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Babe and mother, coming mage,
Shepherd, ass, and cow!
Angels watching the new age,
Time's intensest Now! . . .
Hark the torrent-joy let slip!
Hark the great throats ring!
Glory! Peace! Good-fellowship!
And a Child for king!
("An Old Story")

More than Good Friday or Easter Sunday, Christmas was the "holyday"[1] that most inspired George MacDonald and informed his artistic practice. This article will begin by demonstrating this festive predilection in MacDonald's life and works, then move to an exploration of how MacDonald uses Christmas in two of his earliest books—*Within and Without* (1855) and *Adela Cathcart* (1864)—and finally conclude with a brief discussion of the theological and aesthetic implications of Christmas upon MacDonald's thought and mode of literary creation.

"The Torrent-Joy Let Slip!"

Given the sheer volume of MacDonald's published works and his exuberant faith in Christ, it is perhaps not surprising that Christmas should recur in his writings with regular frequency. The holiday appears in at least fourteen of his fictional books, three of his non-fictional books, and continually in his poetry.[2] What is more surprising is how rarely other church holidays and seasons are mentioned. Though it is difficult to search for something's absence, with the exception of when MacDonald either quotes or translates another poet as in *Rampolli* and *England's Antiphon*, I know of no references to Pentecost, Advent, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, or Good Friday, and only one each to Lent and Easter.[3] This is especially odd when it is remembered that several of MacDonald's novels follow in

great detail the lives of pastors or curates (*Thomas Wingfold*, *The Seaboard Parish*, and *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* to name a few). MacDonald's virtual silence here seems more than accidental. In "Browning's 'Christmas Eve,'" one of his earliest published essays, MacDonald says that "if a man would help his fellow-man, he can do so far more effectually by exhibiting truth than exposing error, by unveiling beauty than by a critical dissection of deformity" (*A Dish of Orts* 196). MacDonald's silence, in other words, is more telling than most, particularly on subjects so dear to him. Therefore, whilst MacDonald's indifference to these holy days could just show that they did not enliven his creative spirit, might it not also point to his dislike of overly complex religious ritual, or hint at deeper theological criticisms? His vehement disagreement with substitutionary atonement, for instance? Such thoughts will be pursued in the final section. For now, what is clearly shown in contrast is just how brightly MacDonald's imagination was kindled by Christmas.

Though there are no descriptions of MacDonald celebrating Christmas as a child, there are two accounts from his adult life, both of which depict his childlike joy in the day's celebrations. During their first Christmas at Hastings in 1857, Louisa wrote an extended description of the Christmas festivities as part of a collection of offerings for her father's 77th birthday. On Christmas Eve the family busily decorated the tree, cooked and made dresses, while George was "sticking up Christmas pictures on the nursery walls to delight the little ones" (Greville MacDonald 285). Then on Christmas Day "thirteen poor children with clean frocks and bright faces" were welcomed for the afternoon, and MacDonald delighted them by telling "the story of the Ugly Duckling." All the children were given toys or books, fed cakes and buns and, then, MacDonald "talked to them again and told them the true story of the day—about the good Christ-child" (286). After these guests departed with half an orange each, the family lit the tree and the plum pudding, and Lousia comments, "How happy everyone looked!" The children then "gambled for" the "candlesticks, nuts, figs, and oranges" before more cakes were enjoyed. Finally, MacDonald's comical oratory concluded the evening: "a history of Punch and Judy was one of the presents the tree afforded Papa, and great glee was there over the display of his elocutionary talents in giving it to our party" (287). This lighthearted image of MacDonald as a playful storyteller is an important corrective to the common view of him as a serious-minded Victorian preacher.

The other account from 1880 reveals that though the location had

changed (from Victorian England to Catholic Italy), and the children had grown, the Christmas spirit remained vibrant in the MacDonald household. The following was written by Lord Mount-Temple:

> On Christmas Eve, we were dining in our little room looking on the olive wood, and we heard the sound of many voices, and looking out, lamps glimmered among the trees, and figures carrying lanterns and sheets of music. Who should they be but the dear MacDonald family visiting the houses of all the invalids in the place, to sing them carols and bring them the glad tidings of Christmas. (qtd. in Greville MacDonald 511)

In addition, the family made "Christmas tableaux" of "the Annunciation, the Visit of Elizabeth, the Shepherds' Visit, the Mother and Child and St John" (*Poetical Works*, Vol. 1 304) and invited all their neighbors including over one hundred Italian children. This is much more than dutiful Christian charity at Christmas; it is an abundant delight that overflows freely into the lives of others—letting the "torrent-joy" (Greville MacDonald 511) of Christmas slip. Yet Christmas was more than a time of personal or community celebration for MacDonald; it was also a fruitful source of artistic inspiration.

