

THE CHURCHMAN

No. 12.

DECEMBER, 1905.

PRICE 1d.

Greeting !

WE wish our readers all the joy usually associated with Christmastide and abundant blessings throughout the coming year !

Our Church.

It is our duty to make the Church of England, of which we are all members, and some of us ministers, a joy and a praise throughout the world.

I am happy in the Church of England because in it I can look back through an unbroken history to the time of Christ Himself.

I am happy in the Church of England because I know it to be soundly and profoundly Catholic.

And yet, while happy in the Church of England because it is profoundly catholic, I find in it a freedom and a liberty which gives me no sense of bondage to a system. I am under authority, but the authority rather of a father than of a tyrant.

The late Archbishop Tait, at the end of his long life wrote, "I have now been twenty-four years a Bishop, and during that period I have been brought into contact with persons of all grades of opinion in the Church of God. The lesson I have derived from this contact has been to respect deeply the opinions of those who are not afraid to act according to the dictates of their consciences. I believe all of them, as they become more conscientious, will be tolerant of difference of opinion ; and if I may single out any one characteristic of the Church of England which

seems to indicate it as the Church of a great and world-extending nation, it is this : that it is wide enough to embrace within its sympathies all the various shades of opinion which the different schools of the Church contain. Had any one school of thought so prevailed as to drive all others out of the Church, it would have been an evil day for the Church and the nation. Looking abroad, I do not see this liberty in any other country or Church but our own ; on the contrary, what one sees elsewhere is that men are driving each other forth because of their differences in religious sentiment. I thank God that I belong to a Church and a nation which understands what is catholicity in its true sense, and embraces in one fold good men who desire to promote their Master's cause, even though in many points they differ widely from each other."

Freed from the bitterness of party spirit, there is no fear for the future of our Church ; it is a fair ground ; it is a goodly heritage. Children, then, of a grand mother, sons and daughters of the Catholic, free, Scriptural, and historic Church of England, enter more and more—that is my message—upon your goodly heritage. We have a great past, but we have, I believe, a yet greater future, founded upon the rock of truth. No new knowledge can wreck us and no new discovery confound us. With a strength as yet unspent and resources of energy on which we have never yet fully drawn, we front the future. May we be found at our great work when Christ comes again.

The preceding article and most of the general items in this issue are echoes from the recent Congress of the Church of England.

The Permanent Value of the Old Testament.

THE permanent moral value of the Old Testament consists largely in the revelation which it gives of sin as an offence against God. Not Greek philosophy, but the Hebrew Bible has taught Englishmen this supreme moral lesson, that righteousness, whether for nation or individual, is an ideal distinct from, and higher than, wealth or pleasure or ease.

The Old Testament takes us into an atmosphere of the knowledge of God, and it enables us to watch Him working out His purpose through long ages. Throughout the Old Testament we are in the society of men to whom personal communion with a personal God was a living reality. It describes many stages of spiritual life, the most varied phases of spiritual experience; but throughout there is the same unshaken conviction that man can know God and hold converse with Him. Noah and Abraham, Moses and David, Isaiah and Jeremiah know God with a certainty of personal conviction, with a directness of intuition, with a grasp of faith, which are the strength of their life and character.

Besides the actual knowledge of God which the Old Testament communicates, there is a permanent value in the method of its communication. It is revealed in a way which profoundly impresses the imagination. No later language, not even that of the New Testament itself, presents to us the outline of the Divine Being with such solemnity and sublimity as the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets.

The Old Testament confirms our faith as we trace the gradual education of Israel for its mission to the world, as we mark the strange vicissitudes through which that nation was preserved, as we hear the voice of God speaking "in many portions and in many fashions," and then find

at last the manifold preparation culminating in the fulness of the times in an event transcending all imagination, exceeding all possible expectations. Much there is to perplex in the history and in the record of the history, but take it as a whole, and the evidence of Divine purpose is clearly seen: we are confirmed in our belief that the progress of the world is not merely a natural evolution of human thought, an instinctive advance towards higher civilisation, leading we know not whither, but a Divinely ordered progress to a Divinely foreordained goal. All sound and cautious criticism has tended not to invalidate, but to clear and enlarge our conception of the revelation of God to Israel by tracing its orderly development.

