

CHRISTMAS RIPPLES.

Wife: "There are times I wish I were a man."

Hubby: "When?"

Wife: "When I pass a milliner's shop and think how happy I could make my wife by giving her a Christmas present of a new hat."

Little Lydia had been given a new ring for Christmas, which none of the guests at the Christmas dinner had noticed. Finally, being unable to stand the obscurity any longer, she remarked, "Oh, dear, I'm so warm in my new ring."

Crawford: "I thought you were perfectly delighted with the Christmas present your wife gave you."

Crabshaw: "At that time I didn't know she had it charged to my account."

"Yes, little girl," said the kind old man with the white whiskers, "I have an immense toffee store, and for Christmas I am going to give you all the toffee you can eat."

"Oh, goody!" cried the little girl, dancing about with happiness.

"Now," continued the kind old man, "how much toffee can you eat?"

"How much toffee have you got?"

"Your wife was telling my wife that you've got all your Christmas presents paid for," remarked the man in the corner of the city train to the lean individual sitting by his side.

"Yes; paid for the last of them yesterday," was the reply.

"Lucky dog! I haven't even begun to think of the presents I've got to buy."

"Oh, neither have we for this year. My wife was speaking of last year's presents."

Bobbie: "Say, ma, what are you going to give me for Christmas?"

Mamma: "Oh, anything to keep you quiet, Bobby."

Bobby: "Well, nothing will keep me quiet but a drum."

Willie (at the close of Christmas Day): "Ma, didn't you say that Santa Claus only brought presents to good boys?"

Mother: "Yes, dear."

Willie: "Well, if Santa Claus thinks all of the fellers he brought presents for are good boys, somebody has give him an awful land!"

Rachel had been frequently reprimanded by her mother for her eagerness to begin her dinner before grace had been said. It came, however, as a shock to all present when, on Christmas Day, Bobby, her eldest brother, on whom devolved the duty of asking a blessing, took upon himself to administer a gentle reproof.

"For what we are about to receive," he said, gravely, "and for what Rachel has already eaten, make us truly thankful!"

Christmas morning brought Mary's admirer round to her house in order to present his Christmas gift in person. Prior to her arrival in the sitting-room he was being entertained by her small sister, Betty. Amongst the objects of art in the room there was a small amateur painting. Thinking it might have been done by his beloved, he turned to the little girl and said:

"Does your sister paint, Betty?"

"Yes," replied Betty, confidentially. "She's doing it now. But she's just finished, and has only got to put a little powder on!"



THE DIVINE CHILD

The advent of Jesus was not with pomp and power. He came as a helpless babe; and yet His advent was attended by most marvellous demonstrations of divine power and glory. St. Paul told the Galatians that Christ was born of woman; but the Gospels tell us that He was born of a virgin! Jesus is the only person who had conscious existence before He was born; and was born because He wanted to be; and who actually selected the time and place of His birth. Then, when He was born, heaven and earth gathered around the holy manger which cradled the celestial visitor; and an angel preached the first Christmas sermon, and a whole choir of angels sang the first Christmas anthem. In the birth of this holy Child we behold a most wonderful paradox—human helplessness combined with divine power. This Divine Child has shed a halo of glory over all childhood. Milton sang of Him:

"Yet sure the babe is in the cradle blest,
Since God Himself a baby deigned to be,
And slept upon a mortal mother's breast,
And steeped in baby tears His Deity."

It was among the extraordinary claims of Jesus that He had conscious existence with God the Father ages and ages before the worlds were created. To the Jews He said: "I came down from heaven"; and to the Father He prayed, just before His ascension: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

Now, if Jesus had conscious existence with the Father from all eternity, the only rational conclusion is that His birth was supernatural. We are not concerned now about the possibility of pathogenesis in the lower forms of life; and to conclude from this that even the virgin birth of Jesus might be accounted for on biological principles. It is enough to know that if Jesus existed with the Father in Heaven before the creation, then His advent into this world, as a helpless babe, is a supernatural phenomenon for which there is no scientific explanation.

But the fact of His supernatural birth is no less credible because it is inexplicable. Indeed, the supernatural is the very thing we should expect as one of the attendant circumstances of a Divine Person. The vir-

gin birth of Christ is by no means so wonderful as His pre-existence and His power to create; and yet we do not hesitate to accept St. Paul's declaration that "by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth." St. John also declares: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

The fact of creation is a standing miracle, the evidence of which we have before us every day. How came this universe to be? There are but two possible answers: either it has existed from all eternity or it was created. If it has always existed, then we have a fact for which science has no explanation, and hence an overwhelming miracle! If it was created, then we still have a phenomenon for which there is no scientific explanation, and hence, another stupendous miracle! So, in either case we are confronted by the miraculous and the inexplicable. It is not possible to get rid of the miracle of existence; and in the presence of this miracle all other miracles fade into insignificance. If we believe that this manifold universe was created by divine power out of nothing, why should we find it difficult to believe in the lesser miracles of the virgin birth and the resurrection? In the former we have the insuperable mystery of the production of something out of nothing, while in the latter we have only the transformation and re-transformation of existing matter.

It was a high honor which God conferred on man when He created him in His own divine image, but it was an unspeakable condescension on the part of the pre-existent Son of God, when He consented to be made flesh and to be "found in fashion as a man." The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the pivotal point in the history of the world. The cradle of Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary stand at the centre of the world's history. That the manner of Christ's advent was supernatural should not surprise us nor tax our faith. We should expect the approach of a Divine Person to be attended by divine manifestations. Let us rejoice then that in the supernatural birth of Christ a dignity has been conferred upon human childhood and motherhood that is closely related to the divine.

The Christmas festival is the world's most sacred and exalted jubilee. Our gifts to one another at this season are but the faint shadow of God's "unspeakable gift" of His Divine Son. No one can ever estimate the fullness of joy that comes to all classes and conditions of men as they celebrate the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. The Christmas-tide kindles a flame of holy joy and love in every heart and home where Jesus finds room. It was a great idea of Dionysius Exiguus when he made the incarnation of Christ the beginning of a new era. Every man in Christendom, when he dates a written document, gives his testimony to the fact that in "the fullness of time," in the reign of Augustus Caesar, the Divine Son of God was born into the world. Let us, like the ancient Magi, bow in lowly reverence before His sacred presence, and pour at His feet the richest treasures of our hearts and lives.—Charles W. Meyers.

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