"A Child For King"

Four of MacDonald's six earliest books were either written during Christmas or intended for Christmas. The self-published *Twelve Spiritual Songs* (translations of Novalis) was produced by MacDonald for Christmas in 1851 and given as gifts to friends and family. *Within and Without*, though not published until 1855, was written during MacDonald's convalescence from December 1850 to January 1851; *Phantastes*, likewise, was composed while MacDonald was ill from December 1857 to January 1858 (one of the Christmas seasons recorded above), while *Adela Cathcart* is set in Christmastide and was likely partially written in December of 1863. Moreover, MacDonald published three stories in special Christmas supplements of periodicals before 1864 and several more through the course of his life.[4] All of this could be mere happenstance or attributed to other factors—Victorian periodicals, for instance, were more likely to publish MacDonald's fantastical stories at Christmas, or the fact that his illness tended to worsen in winter giving the busy young father, preacher and lecturer the time and mental space he needed to develop a story—yet a closer look at two of these works, *Within and Without* and *Adela Cathcart*, reveals

that Christmas also plays a critical role in the stories themselves.

The first two acts of the blank verse drama *Within and Without* tell the story of the monk Julian who after failing to find a true revelation of God in a worldly Italian monastery returns to his hometown to find his former lover, Lilia, deathly ill and pursued by a wicked count. Julian kills the count and the two lovers escape an angry mob by eloping to London. Act III opens in London five years later. Julian and Lilia's love has grown cold and common despite having produced the angelic child Lily. Julian's first monologue sets the time of year:

> And now the day draws nigh when Christ was born;
> The day that showed how like to God himself
> Man had been made, since God could be revealed
> By one that was a man with men, and still
> Was one with God the Father. (52)

The coming advent of Christ thus becomes the very atmosphere of Act III—everywhere present but rarely noticed. Just as Jesus came not to the rich or religious but to the poor and lowly, so too Julian discovers that intimacy with God is best found not in the secluded cloister but in poverty and everyday experience. But despite his growing knowledge of "the divine humanity of Jesus,"[5] Julian nevertheless sees that his romance with Lilia has been strangled by "commonness":

> I have grown common to her. It is strange—
> This commonness—that, as a blight, eats up
> All the heart's springing corn and promised fruit.
> This room is very common: everything
> Has such a well-known look of nothing in it; . . .
> Even she, the goddess of the wonder-world,
> Seems less mysterious and worshipful:
> No wonder I am common in her eyes. (72)

Having passed from the joy of love's spring when a "rosy mist" made everything appear wonderful into the bleak winter when everything is merely common, Julian wonders which one is true: "Is this the real, the cold, undraperied truth— / A skeleton admitted as a guest / At life's loud feast, wearing a life-like mask?" (72). He refuses to believe that the "cold, dull, leaden, gray" "blighting fog" is the truth for "my heart would die if I believed it." Then in one of MacDonald's most beautiful passages of poetry Julian expounds his belief in an eternal childhood[6]:

> But he in whom the child's heart hath not died,

But grown a man's heart, loveth yet the Past;
Believes in all its beauty; knows the hours
Will melt the mist; and that, although this day
Cast but a dull stone on Time's heaped-up cairn,
A morning light will break one morn and draw
The hidden glories of a thousand hues
And sapphire-veins, unseen, unknown, before.
Far in the future lies his refuge. Time
Is God's, and all its miracles are his;
And in the Future he overtakes the Past. (73)

The sudden insertion of the "child's heart" is not accidental. Julian's extended reflections echo the season in which MacDonald sets the story, so that just as the child Christ is born into the darkest, coldest season of the year for the redemption of humanity, so Julian's concept of eternal childhood is birthed just at the moment of his greatest doubt and despair.[7]

To make this point abundantly clear, MacDonald sets the following scene on Christmas Day:

The light comes feebly, slowly, to the world
On this one day that blesses all the year,
Just as it comes on any other day:
A feeble child he came, yet not the less
Brought godlike childhood to the aged earth,
Where nothing now is common any more[8] (74)

