

December, 1958.

C H R I S T M A S . . .

Considering the event of the birth of Jesus, it is fair to state that the spirit of Christmas has been developing ever since a keen awareness concerning man's destiny. Briefly, throughout the centuries, Christmas influences effected mainly four aspects of human interests: 1) The significance of the individual; 2) Reasonable standards of living; 3) Universal understanding among men; and 4) Spiritual potentialities.

The Significance of the Individual

Before Christmas, man was building a world for himself based greatly on the resources perceived through his senses. In the ceaseless struggle to be beneficiary of his own world, man was urged to apply the laws of interactions of various experiences, observations, ideas, conceptions and convictions. Besides, man was always a dreamer. In a way, his dreams were shaped by the sharpness of reality, also by the drives and inclinations of his being. Often his dreams challenged him for better, or for worse. The results of all that has been imprinted in his culture, expressed in many ways, including his religion, art and social structure.

On the other hand, Christmas extended human interests beyond the perceptivity of the senses. A great, precious dream became personified. Someone appeared on the human scene - JESUS - who finally became the Great Righteous for man and mankind. Righteousness is the most universal yearning of man stirred by the mysteries of thought processes of which some still haunt the human mind. For instance: Can man ever throw off reliably his beastly streak? Or, is he more obstinate than evil? Are his inclinations for peace and love merely pious desires, in the last analysis? Where lies the source of man's destructiveness? Are calamities, like the recent Chicago school fire, necessary? Is there a just God? Can man count on him? Will man ever comprehend his real mission in life? Is man truly related to the principles of creativeness? Does the end justify the beginning? What is the end? Renewal? What is the beginning? A great promise? Is life a process? Where does it lead? In his struggles, shall man still continue to dream great dreams? What is man's basic nature? Is he accepted by his Creator? Why so much wastage in man's upward strife, and why is he so sensitive to rise again?...

Jesus accepted the challenges of existence, and initiated a kind of living with God. Christmas, therefore, has become the constant reminder that with the spirit of Jesus the potentialities are there for man to live a blessed life on earth. How to attain this blessedness is man's privilege in his effort for the very best. Some are willing, others not. Reasons vary. However, the true Jesus-idea releases limitless possibilities for organic living in the physical, mental and spiritual realms. It's not a dream anymore that a person can become free from within. That freedom is the true basis for all freedom. Whether the outside world respects it or not, anyone liberated from within evaluates his own and others individuality with all his strength and ability. Is he? Jesus did.

Reasonable Standards of Living

Reasonableness depends on freedom. Freedom promotes understanding. Understanding perceives the need of goodness, and goodness encourages decisions for the better. These are the major requirements of a helpful civilization. Since all social needs are interrelated with one another, mankind needs the help of a science with power and insight to reveal reasonableness for a way of living on the basis of mutuality effecting the lives of men everywhere beneficially. This science would consider the whole field of human relationships. It can be named suggenology (science of relationships). Man is bound to be developed in all of his relation-



ships with himself, with others, and with the outside realities, if his habitation on earth should be more enduring than it seems to be in the present. This field of needs ought to be discovered just as thoroughly as it has been done through the different branches of psychology concerning man's nature and behavior. There is still no world-wide reasonableness practiced, signifying true standards of living. At times, bloodthirsty leaders force their ways into the lives of men, ignoring moral and spiritual values. Righteousness is not in the center of international relationships. Why? Butchering lives (done two years ago in the city of Budapest) is still not prohibited by the consciousness of men everywhere. Organizational forces suppress the outcries of organic injustices and needs among people. Surely, human relationships are a great field for a trustworthy science. Reasonableness in standards of living is bound to come with it. Christmas increases tendencies for reasonable togetherness.

