

# NAZARENE MESSENGER

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## The Christmas Gift

**Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)**

AS WE read the language of our text, our minds immediately take the wings of thought and fly across the seas, and there join the company of humble shepherds that were attending their sheep that night, and hear ringing out across those Judean hills that announcement of the angel that should fill the hearts with joy. For nearly four thousand years men had been longing to hear this announcement. Prophet after prophet had picked up the prophetic glasses, and with joy and expectancy proclaimed to a longing people the coming of the promised Messiah: while promise after promise had been given until the sky was radiant with promises, and hope had reached a place of immediate expectancy; when Lo the prophets laid down their prophetic glasses, and their voices were stilled; and for nearly four hundred years not a single word from a prophet was heard. Expectancy faded to faint hope, the promises seemed to lose their lustre, while time trudged on, and gloom and darkness settled down until men's hearts grew faint and sick.

But out of the darkness and gloom like the lightning's flash came this heavenly Messenger; with an announcement that rang out across those Judean hills until it was echoed and reechoed from hill to hill, from village to village, from heart to heart, until every bondman, every free-man, every Jew, every Gentile from peasant to King, took up the message and passed it on until generation after generation, century after century has heard the glad tidings of the Saviour's birth. Was there any wonder that the shepherds left their herd that night to tell the good news; was there any wonder that the angelic hosts took up the chorus; was there any wonder that the atmosphere was tremulous with paeans of praise?



L. W. DODSON

What did it mean to them? Not the giving of another promise, but the giving of the Promised. Not the placing of another star of hope to point to the coming one, but the Bright and Morning Star itself. Not a prophet to tell of the coming of the Messiah but the Messiah himself. Not a token or symbol of God's love, but the gift of Love itself. No greater Gift could be found; no fuller expression of the infiniteness of man's needs, and the infiniteness of God's

Love. While His coming disappointed the ecclesiastical, and political, self-centered, place seeking Jew, it filled the heart of the humble with a peace and joy that lifted them out of a place of drudgery in service to a place of gratefulness and spontaneity.

A Gift of Love that was so great: A sacrifice of such infinite value that only Divine mind was able to comprehend the fulness of its extent. A gift of Love that would walk among the children of men; One that was able to minister to the needs of humanity, carry their burden and share their sorrows. He saw the widow's falling tears, he heard the cry of the oppressed. He touched the eyes of blind and

they were made to see. He spake and the dumb and the deaf heard. With a word He rebuked the raging fevers or raised the dead to life. He rebuked the raging sea, and said, "Peace be still." Crossed its water to give deliverance to one demoniac. He snatched a little sleep from the pallet on the boat, arose to minister to the teeming needy multitudes that waited on the shore. He took the lunch of a little lad, blessed and fed the multitudes. He poured forth blessings upon the people with a love and unselfishness never seen before. His whole life was spent in blessing others. In His death He gave to

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### The Christmas Gift

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the world an infinite sacrifice that was beyond the power of finite comprehension. It had in it an element that delighted the heart and eye of God. An element that met the demands of Divine Justice, until she sheathed her sword and said, "The penalty is paid. A sacrifice of such infinite power, that it would lift men from the very lowest depths of sin and pollution, to a plane of Righteousness and Holiness. A place of communion and fellowship with himself.

A Peace that reaches down to the subterranean depths of man's soul and gives assurance and quietness forever. A peace that the world cannot give. A peace that amidst the turmoil and strife of life runs on undisturbed. A peace and assurance that holds when the storms are raging, a peace that will outlast the world itself. A peace that will satisfy and keep us through the trials and testings of life.

Why shouldn't earth and heaven rejoice for such a gift as this, and what greater gift can we give this Christmas time than our hearts, our lives, our all to Him?

### Keeping an Experience

One of the greatest problems facing the religious educator to-day is the fact that a large majority of the young people, after they get a religious experience, lose it. A vast number of people who are not Christians today will testify that there was a time when they did have an experience, while multitudes who are Christians to-day will confess that at some time or times they have lost out in their experience and had to be reclaimed.

