

CHRISTMAS MESSAGES
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There is a God Who hears us, and knows us, and, leaving us our full freedom, directs us toward Himself.

CHRISTMAS

By Rev. Wm. Grotefeld,
Pastor, St. Pauls Evangelical Church

O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. He is our God and we are His people.

As I draw nearer the Christmas of 1922 it were as if I saw over the portal of this Christmas an inscription in gold — Grace; Repentance; Hope.

I. Grace

Grace, the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, joy and peace. O how wonderful! O how comforting! The grace of God hath appeared, it is at hand for you and me, it has appeared to all men.

"Rejoice then, ye sad-hearted, Who sit in deepest gloom, Who mourn o'er joys departed, And tremble at your doom: He who alone can cheer you is standing at the door; He brings His pity near you, And bids you weep no more."

Noah saw God as the all-mighty Judge; Abraham saw God as his faithful friend; we see God with Paul as the God and Father of all mankind who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Grace for justice. All who accept may enjoy pardon and peace. Grace, let it shine brightly in gold over the portal of our Christmas, let it fill our hearts, let it be our first reason for "A Merry Christmas."

II. Repentance

Are we worthy of it? Or is there reason for us to say with Jacob: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and all the truth, which the Lord hath shown unto thy servant."? I notice repentance is the second word in gold over the portal of Christmas. Repentance. What does it mean? Conviction and confession of sin, contrition for sin, renunciation of sin, and longing for grace. Is it that? Yes, and all of it. No one will receive and accept the grace that has appeared unto all men in Christ Jesus, unless he learns the meaning of the second word in gold over the portal of Christmas: Repentance. And the keener we feel our insufficiencies the greater and truer will be our joy over the grace that has appeared for all. We are reminded again of it that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously and godly.

Repentance. O how much reason for it, for me, and the world over. Do you want me to enumerate why? No. I thought so. The daily press is full of it. The mere reference to these errings and their sad consequences suffices. We feel it strikes the spot. What we need is repentance. But —

"Ye, who with guilty terror Are trembling, fear no more: With love and grace the Savior Shall you to hope restore. He comes, who contrite sinners Will with the children place. The children of His Father, The heirs of life and grace."

III. Hope

Now I rest my eyes for a moment on the third word in gold over the portal of Christmas — Hope. It brightens my eyes and gladdens my heart, I feel it. And as I begin to muse over the past I recall that a long, long time elapsed until the promises of old were fulfilled and the prophecies all. But it was not a hope in vain. God keeps His promises after all. When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son. At His time and in His

own way God fulfills His promises today.

As I review history I find much, very much improvement was made in this old world of ours; much, very much progress has been made thru the word and spirit of Christ in the church since the first Christmas at Bethlehem in Judea; much, very much improvement has been made in our glorious land since our first Christmas here.

It is true we are not as yet perfect, we still fall short of the ideal Paul sets forth when he says: "Ye are a holy nation, a peculiar people, that show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light; that are diligent in good works, purified in the spirit. We have not already attained, but we follow after, if that we may apprehend of Christ Jesus." We hope. That is one thing we do.

We have looked backward, and around us, and forward as our eyes rested on the third word in gold on the portal of Christmas. Let us not forget to look upward. Hope. Yes, it seems as if it opened heaven itself over us as of yore at Bethlehem, and to the sweet thought: "Nearer My God to Thee" is added the other consolation: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Thus we behold over the portal of the Christmas of 1922 these three words in gold — Grace, Repentance and Hope and say in closing:

"All praise, eternal Son, to Thee, Whose advent set the people free; Whom with the Father we adore, And Holy Ghost for evermore." Amen.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

By Rev. Gilbert H. Newland
Pastor of the
First Methodist-Episcopal Church

The first Christmas carol was sung by angels in the sky to Shepherds on the hillsides of Judea, nearly two thousand years ago. Their message was "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth among men of good will." This was but the beginning of Christmas carols for different phases of the Christmas story are even to this day being put into song. For instance, Isaac Watts wrote of the advent — "Joy to the world the Lord is come." Charles Wesley joined the carolers with — "Hark! the herald angels sing, glory to the new born King." J. G. Holland of our own America adds his version — "There's a song in the air. There's a star in the sky. There's a mother's deep prayer, And a baby's low cry." While Philip Brooks of our own time penned — "O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see the lie." Still another incident of this wondrous life is brought to light in a very modern carol called, "No room in the inn. It runs:

"No beautiful chamber,
No soft cradle bed,
No place but a manger,
No place for his head."
Then the chorus comes with its challenge:

"No room, no room for Jesus,
Oh give Him welcome free,
Let you should hear at heaven's gate
There is no room for thee."

You may not remember or possess any of the Christmas presents given to you by relatives or friends. These gifts you may have forgotten but the impression of those gifts abides. The memory of the lesser gift passes while the memory of the greater remains. You possibly do not recollect the bag of candy and nuts the Sunday School gave, however, the song your class sang about "Silent night, Holy night, all is calm, all is bright," sings its way on in your soul, as sweet as an angels dream. Earth began with a song. It will end with a doxology. Because there is nothing but song that can express the deepest joys of the soul. God perfect Son seems to make Christmas a perfect

day. Christ adds and multiplies all about Him. His lowly mother becomes a Madonna. The manger becomes a cradle. The stable a palace. The Bethlehem Babe, the world's Savior. "Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing his power to save." This is the creed of the Christian believer — What assurance and stability it gives to life. The song of the angels shall never end.

