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And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew II: 2.

From the land of song and story,
Angel-Kept and old as Time,
Where the lily in her glory
Reigns the Queen of Judah's clime,
From the village of the stranger
Where the infant Saviour lay,
Cradled in an humble manger,
Christmas comes to us today.

T. C. Harbaugh

CHRISTMAS MESSAGES

By Downers Grove Pastors

THE CHURCH IN THE VILLAGE

By The Rev. Eneas H. Goodwin

Visitors to the village have invariably been impressed by the number of churches. Some have inferred that the town is very religious, others that the number of churches is too large when compared with the population. If the Church be looked upon as a place of business, as we would a barber shop, meat market or a moving picture theatre, there are too many churches. But if we see the Church as it is in fact, the number of buildings occupied for Church purposes can never be too large. Considering the reason of the institution of the Church, it would be best for a town if all the buildings in it were devoted to Church purposes. For Church purposes include the physical care of people as well as their spiritual welfare. There would be fewer homeless men, women and children if there were more Church buildings.

The position of the Church in a small town has often been misunderstood. And first, the ministers are looked upon as "sky pilots", meddlers, or pets fit only for eating cakes at a meeting of ladies guilds. The strong, sturdy street cleaner or the live business man who demands and gets more in a month than the clergyman does in a year measures his value by money and despises the educated man who seems to depend on him. The clergyman is misjudged for the same reason that the prophets of Israel were misjudged by the Jews. The Jews were selfishly concerned with their individual selves, with their gardens, their square white houses, their business; the prophets saw the black, lowering clouds and were fearful because all the people were in danger. The clergyman is the sentinel in a village, and, very often, he is the only real soldier.

The Church is an organization established by Christ for the purpose of saving souls. To that purpose every thing is subordinate. But as that purpose is the most important in the world so everything in the world is made use of to gain it. Health, food, clothing, homes, knowledge are necessary for sustaining and perfecting life, therefore the Church is interested in all of them, for the salvation of the soul depends on the manner of living here.

With interests so universal for an object of such paramount importance it is clear that the Church occupies a position that can be filled by nothing else. If she were not here there would be a void like that in the heart of a man who thinks all that was

his mother is in the grave.

In a small town the wideness of vision and consciousness of the magnitude of the interests of the Church are indispensable. Small towns are prolific of small minds. Personal comfort and personal desires when obtained and satisfied are conducive to selfishness that is as a concrete wall in the way of progress. Sunday services, sermons, morning and evening public prayers, the door of the church that is never locked that is ever open, the infinite spaces that these suggest, and the wide world thoughts that they convey, force men, women and children out of their little grooves, and make them know that they and the stranger are kin, that all must work together or all will surely fail. This is progress.

With this idea of the meaning of progress it is not difficult to understand the joy of the Christian world on Christmas day. On a Day long ago the divine Founder of the Church appeared visibly to men. Passing through the ages of man, so that child and man might have a Guide along the path of life, He removed His visible presence. To the Spirit He left the care of His Church. That Church has been buffeted, misunderstood, reviled as He was. Her ministers have been despised as He was. But there is no malice in her.

Like Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem the Church weeps over the follies of men, and like Christ healing the sick and raising the dead so does the Church, even in our own village, heal the grief-stricken soul, raise to life dead hopes, and proclaim the sanctity of the home, the inviolability of our natural rights, our duties as citizens, our obligations as neighbors, and our common destiny as children of God.

CHRISTMAS, 1920

By The Rev. J. Alfred Nansen

How swiftly the years chase each other and the experiences of the present are relegated to the past! We are reminded of this as we realize that the Christmas season is here a-

gain. May it be a happy season to all! Christmas means so much. There is no season in the year when I, personally, enjoy so fully the life and heritage of a follower of Christ and rejoice in the fact and privilege of life so deeply as at Christmas tide. Unselfishness, service, altruism, love, all these are called to remembrance and we live for a season in the realm of idealism. The sad part of it is that we so quickly thereafter fall again back into the cold, selfish, commercial way of living. I rejoice in the spirit of Christmas.

God gave the world His Son as the first Christmas gift. This gift was pre-eminently great because it was universal. "The greatest of all events in history—the greatest in every view, politically, socially and morally, no less than religiously—occurred in the reign of Augustus when Jesus of Nazareth was born." So writes J. N. Larned in his History of the World, volume two. Brotherhood and equality, sincerity and purity, no less than the lively hope of eternal life, are ideals which persist in our age because Christ has come and lives evermore in the hearts of His people.

But in our day so many of the large settings for life are being shifted that we sometimes wonder, if we can find time to think seriously about the matter at all, where it will all end. It may be that at this moment those who have been carried to the topmost brink of the waves of progress have been temporarily caught in backward eddies. But the mighty, surging waves still move forward. The leavening principles of Christ's idealism have not been and cannot be submerged for they are pregnant with life. We need to hold steady and serenely trust in the unseen agencies and potentialities released thru the first great Christmas gift.

May this sacred season not be used merely as an opportunity for gorgeous display nor utilized as an opportunity for society folk to vie with one another in the exchange of costly trinkets with unstirred and icy hearts! May it be a season when love will reign supreme! The first Christmas gift was given in love.

"God so loved the world that He gave His Son." And he came into an humble family circle, was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. But there was love a yearning and a burning in the heart of God who gave that gift. The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of love. Christian love is gradually working its way into the heart of the world. A Christian world we, who believe in Christ and the prayer He taught us, must all pray and work for. A Christian community wears the badge of prosperity and is always a fit place in which to live. A Christian home is a foretaste of Heaven. ALL BECAUSE LOVE HAS CREAED THERE THE ATMOSPHERE OF HAPPINESS AND PEACE.

"Joy to the world; the Lord has come—
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room
And Heaven and nature sing!"

CHRISTMAS

By The Rev. Gilbert H. Newland

The Christmas story tells of the value of a child. The singing of the heavenly choir, the coming of the Wise Men to worship was all about a child. You do not remember the first time you heard the Christmas story. What a rare hour it will afford you as you tell it to some child for the first time. This child brought in a new epoch. "Tidings of great joy and peace among men of good will." Christ is the children's king, as is evidenced by the Sunday Schools. This story tells the value of womanhood. Before this she was a slave. Here God elevates her as a co-worker in ushering in a Messiah's reign. She cared for him in his poverty, was true to him in his persecutions, went with him to the cross, watched last at the cross and met him first on resurrection morning. She was guardian friend and mother. Little wonder our churches are filled with women.

This story tells the value of manhood. Joseph took the child to a foreign nation to save his life. He trained the lad so that he grew in favor with God and man. Taught him to build houses so well that Christ became the carpenter of character. Joseph helped make this workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Christmas brings everybody to their best so sing the carols, gather with relatives and friends the holy day and carry the Christmas spirit through the year.

(Continued on Page Five)