The permanent value of the Psalms in supplying the language of devotion is universally acknowledged. "The Psalter in its spiritual fulness belongs to no special time." There is no new Psalter in the New Testament, for the needs and aspiration of the human heart are the same as they were of old. The language of those saints of old who knew God and communed with Him in profoundest penitence and loftiest adoration, in lowliest self-surrender and in self-forgetting praise, is a language for all time. The Psalms are a never-failing spring whose waters have flowed down the ages, broadening out into many channels, stored here and utilised there by successive generations in manifold ways, inexhaustible, imperishable. The spiritual experience of spiritually-minded men moved and quickened by the Spirit of God touches human life at all points, and awakens a response in the hearts of all who are seeking to know God, and desire to express their love for Him. In them men have always found "words for their inmost thoughts, songs for their joy, utterances for their hidden griefs, and pleadings for their shame and their feebleness."

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Parish Notes.

S. JOHN'S PARISH.

The Military Parade held at the morning service on November 12 in S. John's was a fine and inspiring function. Four hundred and sixteen men, including officers, attended. Assembling at the Barracks the forces, led by their excellent brass band, marched to church. Chaplain Kelly preached on the subject of "Patriotism." The address was full of power and of fire, and was appreciated accordingly. After service the troops marched back to the Barracks before being dismissed.

* * *

The Military Review next day, though it hardly enters into the scope of these notes, was the finest ever held in Launceston. We were indeed pleased to notice such a large proportion of Churchmen present in the different companies. Next to serving one's maker comes the duty of active loyalty to one's king and country. The Military Service ennobles characters, elevates the soldier among his fellows, and draws out the fine traits of honour and obedience such as nothing else can do. That being so it becomes the duty, where possible, for all our young men to join the forces.

* * *

On November 19 the collections in aid of the General Church Fund were held. These, we were sorry to note, fell short of £40 this half year. We can only suppose that the many other claims on the generosity of our people had the effect of robbing this fund, so very deserving, of support. From it the various poor parishes in the diocese are assisted. When it falls below the usual level grants in aid have to be curtailed, which means the very poorest of our clergy are made to suffer. It is somewhat piteous to recollect that

devotion, such as appears in their noble lives, should be overlooked by our laymen who are in a position to help.

* * *

The Bishop arrived in Launceston on Saturday, November 18, and remained until the following Monday week. He stayed at S. John's Rectory and got through an enormous amount of work. In addition to holding Confirmations at S. Paul's and Holy Trinity, paying visits to Beaconsfield and George Town, and judging the exhibits in connection with the Fine Art Society, his Lordship performed several important functions in this parish. He preached on Sunday, Nov. 19, in the evening. On Tuesday, Nov. 21st, he held an admission service in the church in connection with the G.F.S. That same night he held a Confirmation when 78 received that rite, and three others a day or two later, who had been unavoidably absent—making a total of 81, one third of whom were males. On the Sunday following his Lordship held an ordination in S. John's when Messrs F. P. Bethune and J. Bethune, both of whom are graduates of Cambridge, were admitted to deacon's orders. In the afternoon of that day he delivered a marvellously able lecture in S. John's to men on "The Material and Spiritual." We were more than pleased to note the large body of men present. His Lordship left for Lilydale on the 27th.

* * *

The Rev. Riley, M.A. (Oxon), has been engaged to assist the Rector for three months. The strain of all the parish work has been very heavy, especially when so many classes for Confirmation had to be taken each week. The advent of the gentleman in question is a real boon. As a scholar, a preacher, and a parish priest Mr Riley ranks high, and we are fortunate to have secured such cultured help.

