

THE PILOT

Southern Pines North Carolina

"In taking over The Pilot no changes are contemplated. We will try to keep this a good paper. We will try to make a little money for all concerned. Wherever there seems to be an occasion to use our influence for the public good we will try to do it. And we will treat everybody alike." — James Boyd, May 23, 1941.

A Prayer for Christmas

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

This prayer was written more than 700 years ago by ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Peace and Joy

At the break of Christmas Day,
Through the frosty starlight ringing,
Faint and sweet and far away,
Comes the sound of children singing.
Chanting, singing,
"Cease to mourn,
For Christ is born,
Peace and joy to all men bringing!"

Careless that the chill winds blow,
Growing stronger, sweeter, clearer,
Noiseless footfalls in the snow
Bring the happy voices nearer;
Hear them singing,
"Winter's drear,
But Christ is here,
Mirth and gladness with Him bringing!"

"Merry Christmas!" hear them say,
As the East is growing lighter;
May the joy of Christmas Day
Make your whole year gladder, brighter!
To each home
Our Christ has come,
All love's treasures with Him bringing!"
— MARGARET DELAND

Far Too Poor

Were earth a thousand times as fair,
Beset with gold and jewels rare,
Yet she were far too poor to be
A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.
—MARTIN LUTHER

Christmas Hymn

The wise men saw with joyful eyes,
That night so long ago,
The wondrous star that blazed afar
On the little town below.

The shepherds watching o'er their flocks
Were startled by a light
That shone all round about them
Most glorious and bright.

I bring you tidings of great joy
The Angel sweetly said,
This night you'll find the Christ your Lord
With a manger for his bed.

In eager haste they followed on
With the star to guide the Way
To the little town of Bethlehem
Where the world's Redeemer lay.

With wondering gaze their eyes beheld
The Christ, so long foretold,
Adoringly they knelt and gave
Their gifts of love and gold.

Dear Christ! Thou art the wondrous Light
That shineth evermore,
Our gifts to Thee are loyal hearts—
We worship and adore.

Our Joyful'st Feast

Ho, now is come our joyful'st feast;
Let every man be jolly;
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly,
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine;
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbors' chimneys smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning;
Their ovens they with baked meats choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie;
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury't in a Christmas pie,
And ever more be merry.

Now wherefore in these merry days
Should we, I pray, be duller?
No, let us sing some roundelays,
To make our mirth the fuller.
And, whilst thus inspired we sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring,
Woods and hills and everything,
Bear witness we are merry.

—From a long poem celebrating the secular joys of Christmas by GEORGE WITHER (17th century)

The Happy Morn

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. . . .
—JOHN MILTON

Holly and Ivy

The holly and the ivy
Now are both well grown;
Of all the trees that are in the wood
The holly bears the crown.

The rising of the sun,
The running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a blossom
As white as lily flower;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
To be our sweet Saviour.

The holly bears a berry,
As red as any blood;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To do poor sinners good.

The holly bears a prickle
As sharp as any thorn;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
On Christmas day in the morn.

The holly bears a bark
As bitter as any gall;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
For to redeem us all.

The holly and the ivy
Now are both well grown;
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.

The rising of the sun,
The running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.

— English traditional

One Small Child

One little child . . . no more, no less—
And could His mother Mary guess
Salvation for the human race
Depended on that night, that place?
And did she know this child would cause
All heaven to rock with glad applause?
Would cause the angels to rehearse
Their midnight song of sacred verse?
Would cause a star of strange design
To leave its orbit and to shine
A brilliant path, from east to west?
Would cause wise men to choose the best
Of hoarded treasure, and to search
The nations from a camel perch?
Would make a king (in craven fear)
Destroy small man-children near?
To this small child the nation thrilled,
For He was prophecy fulfilled.
But could His mother, even, guess
While rocking Him with tenderness
The whole import of His Advent,
This one small child—from heaven sent?
—ESTHER S. BUCKWALTER

Word Made Flesh

Light looked down and beheld Darkness.
"Thither will I go," said Light.
Peace looked down and beheld War,
"Thither will I go," said Peace.
Love looked down and beheld Hatred.
"Thither will I go," said Love.

So came Light, and shone.
So came Peace, and gave rest.
So came Love, and brought Life.

And the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us.

—LAURENCE HOUSMAN
(From "Little Plays of St. Francis")



"... My Son and eke a Saviour born
Who hast vouchsafed from on high
To visit us that were forlorn . . ."
(16th century)

Portion of display, with the Madonna theme, which was on exhibition at the Southern Pines Library during the Christmas season, four years ago.

LEGENDS ILLUMINATE THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Bird That Sang With Angels

By RALPH MCGILL

Birds are perhaps the favorites of God's many creations. The pleasure of having a bird feeder about the house is one of the purer enjoyments of life. They are beautiful without exception. There are no ugly birds. They have many foibles shared by humans, but their beauty causes us to overlook these, or to be amused. It is not at all a coincidence that birds are the center of some of the most pleasing and happy stories about the great events of the Bible in the folklore legends of the ancient countries where the bearded prophets, the Apostles, and Christ lived and had their being.

One of these concerns the nightingale, which Keats immortalized in "Ode to a Nightingale":

"Thou wast not born for death,
immortal bird!
No hungry generations tread
thee down;
The voice I heard this passing
night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and
clown;
Perhaps the selfsame song that
found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth,
when sick for home,

She stood in tears amid the
alien corn. . ."

