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"The strongest memory is weaker than
the weakest ink."

SATURDAY, DEC. 24, 1955

The Star... Went Before Them.

It was a wise man who defined Christmas as "the way the world ought to be every day." We have travelled a long, long way since that fateful Christmas in hallowed Bethlehem 1955 years ago, and almost everything has changed but this one abiding certitude, the cornerstone of our faith and our guarantee against fear. And it is fitting that that faith should be summed up and symbolized in the giving of a gift. A gift is unearned; it is not payment for services rendered; it is not a reward for virtue; it may even be—and in this case undoubtedly is—quite undeserved. It is, in its purest form, an expression of love and nothing else. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." That was the first Christmas gift. And every toy train or doll or teddy bear for which a mother fights her way through the Christmas throngs, every Christmas card or letter or long-distance telephone call—every act of generosity and kindness worthy to be called a Christmas present—is given in the spirit of and in remembrance and honour of that first supernal Christmas gift.

Christ did not come into a world of goodness or to make the road more easy. He only put before us a light to follow, so that in trusting it the triumph at the end would be assured. We talk of hours of crisis, of threats to our security and comfort. They are far from unique; in a material way they are far less ominous than other times and other eras. They cannot be eliminated by logic, nor wished away by the halting inadequacy of words. It is not the storm that must be quieted, but the heart which, trusting, can meet it in calm. "Faith wins by inches what despair yields in miles." Perfection is an illusion of the embittered, who unable to look to the Star of Bethlehem as a guide along the road turn their backs on it and refuse to sense its meaning.

It is, of course, dangerously easy for us to be complacent about our high standard of living, our smoothly working democracy and our relative immunity to direct assault by an aggressor. These advantages are mainly due to the accidents of history and geography. They do not arise from racial superiority; nor is it inferiority that condemns hundreds of millions of people to live in poverty, subjection and fear. Nor have we any sanction in Scripture for adopting such an attitude. Christianity is still an evangelical faith and the nations which profess it are false to their creed if they try to live in selfish isolation. The record, though it is nothing to boast about, does show some progress. But this progress would be immeasurably greater if we could spread the Christmas spirit over the months and days of the year.

Let us, again, this Christmas fervently thank God that we are so happily placed and unite our prayers with the millions of devout souls in every part of the world that the peace of which the Angels sang will come to this sorely tried world—peace through the Prince of Peace.

Interesting News

The Soviet press which, it goes without saying, reflects the views of the government, has complained about the refusal of the United States to export great quantities of the Salk anti-polio vaccine and has tried to make out that the refusal has political implications. An article in a recent issue of Pravda suggested that the vaccine had been put in the category of "strategic materials" which are not permitted to be sent to Iron Curtain countries. All this, of course, is nonsense. The sole reason why the vaccine has not been sent in quantity to Russia or any other country is that it is still in short supply; and, nat-

urally, the United States Government feels that Americans should have first claim on what there is of it. The Soviet complaint thus appears to be one more attempt—a weak one—to discredit the United States in world opinion.

There is, however, one report from Moscow concerning anti-polio vaccine which is of interest. It states that Soviet scientists are on the eve of perfecting a vaccine of their own, which in some ways resembles and in other ways differs from the Salk product. If this is so—and scientists in other countries seem to think it is—it is news of great importance indeed. No one has claimed perfection for the Salk product. All that has been proved about it is that it is very helpful in preventing the paralytic form of the disease and somewhat less helpful in preventing the non-paralytic forms. There is frank admission that further research will be necessary before polio can be said to have been brought under absolute control. This research is going on constantly; and some of the difficulties which beset the vaccine in its early stages of experimentation have been overcome.

It may be that the Soviet vaccine, when released for use, will shed more light on the complicated subject; in which event, it can be taken for granted that Dr. Salk and the many scientists who are working with him will be delighted to co-operate with their Soviet colleagues in every way possible. For medical science is one field in human relations where political or ideological considerations have no place, where nothing matters but the alleviation of human suffering.

Future Predictions

No man living is wise enough—or fool-hardy enough—to prophesy with assurance what wonders are in store for this earth and its inhabitants, say, a hundred years from now—provided, of course, a few recklessly placed hydrogen bombs don't put an end to it meanwhile. About all that anyone can say with precision is that the world has only just entered the field of vast technological development. However, some details of certain aspects of that development are fairly well understood by a few of the more discerning scientists, of whom Sir George Thompson, a Cambridge University professor and former chairman of Britain's Atomic Energy Committee is one.

In a book entitled "The Foreseeable Future", published by the Cambridge University Press, Sir George shares with his readers some of the speculations at which he has arrived in his thinking. Emphasizing the expected development in transportation, he says that a trip across the Atlantic will take less than one hour, in comfort; much less than that if one is in a great hurry and doesn't mind a bit knocking about. Journeying in outer space, away from the universe that has been partially explored, may not come within a hundred years; but there is not the slightest doubt of its eventual achievement. Artificial satellites will be commonplace within a generation or two. They will be used mainly as jumping-off points for journeys to other planets.