The Rev. F. P. Bethune, B.A. (Cantab), whose ordination we have just noticed, is to remain with us as curate, Mr Bethune, who is a Tasmanian, took a high place at Cambridge, and though yet a young man has seen some service in the old country in connection with the Cambridge Mission. If downright earnestness, ability, and a remarkable energy are worth anything, we have them highly developed in Mr Bethune. We are privileged in having one such amongst us.

* * *

We must not omit to thank the Rev. E. G. Barry, Rector of Holy Trinity, for his able and appropriate sermon at the above-named ordination.

* * *

We also desire to record our deep sense of gratitude to the Rev. C. G. Wilkinson, M.A., for his invariable kindness in assisting the Rector on all occasions, when opportunity offered, during the time the parish has been without a curate. Had it not have been for this service, so willingly and ably given, there must have been a collapse somewhere. Our sense of thankfulness is accentuated when it is remembered that Mr Wilkinson's official duties are in themselves a well-nigh constant and heavy strain.

* * *

To all our many friends—the honorary lay-readers—we also offer sincere thanks. It speaks well for our church work that so many cultured laymen give so much time to this especial work.

* * *

No finality has yet been reached in the matter of an organist for S. John's. Mr T. Rule has cleverly handled the choir during the interval. To that gentleman we offer our especial thanks. We desire, too, to thank Miss Evershed for her part of the musical work. We hope to have something more definite to lay before our parishioners next month.

The United Service on S. Andrew's day for intercession on behalf of missions came off in due course. Portions of Holy Trinity choir joined ours thus making the service a very hearty one. The Rev. F. Riley preached an interesting sermon on the aims and work of missions. The collection in aid of Melanesia and New Guinea Mission amounted to £1 13s 9d—a sum, the receipt of which is likely to make these missions believe themselves bloated millionaires. Surely our missions deserve better treatment.

* * *

Though their season was brought to a close at the end of October, the committee of the Young Men's Club sent a team out to Longford on the 23rd November, at the special request of the latter, who would have met S. John's earlier in the season but for an oversight. This trip broke up our record of losses, and had we not tasted of the sweets of victory our boys would have returned perfectly satisfied, for they all voted that Longford shouldn't be missed again. What the locals lacked in play they made up in sociality, and the friendliness of the members was only beaten by the way the ladies looked after the wants of the inner man. The result of the games was S. John's, 55 points; Longford, 28 points, and in justice to the losers it is only fair to say that they made up a scratch team in one of the games which they hardly touch, so that none of the visitors should be disappointed.

* * *

One of the very few hot days of this season it was our pleasure to have for "Treat Day," and it was certainly appreciated. The trysting place was, as usual, the Show Grounds, and with 13 very closely packed busses and drags, we created a great impression driving through the streets. On the ground our muster was larger than ever, and with the visitors we must have had

over 800 present. Everything went off with a good swing, and without a hitch to mar the day's outing. The novelty races provided plenty of fun for old and young alike, and great interest was taken in the programme of sports, which included such as whistling coon, fore-and-aft, wheelbarrow, obstacle, and threading-the-needle races. All reached town by 8 o'clock, tired perhaps, but still happy after such a day's enjoyment.

* * *

The "all work" business doesn't agree with S. John's teachers, and after the extra exertion which the children's treat-day gave them, they think they are entitled to their own "little outing," so with Bible classes a picnic was arranged for Wednesday, December 13. Besides providing the recreation inseparable from the outing, it was the means of strengthening the bonds of union between the teachers and elder boys and girls.

* * *

The result of the examination in religious knowledge was very satisfactory, and though our number of passes was hardly up to the average of last year, the marks gained shewed a higher standard in the quality of the papers. This was particularly noticeable with the Catechism subject, in which credits figured well (with 5 of over 90 per cent. marks). The total papers sent to the examiner (Rev. F. A. Fernau) was 217, and 62 per cent. passed, which must be considered very good, especially as the New Testament subject was not an easy or popular one, being the latter part of the Acts of the Apostle. This year S. John's conducted its own examination. To compensate for a lost opportunity of gaining the "Bishop's Prize," the "Rector's Prize" was substituted, and was given for the highest marks in any one subject for the whole of the parish. This was gained by Ivy Poultenay, of St. John's, in the Lower Middle Division, who got the

