hosts, on joyful wing, A blest New Year of mercy bring.

—Martin Luther.

Date of the Birth of Christ.
"In looking through a reference book I find the birth of Jesus Christ took place in the year 4 B. C. How could it possibly be?" asked a correspondent of the Philadelphia Press.
To which the reply was made:
"The attempt to date things forward and backward from the birth of Christ was first made in 533 A. D. by a Roman abbot, Dionysius Exiguus. He regarded Christ's birth as taking place in the year 754 after the founding of Rome. Early Christians had put it in the year of Rome 750.
"The abbot's belated attempt to date things from Christ's birth was probably inaccurate, and the proper definition of the Christian era is that it begins with January 1 in the fourth year of the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad and the seven hundred and fifty-third from the founding of Rome.
"According to the latest computation Christ was born in the year 6 B. C. or the year 7 B. C."

What of the Night?
Watchman, tell us of the night, What its signs of promise are, Traveler, o'er yon mountain's height, See that glory beaming star! Watchman, doth its beauteous ray Aught of hope or joy foretell? Traveler, yes! It brings the day, Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night, Higher yet that star ascends, Traveler, blessedness and light, Peace and truth, its course portends. Watchman, will its beams alone Gild the spot that gave them birth? Traveler, ayes are its own, And it bursts o'er all the earth.

Watchman, tell us of the night, For the morning seems to dawn, Traveler, darkness takes its flight; Doubt and terror are withdrawn, Watchman, let thy wanderings cease, Hie thee to thy quiet home, Traveler, lo, the Prince of Peace—Lo, the Son of God is come.

JOHN BOWRING.