

CHRISTMAS MESSAGES
(Continued from Page 1)

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

By Rev. J. C. Nansen
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of East Grove

And the Angel said unto them —
"Fear not for behold I bring you
good tidings of great joy: for unto
you is born this day in the city of
David a Savior which is Christ the
Lord." (Luke 2:10-11.)

Nearly two thousand years ago a
child was born in Bethlehem of Judea
and at this season of the year we
commemorate His birth. All the
Christian world will honor His birth
during the next few days. Thousands
of people will be reading over again
the story of the Christ Child. He
was born of poor parents. His birth
took place in a manger. Yet a mes-
senger of God bore the tidings to
humble shepherds of the field who
were keeping watch over their flocks
by night. Even nature could not con-
tain herself so she poured out of her
bosom, as an expression of gratitude,
a light, which guided the wise men
in their search for the child. All
Heaven rejoiced and as an expres-
sion she sent forth a multitude of
the Heavenly host of angels who sang
praises unto God, in that he had sent
into the world a life as the highest
revelation of Himself; an expression
of His holy love. We enjoy the
Christmas season together because of
the fact of the birth of Jesus. It is
a season of gladness, a season of
joy and a season of giving.

The Christ that we serve is the
one that measures up to the elements
of truth contained in that first Gos-
pel message in that:

He is Christ the Lord.
He is a Savior from sin.
As a Savior from sin He brings
joy to all people.

Jesus is Christ the Lord
Jesus is Christ the Lord in His
miraculous conception. The angel
said unto His mother, "Fear not
Mary, for thou hast found favor with
God, and behold thou shalt conceive
in thy womb, and bring forth a son,
and thou shalt call His name Jesus.
The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,
and the power of the Highest shall
overshadow thee; therefore the holy
thing that shall be born of thee shall
be called the Son of God."

He is Christ the Lord in His birth.
"And the word became flesh and
dwelt among us, and we beheld His
glory as the only begotten of the
Father, full of grace and truth."

He is Christ the Lord in His unique
personality. There is something
about Him so that He stands alone
as an unusual character. He is the
second person of the trinity and the
Holy one of God. He is unique in
His power, unique in His wisdom,
unique in His teachings, unique in
His sinless life, unique in His death,
and unique in His resurrection and
ascension. The father owned Him as
His son saying, "This is my beloved
son in whom I am well pleased."

Christ is the Savior from Sin
"His name shall be called Jesus
for He shall save the people from
their sins." The world's hope of a
redeemer was born in a manger.
This hope marked an era in the his-
tory of the world. Life took on a
new meaning. Lives and homes and
communities were changed by the ad-
vent of Christ. The world once car-
dinal for Jesus as a child and made it
possible for Him to live through His
childhood days. In return He pours
out of His soul a power that trans-
forms lives and purifies sinful hearts.
He can and He does bring peace and
joy to all those that believe on His
name. He is ever with us in His
power to forgive the sinner, to re-
new the heart and to sanctify the
soul.

This Savior from Sin Brings Joy to
All People

From every choir and every lover
of song we are hearing at the Christ-
mas time the strains of "Joy to the
world the Lord is come, let earth
receive her King." We need offer no
apology for singing it for all too well
we know the joys of the Christmas
season. Christ has indeed brought
joy into the world by the advent of
His birth. It is well and fitting that
we call this season a time of joy for
it marks the day of light for the
moral and spiritual world. Jesus
brings joy wherever he is permitted
to enter. He brings joy to individ-
uals, He brings joy to homes, to com-
munities and to nations, and as soon
as the world receives Him there will
be joy everywhere. Joy that like a
river shall flow, full and free.

If the angels could say that they
were bringing good tidings of great
joy how much more should we be able
to say it after Christ has functioned
as the God-man for these two thou-

sand years without failing in the
least to fulfill the conditions of that
first gospel message. Today we can
say that He has lived and fulfilled
His mission. He has gained victory
over sin, over death and the grave.
Multitudes are rejoicing today as a
result of freedom from the curse of
sin. All men might well rejoice for
He is abundantly able to deliver us
all. We all look for some one to
give us the victory in our own lives
and we may find it by turning to
Christ.