Jesus was born, as we all know, in one of several caves or stalls cut into the side of a hill at Bethlehem. It was one of the stalls of a caravanserai. You may see them even today in parts of the Holy Land, in India, and in Arabia.

They are picturesque places, where the camel, donkey or horse caravans come. Their attendants sleep in the stalls or on piles of straw and blankets in the open by their animals. The area about the stalls will be filled with dogs, people coming and going,



Day Breaks, Shadows Flee

From a letter written by Fra Giovanni to a friend . . . A. D. 1513

I salute you. I am your friend and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got; but there is much, very much that, while I cannot give it, you can take.

No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in today, Take heaven!

No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant. Take peace!

The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it yet within our reach is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness, could we but see and to see we have only to look. I beseech you to look!

Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by their covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendour, woven of love, by wisdom, with power. Welcome it, grasp it, and touch the angel's hand that brings it to you.

Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, or a duty, believe me, that angel's hand is there; the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing Presence.

Our joys, too: be not content with them as joys. They, too, conceal diviner gifts. Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering, that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage then to claim it: that is all! But courage you have; and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together, wending, through unknown country, home.

And so, this Christmas-time, I greet you. Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with profound esteem and with the prayer that for you, now and forever, the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

and with cooking fires. The air will be heavy in late afternoon with the smell of mutton or goat meat cooking and of the tea being brewed. All about will be vendors of the sweetmeats and tobacco.

Now legend has it that in the stall where Jesus was born there was a little brown bird which had its nest high in the top of the stall on a ledge of rock. He was a most inconspicuous bird. He could not sing a note. He lived a very dull life, and he was shy and sad because he could not sing like the other birds.

One night, as the lonely little bird slept on his nest, he was awakened by a great white light in his cave-like stall. He could hear the angels singing. And one of them said:

"Sing with us, little bird."
"Alas," he said, "I cannot sing."

"Try," said the angel.
And the little bird did try and found that he really could sing the joyous songs the angels were singing. He was so happy he sang with them song for song. And that is why, even today, the poets and everyone else agree the nightingale sings like an angel.

Indeed, the reason all children like animals is because children are closer to the Kingdom of God than anyone else. Jesus said that. And that is the very reason why children especially like chickens, donkeys, cows, oxen, birds and lambs—they were all in and about the stalls when Jesus was born a long time ago. In fact, ever since then the rooster has greeted each morning with that triumphant crow of his—which isn't "cock-a-doodle-doo," as some ignorant persons would have you believe. He is crying out, "Jesus Christ is born."
In fact, on every Christmas morning, at dawn, the rooster crows, "Jesus Christ is born." And the warblers ask, "When? When?"
And the crow answers, "Now! Now!"
And the cow moos, "Where? Where?"
And the sheep says: "In Bethlehem."
If you are awake and live on a farm, maybe you can hear them all.

(Mr. McGill is the distinguished editor of the Atlanta Constitution and writes a nationally syndicated column.)

AT CHRISTMAS

The little ones leaped, and shouted, and laughed, and all the hills echoed.

—William Blake

Grains of Sand

No Ho-Ho

People think they know all about Santa Claus,
People think his journeys sail along
As smooth and sweet as a Christmas song,
With nothing to do but chuckle and smile
And chirp to the reindeer once in a while,
And nothing to worry about at all
But a gift too large and a chimney too small,
They think that his life is one long "Ho-ho"
But they're wrong. . . .
—Ogden Nash

Hush!

The New York Times wishes everybody a Zone of Quiet. . . as follows:

"Transistor radios have given a somber extra dimension to John Donne's observation that 'no man is an island.' By now all places of public assembly are so infested with transistors and their pseudohuman extensions that most of the rest of us have meekly surrendered to having our eardrums under constant bombardment. Not so Dr. Ivan L. Rudnytsky, a lecturer in Russian history at Bryn Mawr College.

"The revolutionary urge struck him when he asked a woman in a Philadelphia bus to tone down her radio and she turned it up instead. An appeal to the bus driver brought only a shrug of helplessness. Whereupon Dr. Rudnytsky snatched the transistor out of the lady's hand and landed it on her head. This technique smacks too much of Ivan the Terrible, but presumably it did bring a brief period of silence—until the police cars came up with sirens screaming.

"What with recorded carols and jingles so inescapable at this season on the streets and in stores, terminals, even offices and factories, we cannot escape a feeling that the nicest Christmas gift Dr. Rudnytsky could give his fellow riders was a few minutes of blissful quiet."

"I Love the World"

Writing, to me, is not an exercise in addressing readers, it is more as though I were talking to myself while shaving. . . All that I ever hope to say in books is that I love the world. I guess you can find that in there, if you dig around.

—E. B. White

And if you dig around in the world you'll come across a great pile of people—a huge pile—who love E. B. White. And everyone of them is a small bit of the world that E. B. White loves. That's the sort of non-vicious circle that makes the world go round and makes Christmas a happy time.

Born Again

Thou whose birth on earth
Angels sang to men,
While Thy stars made mirth,
Savior, at Thy birth,
'Tis day born again.

Thou whose face gives grace
As the sun's doth heat,
Let thy sunbright face
Lighten time and space
Here beneath Thy feet.

Bid our peace increase,
Thou that madest morn;
Bid oppressions cease,
Bid the night be peace,
Bid the day be born.

—A. C. SWINBURNE

Within Thyself

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born
And not within thyself,
Thy soul will be forlorn.

—ANGELUS SILESIVS

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