

CHRISTMASIDE: THOUGHTS ABOUT IT BY THE CITY CLERGYMEN.

Christmas 1911

By Very Rev. E. J. Bidwell, D.D., of St. George's.

The great and outstanding message of Christmaside is one of hope. The infant Christ was born into a world of which the most prominent characteristic was the lack of hope. Even the Jews themselves, crushed under the domination of a foreign power, were beginning to lose in some measure their hope of a Messiah. The other nations of the ancient world were groping about in a sort of dark despair for something to worship in the place of the old gods which had perished for ever. Philosophy vainly endeavored to find the place of religion, but there was no inspiration therein for the masses of the people, and even the profoundest

The Song of the Angels

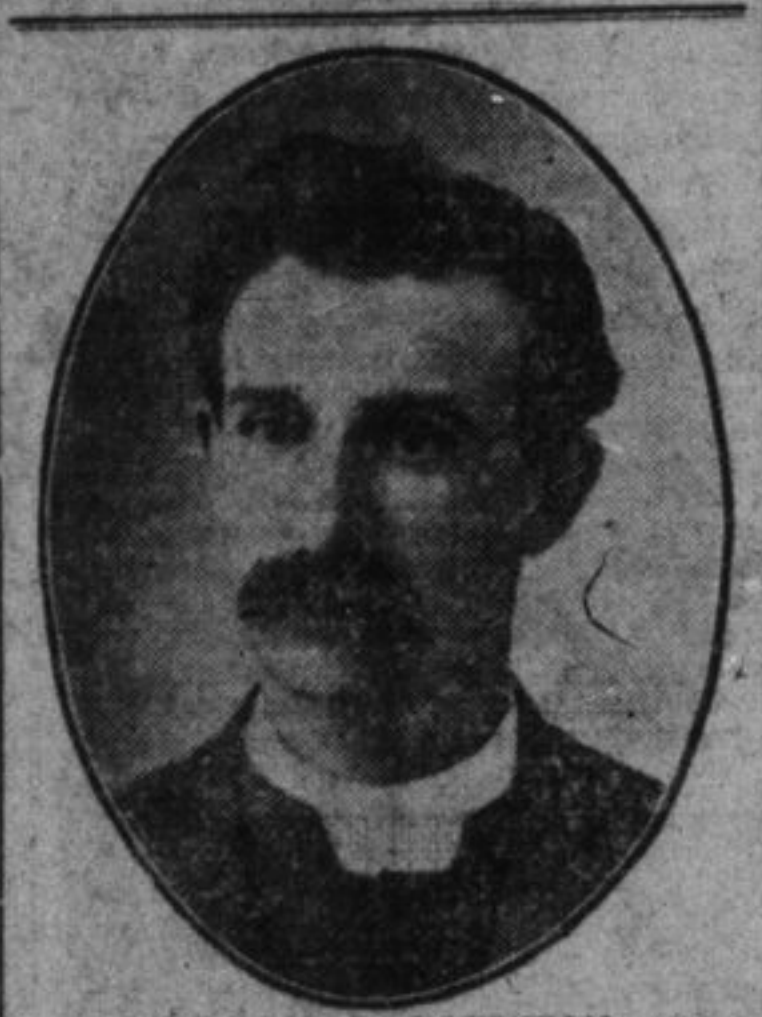
By Rev. S. Sellery, M.A., B.D., of Queen Methodist Church.

"Glory to God" in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The purpose of Christ's coming is expressed in this song of the angels. To bring glory to God, to bring peace to the earth, to create good will among men. This song is really an epitome of the gospel. The working out of this song is the task that the church has undertaken, the task in which the church is now engaged. When the truth of this song has been fully realized the purpose of Christ's advent and the purpose for which the church has been brought into existence will be fully answered. Let us listen to these three notes struck by the heavenly choir in celebration of the Saviour's birth, "Glory to God in the highest." The power, wisdom and love of God are manifested in the works of nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God." The apostle says, "The invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, being understood of the things that are made." And yet the supreme revelation of God, the supreme revelation of the glory of these attributes and perfections is on the Man Christ Jesus, God manifest in the flesh. We know what God is because we know what Christ is. He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. When we look into the face of Jesus of Nazareth as He is portrayed in the gospels, we are looking into the face of God. Christ's advent has brought glory to God, because it has revealed God and has led to the true worship and service of God. "Peace on earth." The gates of the temple of Janus at Rome were shut when the empire was not at war. Only service and that for a brief period, were they closed, and during one of these rare intervals the Prince of Peace was born. One great purpose of Christ's mission is to bring peace. To bring peace to the human heart, to the home, to society, to the nations and to the world. This is being done. Our progress seems slow, but there is progress in this direction. Swords are not yet beaten into plowshares, nor spears into pruning hooks, but there is less war and the horrors of war have been softened through the influence of Christianity. But there will be an end to war, and this end will be brought about through the influence of the Prince of Peace. No other influence can do it. He can do it, because He can do what no other reformer can do. He can change the human heart. He deals

