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A table of contents for *Elim Evangel* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_elim-evangel-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_elim-evangel-01.php)



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# *Elim Evangel*

VOICE OF THE ELIM CHURCHES IN THE BRITISH ISLES  
FUNDAMENTAL - PENTECOSTAL - EVANGELICAL

VOL. XLI. NOS. 52 AND 53

PRICE 10d.

DECEMBER 25th, 1960



Photo by

David V. Davenport

*Youthful Carol Singers*

# GOD TO

“*TH*”

By John Lancast

A HUMAN voice, echoing through the lofty stillness of Sinai's lonely crags, gives utterance to a man's desperate hunger for God and cries, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory." Another voice, parched and cracked, the voice of a pain-racked body and a bewildered soul, takes up the same longing cry and exclaims, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Yet another voice, the urgent, breathless voice of an inquiring mind, adds its insistence to the others and pleads, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Out from the restless tides of human thought and speech the voices of Moses, Job and Philip detach themselves and rise heavenwards, forming as they do so a single note that gathers up into itself all the wistful yearnings of a multitude of hearts.

"What is God really like?" The ancient philosophers, threading their way uncertainly from one premise to another; the indulgent pagan, pausing solemnly before the great veil of the temple; modern man, armed with scientific formulae—all have sought to answer that question, but without success. And yet wherever the Spirit of God has touched, however lightly, the hearts of men this longing to know God in a certain, unclouded way has been awakened within them. Deep calls to deep, and from the heart of a man who has become aware of God there rises a longing to know Him in a personal, intimate way. And that is just where Christmas makes its impact.

At Christmas God stepped down into time and showed Himself to men, and so in answer to those voices crying in the darkness come other voices, glad and certain: "We beheld His glory . . ."; "We have found Him . . ."; "We have heard . . . have seen . . . our hands have handled . . . the Word of Life." Christmas brings the Invisible into focus.

# CONTRACTED A SPAN

*fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

Minister of Elim Church, Eastbourne)

## THE DIVINE SURPRISE

The element of surprise is everywhere in the Christmas story. That a carpenter's house should become the home of God's Son, that humble shepherds should receive the first announcement of His birth, that a cattle trough should be His cradle, that a star should wink its secret message to Gentile astrologers, all this is unexpected. We can understand how Nathaniel felt when he raised his eyebrows and asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" We are taken by surprise.

This sense of surprise is intensified when we consider the background of the Christmas story. For 600 years the Jewish nation had writhed under the iron heel of successive empires and suffered varying degrees of political serfdom. On the eve of the first Christmas, Jerusalem echoed to the tramp of the legions, fishermen on Galilee paid taxes to Rome, and thousands of peasants were migrating to their ancestral homes at the whim of a distant emperor. But through it all the nation had been sustained by the Messianic hope. Like sunlight on distant mountain peaks, that hope upheld them through the dark valleys of despair, for they carried in their hearts the knowledge that God's Anointed would one day come to break oppression and set the captives free. But they saw that hope in political and economic rather than in spiritual terms. They saw the Messiah as some powerful Being like the splendid Stranger who, sword in hand, confronted Joshua on the outskirts of Jericho. Imagine, then, their astonishment when the curtains of eternity were drawn back to reveal the Messiah, not as the shining "angel of his presence," but as a peasant girl's baby. In George Macdonald's tender words:

"They were all looking for a king  
To slay their foes and lift them high;  
Thou cam'st, a little baby thing  
That made a woman cry."

God "contracted to a span"!

## THE DIVINE MYSTERY

"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." So wrote the apostle Paul (1 Timothy 3:16), and this sense of mystery and wonder is no more vividly caught than in Luke's account of the nativity. As the jubilant shepherds recede out of the picture the light falls upon the mother of the child—a woman with an infant God in her arms and an inexpressible wonder in her soul: "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). The silence of eternity pervades this text and forces us to gaze in wonder on that Child and ponder with that mother the mystery we see.