Christmas thus renews and revivifies the tiredness of the earth, but it also transforms the common. Or perhaps more accurately, it unveils the truth and beauty that is always present within the common but that time and familiarity shroud. It causes the full splendor of even the most insignificant things to shine forth. Julian's Christmas day meditations then continue to explore the divine condescension when he says that Jesus "came in poverty, and low / A real man to half-unreal men." As a result of this kenotic revelation of the real, "God shone forth from all the lowly earth" so that "now the Divine descends, pervading all" and "earth is no more a banishment from heaven" (75). Instead, "we feel the holy mystery / That permeates all being: all is God's; / And my poor life is terribly sublime." Christmas hereby destroys the social conventions that have labeled one thing as more important than another, one person as more valuable than other. W. H. Auden—a great admirer of MacDonald—expresses this same idea in his Christmas Oratorio "For the Time Being": "Nor is the Ridiculous a species any longer of the ugly. . . .

Nor is there any situation which is essentially more or less interesting than another" (Auden 389). The implications of this as Auden makes explicit and MacDonald implies is that artistic expression is hereby justified: "By Him is the perpetual recurrence of Art assured" (Auden 389). If nothing, not even the lowest and dirtiest is "common or unclean" anymore and "all is God's," then all things are worthy of attention and the artistic pursuit is legitimate, even in the face of suffering and more ostensibly "serious" concerns. In a letter from 1888, MacDonald says of Christmas: "If the story were not true nothing else would be worth being true. Because it is true, everything is lovely-precious" (Sadler 321). The Christmas story, for MacDonald, is the guarantor of truth and beauty; without it both disintegrate into meaninglessness.

This Christmas revelation is the climax and conclusion of Act III and in many ways is the crowning moment in Julian's spiritual development. Acts IV and V largely focus on Lilia (and Julian's response to her actions) as she runs away from her husband and child before finally being reunited with them in heaven. Looking at the structure of the drama, Christmas, positioned in the pivotal Act III, is the core—it is the fulfillment of Julian's quest for personal divine revelation, and it is the promise that bespeaks the ultimate reunion of all things in heaven.

Almost ten years after publishing *Within and Without* (1855), MacDonald again wove Christmas into the very fabric of a narrative in *Adela Cathcart* (1864). Although this novel has received some attention in recent years, scholars have focused almost exclusively upon the homeopathic aspects of the story and the way in which Adela is cured, never commenting on the Christmas elements (Broome; Knoepflmacher). The story begins on Christmas Eve and spans a period extending just beyond Christmastide. Chapter one introduces the narrator John Smith, a jolly everyman character who repeatedly asserts that he is "nobody." This status as a "nonentity" makes him welcome among children and serves "like Jack the Giant-killer's coat of darkness," enabling him "to learn much that would otherwise have escaped me" (14). Whilst this makes him an ideal narrator, it also means he is akin to fairy-tale archetypes—more significant for his everyman function than individual psychology. Therefore, when he offers his view of Christmas, we can be certain that MacDonald thinks it ought to be the universal view:

> Every year, as Christmas approaches, I begin to grow young again. At least I judge so from the fact that a strange, mysterious pleasure, well known to me by this time, though little understood and very varied, begins to glow in my mind

> with the first hint, come from what quarter it may, whether from the church service, or a bookseller's window, that the day of all the year is at hand—is climbing up from the under-world. I enjoy it like a child. . . . Above all things, I delight in listening to stories, and sometimes in telling them. (4)

Here again MacDonald emphasizes the connection of Christmas with the child, but he also introduces the element of storytelling which is to become so central to the novel. There is something about the nature of Christmas that calls forth stories. Just as it is "the day of all the year," that is, the day that gives significance to every other day, so too it is "the story of all stories," which by its sheer fecundity generates others. More specifically, it is that out of which all joyous activity originates:

> Inside [cottages and mansions] were hearts like our own, and faces like ours, with the red coming out on them, the red of joy, because it was Christmas. . . . Is it vulgar, this feasting at Christmas? No. It is the Christmas feast that justifies all feasts, as the bread and wine of the Communion are the essence of all bread and wine, of all strength and rejoicing. . . . Certain I am, that but for the love which, ever revealing itself, came out brightest at that first Christmas time, there would be no feasting—nay no smiling; no world to go careering in joy about its central fire; no men and women upon it, to look up and rejoice. (6)

In this way Christmas not only legitimates art but gives license to levity, frivolity, and playfulness as well.