maximum marks, viz., 100, in the Catechism. The other prizes were awarded as follows:—Senior Division—Belle Good and Ruth Tevelein, 189 marks each; and Eric Tevelein, 157 marks. Upper Middle—Amy Conder, 154; Vivian Page, 161. Lower Middle—Alice Grubb, 155. Junior—Florrie Bennett, 153, and Cyril Waldron, 120. S. Aidan's only took one subject, the prize winners being Doris Whitton and Gilbert Joy with 87 marks each. The prizes and certificates were distributed last Sunday.

CHRISTMAS COMMUNION.

Need we remind all who have been Confirmed that it is their privilege, as indeed it is their plain duty, to receive Holy Communion on the Festival of the Nativity. In order that all may be enabled to do this there will be celebrations at every hour (save nine o'clock) from six till eleven on that day in the Parish Church; at 9 a.m. in S. Oswald's, and at 11.15 a.m. in S. Aidan's.

BAPTISMS.

- Nov. 1—Ivy May Prior
Estelle Kathleen Campbell
Florence Edna Mitchell
" 2—Reginald Thomas Rosman
" 8—Clem Airey
Marjorie Isabel Brient
" 15—William Gordon Heenan
Keith William Spearman
Muriel May Williams
Thomas Kiely O'Brien
" 22—Frieda Bernice Newman
Irene May Cutler
Thelma Irene Lisdey
Dorothy May Frawsan
Beryl Eveline Wood
" 29—Grace Jane Marvil Walker
Elma Martha Wall
Thomas Culpeck Dawson
Leslie Ernest Lee
Dec. 6—Grace Thompson.

MARRIAGES.

- Nov. 20—Alfred John Allison to Louisa Frances Jordan.
Dec. 5—George Carlton to Frances Mary Powell.

BURIALS.

- Oct. 20—William Nash
" 22—Thomas Rees
" 31—Ethel Walker
Nov. 7—William Powell
" 14—Elizabeth Smith
Thomas John West Dobson
" 20—James Gibbons.

HOLY TRINITY PARISH.

The event in November is always the Sunday School Picnic. This year it took place at Rosevears' on Wednesday, November 22nd. The s.s. Centennial had been chartered, and with the weather all that could be desired, a start was made from the school-room shortly after 9 o'clock. At the wharf we were joined by the branch schools in the parish—Inveresk and Newnham—and the steamer left at 9.30 a.m. It was a happy party indeed that started. When Rosevears was reached the young people soon scattered, first to explore, then to form into parties for different games, while the teachers at once began their work of preparing the first meal, which was given a few minutes after 12 o'clock. Early in the afternoon a large party of the elder scholars, in charge of one of the teachers, walked to Brady's Look-out, while the others went back to games, etc. Then came the usual races, which were just finished when the s.s. Niree came in sight, bringing a number of visitors, who were entertained at afternoon tea. At 4.45 the children sat down for their tea, after which followed the teachers' tea, and then all were busy getting ready for home. Exactly at 6 o'clock the last were on board and the steamer headed for Launceston which was reached at 7.15. A more delightful trip up the river would not be possible, the evening being a perfect one. All on board were sorry when the wharf was reached. Very soon the last passenger was safely ashore, and without mishap of any kind the

picnic of 1905 became a thing of the past. We must express our thanks to Mr and Mrs Whitpain, of Rosevears, for so kindly allowing us the use of grounds and hall, and placing so much at our convenience.

November 12th.—The Quarterly Collections for the building were made on this Sunday, but were disappointing, falling some £7 below the required sum. However a little more was sent in after through the envelopes, and the balance may yet be made up.

November 20th.—The rite of Confirmation was administered in the evening to nineteen candidates, the Bishop giving a very helpful address. The following Sunday evening we had the pleasure of our Bishop's presence. A very large congregation listened to an admirable sermon.

