

*REFLECTIONS AT CHRISTMAS*

Again we celebrate the Christmas season and the renowned Christmas story which takes hold of our imaginations. Though the Christian story stems from neither history nor scripture, but from folk-lore, this beautiful and powerful story is the supreme expression of the Christian belief that God is expressed in human life and the world around us.

We too can allow our imaginations to recreate the story in all its pathos, glory and deep meaning and find its application in our contemporary lives and understanding.

Perhaps the following musings may empower us to create in our minds the meaning of God incarnate in our lives.

MARY

Why me?  
Why did he pick on me?  
I'm nothing special.  
I'm just ordinary.  
Think of all the others he could  
have chosen.

But he picked on me  
And now I'm different -  
Set apart.  
I still look the same.  
But I'm not the same - I guess  
And I even act the same.  
But I'm not the same - never again.  
Why me?

I can hardly believe it.  
My life is changed.  
It is no longer my own.  
It's strange, mysterious.  
Something I don't understand.

I ask, why me?  
But now I am ready.  
I accept it.  
It burns within me.  
My course is set.

Is it glory -  
Or heartbreak?

JOSEPH

It really shook me up  
When she came and told me.  
I couldn't believe it -  
It was just too much to swallow.

I mean - what if you had been in my  
shoes?

I was quiet for a long time.  
We didn't have much to say  
-didn't know what to say.

Have you any idea  
How much I love that girl?  
She is in my every waking thought:  
Mary - Mary - Mary.  
It was always Mary.  
A wedding had been set, plans made -  
And then THIS happened.

For a long time I stayed away -  
thinking.  
Then I went back and asked her again  
Just once.

(Joseph, cont'd)

And she still said it was true.  
So I believed her -  
Because she said it -  
Because I love her.

The INNKEEPER

I'm not really a bad guy;  
-Just tryin' to get by, doin' the  
best I can.  
What with a wife and six hungry  
kids,  
It ain't always easy.

So when the young fella and his wife  
come along  
I tried to do what I could for them.  
Naturally, I didn't have no room,  
What with the traffic and weather  
and all.  
But I seen she was fit to bust  
Wit the young'n she was carryin'.  
"You can use the shed," I told 'em.

Course I didn't charge them the  
goin' rate.  
(I told you I wasn't a hard-fisted  
man.)  
The shed was better'n nothin',  
So I let 'em have it cheap.  
And that's where the baby come.

No, I ain't a tight man.  
But I don't give nothin' away  
neither;  
What with a wife and six kids I  
can't hardly afford to.  
Charity starts at home - that's what  
folks say.  
So I just did as good by 'em as I  
could.  
Doin' my best.

The SHEPHERD

I'm not drunk and I'm not crazy.  
You know me -  
I would never get involved

With such things.  
I always steer clear;  
How did I get mixed up in it?

I keep telling myself it isn't real,  
But I know it happened  
Because I was there  
And I wasn't drunk.

I know it happened.  
But I don't know how come.  
I've got an idea, a hunch, maybe...  
I think I know...maybe.  
And that scares hell out of me.

If I'd been you I could laugh and  
forget it.  
I wouldn't be mixed up in it,  
wouldn't have to think about it.  
But it happened to ME.  
And this scares me  
Because I was there, and I know I'm  
not crazy.  
Maybe it means what I think it  
means:  
And that puts me right in the  
middle.

SIMEON

At last it happened!  
No wonder my hands shake!  
I've waited all my life for this  
day.  
God knows how many mornings I've  
awakened before dawn,  
thinking:  
"Maybe this will be the day..."

Sometimes I've had bad moments,  
But I've never really lost my faith.  
Never really.  
Never really doubted that, someday,  
it would happen.  
(Didn't he promise me? Isn't he a  
Man of his word?)  
He said it would be: and I believed  
him.

Today it happened.  
And you wonder why my hands shake?  
Well; sir, I'll tell you.

(Simeon, cont'd)

I'm a "man of the cloth," so the saying goes,  
And I am well acquainted with responsibility.  
Today, I have been given responsibility greater than any man has ever known.

I am to christen him!  
Now I can die -  
He has kept his word.

HEROD

Who does this kid think he is?  
What does he know about running things?  
They come in here, asking about some young kid.  
Who did they think they were talking to?  
Who's boss here if I'm not, huh?  
Me, that's who. ME!

I'll give them credit for having guts.  
They stood right in front of me and asked about him.  
I should have said the word right then.  
Just a word - that's all it'd take.  
Then we'd see who was boss here, wouldn't we?

But I fooled them. I played dumb; went along for the ride.  
And they spilled the whole story to me.  
Now I know about the "other king."  
Ha! He's as good as dead. I've already taken care of that.

And, as for those guys with the big mouths,  
They've had it...they're living on borrowed time.  
I have plans for them.

I guess we know who's boss around

here,  
Don't we?

The MAGI

Compulsion.  
Research. Hours and hours.  
Pages and pages poured over.  
Finally a glimmer.  
Compulsion.

Just a glimmer and blind faith.  
And compulsion.  
Follow that glimmer.  
That's all you can do.  
There's no escape.  
the path leads somewhere  
And you must follow it.

The end - not the end  
But another beginning.  
The light blazes forth  
No longer a glimmer but the sun.  
Radiant -  
You follow different paths - changed.  
More research and more words,  
But changed.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING ON EARTH AMONG PEOPLE?

A hazardous world full of surprises.  
Peace on earth!  
You call this a revolution?  
CHANGING PEACE in a rough-and-tumble peace on earth.  
TIME for a giant step.  
We shouldn't back into the future.  
But you have to do the looking FOR PEACE.  
Why does a person become a hater?  
The big beat comes from everywhere.  
Meet what you've missed nothing else quite measures up.

*AND ON EARTH THERE*

The beautiful people are at it again.  
Join the celebration LOVER.

ESOTERIC EXPERIENCE

*Imagine a visitor from outer space arriving in the city hosting the championship game of the National Football League. What kind of report would be sent back?*

*There is great excitement in this city today, an excitement that has apparently been building up for weeks. It is focused in a kind of outdoor temple seating more than 30,000 people. In the centre is an open space and at each end a two-branched tree called a goal.*

On the field are two groups of athletes representing, apparently, the forces of light and darkness, of good and evil. They battle, almost to the death, for possession of a small, elliptical object called a football.

At the end of the contest, the victorious gladiators join in a great celebration which centres round a large chalice, called the Grey Cup, which is filled with champagne and from which each drinks deeply. Some worshippers at this festival have been so overcome with excitement and anticipation that they became unconscious before the contest began.

It is difficult to understand the significance of this festival and therefore impossible to share the excitement, but for many people it apparently has profound meaning.

Advent in the Christian tradition is a time of decision. It is a way of looking at the world and of choosing what our role will be in relation to the world.

Harriet Eleanor King has written:

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;  
Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth;  
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice;  
And whoso suffers most hath most to give."

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