Sensing the objection that this view does not account for the evil and darkness present in the world, Smith asserts his belief in the priority of light over darkness: "I count Light the older, from the tread of whose feet fell the first shadow—and that was Darkness. Darkness exists but by the light, and for the light" (6). MacDonald here presents a view that is an interesting variation of the Augustinian understanding of evil as *steresis*. For Augustine, evil has no ontological status but is merely parasitical of the good. Yet in MacDonald's view, while still derivative, evil is not a parasite but a servant. Thus, when asked how rejoicing can be good when there is evil and cruelty in the world, MacDonald (through Smith) responds: "Take from me my rejoicing, and I am powerless to help them. It shall not destroy the whole bright holiday to me, that my father has given my brother a beating" (6). Merry-making is not only divinely authorized by the Christmas event; it

is in addition a source of vitality that empowers the individual to help those who are lost in darkness. Moreover, evil is denied ultimate seriousness. Evil is evanescent and secondary; joy is eternal and primary. Suffering, therefore, does not automatically undercut the goodness of joyous activities like telling wild and playful stories. Of course, MacDonald is not advocating some sort of purely aesthetic hedonism that ignores the needs of others—"doing your duty" is one of his most constant themes—but he is defending the goodness of innocent play against those who would say that such activities are not really "serious." His disciple C. S. Lewis later summed this up when he said: "joy is the serious business of heaven" (93).

Arriving at the Cathcart home, Smith discovers that Adela is suffering from some sort of psychological listlessness, slightly dampening the Christmas spirit. On Christmas morning they go to church and hear the new curate's sermon, which is an early condensed version of MacDonald's first unspoken sermon, "The Child in the Midst":

> The winter is the childhood of the year. Into this childhood of the year came the child Jesus; and into this childhood of the year must we all descend. It is as if God spoke to each of us according to our need: My son, my daughter, you are growing old and cunning; you must grow a child again. (19)

MacDonald then unfolds the two ideas central to his notion of the childlike. The first is the eternal childhood of God for "He who is the Unchangeable, could never become anything that He was not always," while the second is the childlike child, that is, "the best child you can imagine" (20). With the first MacDonald deflects the theological objection that Jesus is no longer a child but an adult, thus allowing him to extol certain aspects of childhood. Meanwhile the "childlike child" counters the criticism that many characteristics of children are not worthy of emulation. The sermon concludes with an exhortation to adults to partake in the day's childlike joy:

> Then be happy this Christmas Day; for to you a child is born. Childless women, this infant is yours—wives or maidens. Fathers and mothers, he is your first-born, and he will save his brethren. Eat and drink, and be merry and kind, for the love of God is the source of all joy and all good things, and this love is present in the child Jesus. (20)

That Christ became a child is more than just a necessary condition of God becoming human; it is for MacDonald the moment that perpetually enables delight. Indeed, if it is true that MacDonald wrote his stories, as he states

in "The Fantastic Imagination," "for the childlike, whether of five, or fifty, or seventy-five," and the "childlike" is a category created, exemplified and sustained by Christmas, then one could even say that Christmas undergirds all of MacDonald's artistic creation (*A Dish of Orts* 317). Furthermore, Christmas reveals "a child for King" and thus overturns conventional human standards of judgment. The frolicsome play and exuberant joy that is given license only at special times like Christmas is revealed to be more eternal than the "degrading spirit of the commonplace" typical to humanity's experience (*Miracles of Our Lord* 256).

These reflections on Christmas, then, serve to justify the main activity of the novel—the telling of diverse tales. Whilst Christmas is rarely mentioned after the second chapter in the frame-narrative, its spirit nevertheless pervades the entirety of the novel. The internal justification for forming a *Decameron*-like story-telling group might be to aid in the cure of Adela, but MacDonald's theological justification is clearly the joyous nature of Christmas itself. This is made explicit when Smith, before beginning to read "The Light Princess," says: "This is Christmas-time, you know, and that is just the time for story-telling" (55). Adela's respectable and worldly aunt then asks if "it is a story suitable to the season," and Smith replies, "yes, very, for it is a child's story—a fairy tale, namely; though I confess I think it fitter for grown than for young children" (55). MacDonald here inverts conventional religious expectations. Instead of Mrs. Cathcart's desire to be more careful, restrained, and pious during Christmas, Smith argues that Christmas makes one more carefree and fun-loving. As we have seen, MacDonald himself behaved this way during Christmas—reciting "The Ugly Duckling" and passages from *Punch*, as well as publishing some of his most playful and raucous stories in Christmas periodicals. "The Giant's Heart" (one of MacDonald's oddest and most nonsensical stories) was first published shortly before *Adela Cathcart* as "Tell Us a Story" in the Christmas edition (1863) of *The London Illustrated News*, and it included a frame in which "Uncle Bogie" tells the story laden with elements of the grotesque immediately after Christmas dinner to the delight of a group of children.