From the standpoint of the individual, it is a serious thing to lose his experience. We are prone to treat the matter lightly, but to backslide starts an influence through one's life that can never be erased. There are at least two great dangers that come from it. The first is that the person will become discouraged and lose confidence in himself. Every person who has done even a small amount of personal work, has met with the objection that they have tried it and failed and hence it is useless to try again. The other danger is that the character will become so weakened that they will never be able to settle down. There is usually in each individual case, a certain point at which they fall each time. Whenever in future experience they meet this place, there is greater danger of falling.

In my observation and experience, there are a number of reasons why young people backslide. Among them



R. R. HODGES  
Principal of Academy

is the physical, mental, and spiritual changes that are taking place. The age from twelve or thirteen to twenty or twenty-two marks a complete change in every boy's or girl's life. They change from a boy to a man, from a girl to a woman. Their complete being is in a change. They do not know what they want to do and cannot look far into the future. A few can and do keep steady during this age but the vast majority falter at some time.

Again, another cause of backsliding is the fact that many stop short of a real experience. They go to the altar and pray until they feel easier but give up before they really "strike fire". They soon find that such an experience has not taken the love of the world out of their hearts and they have a hard time living a christian life. The first step is to yield a little on the line of worldly pleasure and before long they are back in the world again probably deeper than before.

Another cause of backsliding is the low ethical and moral standards that are held by the young people and in many cases by the leaders. Somehow,

they have lost the idea of the sacredness of Sunday and the Church and the high standards of Christianity. The first step towards backsliding is often taken by whispering in church, by visiting too much on Sunday, or by allowing things of secondary importance to occupy the chief place. Many do not break completely with the worldly crowd. They pray, "Lead us not into temptation", only to turn right around and get into temptation by getting back into the "old crowd" again. There is and can be only one result and that is they are soon one of the crowd again.

I do not know that I can suggest a cure for all cases, indeed I doubt if it will ever be possible for us to keep all our young people from backsliding, but there are a few means that I believe would be helpful.

Considering these means in the opposite order of the causes, I believe that we as leaders should seek to raise the ethical standard of our young people. More study of these standards in the Sunday School and Church, at the family altar in the home, and in our daily association would be helpful. God requires a high standard of life from every one of His children and will not bless those who do not live up to that standard. A person, who continually walks as near sin as he can get and yet not sin, will not enjoy himself and will soon take off the restraints.

To the second cause, I can only say that we should do our best to see that each seeker prays through and does not stop short of a real experience. There is such a thing as a real faith and getting an experience as a result of its exercise, but many a soul tries to "take it by faith" and gets nothing. May the Lord give us much wisdom in directing souls at the altar!

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### Old Time Religion

Old Time Religion: Yes, we believe in it. We believe that the God who old



J. O. YOUNG.

Abraham across the Syrian Desert to a land that He had promised to show him

is the same God we serve today. We believe that the God who led Israel through the wilderness, and brought them safely into the promised land, is still able to deliver from the Egyptian of sin, and to guide us into a land flowing with milk and honey. When we read that the God of the Hebrew Children delivered them from the fiery furnace, and the God of Daniel closed the lions' mouths, our souls cry out for joy that He still takes care of His own. And when Sacred Writ tells us that after one hundred and twenty had tarried ten days in the upper room, we exult in the thought that we may still tarry and receive our Pentecost.

A belief in a God who answers prayer is a necessary foundation for a supernatural religion. But I wonder how many of us are really living out the faith we profess. Some one has said that we "should so risk ourselves on the promises of God, that if they were to fail, we would be bankrupt." I may believe that the electricity in the wires will light my home, but if I never turn the switch, I will sit in darkness. I may believe that the money in my purse will buy me food, but if I never pass it over the counter, I will go hungry.

Are we really walking in the footsteps of "faithful" Abraham? Have we really left all to follow Jesus? Have we so far cut the shore lines that it can be truthfully said of us that we "have gone out, not knowing whither we go?" This must be done in spirit, if not in reality, before God can make us much of a blessing. It is true that we must know that God has spoken. Without that, supposed faith is only presumption. But to live where we can hear the voice of God, and then "rise up early and go" is the ideal of a christian life.