What Do Christ, Christmas and Christianity Mean to Mankind and the World.

By Rev. F. G. Robinson, Pastor of Princess Street Methodist Church.

A few years ago a certain great writer, when speaking of Christmas, said: "The festival which of all others, perhaps, speaks most directly and most forcibly to the heart and round again bringing with it all the benign associations, all the honored customs, all the intimate significance of the past. To the home it means one thing, to the church another, to the thinker upon the profound mystery, which underlies its genesis it suggests



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age long questions, which mankind, with all its thought, has never succeeded in solving, yet from which it has never succeeded in getting away. And never was the spirit of equity addressed to the personality of the founder of Christianity to the meaning and implications of His teaching, and to His place in history as here and today, never was it, on the whole, so serious, so completely honest, so genuinely reverent. This is emphatically the age of faith, and the faith of the age is proved by its doubts. For what do these doubts, manifold and subtle as they are, imply and prove? Surely this most devoutly that man cannot get away from religion, but feels its necessity to be so imperative that he finds himself impelled by the deepest needs of his nature to seek more and more ardently to enter its appeal and sanctions in fact and form to which his reason is able to give a full and free assent. "If there were no God it would be necessary to create Him." Maybe these words were spoken in jest, yet the just expressed a truth profounder than the great Napoleon knew. Hence, though conceptions and outward expressions of religion change, religion itself persists, for religion is not an idea but a consciousness, and because a consciousness it moves ever onward towards a fuller and deeper knowledge of the one indivisible and inseparable truth.

More and more the evidence of Christianity is looked for and is found in Christianity itself as represented not by churches or creeds, but by the word of its founder. It is not accident that we hear so much less in these days than formerly in praise of the gospels and creeds, merely ethical in character. Of course, if the living or dead, will the fair-minded man speak disparagingly. Those of the past have done a work of great value, which was their work for the time being, and those of the present day are all worthy to the extent of their capability. But man lives in two worlds, and his being comes at every point into contact with influences and intimations which the highest human knowledge fails to explain and to satisfy, and so while ethical codes may meet the demand of reason they leave a claim of which unrecognized. Is there any distinction between ethics and religion? Is it not the truth that ethics is a part, and religion the whole? In the opinion of many the work of religious construction most pressing in these days is to reconcile to the human reason a view of religion which merges the best of righteousness in a profounder and more comprehensive conception, one which sees in the ethical law which mankind implicitly recognizes, and more or less successfully obeys, the expression and proof of a universal order. To those who thus think, no attestation of the world's moral government, with all the implications of the supernatural which that involves, can be more impressive than the fact that at a time when hoary civilizations were hastening to destruction and their ethical systems were decaying and effete, there appeared a spirit of influence, a personality, which at once arrested decay. He has ever since served as the inspiration of the moral life of mankind. Nor have there been any doubts about the personality for well nigh two thousand years, but they have not explained it. They have based upon it all manner of dogmas, accepted in one age and rejected in another, and still the personality stands alone unique and isolated on the stage of history. He nothing else the world has ever known.

That an event so remarkable, charged with effects so stupendous, should be a mere accident of culture, an unmotivated incident of a blind, irrational cosmic process, is an assumption so

The Heavenly Song

By Rev. H. D. Whitmore, Pastor of Calvary Church.

"Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke ii, 13, 14. There must be reason for singing. The singing that hath no reason is not true singing. There is much misconception about singing. We must hear the words, we must catch the thrill and pathos in them, through the music of the voice. I have heard singing that was considered the perfection of art, to me, a layman in music, who did not understand the many shades and ramifications of an octave, it meant nothing only so much sound, and the strivings of what appeared to be the human voice. Then again, I have heard singing that had in it all the culture and training art could give, but oh, how different. The soul was thrilled, and lifted up, you were transported into another world. What was the difference? The words came to you with a new inspiration, every syllable reverberated with sweet and glorious music, each tone was distinct, each word intelligible even to the untrained, nay, the ignorant, if you please, understood. And understanding, worshipped.

You will remember they were shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over the flock by night, that saw the multitude of the heavenly host, and heard them praising God. The mere singing of such an host would have awed them greatly, but when they were able to intelligently understand those heavenly singers' song, they too glorified and praised God.

In spite of the joyous spirit of Christmaside, there will be a multitude of lives who will experience the minor note amidst the festivities. While thousands of home circles will be complete, there will be many vacant chairs, and many dim eyes that gather at the festive board. If you know dear ones can but hear the heavenly host and fully understand the import of the song, they will, I am sure, have complete healing of all wounds, and their hearts experience anew the preciousness of the truth, "Peace on earth."

"Peace on earth." Why? Do you not know that His name was called, "Jesus," and He will save His people from their sins? Do you not know that His name was called "Immanuel," God with us? No wonder there is peace, no wonder there is heavenly joy. He wipes away all tears, and to all who confide in Him, He gives "joy for aches, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Let us send special messages this Christmaside, messages full of tender affection, and sincere regard, Father, mother, sister, brother and beloved friend. May they hear the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Some of the most valued gifts are those which we might buy for a few cents. But oh, how precious they are. The dim eyes are closed, the aged hands are still, the gentle voice is hushed, but the old newspaper, with a tuft of wool in the centre, speaks eloquently of a love that will never grow old.

Let us not count the cost of the gifts we receive and value them accordingly, but let our ears be un-stopped amidst the din of the world, and be attuned to hear anew the angel's song, and may we thus learn of the love that sought in tender solicitude to make us truly happy—this Christmaside, and with bowed hearts may we worship Him, seeking to be filled with His Spirit, and throughout the coming year experience the deeper beauty of the song of the heavenly host, "Peace on earth," and may each day bear testimony, in our lives, of good will toward men.

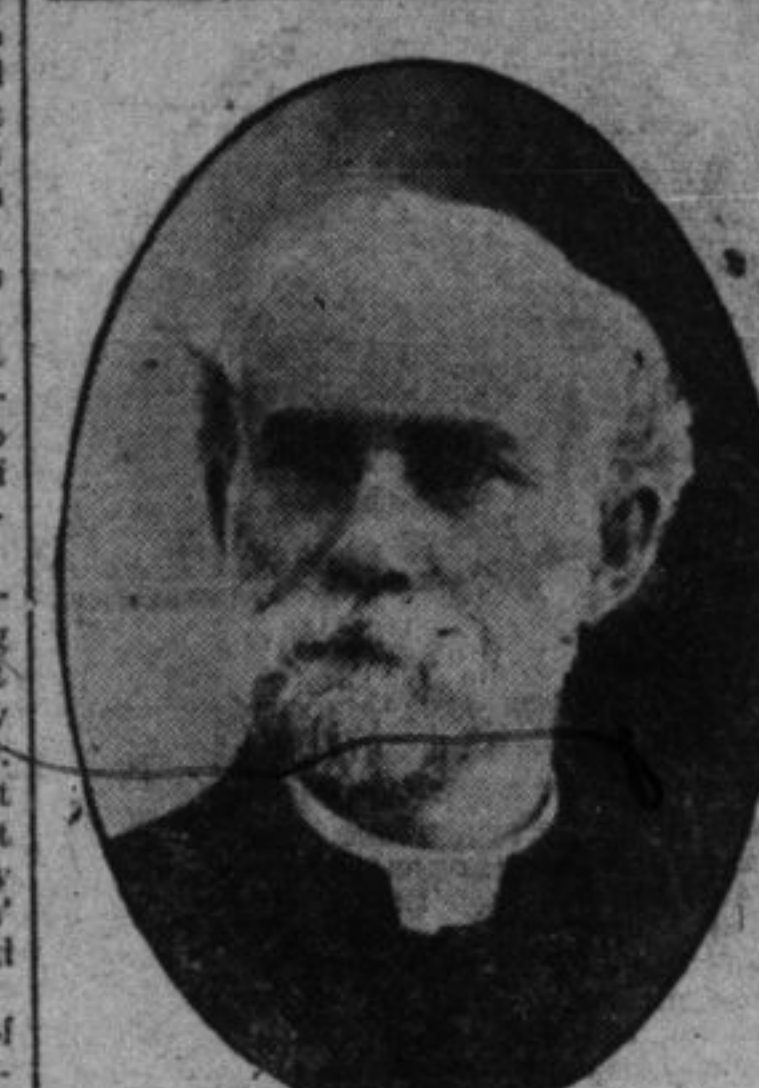
Schools No Help.