"CHRISTMAS GIFTS"

By Arthur Spencer Phelps, D. D.
Pastor, First Congregational Church

In the days "befo' the wa'" in the south it was the custom of the slaves to greet their masters and mistresses on Christmas morning with the salutation, "Christmas Gift." It was a part of the custom for the one greeted to give some little token to each slave upon this salutation. Probably the slave owner received greater satisfaction over this little opportunity to experience the blessedness which comes from giving rather than receiving, than over any other experience connected with slave owning.

On the other hand, this looking forward to Christmas as a time of little gifts to be received on the part of the slave was one of the bright spots in an unenviable condition. We look back upon it today with a knowledge of the childishness of the race.

All of us have gone through the same experience. As children, Christmas had but one meaning. Christmas eve was the mystic time when Santa Claus made his annual visit. How eagerly we waited and how earnestly we tried to be "good" so that the dear old saint would bring us lots of presents.

Then there came a time when Christmas came to mean something different. Through the instrumentality of little gifts, the product of our childish labors, or purchased by the collection of pennies, accumulated one by one, we began to learn the blessedness of giving. Then, too, we began to learn the significance of Christmas as a birthday — THE BIRTHDAY—the natal day of Jesus, the Christ.

Then, perhaps, as the years came and went we came to realize that there was danger that this great day become one of barter and exchange. As we planned for it we said, "I must give a present to cousin John because cousin John is going to give a present to me." And perhaps cousin John

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**Bunte's
Diana
Hard
Candies**

**Chocolates
Bunte
Morse
Foss
Temptation**

NUTS and FRUIT

Christmas Trees

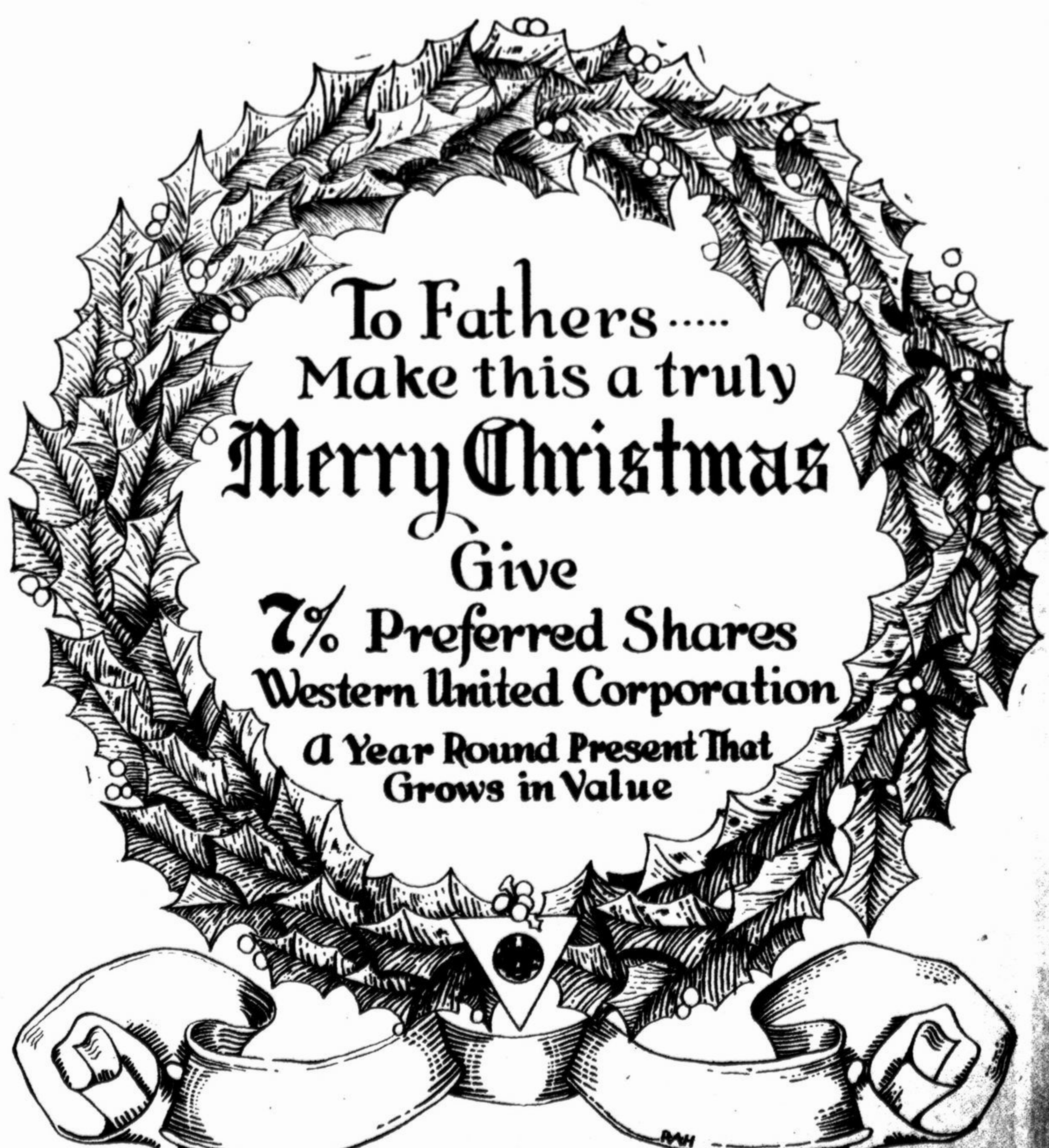
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Grows in Value

**Going Home For
The Holidays**

Then, remember the usual rush and start right by letting me make your travel arrangements, at once.

And, be sure you get ahead of the "last hour" rush and avoid possible disappointment at the other end of the line, by sending your Christmas packages without any delay.



J. L. REMMERS

Ticket Agent