Can this truly be "the fulness of the Godhead bodily"? Can Omniscience be resident within this unreflecting brain? Can Omnipotence be present in this tiny, unco-ordinated body? If heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, much less the great temple in Jerusalem, how can it be that within the compass of this frail life God "gives a full and complete expression of Himself" (within the physical limits that He set Himself in Christ)? And if this be so, how can He be truly man? The more we ponder, the deeper the mystery becomes. But the New Testament never hesitates. It points to the circumstances of His birth (Matthew 2:1-6), the moral grandeur of His life (Hebrews 4:15), the sovereign power He wielded (Matthew 14:24-33) and the triumph of His death and resurrection (Romans 1:4) as evidence of the assertion it repeatedly makes about Him—that He was the



“radiance of the glory of God, flawless expression of the nature of God” (Hebrews 1:3—J. B. Phillips). This, then, is what God is like! This is the answer to that lonely cry on Sinai! And Philip’s question is answered here—“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father!”

So we ponder the mystery of God manifest in human nature. Somehow He took upon Him the form of a servant and moved among the sons of

men as the Son of God, full of grace and truth, the Eternal seen within the dimensions of time and space. We gaze upon Him, baffled by the wonder of it all, and exclaim with Tennyson:

“Strong Son of God, immortal love,  
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove.”

God “contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man.”

## THE BABE WHO HAST RETRIEVED OUR LOSS

“The earth-shaking movement which transformed the Roman empire and created Christian civilisation,” writes Dr. C. S. Carpenter, “begins with a mother and a Child—and God.” This rough manger in Bethlehem becomes a focal point in history because it bears the Child of destiny—the Son of God.

But why has He come at all? What is the point of this great incarnation? What is God’s purpose in stepping down into history?

First, to reveal Himself. “No man hath seen God at any time” writes John (1:18); “the only begotten Son . . . hath declared Him.” The types and shadows are discarded and the uncertain gropings of the human mind are no longer necessary—here is God Himself, “our God contracted to a span,” the Divine scaled down to the narrow limits of the

human, and seen in terms of flesh and blood. God has come into the shrunken horizons of human experience and shown His glory in the person of His Son, who “toiled along our pathways rough.” Our lost vision of God is restored by the Babe of Bethlehem.

Then, to redeem. He came not merely to deal with our defective ideas about Himself, but primarily to deal with our sinful hearts. “I am come,” He said, “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Karl Barth has written: “Except we see the Cross of Golgotha, we cannot hear the Gospel at the crib of Bethlehem.” The purpose of Christmas, then, is not merely revelation, but redemption. He took our human nature in order that He might die—“He also became a human being, so that by going through death as a man He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might also set free those who lived their whole lives a prey to this fear of death” (Hebrews 2:14, 15—Phillips).

So we come afresh to the manger and ponder the miracle of God manifest in the flesh. When we have said all, we have but lightly touched the surface of an imponderable mystery. Here lies the Son of God—God contracted to a span, God accepting the limitations of human nature, God taking to Himself a human body. We gaze down on the minute perfection of this tiny Babe and sense the shadow of the Cross; we worship at His crib, but we remember that:

“When He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared Me . . .”; and “We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

“O come, let us adore Him!”

## THE HOLY BABE

Lo! a star!  
A King is born.  
Hasten  
At the dawn.

Hasten where  
The Baby-King  
Sleepeth  
While angels sing.

While angels sing  
With folded wings,  
Worship  
The King of kings.

GORDON WRIGHT.

# Leaves from a Minister's Diary

By T. H. Stevenson

OUR local library committee voted to make the book *Lady Chatterley's Lover* available to the public. To those who objected a councillor replied: "What right have Ilford Council to question the decisions of Her Majesty's courts?" The very existence of the Court of Appeal is evidence that those concerned may question any decision if they are minded to do so. At Christmas we think of the birth of Christ, but also remember His death which was executed by the decision of the religious court that cried "He is guilty of death," and by Pilate, who "gave consent that it should be as they required." Does anyone suggest that their decision was just and beyond question?

☆ ☆ ☆

Of the infamous book referred to, more than 1,000 were quickly sold in our town—and there was a waiting list. One store reported: "Two hundred copies were sold. About ninety-eight per cent of the customers say they are buying it for someone else." I seriously question whether needy cases could as easily find helpers to do their shopping!

☆ ☆ ☆

A few days after the death of Mr. Gilbert Harding, of B.B.C. fame, I met Mr. Legerton, the secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society, and recalled that only a year or two ago these men appeared together on television. Mr. Legerton was being "grilled" by Gilbert Harding, though one would have thought the order reversed. Mr. Harding looked miserable and almost fearful. His victim appeared otherwise, in fact the very opposite. No wonder Mr. Harding there admitted that despite his strict views about Sunday observance Mr. Legerton was a very happy man. And now Mr. Harding is dead, leaving

behind his own testimony that neither fame, fortune, fun nor conversion to the Roman Catholic faith had removed his fears, especially of dying.