December 3rd.—Advent Sunday, and also the eve of the Festival of the Dedication of our Church. Special services were held, the Rector occupying the pulpit morning and evening. The Bishop's Pastoral was read in the morning, and at night Advent thoughts were blended with Festival memories.

On Christmas Day there will be celebrations of the Holy Communion at 7, 8, and 11 a.m.

TRINITY MISSION HALL, INVERESK.

November 17th.—The monthly meeting of the Temperance Society was held. There was a very satisfactory gathering, and a very interesting programme of songs and recitations was given by the various members. The Rector gave the address, taking for his subject, "A Happy Xmas," showing how much more likely this was to be a reality in

the home where temperance was the rule than in a home where it was otherwise. The meeting was the final one for the present year.

NEWNHAM AND MOWBRAY.

November 29th.—On this day the laying of the foundation stone of the new building took place. The ground was prettily decorated with flags, and just before 4 o'clock two drags arrived bringing members of Holy Trinity choir and visitors from town. The choir having vested in the school came in procession to the ground singing, "Onward, Christian soldiers." The clergy present were the Rector, Revs. Canon Beresford, A. Barkway, H. B. Atkinson, and F. P. Bethune; also Mr E. A. Champion, L.R. A service appointed for the purpose was said, and the stone was solemnly by the Rev. A. Barkway. The Rector then stated that the building would take the name of S. Barnabas' Church Hall, and would be fitted up to serve all church purposes. The Rev. A. Barkway expressed the pleasure it gave him to be there and perform the duty with which he had been honoured. He gave a very interesting address, and was followed by Canon Beresford, who congratulated all on the starting of the work. Then, during the singing of another hymn, offering was placed on the stone amounting to close on £14. After the service all adjourned to afternoon tea kindly provided by Mrs J. C. Macmichael. It was given under the trees in the garden, and a prettier spot would be hard to find. And so ended an interesting and happy event.

S. GEORGE'S, INVERMAY.

We were very fortunate during November in having beautiful weather for our two chief Sunday school events of the year, namely, the treat and the special Sunday in

connection with the school and its work. The picnic was held on the 9th, and as it happened the thermometer was in a festive mood and ran up to 87deg. in the shade. It was a most beautiful day, and the children and all the elder people who were able to be present during the day enjoyed themselves. There was great excitement over the races, and much fun was caused by the atrocious handicapping of the superintendent (the latter, by the way, has a hard time as handicapper; he is always a sceptical individual, and pays no heed whatever to previous "performance"). However the races were run and things in general settled themselves down after the athletic excitement. A good tea, and afterwards games in the moonlight brought our picnic of 1905 to a close. We were all tired next day, but there is something healthy in being tired after such a grand day as the 9th was. We must not forget to thank all the Sunday-school teachers and other friends who came and helped at making sandwiches, cutting up cakes, and dispensing tea and ginger beer. Mr Brown was as busy as the proverbial bee all day, and nothing, from putting up tents at 6 a.m. to having a cup of afternoon tea with our visitors seemed to come amiss to him, we are all grateful to our old superintendent, and hope he will always be able to help us in this and any other way. In connection with our picnic we feel sure that it will be gratifying to those who helped us in the appeal we made for direct giving towards the expenses either in money or in kind, to know that there are a few shillings to the good after all expenses are paid.

On Sunday, the 16th, the Rev. R. K. Collisson preached at 11 a.m., the Lord Bishop gave the address at the children's service in the afternoon, and the Rector preached at 7. All the services were well attended,

the offerings were moderately good only, and will be handed over to the Prize Fund.

Of a class of ten candidates for Confirmation only five came forward for the laying on of hands on the evening of the service at Holy Trinity. The other five evidently felt that another year's training would see them better fitted to undertake the responsibility incumbent upon all confirmees. It is much better to be certain of one's ability to do what Confirmation desires one to do, than it is to treat too lightly things, which by reason of their seriousness and solemnity, require earnest prayer and very careful and sometimes long preparation.

