

CHAPEL - December 20, 1927

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Just a word about Christmas and what it means. I read to you a few days ago that God called a man his friend. I think that is the highest compliment paid any person in the Bible. God spoke of Abraham as being his friend. I have been thinking about that for over a year,- our change of attitude and what it would mean to us if we could feel that we are friends of Jehovah, if we could feel toward the great God of this universe as our friend.

Christmas marks the period when, all the Christian denominations firmly believe, the Messiah was born. We realize that we do not know that this birth took place on December 25; we do not know just when it was, but the best that we can determine is that it was at this time of the year. Caesar had called together all the Jews, all the people of the Roman Empire to take what we call in America a census in which they got the number of people and the amount of wealth that they had, but we cannot find in Roman history just the date of this event. Mary and Joseph went that they might be registered, and while on this trip they stopped in Bethlehem and there it was that Jesus was born. There was a great crowd of people in the town and there was not room in the hotel for Mary and Joseph and they had to spend the time in a stable. That was not as bad as it sounds because lots of people used ~~to~~ rooms in these places that were provided for animals at that time. Shepherds came, shepherds that were out on the hills,- the same hills ~~that~~ ^{on which} David sang and guarded the sheep of his father. The shepherds got the message and them came. They represent the people of more or less lowly life, but from over in the east the wise men came. They represent the people who have studied and are acquainted with things scientific, acquainted with astronomy, acquainted with what we call higher learning today. They got the message and them came. We find people from those occupying the most lowly position to those who are most intelligent in human society getting the message somehow from Jehovah and coming and bowing and paying tribute to this little child that was born in Bethlehem of Judea. To you and to me, the Christian people of today, he is the Messiah, the man who was not only man, but God, who came to show the world how to live and who went about doing good, and he said to his disciples You are my friends if you keep my

commandments. He came, as the message tells us, bringing peace on earth and good will toward all men, and yet the world has not reached that point even today.

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Unfortunately it comes at the same time as an old feast and falls practically at the same time that the heathen world went almost mad with frolic and drinking, and we have not lost that phase of it. I hope we will and that we will some day observe the birth of the Messiah in a way that is in keeping with the religion that he established and with the standards that he set up for us to follow.