The Toronto question did not help the conservatives much. In the French counties they lost Glenora (formerly Scotch), Prescott and Sturgeon Falls, while on the other hand the conservatives won in the French counties, Stormont and East Ontario, the latter could be accounted for by the capture of L. J. Kehoe, an Irish Roman Catholic, from whom the French expected very little consideration on the question of the bi-lingual schools.

Questioning of the Wise

By Rev. M. Macgillivray, D.D., Pastor of Chalmers Church.

Asking about Jesus is the most persistent of all inquiries. The books which deal with Him hold their own best in the literary competition of our time. The men who deal with Him, by way of research, or example, are the most helpful of their kind. And the reason is that the soul of man ever demands something deeper and fuller than it has yet received. So that asking, like the wise men, is a great and sacred passion, with its roots far down in our nature. Jesus is always either a Comforter or a Troubler. He promises rest and peace, but only to those who "believe" and "come." He brings trouble to the wicked. He lays down great



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principles which, according as they are received, unite or separate men, set them up or cast them down. And His judgment is delivered daily, dividing the just from the unjust, showing that the heaven of righteousness is rightly working.

If the twenty-five, odd, churches of Kingston stood, any of these days, should to shoulder, and spoke out plainly the "truth as it is in Jesus" about many things, and asked some questions without fear, and boldly set forth His law, how greatly would so respectable a community as Kingston be troubled! One would be amazed at the heads and the interests that would be hard hit. But then, how many nasty sores would be probed, and what housecleaning and amendment would there be in many quarters!

And so it is that we cannot stop asking questions about Jesus. Learning is deeply concerned with Him, philosophy looks down from her serene heights to see what He is like, and whether she can find a corner for Him in her comprehensive reason. Science may avert her eyes from the things we see to cast an interested glance at the stream of inquiries thronging around Him, and possibly to write an article about Him, sometimes friendly, sometimes the reverse. Literature, on occasion, devotes a sonnet, or a romance to Him in order to be found in such goodly company. Priests and scribes turn away from the routine and ceremonial of their offices to investigate afresh, the story of this unnameable Man. Even kings pause in their royal progress to ask a question, or—the greater the marvel—to attempt a homily in His name. But a better, and fraught with bigger hope and consequence, the poor, the penitent, the heart-broken, want to know who He is that they may speak to Him, and get the healing and saving answer never anywhere else supplied.

Thank God, all who want Him can find Him. Then let us do as the wise men did: Seek Him, adore Him, and open out of their own accord. Our heart is the best gold and incense we can bring.

A Million Developed Power.

The recently issued report of the Canadian Commission of Conservation, a volume of 400 pages, on the water powers of Canada is the result of two years of work. The volume, with its accompanying power maps, becomes at once the recognized Canadian authority on water powers. The work is lavishly illustrated. A summary shows that Canada has one million six hundred thousand developed horsepower from water powers. Of this one half is in Ontario, but as the Ottawa river, for statistical purposes, is reckoned as wholly in this province, this accounts for much of Ontario's lead. Three-quarters of a million of Canada's total water power is used to develop electrical energy. The pulp and paper industry uses 500,000, while minor industries consume the remainder.

Jesus Christ, the Ideal Man

By Rev. John Webster, Pastor of Brock Street Methodist Church.

