

Christmas Greetings

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"TO OUR MEN and WOMEN, WHO ARE NOW SERVING THEIR COUNTRY"

This Christmas Season, we direct A Special Greetings to our men and women, who are now serving in the Armed Forces of the United Nations. To each and everyone of you, our Christmas Wish is Strength and Success in your undertakings—and a Safe return to your home.

The deeds you have done and will do
The great personal sacrifice you have made and will make
The service you are rendering to our Country, to our people and to all humanity
Will make it so that at some future, happier

Christmastime, all people of the world can again sing
PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.

—YE EDITOR.

"Christmas, Then and Now!"

(By Rev. E. F. Ridley)

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

The Wise Men rejoiced because they knew THE GOVERNMENT (the ideal one) would be upon the shoulders of the Child whose birth this star announced. And that "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace". "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." They knew that though there was no war in the earth, neither was there any peace on earth. But, under Him, peace and joy would come.



At that moment, the Jewish nation had no peace, because its people seethed with anger and resentment at having to pay tribute to Caesar. They despised Rome's tax-collectors and caved under the iron hand of the mistress of the world, as, in their expectancy, they awaited the Messiah.

Thieves and robbers roved the land, even near Jerusalem. Few men cared at all for their neighbors. Priests and Levites passed by on the other side of suffering. Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Often some Lazarus lay at the gate of a Dives and begged for crumbs. Men were hard-hearted, self-righteous, egotistic, robbers of the poor, devourers of widow's houses. They ate not with publicans and sinners, prayed apart from them, and put heavy burdens upon others which they themselves lifted not even with the little finger. They cleaned the cup outside, but within "were full of extortion and excess".

The Roman Government was slipping—cracking up under the blood-thirsty emperors, whose greed and lust for power led them from intrigue to intrigue and from murder to murder. The arena and circuses were made red with the blood of innocents and captives—to entertain a hardened populace. Kings had the power of life and death; human slavery was everywhere honorable. Death still had its sting and the grave its victory.

But now! A new era had arrived. The Wise Men knew this "King of the Jews"—"born in the City of David" was the Resurrection and the Life and whosoever believed in Him, though he were dead yet shall he live. They knew He would "carry the young lambs in His bosom and gently lead those with young".

Christmas to them meant the coming of One who would heal the sick, shame sinners for desiring to stone another sinner, take the sting from death and the victory from the grave.

Almost two thousand years later, we still rejoice, for, in that hour, to earth had come the Lord from Heaven, while His angels sang "Peace on earth, good will toward men". The Redeemer of the world had come. He still lives.



"A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION" . . .

(By Rev. F. C. Williams)

There is no story in all the world more beautiful than the Christmas Story. There is the wistfulness of long wandering about these three strangers, star-guided across the desert. We think as we read of the Moslem pilgrims, who to this day may be seen shrouded figures upon camel back in that same desert, guiding themselves toward Mecca by the selected star. And these are but stray instances of man's long search for the highest he can conceive.

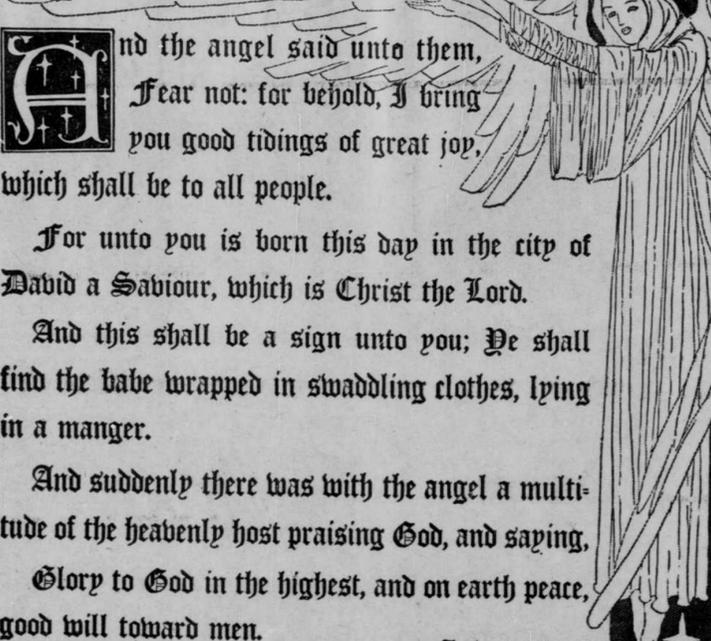
But those ancient wanderers were generous, and travelled that they might give. Those men "saw and fell down, and gave." They did not give without seeing, as so much modern charity gives. To put down one's name in a list of subscribers while one hardly knows what is the object of the charity, is a fashionable way of saving the trouble of investigation and of sympathy, but it is not worth the name of benevolence. Nor did they give without falling down. Many are willing to be generous who are yet too proud to bow down their spirit in worship. It is so much easier to give than to fall down in reverence and humility.



Christmas is not only a time of open heartedness between man and man. It brings with it also the desire to give to Christ, a desire which sometimes comes to us all. And if we may so far follow tradition, it is worth while to remember that these men, opening their treasure, brought gifts each from his own land. They brought what they had. So for us all, we ought to give that what we have to our friends along with the tokens of friendship which many of us are giving this Christmas season.

The first Christmas was ushered in with a wondrous outburst of song. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men". What sweet, melodious, heavenly music, the shepherds heard as they kept watch over their flocks in Judean hills on that first Christmas morning long ago.

But as we turn our ears toward the East to day, we fail to hear such sweet music as the shepherds did, but instead, we hear the cry of hate, the struggles of men as they grapple for the throat of their brother. We hear the drone of the plane as it makes its way across the heavens to rain down death on helpless humanity without any thought of good will. Centuries have passed since the angel song sounded on the hills of Judea. Not yet has it been realized. At times, as we look out over the strife and sin of earth, we almost despair. But God is still supreme. His truth is marching on.



And the angel said unto them,
Fear not: for behold, I bring
you good tidings of great joy,
which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And 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 2 10:14

The Spirit of Christmas

(By Rev. J. E. Blackmore)

(Read this Christmas Message on Page Two)

"Religious Significance of Christmas"

(by Rev. C. C. Reynolds)

(Read this Christmas Message on Page Two)