☆ ☆ ☆

Visiting another church, I was interested to meet a young man whose parents have recently been converted and now attend my church. After telling me about his parents, as he stood beside his wife he put his hand on his very young daughter, saying: "This is my little girl who brought us to Christ." Wonderful! Unlike Timothy, whose grandmother and mother were in the faith before him, here a little girl leads the way for parents, and grandparents also. "A little child shall lead them." That first Christmas, when old Simeon took the Child in his arms, he could say even of the Babe, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

☆ ☆ ☆

Thinking of children, the question of godparents at baptism was raised at the Church of England Assembly by the Prime Minister's brother. He pressed for its abolition and cited the case of Dr. Weizman (an orthodox Jew) acting as godparent to General Wingate's son. He contended that, as in the Church of Scotland, the father of the child should carry the babe to the font. Perhaps when an infant is brought to an Elim church for dedication we at least should insist that the father at least is present also. This service can easily become as empty a ceremonial as infant baptism often seems.

☆ ☆ ☆

On my birthday I received greetings from a young man whom I had the great joy of leading to Christ two years ago on my birthday. The date I was born is the date he was "born again," and so we easily think of each other, of my natural birth and his spiritual birth. The latter is the more important and the more realistic, the one that we can remember taking place, and one that has brought us into the wonderful family of our heavenly Father.

☆ ☆ ☆

Christmas, I trust, will be a happy time for all our readers. For many people it is spoiled before it really begins. Dr. Freeman, Manchester police surgeon, relates that nine out of sixteen drivers examined for drunkenness a week before Christmas had come from parties in offices—"a custom which presented a pathetic spectacle when they were sober enough to realise the tragic consequences of their folly; their first time within a police station." May our Christmas be joyfully spent in worship and the fellowship of family and friends.

# “Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness”

(Psalm 65:11)

January, February, March, April, May, June, July,  
August, September, October, November, December

## A REVIEW OF THE YEAR 1960

By J. J. Morgan (Field Superintendent)

**January.** The month of beginnings, when on every hand we hear the glad and exciting words “A happy new year.” But this is particularly so in Scotland. It is the Scottish custom to observe the coming in of the new year. Hogmanay is a great night in the land of the heather. In many of our Scottish churches it is the opportunity for holding the winter convention. And so the new year began for our friends north of the border with times of prayer and to the accompaniment of praise and exhortations from the Word of God.

Our President too this month visited the Elim churches in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Later in the month our friends at Westcliff-on-Sea, under the leadership of Pastor George Backhouse, entered into a very beautiful and commodious new church building which will prove a great blessing for this ever-increasing work.

**February.** During this month, when the wind blows cold and the rain and sleet fall, it is an act

of faith to plan for conventions and special services.

During the month Pastor Donald Gee attended the minister's third anniversary at Hastings and Pastor Joseph Smith held a special series of meetings for the deepening of spiritual life at Worcester and at Graham Street, Birmingham. This warrior preaches with the fires of youth still burning in his heart.

A profitable youth leaders' conference was held in York during this month, conducted by the National Youth Committee. Teachers from the Sunday schools and youth leaders were thus brought together to co-ordinate their work for God.

**March.** The cold winds of March blow and discourage folk from leaving the warm fireside after a busy day at the office, factory or shop. But still the work of evangelism goes on. Rallies are held. One of particular interest in all our churches was the united Bible colleges demonstration, held this year in the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The chairman was Pastor Donald Gee and the speakers were Pastor Wesley Gilpin, Principal of the Elim Bible College, and Pastor Fred Squire, Principal of the International Bible Training Institute. It proved to be a great time of blessing, and during this meeting a 100-student chorus and musicians under the direction of our Musical Director, Pastor D. B. Gray, rendered inspiring items.

During March Pastor David Hathaway conducted an evangelistic crusade in the Town Hall, Coleraine, in Northern Ireland, Pastor George Canty and party in Paignton, and Pastor Eddie Smith at Gorleston-on-Sea. Earlier Pastor P. S. Brewster opened a new church at Ebbw Vale. For the efforts of our evangelists we thank God.