The new room is just about completed, and is a splendidly large addition to our building at S. George's. It will be of great assistance to the work at that centre, besides being of monetary assistance during the year, as we understand it has already been rented for use as a day school. The room is complete with all necessary convenience, and has plenty of floor space. Messrs French Bros. were the contractors, and their workmen may be congratulated on having put up a really good building.

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S. PAUL'S PARISH.

Our school-room is indeed "an old friend with a new face," as the Churchwardens have had the interior coloured and all the woodwork painted afresh. Our grateful thanks are due to Mrs Hardwicke Weedon for her handsome gift of new art serge curtains for the stage, also to Mr Hardwicke Weedon for having the water laid on to the church grounds, and providing a cup for the refreshment of the thirsty little school children. With such very pleasant surroundings we earnestly hope to see the roll-call of the school largely increase.

The long talked of "fair" is a thing of the past, and we heartily congratulate the promoters and stallholders upon the success of their

efforts. The room presented a very pretty appearance when the Mayoress, in her usual charming way, declared the "fair" open, and wished it every success. We hoped to have the balance sheet ready before this issue, but the result will have to wait and appear in the next number. A word of praise is due to the members of the Girls' Friendly Society, who more than did their share of the hard work, and as so many have suggested that another may be held next year, we hope it will inspire others who have not yet joined our ranks, to offer their services and help on this good work. The decorations of the stalls were universally admired, and our readers will be delighted to hear that Mrs Hardwicke Weedon has presented all the beautiful peach blossom to the school to be used on future occasions. We are most thankful to her for her very acceptable gift.



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It was a very graceful and thoughtful act of the Rector of Holy Trinity to ask the Rector of S. Paul's to lay the foundation stone of the new Church Hall, to be known as S. Barnabas, at Mowbray last Wednesday. It brought back many happy memories of twenty-seven years that the Rector spent going to and fro to the suburban parish, and we were glad to see those present who remembered "the days long passed." It was a lovely afternoon, and we, who were privileged to be present, will long remember it, and we heartily congratulate the Rector of Holy Trinity upon the energy he is displaying in bringing the outlying part of his parish to the front in church matters.

The Sunday School Festival was held on Sunday, the 10th December. The hymns were unusually good, and the children gave a good account of themselves. Appropriate addresses were given by the Rev. Riley and the Rev. Bethune, of S. John's.

The time fixed for the first United Admission Service of the Girls' Friendly Society, held at S. John's on the afternoon of the 21st November, was unfortunate as regards the S. Paul's branch, only 6 candidates and 3 associates being able to be present. However, the Rector hopes to hold a supplemental service at S. Paul's before long, when we hope to see every member present. The Bishop's kindly address at the service at S. John's was most helpful, and we only regret that more were not present to hear it.

The Bishop preached at S. Paul's on Sunday, the 19th November, in the morning, and a large congregation assembled to listen to his earnest words. In the absence of the choirmaster, Mr G. Whitelaw took charge of the musical portion of the service, and the choir was

greatly helped by the assistance of Messrs Unsworth and Spicer from S. John's.

At rest, John Holder, for many years a faithful parishioner of S. Paul's. We remember the many kindly deeds done so quietly for "the Master's sake and the good of the church," and as we listened to the Rector's kindly words from the pulpit on the Sunday evening after the funeral, we heard the words of old re-echo once again, "He hath done what he could." Many times we shall miss him, and perhaps envy him his rest.

The Rector hopes to see a good gathering of the faithful at the Christmas Eucharistic Services, and wishes the parishioners one and all "A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

REVIVALS.

It is an object-lesson to the whole nation that when the Church of England meets in her annual conclave, to debate the things which belong to its well-being, the subject to which she gives the first and most conspicuous prominence is the need of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to bring the nation to Christ.

We shall have to recognise, more than we have been wont to recognise, that the Divine Breath bloweth where it listeth, that the Spirit of God can and doth move whole bodies of people; and that there are times of visitation and of refreshing which pass over neighbourhoods, periods of spiritual plenty to be prayed for and availed of when they draw nigh, veritable Souls' Awakenings upon a mighty scale; times when occasion is ripe, and the river of God is running full.