Practically all industry will be on an electronic basis. Mechanical brains will take over the bulk of office work, although highly skilled workers and technicians will still be in demand—presumably to see that the mechanical brains are kept in comfortable circumstances. What is now called "common labour"—a most unsatisfactory designation—will have virtually disappeared. All these things, of course, will have tremendous social repercussions. Whether these will be good or bad Sir George does not attempt to predict; that is not his field. No doubt, it will depend on whether in the meantime man will have learned to control himself as well as his machines.

EDITORIAL NOTES

To all our readers, young and old, a Merry Christmas.

Special congratulations are due to Mr. Alexander Cameron, of Elmsdale, who celebrates his 104th birthday anniversary tomorrow.

"Christmas itself may be called into question
If carried so far it creates indigestion."



The Real Christmas Spirit

By Loyd Phillips
St. Petersburg (Florida) Independent

Look beyond the tinsel to find the real Christmas spirit.

Should the three Magi return to earth today to look for the Spirit of Christmas, would they find it at your house?

Herod's three wise men were guided to the cradle of the Christ Child by a star. The Heavens burst forth into a blaze of light to alert the Shepherds, and an Angel directed them to the Manager.

Isaiah foretold the birth of the Saviour of Man: John the Baptist introduced Him as the Messiah and the voice of the Creator of the World, through the dove, identified him as the Son of the living God.

Yet the learned priests, the riddle statesmen, like the masses, saw the Son of Man grow up in their midst and knew him not.

In spite of His great miracles which have never before nor since been performed on this earth. He was recognized and accepted as the Messiah by only the faithful few. The educated and discerning Paul did not stop perceiving the Lamb of God to become his greatest apostle until he was stricken down on the road to Damascus. Denied by his close friend and deserted by those who might have helped Him, He was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver by one He had befriended.

STILL UNCOMPREHENDED

Notwithstanding the miraculous accomplishments of this enlightened age, the mind of man today remains cynical and small. With millions professing belief in the Divinity, mankind still does not comprehend the significance of the birth of Jesus. With millions of Christians the world over celebrating the event, only those with abiding faith feel imbued with the true spirit of Christmas.

In the early Colonial days Massachusetts emulated the English parliament in adopting an ordinance outlawing the observance of Christmas. While Christian nations today encourage the celebration of Christ's birth, some of our methods serve to divert attention from the real purpose of the most widely observed holiday of modern history. Although beautiful and perhaps beneficial, our modern holiday revelry, our lavish decorations and our lighted trees have only the remotest connection with the birth of the promised Prince of Peace. Ancient pagans decked their halls with holly and exchanged gifts while they placed ornaments on trees to induce fertility. Christmas cards and poinsettias add beauty and sentiment to the season, but these are only recent North American innovations. The quaint custom of kissing under the mistletoe goes back to wicked Babylon and the exchanging of gifts took place around the 15th century in the Netherlands to commemorate St. Nicholas Day, and neither custom had any connection with the birth of Christ.

BEHIND THE FESTIVITIES

All these ceremonies are good to have. The brightness, the fellowship and the good cheer add to the brotherhood of man and serve to make Christmas the most important day of the year. However, these gay festivities and the tangible expressions of human affection which constitute an important part of our lives still do not embody the true Christmas spirit.

Where then would the three Wise Men find the Christmas spirit today? Where then would they find the peace and good will of which the angels sang in the long ago? Would they find it under a lighted tree among the gaily wrapped jewelry, perfumes and toys? Would they find it among the crowds who shop, or the crowds who sing and dance?

We believe the Magi could find the Christmas Spirit without difficulty today and without benefit of the guiding beams of the bright star of Bethlehem. Christmas is more than mere rituals; it is a feeling and it is abundantly present this day in the hearts of all men who believe the angel's statement, "To you is born a Saviour". As if through a prophetic vision for our guidance at this Christmas in 1955 the Son of God expressed for us the Spirit of Christmas in the words: "It is more Blessed to Give than to Receive". Scarcely will scoff and claim that the Angel's promise of goodwill and freedom from fear has yet to be fulfilled. But it is true that those who with unshaken faith in the Saviour and devotion to the cause of the common man have kept alive the realistic hope that man will one day live in universal peace and goodwill under the Golden Rule.

SOUL OF SIMPLICITY

The Christmas spirit is the soul of simplicity. In His own words, the Saviour's mission was to heal the sick, lift up the downtrodden and preach the gospel to the poor. Today through the complex gadgets of complicated modern civilization, the simplicity of the Christmas Spirit is comforting and reassuring. We remember our own childhood and choke a little as we listen to Christmas carols and think of those whose love and generosity made us unforgettable the Christmas of our early days. The stirring but simple story of the child born humbly at Bethlehem out of love for men lifts us up for a short space of time and we behave with kindness and charity to all. The carols and the Christmas story refresh our memory and for an interlude we stop our self-indulgence and try to emulate the Saviour who without hope of reward, gave his life for us. Although simple, it is a wonderful story, whose words sing down the corridors of time reclaiming and inspiring countless generations.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

TO OUR MANY POLICY - HOLDERS ...

throughout the Province and beyond, we extend the Season's Greetings and best of wishes for Happiness, Peace and Prosperity in the New Year.