**April.** The opening of the new Elim church at Ilford was one of the outstanding events of this month. For many years the people of Ilford looked forward to the day when they would enter into their new home. The Mayor and Mayoress of Ilford were both present and a large crowd of Elim members and friends witnessed the opening by Pastor H.



Pastor and Mrs. Joseph Smith.



*Some of those who took part in Elim's Easter witness at Trafalgar Square.*

Burton-Haynes (President 1959-60), and for Pastor T. H. Stevenson and his deacons it was a day of attainment.

The Royal Albert Hall was the Mecca for Elim church members on Easter Monday. This year our guest speaker was Rev. Ray Hughes, a dynamic evangelist from the U.S.A. This was a great day with God and His people.

In addition to the London Royal Albert Hall gatherings a score or more conventions were held throughout the country. Pastor Ron Jones and party conducted a campaign at Letchworth Garden City during this month with much blessing.

**May.** Campaigns still go on in Elim churches. Pastor L. Lambert and party campaigned at Poole, Dorset. Norwich had a special second anniversary convention, at which Pastors J. Carter and H. W. Greenway ministered the Word. Fareham too was opened up by a campaign conducted by Pastor Charles Brookes and party.

Stockton-on-Tees was opened by a crusade by Pastor John Woodhead.

The London Crusader Choir visited Bristol for a symphony of praise and Pastor R. Jones chaired this inspiring service.

A sad blow fell upon the Elim work this month. On May 5th Pastor John Dyke passed from the scene of his earthly labours into the presence of his Lord and Master. He was about his Master's business in the morning and in the afternoon he was at home with the Lord. Unforgettable scenes were witnessed the day this valiant warrior was laid to rest. From every part of the land men (and women) of

God came to pay their personal tribute to one beloved among us.

The conference in Harrogate was a time of great spiritual blessing. It is a joy for Christian ministers and lay brethren to get together and plan for the future days. Changes come and changes go, but God's work goes on.

**June.** Whitsuntide. The coming of the Holy Spirit at the first Pentecost is remembered and honoured in Elim churches and conventions, for the deepening of the spiritual lives of God's people is the order of the day. All over the country the emphasis is on the power and manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the Church of God.

During June Pastor A. Boston laboured in the evangelistic field at Gainsborough and a youth conference was held in London to discuss ways and means of helping youth.



*Pastor Ron Jones and crusade party at Letchworth.*



The Scottish churches had a wonderful day in Glasgow when 1,000 people gathered for the presbytery rally in St. Andrew's Hall.

**July.** The month of sunshine. Where did the sun get to some days? But who cares? Camp was the order of the day—Weymouth, Clacton, Porthpean and Rhowniar. In the tent at Bradford Pastor David Hathaway laboured away for God and many decisions for Christ were recorded, and the church there was wonderfully cheered and encouraged.

**August.** The holiday month. Yes, for some, but Elim uses every available holiday to get the message of God home to the hearts of saint and sinner.

Large Pentecostal conventions were held in Bristol and at many seaside resorts like Bridlington, Southport, Southend-on-Sea, etc., to accommodate God's people while on holiday. Nothing helps us like good fellowship, even on holiday.

**September.** From August into September Pastor Philip Brewer conducted a campaign on new ground in Middlewich, and Pastor Ron Jones and party pioneered a new church in Shrewsbury, resulting in another Elim church being established. During this month, too, many churches were planning and preparing for their autumn and winter work.

**October** began with the great symphony of praise by the London Crusader Choir led by Pastor D. B. Gray. The guests included Julie Adams (teenage elocutionist), Ruth King (pianist), and the American Crusader Male Voice Trio (and they very nearly did not make it, as one member of the team was left behind with a bad throat in Birmingham but turned up just before the service commenced).

These brethren toured many of our churches with great acceptance and blessing upon their ministry.

In October, Longton church entered new church premises, and the Scottish churches held a great rally at Alloa.

**November.** Many churches make this the opportunity for a youth drive—when young folk do not know what to do with themselves. In many churches Sunshine Corner and Junior and Senior Crusaders are forging ahead. Our missionaries are worthy of mention, for month by month, summer and winter, those on furlough tour our churches and lecture on the work of God in lands afar. Nor would we fail to tell of the marvellous job done over the year by the London Crusader Choir in our churches and in the prisons of our land. One sister is specially worthy of mention—Miss Jean Ayling visits some of our missionaries by air during her holidays and comes home and tours our churches showing pictures of the work being done.