As the simple shepherds came to
see the joy-giving Christ, so the
world should come to see Him by
the eye of faith. To see Jesus by
the eye of faith is to see the deep
sea opening a way from Egypt to
freedom's shore; it is to see the water
gush full and sparkling from the
desert rock; it is to see Lazarus
coming forth from the grave; it is
to see pardon and forgiveness when
our sins are forcing us down into
the dark abyss of gloom and uncer-
tainty. There is no other sight in
all the world like Jesus, with forgive-
ness on His lips and a crown of life
in His hand. This is worth labor-
ing for, living for, praying for, suf-
fering for and dying for.

We well remember how the prop-
het's servant climbed the steeps of
Carmel. Three long years and never
a cloud had dappled the burning sky;
three years and never a drop of dew
had glistened on the grass or wet the
petals of the dying flower, but the
cloud came at last. No bigger than
a man's hand it rose above the sea.
Gradually it spread, and as he saw
the first lightning's flash and heard
the first roll of thunder, he forgot
all his toils, and would have climbed
that hill many times to hail that
welcome sight.

And thus it has been in the Chris-
tian world. Two thousand years ago
the refreshing cloud appeared in the
form of the birth of a child in a
manger. It has grown till its influ-
ences are felt to the ends of the
world and today we recognize in that
birth,

- 1. A divine person who is Christ
the Lord.
- 2. We recognize in that birth a
Savior from sin, and
- 3. We recognize in that birth a
Savior from sin who brings joy to
all people.

"JOY TO THE WORLD THE
LORD HAS COME, LET EARTH
RECEIVE HER KING."

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

By Rev. A. L. Allison
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The origin and the momentum of
Christmas is in the facts of John
3:16 — "God so loved . . . that He
gave."

Jesus Christ our Savior is the gift
of the Christmaside and is the gift
of God's love for the good salvation
of our souls. Moreover: Love and
goodwill and giving for the good
salvation of our bodies and minds
and souls on the part of the riches
of God through Jesus Christ has been
re-incarnated, re-duplicated and mul-
tiplied by the manhood and woman-
hood which has been so saved and
enriched by our divine Savior and
heavenly Father — with consequent
love, tears, goodwill, giving and joy
— for others' needed good.

This, as it seems to me, is the
essence or substance and genius of
the Christmas spirit. The real Xmas,
as it seems to me, is a gift and life
and spirit of love and of a goodly
generosity and helpfulness and sal-
vation and joy.

So it has been the custom of my
ministry and of my group of church
people along with thousands and
thousands of others the wide world
over to give special Christmas col-
lections and individual contributions
for our church benevolences and mis-
sionary work and for the poor and
otherwise needy for the good of even
the most lost and sinful.

Moreover, as the Christmas spirit
is with our Savior and God all thru
the year; its real re-incarnation and
multiplication has been experienced
and practiced by innumerable men
and women throughout all the days
of the year. It is for all the days—
from Christmaside to Christmaside,
even for evermore. So, personally,
along with the custom of many pas-
tors, I have for years with the
Christmas spirit of love and good-
will, given out specially prepared
Christmas messages, from heart to
heart for the good of my people thru
all the days of the coming year.

There are hosts of people of riches
of this world and of people of humble
position and industry and thrift who
are of distinctively Christian char-
acter and goodness who practice the
Christmas spirit of love and gener-
ous giving all the year.
So a recently published statement

concerning one of the great Chris-
tian churches of today commemorates its
fifty-eight annual benevolences for
which causes we are told this church
is giving about \$40,000 per year —
"helping to build churches, colleges,
orphanages, Christian associations in
neglected regions and for neglected
peoples."

All this is a matter of the Christ-
mas spirit. It is a matter of the
Christmas credentials. It is the ben-
eficent glory of real Christianity.

It is because of this Christmas
spirit brought to mankind nineteen
centuries ago by our Lord and Savi-
or and which has been re-incarnated
and multiplied ever since more and
more, that Phillips Brooks wrote his
"Little Town of Bethlehem" which
has become the wide world over not
only a song of the nativity but as a
modern song and prayer in the hearts
of the benefactor men and women
of this Christmas spirit throughout
the world from Christmas to Christ-
mas.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him
The dear Christ enters in.