Space does not permit a complete investigation of the remainder of *Adela Cathcart*; however, a brief look at two of the stories set within the frame, "The Shadows" and "My Uncle Peter," will gesture towards the hermeneutical implications of Christmas for the rest of MacDonald's corpus. Composed during the Christmas of 1857, "The Shadows" is MacDonald's first fairy tale and in some ways his most enigmatic, yet the idea of Christmas

established earlier in *Adela Cathcart* offers an important interpretive clue. It is mid-winter, and Ralph Rinkelmann is old and ill. At the very depths of his illness when he is "hovering between life and death," he is taken and made king of Fairyland. This initiates a series of adventures with the grotesque and carnivalesque Shadows who "always jest in earnest" (189). After returning from his first visit to the "Shadow-church" in Iceland, Rinkelmann looks around his small cramped room and finds it "more mysterious than ever," which makes him suspect that it is "more likely that he had seen a true vision; for, instead of making common things look common place, as a false vision would have done, it made common things disclose the wonderful that was in them" (198). Through his childlike experience of the creatures of fairyland, Rinkelmann has begun the Christmas-process of growing a child again despite old age, winter, and illness. When the Shadows take Ralph back to their church for a second visit on their "grand annual assembly," MacDonald finally reveals that it is Christmas Eve. Not surprisingly, the "grand annual assembly" of the Shadows consists in the telling of stories, stories of how the wild and unruly Shadows play tricks on humans in order to reveal truth to them—often on Christmas Day. Taking the frames into account, MacDonald is telling the story of John Smith telling a story during Christmas-tide about Ralph Rinkelmann, who on Christmas Eve is listening to Shadows tell stories about Christmas-day. It is difficult to imagine a structure more interpenetrated by the day "the world was saved by a child" (133). Moreover, in this story MacDonald highlights how Christmas itself justifies the "mingling of the humorous, even the ridiculous, with the serious," an argument which he had already articulated in his defense of Browning's "Christmas Eve" (*A Dish of Orts* 200).

Meanwhile, in "My Uncle Peter" MacDonald gives the portrait of a person imbued with the childlike spirit of Christmas. Peter "was born on Christmas-day" and was "very anxious to die on Christmas-day," which MacDonald wryly comments "was rather ambitious of Uncle Peter" (278). The key characteristic of Peter is what MacDonald elsewhere calls "divine carelessness" (*Miracles of Our Lord* 372)—he delights in giving away his money and playing little jokes for the joy of others. His favorite thing to read is "fairy tales, as many as he could lay hold of" such that "the whole region of his brain was held in fee-simple, whatever that may mean, by a race of fairy architects, who built aerial castles therein, regardless of expense" (280). In this MacDonald shows that the ethos of Christmas is not austere piety but extravagant joy—a joy that forgets self-interest and self-regard as its

excess overflows to others. Peter is thus MacDonald's first "holy fool," but unlike with his more famous cousins (Sir Gibbie and Diamond) with Peter MacDonald highlights the connection of this childlike joy with Christmas.

It is, furthermore, the restoration of childlike joy to Adela that finally brings about her cure and the end of the novel. Christmas and the telling of stories (amongst other things including romantic love) revive her from "the degrading spirit of the commonplace" such that she is not frightened by the prospect of her father's penury but invigorated for she has begun to see her life as an adventure akin to one of Smith's fairytales.[9]

"Time's Intensest Now"

As a consequence of dismissing forensic justification, MacDonald did not, like traditional Protestants, make the cross the locus of his faith. Thomas Gerold, for example, observes how MacDonald "has problems taking the cross seriously enough" (87). When we look at MacDonald's most extensive discussion of this issue, the unspoken sermon "Justice,"[10] it would indeed seem that taking the cross "seriously" is not MacDonald's priority:

