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A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE.

The coming of Christmas, this year, does not, we are grieved to say, coincide with as much peace and goodwill on earth as reasonable men and women would expect to find in these enlightened times. We would have liked to see this wonderful Christian festival — the traditional anniversary of Christ — really to be an occasion for rejoicing and thanksgiving, a time to be merry and cheerful with a good conscience, knowing that all is well with us. But all is not well. We live in dangerous times and the festival to which we have been looking forward with so much hope is overshadowed by events that cause concern and distress in the minds of all peace-loving men. There is tragedy, injustice and unrest in the world and it requires an effort not to give way to despair. Yet we must make this effort, we must hold fast to the promise of better things to come and cling to the hope that reason and understanding will prevail so that the human progress achieved through the past will not be suddenly halted and overwhelmed by catastrophe.

There is little we can do individually in this direction but the more deep-rooted and widespread is faith in the possibility of a peaceful solution of the world's troubles, in freedom, social improvement and a kindlier society, the greater are the chances of averting disaster.

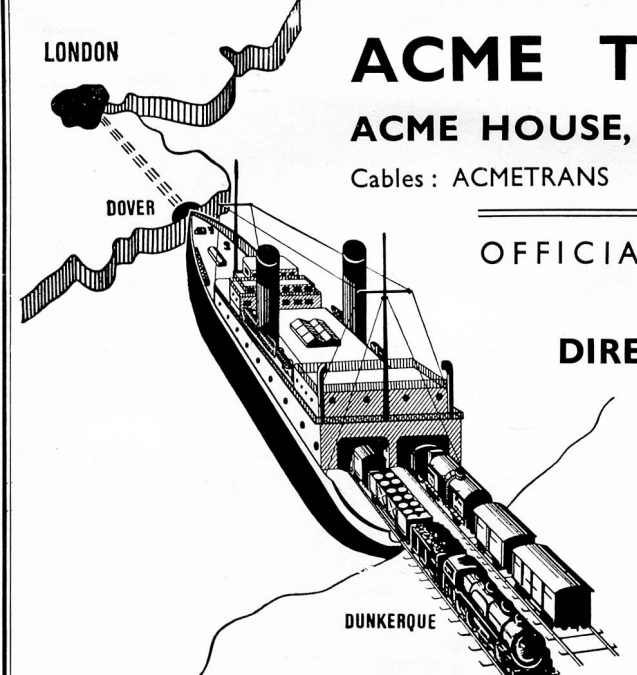
Whatever to-morrow may bring, Christmas remains with us as a reminder of the fact that our civilisation is rooted in the Christian tradition and that simple goodness, basis of all Christian ethics, will in the end triumph over evil.

So let us become steeped in the Christmas spirit, shed for a day of two our responsibilities and cares and rejoice, once more, in the knowledge that "unto us a Child is born".

Amid the jollities of the festivities it is sometimes forgotten that it is the birth of Christ we are celebrating. Christmas has been commercialised to such an extent that it has become a travesty and no longer conveys or emphasises its real significance. What we actually celebrate is the great historical event on which it rests, namely the commemoration of something that has changed the world and is the mainspring of the evolution of human affairs during twenty centuries.

The Christmas story, furthermore, has always appealed to the imagination quite apart from its theological meaning. The birth of a child arouses in everyone a feeling of wonder and gratitude and causes one of the deepest joys of which the human heart is capable. It is a natural joy which has little to do with material circumstances, it is a joyful event for rich and poor alike. Picturesque details by which the story has been embellished are of secondary importance. The central and important fact is that, according to Christian teaching, the birth of this Child was more than an ordinary family matter. It was an event that shook the world and determined the future course of human history. May its benign influence also bear on the counsels of those who direct the destinies of the nations in our times.

With these thoughts the Editor wishes to convey to all his readers a message of hope and his sincere wishes for a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



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