"O Holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend on us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!"

THE FACT BEHIND IT

By Rev. Eneas B. Goodwin
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William Jennings Bryan may be
wrong in the opinion of some biolo-
gists, anthropologists and chemists,
but he is much nearer truth in being
wrong with the Bible than he would
were he to assume that he was right
because he agreed with certain theo-
ries and speculations of limited spec-
ialists.

The Bible is the revealed Word of
God, and being wrong with the Bible
means being right with God. If a
man stand by the Bible he may safe-
ly and serenely look upon the as-
sumptions of a small number of de-

tail workers with interest, and with-
out considering himself old fashioned
or credulous, reject them. It is hard-
ly a sign of credulity or superstition
to trust God and His Word when we
are so ready to place our confidence
in untrustworthy men.

In the Bible is the revelation of
the Divinity of Jesus. From the Bible
we learn that He is God. Recent
Higher Criticism which, to those who
are familiar with its methods, is no
more than the drawing of inferences
from subjective assumptions, can
have no effect on the fact that Jesus
is God. I may assume that the earth
is flat and then draw absolutely logi-
cal conclusions that could not be en-
tervorted by any one, that would con-
vince the stoutest sceptic, still they
would be all wrong because the foun-
dation is false.

That Jesus is God is the fact. It
is the fact on which the most en-
lightened as well as the most devout
people in the world fix their hope of
everlasting life. To speak of spiri-
tuality, of the intercommunion of souls, of a
future life, without believing that
Jesus is God is absurd. The absurd-
ity is apparent to those who have
followed the so called spiritualistic
movement of the past year.

On Christmas Day, particularly,
we try to visualize for the purpose
of strengthening our personal faith
the visible appearance of God on
earth. On that Day we do not ask
how He could have appeared, nor do
we argue that our planet is so dis-
tinctive that it is difficult to conceive
that God should appear on it. For
one Day at least we confess that,
mentally, we are limited, and that we
are not able to fathom the mind of
God. But the soul of man is not in-
significant and God did appear. With
these two thoughts reflecting two
facts we are able to understand the
meaning of the joy and hope in the
world on Christmas Day. We have a
soul, it is worth something to God,
for God condescended to appear and
tell us of its worth.

Christmas Day, therefore, is a Day
of humble thanksgiving as well as a
Day of rejoicing. We are thankful
because we know with certitude what
was only a reasonable belief beyond
the limits of Palestine before the ap-
pearance of Jesus. We now know
that the grave is merely a chest
where the least valuable of our pos-
sessions is stored for a while. And
we rejoice because we know that,
however unheeded we may be here,
(Continued on Page 3)

You Are Invited to Become a Member of Our

Christmas Savings Club

The Easiest, Simplest and Surest Saving Plan

Start a Bank Account With 1c to \$1.00

Come to this bank and deposit 1, 2, 5 or 10c and increase the amount each week for 50 weeks--or deposit \$2.00 each week for the same time--or

Join as Many Classes as You Desire

SUCCESSFUL FOLKS SEE

Successful folks have vision which looks far beyond the immediate tomorrow--still to those who have not reached an independence which permits such action--the tomorrow is very important.

Step by step is success attained. Thrift which calls for regularly putting aside a portion of any income, soon has a working capital to indulge a bigger vision.

It is never too late to start. A great Chicago publisher who failed at 50 had the courage to start all over again and at 65 his second success far outstripped his former effort.

START BUILDING NOW

Start building today. Add a little here—a little there and before you know it you will be one of the independent and influential citizens of this community.

One of the best ways to start is with a Christmas Savings fund. Because this calls for the depositing of a definite amount each week it is an obligation.

This institution wants to help you. Banking is much more than a mere depositary for the safe keeping of funds.

Come in and get acquainted and permit us to show you innumerable ways to make money.

Enroll Yourself - Enroll Each Member of your family - Get Your Friends to Join
Set Your Children a Good Example - Teach Them to Save
Encourage Your Employees to Have Bank Accounts - Everybody Welcome

FIRST NATIONAL BANK

DOWNERS, GROVE, ILLINOIS