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THE NATIVITY

This is the month, and this the happy morn
Wherein the Son of Heaven's Eternal King,
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring:
For so the holy sages once did sing
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

That glorious Form, that Might insufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty
Wherewith he went at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and, here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day.

And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay,
Say, Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the heaven, by the sun's team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light?

And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?
See how from far, upon the eastern road,
The star-led wizards haste with odors sweet!
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet:
Have thou the honor first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the angel choir
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

—John Milton.

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Medically Speaking

By Herman N. Sundesen, M. D.

TOO MANY NEW TOYS MAY CONFUSE CHILD

In another day, your baby will be swamped with new Christmas toys. Everybody, it seems especially Mom and Pop, wants to give the baby something he can play with.

If you're a wise parent, and I'm sure you are, you'll not only inspect these toys carefully to make sure they are safe, you'll also watch how your toy plays with them.

Make a mental note of any toys which seem to fascinate or intrigue him more than others. This may reward you with a few moments of relaxation, peace and quiet many times during the coming year.

FUSSY BABIES

All babies become fussy at times. And if you save an especially interesting toy for periods like this, I think you will find that baby will be pleased and so will you. Don't expect a tiny tot to know right away what he is supposed to do with a particular toy. Give him a day or two to find out for himself. Then, if it still befuddles him, show him how it works.

I don't have to remind you not to give him toys that are too advanced for his age. But if friends come up with such items, as they are apt to do, don't exchange them.

Instead, put them away for a month or two or even longer. After all, he'll be able to use those complicated toys some day, probably a lot sooner than you think. You'll be surprised how quickly that infant of yours will grow.

The toy manufacturers themselves provide the best guide as to when your baby will be ready for what toy. Many of them attach labels explaining the purpose of the toys and at what age it is advisable to give them to the baby. Although a baby who is able to sit up should have several toys at one time, don't give him too many. It will only confuse him if you do. And when you give him some new toys, put away some of the older ones.

In a short time, you can substitute the older toys again and your tot will be as pleased with them as though they were brand new.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

D.M.: Is there any connection between the substance which causes an enormous amount of tartar to form on the teeth and a stiff and painful toe joint? If so, what can be done to keep this substance out of one's system?

Answer: In so far as I am aware there is no relationship between the tartar on the teeth and stiffness of the joints. These conditions are unrelated.

Merry Christmas

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RICHMOND ST.

Thanks to beauty contests and the selections of Miss This and Miss That, some journalists have developed the habit of appending a set of three fundamental figures after the winner's name: 36-25-36, and we all know what they mean. Why not have something similar for handsome young men: 50-35-45 or some such design? Maybe only lifeguards could qualify at first but it would give those of us whose shoulders slope, whose stomachs slump, and whose posterior protrude, a target at which to aim.

A former inmate of Guelph Reformatory has told police that while there he went through a "crime school" being taught ways in which to avoid detection in the commission of crime. Under threat of physical punishment he took the "course." This is not surprising though it is shocking. Unfortunately, prisons, by the very fact that they closely confine men of certain unstable or malignant minds—forcing them into intimate and clandestine companionship—are apt to become crime schools, whose graduates emerge more dangerous to society than when they entered. The community faces no more difficult problem than its attempts to reform or cure the criminal mind.

This is a true fish story, recalled when a lady who used to live in this part of the country visited the district. The lady, a dainty person and a meticulous housekeeper, never cooked locally caught fish because she disliked them, and the way the odor of cooking fish permeated the house. But one day her pre-school son came home with a fresh fish. She asked where it came from, and he said he got it at a neighbor's (we'll call him Mr. Smith which isn't his name). Mr. Smith had been out fishing that day. She didn't want to use it, but on the other hand, what could she tell the kindly neighbor, who evidently didn't know she didn't like fish, if he mentioned it later? She cleaned and cooked the fish, and the family enjoyed it. "There now, mother," said the boy, "Wasn't that a good fish? I wonder why Mr. Smith threw it in the garbage."

Two more Latin American states—Bolivia and Ecuador—have joined in a large-scale campaign to wipe out illiteracy within their borders. The campaign, launched by the Organization of American States, is designed to establish 100,000 reading centres for new literates of all ages in twenty Latin American Republics. Bolivia and Ecuador will establish "popular libraries" in 1,500 communities.

using books specially prepared by the fundamental education bureau of the Pan American Union. More than 3,000 centres being set up in Costa Rica and Nicaragua have already been supplied with libraries of textbooks written under the supervision of Dr. Guillermo Nannetti, head of the Pan American Union's fundamental education bureau.

A Mississippian likes to tell about the one Republican vote that cropped up election after election in his home town. Everybody knew it was cast by an old farmer Union soldier who had been wounded and left behind during the war between the States. When the old-timer died, the town gave him a fine funeral, then heaved a civic sigh of relief that its one Republican vote—that great black mark again—was eliminated. But that Fall, when votes in the presidential race were being counted, a sudden commotion arose. "That Republican vote has showed up again!" one of the tabulators yelled. "We buried the wrong man!"

—New Orleans Time-Picayune



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