

The Russell Leader

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GARLAND HALL, Manager.
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CHRISTMAS IS A WITNESS OF MAN'S FAITH IN HIMSELF.

Amid the crashing walls of man's material world Christmas stands out as the supreme Security. Hard times have not robbed Christmas of its value but, rather, have increased its value. Over field and factory, over mansion and cottage Christmas pours its light and joy, melting the hard heart of man and akening the seeds of kindness and hope. This is the secret of the Christmas spirit whose component parts are good nature, generosity and expectancy toward the future.

The world says that Christmas is a date on the calendar. But, more, it is a sentiment of the heart. The magi of old took a sentimental journey. They went out of their way to bring happiness and homage to a mother and a child. They went out of their way to evade the crafty Herod who would snuff out that life of promise. Their detour has become the true Way. Their fellow-feeling has become a universal pattern. That is what makes Christmas a good time even amid hard times. A kind time amid cruel times. A forgiving, charitable time in the very citadel of hardness and hatred.

If sentiment were all, Christmas should have perished long ago. There is yet more. Vision belongs to this Day of Days. From vision springs the challenge—It can be done! What can be done? Anything that man imagines in his heart. Specifically, to wish everybody good cheer. To forgive enemies. To stop senseless feuds. To revive old friendships. To build a better world.

To one not insensible to dreams Christmas brings a vision of what life might be like if we lived every day at our best. The trouble is that we live for most of the year on so low a level that Christmas comes upon us suddenly and surprisingly. But in that surprised awe as we see again the invincible power of good will, we act a little better than we are, because everybody acts a little better than he is, which gives us a better chance.

Beyond the mood of Christmas, beyond its good offices to date there is a prophecy. No longer can sincere people share the Christmas spirit for a day or two and then turn immediately away to the pursuits of war and violence. The time is coming when the meaning of Christmas as a standard of living may displace the meaning of Christmas as a commemoration of something which happened far away and long ago. The magi are not ancient wise men but modern thinkers, the guiding star is not an astronomical portent but a moral influence, and the Bethlehem Inn is not geographically located but is found in human hearts, too often trivially overcrowded by things that do not matter.

Christmas is a witness of man's faith in himself. There is an elemental promise in our human lives, even at their worst, which the past and the present have not fully manifested. From the humble manger, and from every cradle, life looks up ever hopefully expectant. It's coming yet that men shall brothers be, everywhere and all the time, in even the most grievous circumstances. Maybe, because of the grievous circumstances.

IT'S WORTH IT

When Christmas is two weeks away
Some of us stew and fret,
And wonder if it failed to come
We'd miss it with regret.
There's so much this and that to do,
And so much cash to spend,
We get a feeling it were best
The habit had an end.
The days of steady labor when
We plan the Yuletide meals,
The hours spent in search for gifts
Until one surely feels
That when at last the day appears
And we should whoopee make,
We're too done out to cheerful be
And of its joys partake.
But when at last the midnight bells
Peal in the gladsome day,
And twinkling stars light up the night
We have no heart to say
That anything should stay our hand,
Or quell a worthy thought
To meet and greet the day of days
In spirit that we ought.
All effort's nothing to the light
That shines in childish eyes
When they wake up on Christmas morn—
And nothing to the sighs
Of quiet gladness when folk meet
With kith and kin around
The festive board on Christ's birthday
Where peace, good will abound.

GIVE CHRISTMAS A CHRISTIAN MEANING.

Another Christmas season is at hand! No matter how disturbed and trying conditions may be during the year, the loving exchanges of the Christmas season seem to make young and old forget their miseries and their heartaches. Discord and enmity cannot thrive in an atmosphere of peace and goodwill. It is well that the Christmas of 1937 should be fittingly observed in every land, for in public and private life there is much to forgive and forget. The crooked needs to be made straight and the rough places plain.

Yes, there is the welfare of the needy, but we are not going to stress that at this time. It is possible for each individual to consider what he may do even though short of funds, to bring comfort and good cheer to all about him. A kind word, a word of encouragement to a depressed soul may mean more than the richest treasure. A word of forgiveness and of hope to one that has gone astray may mean restoration and peace. It is the offerings of sympathetic and loving hearts rather than the contents of white-ribboned boxes—yes, they are appreciated too—that are most necessary. Then let the spoken word and the written word convey the messages that the heart prompts.

It is wonderful how much sunshine there would be at Christmas-time if people expressed kind wishes to each other in a real way. This is true for husbands and wives, for parents and children, for employers and employees, for teachers and scholars, for preachers and people. There is nothing in the world that lives so long as goodness, and goodness is most easily shown in a simple little act or a kindly word. Therefore, let us give Christmas a Christian meaning, again this year.

GREATER NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION GIVES ADVERTISERS CHEAPER RATE.

In Canada during 1936, and in both the United States and Canada during 1937, newspaper circulation surpassed all previous records. Where many other business activities declined by 30, 40 or 50 per cent. during the depression, the decline in newspaper circulation amounted to only about 5 per cent. in Canada and 11 per cent. in the U.S. This loss has been more than overcome and the characteristic expansion has been resumed. The steady growth in demand for newspapers should be of particular interest to merchants and manufacturers, since it indicates that in spite of the competition of news broadcasts the newspaper is continuing to make headway in popular esteem.

