

# THE ADVENT: IT'S SIGNIFICANCE

(By Rev. E. J. Hardison.)

Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, for there shall be peace and truth in my days. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. —Isaiah 39-40-1.

Familiarity often blunts wonder.

Does God care? It is a tremendous thing that the prophet is here saying, and we stand by his side only to see great continents of truth spread itself before our ken. Notice the Word. Jehovah's words are always full of comfort. It was the Portuguese mother on the coffee plantation in Brazil with her 19 children about

her, no beds in her house, and they all slept upon the floor; and when she heard of the story of the beautiful home the Saviour has gone to prepare, only rejoiced and said: "I knew it was to be, for He would in his great love give us a better place than we have here." The word has always made glad and full the hearts of the people who have received it. And notwithstanding the omnipotence of our God, has always used human hands and hearts to accomplish all

His major undertakings. When He created the world, He left it all in the care of man. When He saved it from the flood, it was still in the care of man. When He gave the race the decalogue, He disdained to leave the tablets of stone at the door steps, but required of Moses a mighty rugged climb, before he left it in his hands; when he first inspired a message to mankind He refrained from writing it Himself, but has always used men to declare His truth. Thus it was not the mission of the One to come to write but to cheer the faint-hearted, and the lowly.

There is no greater thing than truth. It is the thing as it is. It is God. It is peace. "The truth shall make you free." Nothing else can liberate. Nothing ever will. He is a God of comfort says St. Paul, 2 Cor. 7-6. You may easily predicate anything of such a being, but there is no other attribute of Deity that means so much to the world as the message of comfort. It was the highest note the angelic choir raised: "Peace on earth"; it was the last words of the Peacemaker himself as He said: "My peace I leave with you." He relieved all my anxieties when He sent his Son. He was a friend to man. He was the herald of comfort to all. He made the lame to walk, and the deaf to hear.

Because it is in the Bible we do not realize the daring the fearless leap of faith that brings the Eternal down from the infinite heavens into such a thing as the timely advent of a friend. It is the glory of the Hebrew genius that it makes bold to scale the heavens and bring God into man's little life. "The Lord!" What shall the nations say of Him? And God uses Titus, Paul, and James and John to reveal his comfort in and through. And whether God descends or man is raised, it is one and the same thing: it is the love of the Father comforting his people.

We wonder where He is? Behold He is all about us. We seek Him only to find Him already in our presence. It was Dr. Jowett who one time accepted the invitation to preach quite a long way from home a special sermon. When his train reached the station, he stepped upon the platform, and anxiously walked up and down for an hour waiting for some one to meet him. At the same time there had been another man even for a longer period of time that was waiting for the noted visitor and he too was walking up and down the same platform, but he had never recognized the great preacher in his street dress. "Comfort ye," my people. Will you dare to do it this season that commemorates the Advent? Will you make his coming twice real to you by undertaking to walk in His steps, and comfort the comfortless? Would you like to know the great God of ALL COMFORT; then "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people."

We look at our friends; and look up to say, "I thank Thee." How He has comforted us with home, loved ones, friends too many to name. Even the memory of those long since gone before we thank Him. He spends all his time trying to make us Comfortable. Scores of men restlessly run up and down the land to seek some new supernatural voice or truth, when the Almighty is ever present, yet they sadly say that there is no sign of Him to be found. They see nature, beauty and truth, they see love and loyalty and sacrifice; but never the self-evidencing fact of the comforting God.

Yes, He sends His greatest comfort by a friend. He himself did become the friend of man. It is by human voices that we love and know; by books that we read that God speaks to us. He even guides our feet by the obstacles that block our pathway. We even sometimes fail to recognize Him, and "suppose Him to be the gardener." He is coming again. He will be seen by the observant. He will be presented by a friend. Thank God for the messenger. One has beautifully said that when God could not be everywhere, He made MOTHER as the next best one to represent Him. How she comforts us. How her middle name might well be "comforter". It was one of the Hebrew prophets who said, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." We say yes. We never see him, we only see his representative. And we see God then clearly.

Back of the loaf is the snowy flour, Back of the flour the mill; Back of the mill is the wheat and the shower, And the sun and the Father's will.

But the best of all is the thought of the Incarnation. The place of Jesus is witnessed by the fact that we are met here to worship the infinite and eternal God in the light and truth of Jesus. It is through and in Jesus that we have seen the Father. All we know of his forbearing nature, His forgiveness, patience and love we know because Jesus told us the story in actual life. "He that hath seen

me hath seen the Father". When we see him, follow him as he grows in stature, in favor with God and man, tempted the without sin watch him from the Nazareth home to Calvary, and it is the true and perfect humanity of our Lord that draws us to Him. No cohort of angels shrouded his person. No nimbus protected His head. He lived as a man comforting men at all times. And yet at all times God was in Him reconciling the word to Him; comforting the sorrowful, and healing the broken-hearted. Manhood and character are our highest ideals. We have no conception of angels, but imagine them as men, and attach wings to them. What stupidity! So we live our lives in Him; but we cannot conceive Him.

The good tidings shall be to all people. Jesus came to us as a Comforter. If we follow Him we must be harbingers of Peace and Good Will.

The very love of God came among us as a man; and we are judged as the standard of a perfect man, Christ Jesus. He always went about doing good, and conscious of his line of action. Therefore the love of the Heavenly Father goes the length and breadth of Heaven to give the world one greatest need. The world was cold for human love and sympathy, and is still cold and desolate except where awakened and lighted by the true light which will light every one that cometh into the world. He gives his best to man as man. It is God's way throughout. He sent Paul to Titus to comfort him. He sent Jesus to comfort all, and the Father sends you and me and all men the salvation through Jesus that makes us whole; that reveals to us himself; and whose coming among us as a little child, the whole church is keeping again, in memory, her Advent-watch.

# C. B. HILL

MURPHY, N. C.



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2.00 Child Rocker	1.49
3.00 Adult Rocker	2.34
14.00 Oak Dresser	12.29
30.00 Kitchen Cabinet	23.99
3.00 Velvet Rugs, 27x54	2.39
7.00 Axminster Rugs, 36x64	5.34
2.50 Cotton Blankets, per pair	1.49
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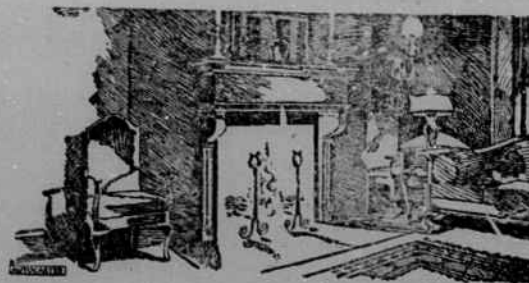
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