Let us pass to another thought. Daniel and the three Hebrew Children are our ideal heroes. Both incidents are dramatic in the extreme. But perhaps the dramatic feature did not so much appeal to them at the time. It was a matter of life and death to them. But they were uncompromising. They were "radical" in their views of what it meant to be true to the religion of their forefathers. It did not suit their conscience to "trim" a little for the sake of "policy." They came near being "a little extreme," But *God honored them.* Not long since it was our privilege to sit under the ministry of a man whom God used many years ago to help launch the great holiness movement. We noticed that he was very radical and very positive in his statements of truth. And we remembered that most of those early hero preachers were radical and positive men. But *God honored them.*

And "God's skies are full of Pentecosts." But they are not showered down promiscuously. The woman who lost the piece of money searched diligently *until*

she found it. The man who found the treasure buried in the field went and *sold all that he had* and bought that field and the disciples tarried in the upper room *until* the Holy Ghost came.

If we would see the old time glory and power manifest, we must pay the old time price, and seek for it in the old time way. I say, let us prove God.

Oh give me the old time religion,  
Oh give me the joy I can know,  
I believe in the old time religion,  
As our fathers received long ago.

### The Meaning of Christmas

CHRISTMAS! What does the word mean to us? It matters much whether we be young or old, a Christian or not a Christian. If the reader be a child what is the picture brought to his mind? Does he see Santa Claus with his swift reindeer and jingling bells; a chimney with stockings hung on the broad



GLADYS AIKENS  
CLASS OF '24

mantle; an evergreen tree lighted with candles and decked with toys of every description? Does he think of it as a time in which to play and selfishly enjoy the toys which perhaps cost the price of something absolutely needed in the home? Or, on the other hand, does the child remember the story so often told him of a little town called Bethlehem; of a woman called Mary and her husband Joseph taking lodging in the stable of that town; of the babe in the manger wrapped in swaddling clothes; of "Shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night"; and the angels repeating to the words, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"? Does he remember the three wisemen, guided by the star of the East coming to bring gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh as a token of love and worship to the Saviour of the world? Christmas, what does it signify to the child?

Suppose our reader is an adult. Does he look forward with anticipation to

the holiday time as a time of frivolity and fun, when we lose all responsibility and let our spirits enjoy with free course the dancing and frivolous gaiety which reigns on every hand? Does he give gifts to his friends with the hope that he will receive one in return? Or does he look forward to the time with joy and thanksgiving in his heart because to the world a Saviour has been given? And because that same Saviour has become a supreme factor in his life? There is cause to rejoice and give praise and honor to HIM that gave HIS only begotten SON that whosoever might believe in HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life. At the same time he would not forget the poor and needy, the enemy as well as the friend, in remembering the song of the heavenly host, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward men". Then in giving love gifts to his friends he will remember to give love gifts to the one that is hungry, to the one that is coatless, and to the one that is friendless as well as to the one who might be his enemy.

After all, will not the child that pictures Christmas as a time of play be the one that in later life will anticipate the frivolity and gaiety of the season; and the child that remembers the story of JESUS' birth be the one to remember to give good gifts to those less fortunate and to bring joy to the heart of the sick and needy? Christmas, what does it mean to us?

### The Second Semester

Plan to be with us the second semester. Registration for the second semester will be on February 1, and we are expecting a number of new students at that time.

We are planning to offer new subjects and it will be a very advantageous time for many to enroll. It may mean the saving of a full year of school for you to enroll.

Write and tell us your plans for your schooling. We are always glad to give you practical suggestions that may aid you greatly. Plan to be with us and tell us you are coming to register February 1.

## Printing

The College Printing Department is steadily growing. We are planning to make it a paying department and to do this we need the co-operation of all the churches in the school zone. We are making special rates for pastors. Send your orders to Mr. Harry A. L. Rogers, Manager, and let him do your job printing.

# Ye are my Witnesses

## Ye are my Witnesses

Isaiah 43:10

In the contest between right and wrong, between the forces of hell and the powers of heaven, God saw fit to place on man the responsibility, to a large extent, of the final outcome.

God wills and desires that we as His children should defend His claims by witnessing for Him. If we as Christians fail to do the witnessing He would have none to witness unless He did as in two notable cases; namely, either license a rooster to carry a message as in the case with Peter, or commission an ass to rebuke as was the case in Balam's experience.