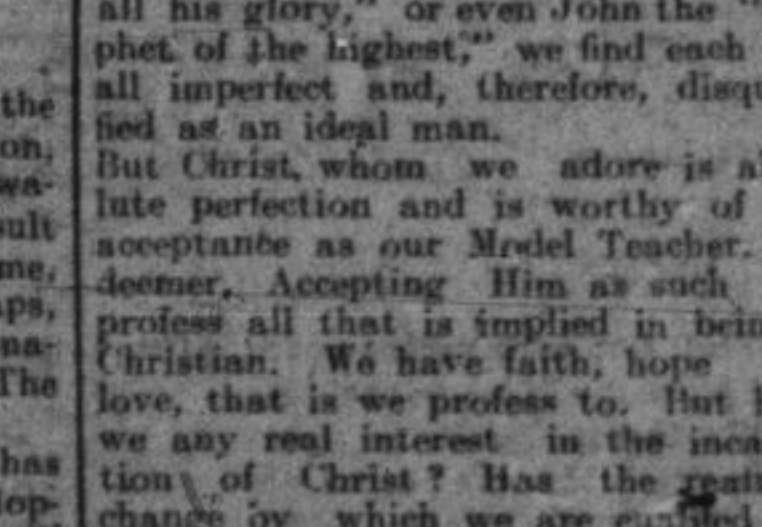
Once again—as we join all christians in the festivities, in connection with the celebration of the greatest event in the history of the human family, the Saviour's assumption of humanity, an act of infinite condescension, voluntary, complete, astounding—our minds naturally turn toward that child in the manger, in Bethlehem, who in due time became the Ideal Man.

From the time the first promise was given of a Redeemer, down to that wonderful night, when the faithful shepherds, amid the Judean hills, heard the angels announce that the long-looked for Deliverer had appeared as a babe in "swaddling clothes," all generations longed for an ideal man, after whom they could model their character, an ideal that should permanently defy criticism, a sample of what human goodness is in its truth, and its completeness, one whose life declared that while external circumstances are something, they are by no means everything, that the inward life is the great and essential thing, but for its growth it needs circumstances. The pledge for the progress of Christianity is the personal character of its Founder, Jesus Christ. He has given us a life in which there is the absence of any disturbing flaw. In this world, scolded and derided, by sin, Christ alone, is absolutely without sin. His critics seek in vain for any sign of evil in His ideal life. Not a word, or action, or gesture, or movement which in any sense indicates a will averted from good. This model life is perfectly harmonious. Unlike all other great men, we see in Him nothing of narrowness or one-sidedness.

The best of us appropriate one part of goodness at the expense of the rest. Not so with the Son of Man. He had no one predominant virtue that shadowed other virtues. Every excellence is adjusted, balanced, illustrated by other excellences. Being what He was, the impersonation of goodness and truth, containing within Himself all those elements of character which win, convince and stimulate mankind, His religion became all-pervading, all-embracing, all-satisfying.

The advent of Christ presented a world ransomed from the destroyer, a mediatorial kingdom created upon the ruins of earth's spoiled thrones, a name that is above every name, honored in heaven by prostrate obedience and undying song, honored on earth by every confessing lip and every leading knee, and this was the joy, in part, set before our Saviour.

