

I Need A Lot of Christmas

This week I turned on my car radio to hear "Oh we need a little Christmas, right this very minute..." And I thought to myself - "no, no this year, this year we need a lot of Christmas. With Terror attacks and mass shootings and 1 million + refugees just in Europe, we need a lot of Christmas this year. Sometimes I get quite discouraged about the state of the world, and I have to say the temptation to give up and move to existential despair is quite attractive. Especially when the news never stops showing you one more shooting, one more prisoner who dies, one more homeless family. one more terror attack.... Oh I need a lot of Christmas this year. But as I thought about this night, I remembered a poem that gave me pause. A song that puts the birth of Christ into historical perspective. And the lyrics shook me and made me want to once again light the Christ Candle tonight (light candle) The writing is entitled:

One Solitary Life by Dr James Allan Francis © 1926.

He was born in an obscure village

The child of a peasant woman

He grew up in another obscure village

Where he worked in a carpenter shop

Until he was thirty when public opinion turned against him

He never wrote a book

He never held an office

He never went to college

He never visited a big city

He never travelled more than two hundred miles
From the place where he was born
He did none of the things
Usually associated with greatness
He had no credentials but himself

He was only thirty three
His friends ran away
One of them denied him
He was turned over to his enemies
And went through the mockery of a trial
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves
While dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing
The only property he had on earth
When he was dead
He was laid in a borrowed grave
Through the pity of a friend
Nineteen centuries have come and gone
And today Jesus is the central figure of the human race
And the leader of mankind's progress
All the armies that have ever marched
All the navies that have ever sailed
All the parliaments that have ever sat
All the kings that ever reigned put together
Have not affected the life of mankind on earth
As powerfully as that one solitary life

100 years from now, ISIS will be a footnote in historical texts. 200 years from now we pray the gun violence and homelessness on earth is done, but even if it is not, people will still light candles on December

24th in the Year of Our Lord, Anno Domini 2215. Evil and greed and hate do not win, ever. Oh, sometimes, they appear to have the upper hand. But they will never hold on, because of the promise of Christmas... hope in the darkness, peace in the midst of turmoil, healing beyond pain and greed. A promise sealed on Easter morning.

All the armies that have ever marched All the navies that have ever sailed

All the parliaments that have ever sat All the kings that ever reigned put together

Have not affected the life of mankind on earth As powerfully as that one solitary life. And so shall it always be. AMEN