### Universal Understanding among Men

No matter how hard, and with what fearful methods is trying the Soviet regime to unify mankind under the communist flag, it will not succeed. A Boris Pasternak will awaken the conscience of the subdued people as deeply as Walter Rauschenbusch, and others did in their days for liberating the exploited ones. No nation, no culture, no civilization or any economic force can be the common denominator for mankind. Not even a political system could do it or a kind of religious organization. All the ailments and shortcomings of men everywhere point to one great fact, namely, that through the individuals mankind is desperately hungry for righteousness. No one ever has made it clear what righteousness is, except Christ Jesus. There is no selfishness, or any other limitation involved in the presentation of Jesus for the well-being of men anywhere. This means that without the spirit of Jesus there is no hope for men to live righteously in this world. However, this is not a pessimistic outlook on life, rather a mature realization concerning man's capability to be used by what Jesus truly is to the individual and to mankind. He is the Creator of a new man, applying righteousness as a universal principle for living. With Jesus, men are considered to be more important than any kind of system, organization, interest or concentrated powers on possessions and territories. Even the divisions among Christians are not justified. Differences should never be used for divisions, rather for better understanding. Christmas is not a denominational concern; it is a season for world-wide awareness. Organically, the Jesus-idea forms the center of motivation for universal understanding among men.

### Spiritual Potentialities

In the consciousness of man, the most complete awareness is expressed through Christ-loving spirituality. This, in turn, seeks metaphysical considerations, and becomes a reliable factor to cause quality in man's endeavor. Spiritually refined consciousness explores hidden realities in behavior, attitude and relationships, deepening the interest in harmonious living. Even mental drives, dispositional differences, the thrust to live, and the hunger for "rights" are brought under control by ideas which promote spiritual well-being. As a result, man becomes increasingly interested to be in harmony with the creative forces nourishing lasting concern for the very best which can be expressed in living. Any person, therefore, can overcome the uncertainties of his strivings through having faith in the first Christmas emphasis: "...to you is born this day - a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." The acceptance of this belief invites revelation from God - the greatest blessing in life.

Christmas is more powerful than all the selfishness of human hearts.

- BLESSED HOLIDAY-SEASON TO ALL OUR FRIENDS -

WEST PULLMAN BAPTIST CHURCH - 656 West 118th Street, Chicago 28, Ill.

Rev. William Tatter, pastor



December, 1959.

## THE CHALLENGES OF CHRISTMAS

A worker, due to vitamin deficiency, fell asleep while employed. His foreman caused him to be fired, thinking that the job comes first. Such attitude shows the old way. Fortunately, there are establishments where the ailments of employees are considered at least scientifically. This is a better way. However, there is an inclination on consciously-guided (give-and-accept) basis which reflects willingness to solve problems by creating better relationships. This is the right way. The meaning of Christmas challenges the use of resources to meet the essentials of the right way.

### A Return to Religion

Industrially, shaping the immediate future has become the task of the scientists. Tremendous forces are released and will be placed into helpful use. Promises of improvements are made in the field of advancement. The preciseness of the laws of energy seems to fortify the reliance of many scientists on future possibilities. Still, the most significant encouragement derives not from scientific findings, rather from what the scientists themselves consider to be of outmost importance in human affairs. Many of them are perceptive to philosophical and religious concepts. Some even suggest for thinking people as a way of overcoming the one-sidedness of living - a return to religion. It is commendable and points toward the right direction. However, the question pops up: To what kind of religion shall thinking people return? Conservative, progressive, liberal or radical religion? Materialistic, superstitious, mystical or imaginative religion? Authoritative, democratic, utilitarian or deed-directed religion? Legalistic, other-worldly, quietistic or ethical religion? State-governed, institutional, dogmatic or practical religion? Sectarian, denominational, national or ecumenical religion? Biblical, prophetic, altruistic or spiritual religion? (Etc.) Since religion reflects relationships between man and God, man's attitude ought to be inclusive concerning all feasibility of the good life on earth. Sectional, or partial religion wears off. Whereas living religion grows with man. The emphasis is on man. God cannot be defined. Religion is a term for man. Man yearns for God. This yearning is safeguarded by the watchfulness of the free pulpit. Christmas challenges man's attitude toward life with the help of the free pulpit.