Whether we think of Noah the "preacher of righteousness," or



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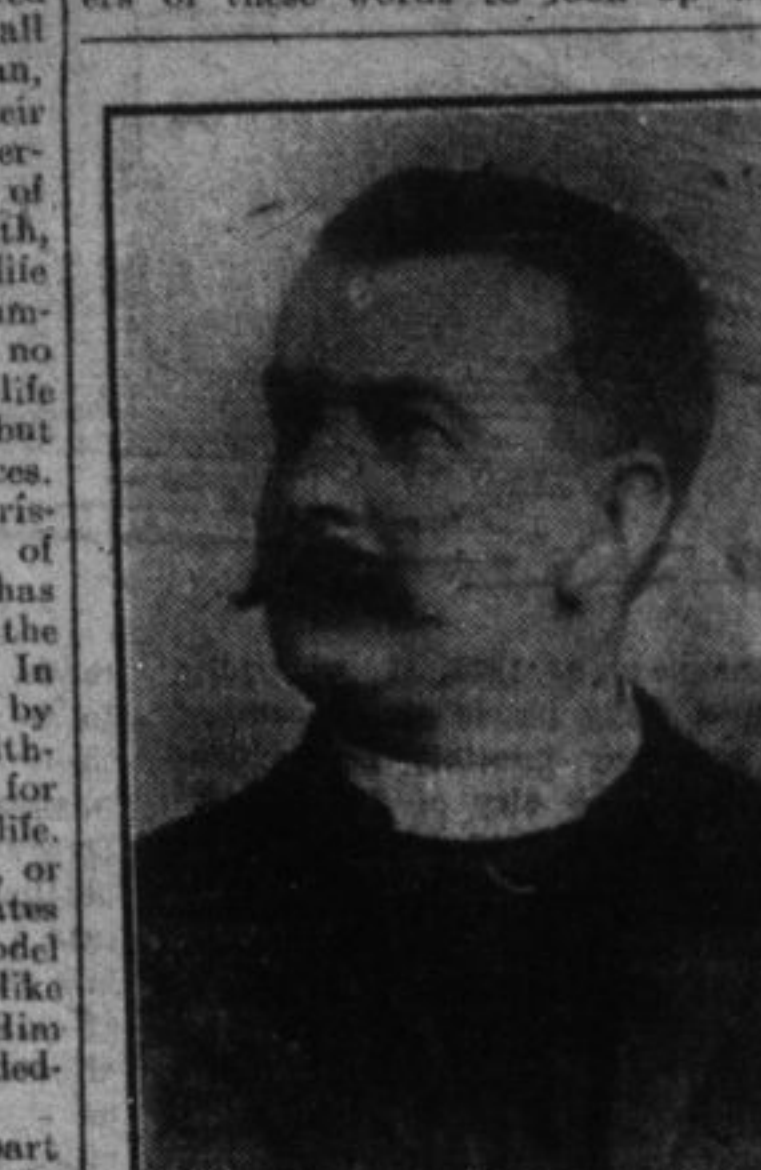
Abram, "the friend of God," or Lot, the "just," or David, the "man after God's own heart," or Solomon in all his glory, or even John the "prophet of the highest," we find each and all imperfect and, therefore, disqualified as an ideal man. But Christ, whom we adore, is also perfect and is worthy of our acceptance as our Model Teacher, Redeemer. Accepting Him as such, we profess all that is implied in being a Christian. We have faith, hope and love, that is we profess to. But have we any real interest in the incarnation of Christ? Has the existing change by which we are enabled to look to God and say Abba Father taken place? and thus there has come to our hearts to understand the purposes of the Saviour Advent. Have the purposes of His coming been fulfilled in our individual experiences? After all, this is the all-important question. Let us bring our faith, hope and love to the test of God's word and see how we stand in the light of that word. If our faith be genuine, according to the scriptures, there follows the evidence of our salvation, namely, the witness of the spirit. "He that believeth on the Son of God has the witness in himself." The spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Is this our Christmas experience or is our faith, so-called, a mere intellectual assent to the facts that Christ became incarnate, lived, died and ascended?

If our hope be genuine, then the scriptures tell us that it leads to purity of life. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as

Christmas Duty

By Rev. W. F. Fitzgerald, M.A., of St. Paul's Church.

The Whig has asked me for a few lines to this Holy Season. One would wish to write on the (1) marvellous birth of Jesus or concerning the (2) message to the shepherds who watched their flocks that first Christmas night, or the (3) Christmas joy associated then and ever since with the whole facts and phases of the great event. But I wish only to dwell on Christmas duty. Our duty I may arrange in three words, (1) thankfulness, (2) thoughtfulness, (3) trustfulness. Why do we make the Christmas service specially bright? It is because it is a day of thanksgiving. Let us ask the readers of these words to look up what



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was said to the people of Israel about one of their fasts (Joel, xiv, 1, 15). A thankful heart is a happy heart. They have a happy Christmas who have learned to give thanks to God for His great Christmas gift. Next, thoughtfulness. There are many who are poor, sick, sorrowful or in pain or loneliness at this season. Can our readers in token of thankfulness, make Christmas brighter and happier by some kindly thought an act for some poor, sick, or lonely one, and thus by thoughtfulness, bring Jesus nearer to all concerned. My last word is trustfulness. If some one brought you a Christmas gift you would never think of saying "I don't believe it is for me." Our Lord has brought us most precious gifts. He offers them to us. Do not distrust Him by saying "They are not for me," but trust Him, that all He came into the world to do, and to win for man. He gives and will give to you, both in this life and in the life to come. To all who read these words, to those you love, and who love you, wherever you are and may be, I wish you, and for you, a Christmas of thanksgiving, thoughtfulness and trustfulness, and this indeed means for you "A happy Christmas."