> I believe that he died to deliver me from all meanness, all pretence, all falseness, all unfairness, all poverty of spirit, all cowardice, all fear, all anxiety, all forms of self-love, all trust or hope in possession; *to make me merry as a child, the child of our father in heaven*, loving nothing but what is lovely, desiring nothing I should be ashamed to let the universe of God see me desire. (*Unspoken Sermons* 534; emphasis added)

This passage is the entirety of what MacDonald has to say about the death of Christ in what might be called his "credo"—a lengthy series of "I believe" statements intended to articulate clearly and positively his Christian faith. Yet even here into the very heart of justification MacDonald sneaks Christmas. Whereas some Protestants could be said to see the shadow of the cross even at the cradle, MacDonald sees the shadow of the cradle even at the cross—maybe even the shadow of a Christmas tree. Instead of taking the cross "seriously," then, MacDonald seems to be taking it "lightly" in that the cross is what enables him to be "merry as a child."

Christmas is, therefore, the center of MacDonald's faith and the moment to which all other moments point. As God's *fait accompli*, the birth of Christ is "time's intensest now"—the instant when past, present and future meet and temporality melds with eternity. For humanity in this era, Christmas itself is also a past, present and future event (in a more theological version

of *A Christmas Carol*[11]). This means first of all that Jesus was, is, and always will be a child, but it also means that Christmas is behind the memory of, the present experience of, and the future promise of joy. Christmas is the day that "makes all the days of the year as sacred as itself" (*Adela Cathcart* 310). It is in other words the moment which guarantees that eternity indwells history.

With such a theology it is no wonder that MacDonald seemed to delight in subverting certain elements of conventional Victorian morality and that he felt no compunction in offering farcical and fantastic fairy tales as fitting responses to the day "the world was saved by a child" (*Adela Cathcart* 133). Many critics have observed how the "fairy-tale was a special kind of construct which enabled [MacDonald] to express his particular view of life" (Raeper 314). Perhaps in light of MacDonald's understanding of Christmas, it could be said that fairy tales and other such stories for the "childlike" are not, for MacDonald, just an apt means of expressing a particular view; rather their playful levity somehow participates more fully than "serious" stories in the joyous reality of "the day of all the year," the day when God gave "a Child for king."

Endnotes

1. A spelling used by Louisa MacDonald (Greville MacDonald 287).
2. Books with only brief references include: *A Dish of Orts*, *At the Back of the North Wind*, *Home Again*, *Mary Marston*, *Paul Faber*, *The Seaboard Parish*, *St. George and St. Michael*, *The History of Gutta-Percha Willie*, *The Vicar's Daughter*, *Castle Warlock*, *Weighed and Wanting*, *What's Mine's Mine*, *Wilfrid Cumbermede*, and "Uncle Cornelius: His Story." More extended reflections occur in *Within and Without*, *Adela Cathcart*, and *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*.
3. In *Donal Grant* Lent is used metaphorically to indicate the austerity of Scottish Sabbaths: Saturday is "the schoolboy's weekly carnival before Lent" (109). Easter is mentioned in passing as the time when a curate has a yearly gathering in *The Seaboard Parish* (108).
4. "My Uncle Peter" appeared in *The Queen* in December of 1861 and was accompanied by two Christmas poems; "Cross Purposes" was first printed in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* of 1862, while "The Giant's Heart" was initially published in the Christmas supplement of *The Illustrated London News* in 1863 as "Tell Us a Story." MacDonald also published translations of Luther's Christmas poetry in the *Sunday Magazine* in 1866 and later printed his final fairy tale "The History of Photogen and Nycteris" in the Christmas supplement of *The Graphic* in 1879.
5. This is MacDonald's phrase from his abridged analysis of the drama (Greville MacDonald 225).
6. This passage is also MacDonald's first attempt to describe what he would later call

"the childlike."
7. In *Adela Cathcart* MacDonald says, "I believe the proximate correctness of the date of our Saviour's birth. I believe he always comes in winter" (5-6).
8. The manuscript held by the Huntley Library has "where nothing now is common or unclean" echoing the realization of Peter in Acts 10.28: "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."
9. This is Adela's response to her father: "you would not wonder that I take the prospect of poverty with absolute indifference—yes, if you will believe me, with something of a strange excitement. There will be something to battle with and beat" (456).
10. Interestingly, this sermon dealing with forensic justification is the longest MacDonald ever wrote by a significant margin, occupying forty pages in the Johannesen edition. The average length of an unspoken sermon, meanwhile, is seventeen pages.
11. Scrooge's experiences of the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future interestingly serve to restore his childlike joy.

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