### The Paramount Title

All titles mark entrusted meanings. Most of them are impressive and stimulate interest in a cause. They also signify social standards. Western civilization cannot be without them. But there is a title which brings out human evaluation more than all the other titles combined. It was given to the bearer of the Christmas event after he grew up and began his ministry among men. His adversaries called him, "a friend of sinners!" In the pre-Christian era sinners were ostracized, discarded. Yet civilization moved forward very slowly. Jesus revealed the universality of sin (mishandling or misuse of human existence) and offered power to overcome it. Through faith in Jesus there is a triumphant awareness concerning man. Accordingly, man is not a final product of nature. His destiny is shaped by his Creator, surpassing his physical strivings. Man is capable to understand unseen realities; his spiritual nature overpowers him in his struggle for survival. The friendship of Jesus heals the sin-caused wounds, also settles the unwholesome differences between the self and God. The result: a new life, vigorously dedicated to the most normal way of living. Free pulpit, faithful to the challenges of Christmas, truly voices the great, redeeming love of the "Friend of sinners."

### Man is Still in the Making

With all the advantages of civilization, does man know himself? What is the true concept of man today? For instance, is Mr. Khrushchev a man? He



is an outstanding product of the Russian jungle with keen Soviet indoctrination. He proved himself to be a shrewd propagandist and a ruthless hypocrite. True, he has other, more acceptable qualities. But can he be trusted? Particularly, when he differs in convictions from others? Considering what a person is, physical classifications are not enough. In our days even definitions are re-examined. Conscious thinking is taking place clarifying concepts and understanding. Through analytical consideration it can be perceived that what any person offers in any field is rather limited. Yet the world of faith for spiritual possibilities is unlimited. Man wants to be developed completely in his mind and personality. Although there is not enough mutual trust in human relationships, still the deep longings of spiritual-minded individuals reflect a kind of outreach toward the Universe, more so through faith, which seeks improvements in attitudes toward all human values. Today not a few are truly interested in moral and spiritual determinations of overcoming any kind of subjugation. There is an urge to discover high qualities of human togetherness which would be more significant than the power for possessions or centralized control. In his own self, a man wants to know the possibilities of becoming truly reliable, even more reliable than the principles of energy are. From this and also from relationships' viewpoint the real man is still in the making. Free pulpit thinks, speaks and decides in favor of the real man! Christmas, with all its challenging helpfulness, ushered in a real person into the world of man and mankind.

### Sane, Safe World

The French revolution signaled three words up into the sky of history: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. These are wonderful words with great meanings. Yet, they did not become the driving ideas of mankind. Why? Because most Frenchmen wanted Liberty, Equality and Fraternity mainly for the French. No nation can be above mankind. The spirit of the New Testament offers three words of great realities to all the inhabitants of the earth. These are: Righteousness, Freedom and Peace. They are inherently supplementary to one another and cannot be separated. A person cannot be divided within its identity without harmful results. Likewise the unity of nations and peoples cannot be subjected by lesser interests without causing dangerous divisions. Christmas, undoubtedly, blesses every individual, but basically it belongs to the whole world. Therefore, it challenges all the forces available for the expansion and support of a sane, safe world among men. Jesus came to release the forces of love through which righteousness, freedom and peace are triumphant realities to live by. The free pulpit is uncompromising in the fulfillment of its mission for a truly free, sane and safe world.

Finally, it's necessary to state that free pulpit is free from organizational intentions. In fact, it is free from all interests of human strivings, but not unconcerned about them. However it is never free from the will of God who is above all forms of realities, yet emanative through Creation. (There is no freedom without devotion to God.) The sermon on the Mount is a matchless contribution of the free pulpit. The very best America has is the freedom of the free pulpit. Without it democracy would eventually degenerate. Words like righteousness, grace, reconciliation are not in practical use among the Soviets, because they misuse freedom. The meaning of Christmas encourages anyone to respond to two questions, namely: Do you have a free pulpit in your church? Are you supporting it truthfully? Consciously-guided conduct, maintaining the right way of living among men, needs your co-operation and vice versa...

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