Public Schools Starved.

Benford Examiner. In comparison with the higher forms of education, the public schools are being starved. Last year the government grant to public and separate schools amounted to \$1.35 per pupil; to high schools and collegiate institutions, \$4.66 per pupil; to normal and model pupils, \$12 per student, and university students, \$126.25 per head. The normal schools and university are either receiving too much or the public schools are being starved and it is no wonder that there is such a scarcity of teachers that many schools have to be closed.

A single square yard of leaf surface, counting both the upper and the under side of the leaves, can, under favorable circumstances, decompose at least a gallon of carbonic acid in a day.

Because you are satisfied with your own opinion it doesn't follow that it is better than the other fellows'.

He is pure. Nothing less will satisfy. How is it with our love? Love must of necessity manifest itself because of its inherent vitality. The great teacher Himself said: "If ye love Me keep My commandments." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and with all thy neighbor as thyself." (Lawyer.) "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you, ye love one another." "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." That love must be the kindest which has the furthest and most open vision. It cannot be either a small or scanty love that takes in God. And all men good and bad, saved and unsaved, but all redeemed, that takes eternity with its scope and range. What a happy Christmas this will be if our faith brings the witness of the spirit. And our hope leads to purity of life. And our love leads to willing and cheerful obedience to the commandments of our high King. This is Christianity realized, embodied, and paraded by an affection, honored only by the limits of the human family. "Pure love to God its members find, Pure love to every son of man."

philosophy did not bring hope to those who endeavored to master it, and live by it. Into this world of darkness and despair was born a little child in the hum of a surroundings, and of lowly parentage. But this little child was the Son of God, and was the bearer of a splendid message of hope to mankind. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is of supreme value just because it assures men, as can be done in no other way, of the unflinching love of God. For most of us, the love of God is the love of God, there is no room for despair or pessimism. For with a belief in the infinite love of God in our hearts we can face all the difficulties and problems of life with serene confidence that the love of God is too great for the love of God to solve in His own good time.

Christmas, then, the season beyond all others that reminds us of the great power of love, reminds us also most forcibly of the love of God. At Christmaside we see this selfishness is not a fault, it is one of the worst of crimes, and this truth is borne in upon us because at this time we are reminded so clearly the pure selfishness of the love of God. And the question naturally arises, what are we doing to make the love of God clear and manifest in our own personal surroundings? No one is lost until he has lost hope. The Christian has to his supreme duty and privilege to help in passing on to all the message of hope. So I say that we must not be content with giving at Christmaside a little of our money or perhaps of our time to those who are less well off than our selves. We must always be trying to bring hope into lives where it is not now. That is why we want to do away with insanitary and overcrowded homes, that is why we want bathing facilities and properly equipped public playgrounds for the children. That is why we want men and women who will give service as well as those who will give money to such objects. We want to show that we believe that hope and confidence in the love of God is the one and only force that can save the world.

Christianity has been ever the hope of the hopeless, the champion of the weak, the defender of the fallen. When God sent His Son to the world in the form of a helpless infant He not only displayed the power of His love by this tremendous paradox, but also indicated the lines along which the salvation of the world was to proceed. Any man who has realized for himself the wondrous love of God as shown in the coming of Christ to this world, can go out and face all the difficulties of life in a spirit of hope, and what is more can bring hope to all those with whom he comes into contact. We Christians are neither foolish optimists, nor overly pessimists, but just because we have still ringing in our ears the angel message, "Unto you is born this day a Saviour," we are not afraid of facing the evil of the world, for we have in our hearts the unshakable belief that God is on our side, and that in the long run, at any rate, the side on which God is will be sure to win.

Government By Commission. Philadelphia Record. In the cities containing a population of 1,000,000 inhabitants, the commission form of government has now been adopted, and is in operation or will be soon. The new form of municipal government is confined to no region, but is practiced north, south, east and west. Texas has sixteen cities prospecting under it, Kansas twenty-five, Oklahoma thirty, California nine, Alabama eight, and Massachusetts six. A plan so uniformly beneficial cannot be denied to have superior merit.