Between 1926 and 1937 the gain in newspaper circulation in Canada amounted to 23 per cent., according to figures compiled by a leading advertising agency. It is notable that the rate of expansion during these 11 years was in excess of the rate of growth in population.

With this report of increasing circulation comes the natural one of increased newspaper consumption by the trade. In the U.S., Great Britain, Canada and other Empire countries the newspaper occupies a position unparalleled in other countries. The statistics of newsprint consumption in the countries just mentioned and in a number of other democratic countries, such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Argentina and The Netherlands, suggest that the newspaper is an important instrument of democracy. Is it true that where the people must make economic, political and social decisions for themselves, there comes an almost automatic demand for a wider scope of information? The political philosopher might find material for an interesting study in a detailed comparison of per capita newsprint consumption in democratic and absolutist countries. Does it follow that in democratic countries newspapers showing independence of editorial opinion, should receive the support of all those who prefer the present form of government?

Per capita consumption of newsprint for important countries is given at: United Kingdom, 60 lbs.; U.S., 57 lbs.; Canada, 36 lbs.; Scandinavia, 26 lbs.; Argentina, 27 lbs.; Netherlands, 23 lbs.; France, 18 lbs. Now consider the figures of the absolutist countries from which freedom has been banished: Japan, 13 lbs.; Germany, 11 lbs. Italy, 3 lbs.; Russia, 3 lbs.; Austria, 9 lbs.; Mexico, 3 lbs.; Brazil, 2 lbs.

One indirect effect of the increase in the circulation of newspapers in Canada is that in most provinces advertisers are getting more for their money. In Nova Scotia, for instance, lineage rates have increased 25 p.c. and circulation by almost 60 p.c. In Ontario, with an increase of 23 p.c. in circulation, the advance in rates has been less than one per cent. Which means that all merchants are getting 23 per cent. greater return on each dollar invested in newspaper advertising than in any other form, and this striking benefit promises to continue in 1938, although daily newspapers are advancing rates early in the new year.

Those who insist that Christmas is not Christmas without a "dash" of snow, have had their wish. The snow-storm of the past week buried the landscape with about two feet of snow that has all the earmarks of remaining with us.

In Praise and Spirit of Noel



To St. Francis, the Spirit of Christmas was essentially gay and joyous. His own heart leaped at the very thought of the celebration—to him Christmas was a living reality.

In the thirteenth century, however, when St. Francis lived and labored, men considered Christmas a very solemn event. No games, no merry-making, no joyous carols to mark the season—nothing but solemn services.

St. Francis desired to bring back to his people the picture of the "Heavenly Child" rather than emphasize the generally accepted picture of "The King Who Sits In Judgment on the World." His object was to de-solemnize Christmas. And he planned.

He made Christmas in his parish a holiday for young people. He dramatized the story of the Nativity in a happy little play. He had the young folks sing native chorales in praise of Christmas. In short, St. Francis made Christmas a joyous season.

Christmas since then has become the children's holiday. It is our custom now to indulge in all sorts of games and fun-making on Christmas Eve. The night before Christmas is perhaps the happiest evening of the calendar. Throughout the celebration, songs, carols and hymns are sung to commemorate the glad tidings.

Following are a few of the most popular of those songs and hymns. We would suggest that you clip this section to join Christmas Eve with the music that will be filling the air from a thousand radio stations, pianos, house gatherings, etc.

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondrous love.
O morning stars! together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God our King,
And peace to men on earth.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to 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;
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

Once in Royal David's City,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a Mother laid her Baby,
In a manger for His bed;
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ that little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all;
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall.
With the poor, and mean, and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And thru all His wondrous Childhood
He would honor and obey,
Love and watch the lowly Maiden
In whose gentle arms He lay;
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He.

For He is our childhood's Pattern,
Day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feeleth for our sadness,
And He shareth in our gladness.

GOOD KING WENCESLAS

Good King Wenceslas look'd out
On the feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
Deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Tho' the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

"Hither, page, and stand by me
If thou know'st it telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh and bring me wine,
Bring me pine-logs hither;
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear them thither."
Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together;
Through the rude winds wild lament
And the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now
And the wind blows stronger;
Falls my heart, I know not how,
I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, my good page;
Tread thou in them boldly,
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's steps he trod
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child!
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace!
Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly Hosts sing Alle-lu-lu-lu!
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant, beams from Thy Holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

AWAY IN A MANGER

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head;
The stars in the heavens look'd down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep in the hay.
The cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes;
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle to watch lullaby.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.
Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head;
The stars in the heavens look'd down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep in the hay.

JINGLE BELLS

Dashing thro' the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh,
O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way;
Bells on bobtail ring, making spirits bright;
What fun it is to ride and sing
A sleighing song tonight!

Jingle, bells! Jingle, bells! Jingle all the way!
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh!
Jingle, bells! jingle, bells! jingle all the way!
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh!

Now the ground is white, go it while you're young!
Take the girls tonight, and sing this sleighing song.
Just get a bob-tail'd bay, two forty for his speed,
Then hitch him to an open sleigh
And crack! You'll take the lead.

HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb:
Veil'd in flesh the God-head see;
Hail th' Incarnate Deity,
Pleas'd as man with man to dwell:
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hail, the heav'n born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye to Bethlehem with one glad accord.
Lo! in a manger lies the King of Angels;
O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

O sing, choir of angels, sing in exaltation
O sing all that hear in heaven God's holy word.
Give to our Father glory in the highest;