

The Commoner.

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Christmas==Love's Festival



Christmas is love's festival. Set apart for the commemoration of God's gift of His Son it has grown into a great holiday which is observed throughout Christendom by rich and poor alike. Even those who refuse to take upon themselves the vows of any church are constrained to join in the beautiful custom which makes both parents and children look forward to this day with pleasant anticipations. For weeks before December 25th busy hands are at work, tiny savings banks are gathering; in their sacred store and eager expectancy is written upon the faces of the young. To the boys and girls Santa Claus is a sort of composite donor who monopolizes the distribution of presents and who, reading the minds of his little friends, rewards the good (and all are good just before Christmas) with the very toys that they themselves have selected, while the older ones learn by experience that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Back of Christmas and the Christmas present is love, and the broad, brotherly love taught and exemplified by the Nazarene is not content with the remembrances which are exchanged as tokens of affection between members of the family and between intimate friends; it is compelling a widening of the circle to include the poor and the needy though not of kith or kin.

What an instructor love is! How it develops the one of whom it takes possession! It is the mightiest influence known among men. When once it is awakened it dissolves all opposition. Dr. Parkhurst, the New York clergyman, in illustrating the difference between force and love said (quoted from memory) that force is the hammer which can break a block of ice into a thousand pieces but leaves each piece still ice, while love is the ray of sunlight which, though acting more slowly and silently, melts the ice.

At this season of the year our thoughts turn to the contemplation of the new degree of love revealed to the world by Jesus. To love between members of the family and love between friends He added an all-pervading love that in-

cludes every member of the human race. Even enemies are not beyond the bounds of this love, for man's puny arms are not strong enough to break the bonds that unite each son of God to all

which the intellect employs, sometimes for good sometimes for harm. But greater than all is love, the weapon of the heart. It is a sword that never rusts, neither does it break, and the wounds

that it leaves are life-saving, not life-destroying. No armor can withstand it and no antagonist can resist it. But why try to define this love or to measure its scope? Paul, the apostle in his first epistle to the Corinthians describes it in language to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken. Let his words suffice:

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never falleth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away with. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; then shall I know even as also I have been known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Christmas==1904

'Round the world 'tis ringing still:
"On earth peace; to men good will."

Long years ago, across Judean plains,
Where shepherds watched their sleeping flocks
by night,

There rang a song whose echoing refrains
Aroused them. While the bright and golden light
Of one clear star, in glory overhead,

Shone forth to guide the searchers' weary way
And by its radiance were the wise men led
To where the manger-cradled Saviour lay.

'Round the world 'tis ringing still:
"On earth peace; to men good will."

Before the city walls the sullen guns
Belch flame and smoke, and hurtle shot and shell.
Thro' swamp and brake blood lust still swiftly runs,
While carnage marks the spot where armed men
fell.

"For God and right!" may be the battle cry;
And yet, through all is heard the sweet refrain
The angels sang beneath the star-lit sky
That bent above the far Judean plain.

'Round the world 'tis ringing still:
"On earth peace; to men good will."

For not with guns, nor with the power of might,
Shall man be turned from paths with error
fraught,

Nor shot, nor shell, shall change the wrong to
right—

Not thus are works of God in wisdom wrought.
Hark! Once again the Christmas carols ring
The message that the watchful shepherds heard.

Once more the angel heralds sweetly sing
The song whose echoes countless hearts have
stirred.

'Round the world 'tis ringing still:
"On earth peace; to men good will."

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his brethren. "Love is not stupid," says Tolstoy. It makes known to us our duty to our fellows and it will some day rule the world. Force is the weapon of the animal in us; after it comes money,

The Coal Trust

On December 1 the anthracite coal trust gave the screws another turn and the price of its pro-