✓ If ever a great spiritual awakening was needed it is now. On all sides we have people lamenting over our

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present condition. Gambling is increasing in all its forms. It is more than questionable whether drinking has declined. Our standards of luxury rise daily higher and higher. People are so rich that they do not know what to do with their money; and yet there are more paupers than we care to think. One in nine of the London population, they tell us, dies in a workhouse. There are schemes in abundance for social reform, but there is not driving power behind them. A plan is taken up so long as it is in fashion, and then it is dropped and heard of no more. Vested interests are powerful. Selfishness is everywhere. The reformers hang their heads in despair. There is a lack of moral earnestness. Attendance at public worship is not what it was. Religious people are too much occupied with controversies among themselves. The life is too often less than the raiment.

Meanwhile, popular rationalism boasts that it has acquired a new lease of existence; and proposals are being made to abolish the permanence of marriage and to destroy the integrity of the home. I only repeat what we are constantly hearing. And I ask you do we not need on a large scale that of which we have seen the tokens elsewhere; not, indeed, a mere repetition of outward manifestations, but the very same spirit and power? Is that Spirit straitened in Himself, or is He straitened in us?

Everything depends on the standpoint from which we look at things. If you look at these things, for instance, from afar off, with the cold eye of a critic, they will look very differently to when you look at them closely and with the systematic interest of one who has felt their power.

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CHRISTMAS.

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It is the birthday of their king.

Christmas Day! What a happy day it is for children. How you look forward to Christmas eve and wonder how many presents you will get, and what they will be; and very early in the morning you want to look at them all and see which you like best. Or, perhaps, there is to be a Christmas tree, or children's party, to which you have been invited, and you are expecting to enjoy yourselves very much indeed. But, dear children, we must not forget the real meaning of this joyful season, and the greatest gift that Christmas brought us—the gift of God's own Son. More than 1900 years have past away since the first Christmas day, and yet we still keep it every year, and the older we grow the more beautiful the Christmas story seems to grow.

You will perhaps remember that at the time of our Saviour's birth the Jews were governed by the Romans, and the Roman emperor, in order to find out how many there were, and to what city or town they belonged, ordered every one's name to be written down in a book. Taking the "census" we should call it now.

It is Christmas eve, and the city of Bethlehem is quite full of people, who have come from all parts in obedience to the emperor's command.

The busy day is almost ended, when two weary travellers are seen to enter the town. Though poor, they are of royal descent, and to the city of David they must come to have their names enrolled. Tired and worn with the long journey from their home in Nazareth, they arrive at the inn where they hope to stay. But so many others had arrived before them, no room can be found

there, except in the stable or cave where the animals are, and gladly they take even this mean shelter. No one notices the poor carpenter and his gentle companion as they enter that lowly door, and yet we know more about them than all the other people in Bethlehem that night.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars begin to peep;
Birds and beasts and flowers,
Soon will be asleep.

The town is hushed and silent. One by one the stars begin to shine out in the sky. There is a little "stranger" star there to-night, but its bright light is not noticed amongst so many. Outside the city the shepherds are keeping watch over their flocks, when they are startled by a very bright light in the heavens shining round about them. So bright it is, they can hardly see, and hide their faces in fear. But some one is speaking, and looking up they see a beautiful angel. What is he saying to them? Do not be afraid for I bring you good news.

"To you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. . . . Ye shall find the babe lying in a manger." Then on their listening ears bursts a song from many angel voices, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men," and as they sing the angels mount higher and higher, till they vanish from their sight. The shepherds, wondering very much, hasten to Bethlehem, and there, in the stable, they find the Virgin Mother and Joseph, and and the babe lying in the manger, just as the angel had said.

Dear children, you and I did not hear the angels' song on that first Christmas eve, but we can learn it now. May it find an echo in our hearts this joyous Christmastide, that we may thank our Father in Heaven for all His love and goodness to us in sending His only Son into the world, "that the world through Him might be saved."