

A SERMON: Christmas Chimes

By THE REV. STEPHEN M. PAULSON, D.D.

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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord.—Luke 2:10, 11.

A happy and a blessed Christmas to all our readers. May this season bring you the joys of home and family and friends, and the renewal of hopes which possibly the years have dimmed. The new Life which came into the world more than 1900 years ago in Bethlehem has a way of bringing new life to those who journey in spirit to that distant night when Jesus Christ was born.

During the last weeks there has been much business, much preparation, much going to and fro. There has been much jostling and crowding as there was long ago in the inn where there was no room for Jesus. So sometimes I am afraid that all the shopping for gifts and trees and toys and tinsel tends to dim the real joy of Christmas. Not that I would object to any simple pleasure which brings gladness to the heart of a child; but happiest is the child which has been taught to see the "Little Lord Jesus" behind all the Christmas celebration.

World Needs Christmas

The world needs Christmas. Amidst times of wars and rumors of war, there are multitudes who long to hear again the song of the angels, promising peace and goodwill to a world where contention and hatred seem to rule. And however far astray men may have gone from the paths of rectitude, and however filled their lives have been with material things, eventually they turn wistfully toward the little town and its little Child, hoping that there they may find the peace they seek.

Little towns always have had much to do with the world's history. People are attracted to big cities because of their wealth, their power, and their pleasures. But they forget that the large number of the world's great souls have come from little towns. And that is why a great part of humanity makes its pilgrimage in spirit to the little town of Bethlehem where Christ was born.

Many wonderful things there are in the Christmas story, and



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Adoration of the Shepherds

they all bring their helpful thoughts and lessons. Think of Mary seeking shelter in her time of need and finding it only where our dumb fellow creatures were protected from the elements. Does it not suggest to us the fact that the love of Jesus reaches down and blesses the humblest creatures upon the earth?

Heaven Touches Shepherds

Think of the men out on the hills in the chilly night, probably talking about the hard life of shepherds. And suddenly Heaven touches them and glorifies their occupation, for in Bethlehem, their little village, the Good Shepherd is born. God gives them a vision and a revelation which lifts them forever out of their humdrum existence.

But above all, think of the first Christmas message: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ, the

Lord." There is where Christmas meets the world's need, and that is why we turn to Bethlehem at Christmas.

Men take their hopes to Him, their hopes of a redeemed humanity and of peace and love among men; and they find them translated into realities in the glorious Person of Jesus Christ. And when men learn to take their problems to Him they shall find the solution in the spirit and teaching of Him whom the prophet called: "Wonderful Counselor, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

He is God's great Christmas gift to the world. God so loved the world, and that includes you and me, that He gave His only begotten Son. Let us then keep Christmas as people who have received that most precious gift, and in our joy and thankfulness sing with hearts and voices, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, goodwill among men."