In order to be a witness that is worth anything three things are necessary: first, one must know something about the case in hand. No second hand information will be accepted in any court. Some time ago the writer was summoned as a witness in a case at law. The first important question asked after taking the witness stand was, "Do you know anything about the case?" It is of highest importance that the witness have first hand information. Be an eye witness. Had the answer to the above question been in the negative, the court would have immediately dismissed the witness. A witness in court who is merely repeating what he has heard someone say will soon be "trapped" in his testimony and the jury will know that he does not know what he pretends to know. So it is in the Christian life. Many start out with a profession, without a possession. Their testimony will sound well so far as words are concerned, but unless they have experimental knowledge of the thing in regard to which they are witnessing, the "jury" will soon be aware of the fact. Their testimony will not only be thrown out of court, but will also have a weakening effect on the case. Every professor of salvation whose life does not prove that he is a possessor will thus bring reproach upon the fair name of religion.

The second important question asked in the above case was, "Are you willing to tell what you know? A witness on the stand may know all the details of the case, but if he is not willing to tell it he is of no value as a witness. Many will witness for Jesus where it is popular to do so, but where it is not so popular, where there may be some reproach attached to it, they refrain from witnessing. It may be that in that unpopular place is someone in whose life the great debate is surging, and a clear definite witness might have won that individual to God. But failing to tell

what they claimed at other times to know, the case has been lost for God and the enemy has won the day.

The third and last important question the court asked in the above case before the witness was accepted was, "Will you tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" Or to put it in another phraseology, "Are you willing to tell it straight?" There are those who are not afraid to use definite terms when in a red-hot religious service, but when they chance to be where form is more the order of the day, they seem to forget those definite terms, and thus fail to give a clear testimony; and by failing to give a clear testimony they fail to "tell it straight." The need of the hour is not a sentimental, indefinite, parrot-like testimony, but rather to make sure that we know first-hand the facts in the case. Then with a ready mind and a willing heart to proclaim it in all clear-



H. A. Erdmann, Prof. of Science

ness and earnestness to the ends of the earth, "wherever man is found."

Then the question naturally arises, "How are we to witness?" There are several ways. There was Daniel who witnessed in the lion's den. There were the three Hebrew boys who witnessed in the furnace. One can witness both in word and in act, or by his life. That life that is lived every day speaks louder than words can ever witness. Elisha stopped in at Shunem's home for dinner one day and left such a testimony that she said to her husband, "I perceive that this is an holy man of God." O for lives that would convince those by the wayside of life that we are, not only holiness people, but holy people.

Again one may ask, "When shall we witness?" Paul declares, "Be instant in season and out of season." We might say when the revival is on and when it is not on. When it is popular

to do so and when it not popular. When the world would proclaim it the proper time and when it would, not. But let us every one witness with that daily life that shall be convincing that Jesus' Blood can cleanse from all sin.

In conclusion: "Where shall we witness?" First in Jerusalem. Your own home and household. Witness to the little prattler in your home and teach him the story of salvation. Do not wait until they are ten, twelve, or fourteen years old, but begin when they are that many months old. Witness to your household in word and then witness to them by your life in such a way that they will be convinced that you have first-hand information in regard to the things you have told them about the Christ. Next, witness in Judea. The community in which you live, that is among your neighbors. Then in Samaria. That takes in those who despise you. Proclaim to them by a godly life that salvation is not a failure. And then in the uttermost part of the earth. If you cannot go to the uttermost parts of the earth in person, remember there are two routes to the far field; the steamboat route and the pocket-book route. "Ye are my Witnesses."

H. A. ERDMANN

## Keeping an Experience

(Continued from page three)

Ever since the writer has been teaching in our holiness schools, the one great burden has been that we might help our young people to get established in their experience. At present there are in our Academy about an hundred young people. Many of them are having difficulty with their experience. Several have reached the point of discouragement and refuse to try any more. Others are still trying and thank God some are getting established. The prayers of every christian who reads this are earnestly solicited for the young people here and the teachers in charge.

For the first cause, I can only say that the boy and the girl needs a friend. That friend may be the parent, the pastor, the Sunday School teacher, the day school teacher, or in fact, any person. If the boy or girl can find someone to listen to their foolishness, to appreciate their plans, to enjoy their fun, to sympathize in their troubles, in fact, to understand them, they will come to that person for counsel in the difficult places. May God make us, real friends to the boys and girls.