*Young people at Bristol sing Christmas carols.*

**December.** Cold and bleak, but withal a blessed month. Carols and Christmas parties. What a happy month when we remember the coming of the Son of God. Many of our church choirs sing carols in hospital wards and are very welcome visitors. This year Christmas Day is on the Lord's day. Let us make it truly God's day with family worship in His house. The honouring of Him who came so long ago to save us will sweeten and sanctify every earthly pleasure at this time.

May we all be able to say as we survey the year 1960:

### **THOU CROWNEST THE YEAR WITH THY GOODNESS**

and let us face the future assured that God is with us. So, a *happy new year to all.*

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## **THE ELIM EVANGEL**

Official Organ of the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance

Executive Council: J. Woodhead (President), J. T. Bradley, P. S. Brewster, H. Burton-Haynes, S. Gorman, H. W. Greenway, W. G. Hathaway, J. C. Kennedy, J. J. Morgan, E. J. Phillips.

Editor: Aubrey Hathaway, B.A.

Terms: 28/- for one year or 14/- for 6 months, post free to any address.

Published every Saturday by Elim Publishing House, 36 and 37 Clapham Crescent, London, S.W.4.

Quantities: 5/- per doz. post free, monthly payments. Odd copies charged full price.

Remittances should be addressed to Elim Publishing House, 36 and 37 Clapham Crescent, London, S.W.4, and cheques made payable to Elim Publishing House.

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## From the Editor

CHRISTMAS, the Babe in Bethlehem's manger, adoring shepherds, heraldic choirs in the vault of heaven—here is the age-old wonder and enchantment of the greatest story ever told, a story to captivate the imagination of every child and yet to mystify the intellect of the sage.

The simplicity of the Christmas story is one of the supreme sources of its charm. None of the trappings of earthly grandeur are here in the stable of the humble travellers' khan beside Judæa's winding road. Only a youthful mother, bending low over the helpless form of her first-born son; only the rudest cradle, pressed into service at this moment of need; only a makeshift shelter, holding none of earth's meagre comforts. None could claim a lowlier birth. How significant are the words of Scripture: "He emptied Himself." Childlike minds may not comprehend the majesty and glory of the Eternal, but the Babe of Bethlehem wins His way into the hearts of the youngest and simplest. And was not this an integral part of the great plan Divine? "What is God like?" the inquiring human mind demands. "The high and lofty One who inhabits eternity!" But earthbound intellect cannot readily soar into such realms. Then it is that the other great answer is given: "God was in Christ . . . God manifest in the flesh . . . the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us . . . made in the likeness of men." Wonder of wonders that, in order to lift us up to where He is, God came down to where we were—nay, down to the level of the lowliest of the sons of men.

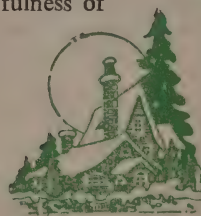
Yet, with all its simplicity, the story of that first Christmas is shrouded still in mystery. Mortal man may see and give thanks, but he cannot fully comprehend the mystery of the incarnation. That God, infinite in His majesty, splendour and power, creating vast worlds that stretch out beyond the reach of man's greatest telescopes, holding the myriad hosts of the stars in His grasp, originator of all that man can see—that such a God can dwell within the finite, limited span of a babe! No wonder Paul cries out: "Great is the mystery . . . God was manifest in the flesh." Surely it will take eternity to understand fully this wonderful event. Its wonder thrills our childhood days, yet challenges all the powers of our adult minds.

The incarnation, however, is no isolated event, but part of that great Divine plan to redeem a lost world, eradicate the consequences of man's disastrous fall and restore God's crowning creation to the place for which he was destined before the worlds were framed: to enter into fellowship with his Creator—nay, more: to enter into Divine sonship and joint inheritance with Christ. Without Bethlehem there can be no Calvary, for only one who is identified with the human race in all its limitations and infirmities can be an effectual high priest. Only as man can He stand in man's place before God, and only as the Divine Son of God can He accomplish what no man could ever effect, the all-availing sacrifice of the only sinless Man who ever lived.

"Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" says Luke. And well might she ponder, as well may we, for in this little Babe "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Mystery of mysteries, wonder of all wonders:

"The great Creator became my Saviour,  
And all God's fulness dwelleth in Him."

"O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord."





# MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

By H. Palliser (Minister of Elim Church, Carlisle)

IT is something over 1,900 years ago, and there is great excitement in heaven. A critical hour is approaching when God is about to intervene in the affairs of sinful men. He has sent prophets and priests, judges and kings, and now He says "I will send unto them My Son." And there in heaven are angels watching and wondering as Christ prepares Himself for His incarnation.

But who is to be the chosen vessel for such a purpose as this? With what care did God choose Abraham—the father of the chosen race, "Abraham My friend." Look at the nation's lawgiver—"Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." Consider the founder of the royal family from whom Christ will trace His earthly descent—"David, the man after God's own heart." And here is something more wonderful—someone on earth is to be the mother of our Lord! What a wonderful woman she must be! And if the Roman Church has sinned in worshipping Mary I fear we Protestants have erred in going to the other extreme of underrating her.

And now look! Before Christ leaves heaven, Gabriel makes his way to earth. He goes past Rome, the centre of power; past Athens, the centre of wisdom; past Jerusalem, the centre of religion; to the despised little highland town of Nazareth. Look at Nazareth. It is seventy miles north of Jerusalem, resting on a hillside, and straddling the main road from the Phœnician seaports of Tyre and Sidon to Jerusalem. It is a busy little town. Roman armies make it a halting place; Greek merchants break their journeys there; people of every nationality travel through its streets. Bear all that in mind and you will understand why Nazareth has a bad reputation, and why Judæan Jews say "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Well, Gabriel goes to Nazareth because in that foul city dwells Mary, the Lord's chosen vessel.

In passing, here is a detail we often pass over

lightly. The record of Christ's birth as told from Mary's side is given by Luke, the beloved *physician*, and for beauty, delicacy and restraint his record is quite unsurpassed. Luke throws a flood of light upon Mary which is very revealing—showing us something of the woman she was.

## HE TELLS OF HER CHARACTER

"Thou hast found favour with God." Now the point of interest here is the little word "with." It means "by the side of." By the side of, in fellowship with, in God's company, God's true yoke-fellow. She may be a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Judah and of the house of David; but that is not the reason why she has been chosen. No, this is the reason—she lives with God.

She is a true daughter of Abraham, the friend of God. She is the granddaughter of Enoch, who walked with God. As I see it it means this—that her life of fellowship with God is a settled thing, it has become a holy habit and custom and rule. She has done it for so long that it has become her natural element. It *must* be, else she would not have survived the pollutions of Nazareth! And all the time the Lord has been watching her, assessing her and considering her. The mind goes back to a scene in the Old Testament where the Lord is musing to Himself over Abraham, and He says "*I know him*, that he will command his children after him that they may keep the way of the Lord."

She walks with God. Many a time she has read the Word of God and many times she has read Proverbs 31:10, 11, 25-31. Many a time she has gone to Psalm 139 and made it her prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart . . ." And she is quite ahead of Paul (2 Timothy 2:20) as she thinks of vessels unto honour, and desires to be one. And so her consecration becomes fuller, deeper, broader, until when Gabriel comes and delivers his message

she says naturally and simply, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

Yet all the time so humble is she that she never thinks such a destiny will be hers. And all the time the Lord looks upon her and says "Them that honour Me I will honour"; and again, "To her that hath shall be given." And it is so.

### HE TELLS OF HER CONFIDENCE

Gabriel delivers his message, and then Mary asks a question: "How . . . seeing . . .?" And as I see it, this is not the language of unbelief. It is a simple natural question bearing on the biological, the scientific side of this event. The angel, let it be noted, has no hint of rebuke in his reply. His answer is given by means of (a) an explanation: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"; (b) an illustration: "Behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age"; (c) an exhortation: "With God nothing shall be impossible."

This word Mary accepts in simple faith. How do I know? A little later she meets Elisabeth, and Elisabeth breaks out ecstatically, "Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." And again I think of Abraham, and of that which was written concerning him by Paul: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform." No wonder Dr. Alex. Whyte wrote: "And again, if we are to apply this sure principle to Mary's case, 'according to your faith be it unto you,' then Mary must surely wear the crown as the mother of all them who believe on her Son. If Abraham's faith has made him the father of all them who believe, surely Mary's faith entitles her to be called their mother. If the opposite of our Lord's words hold true, that no mighty work is done where there is unbelief; if we may safely reason that where there has been a mighty work done there must have been a corresponding and a co-operating faith; then I do not think we can easily over-estimate the measure of Mary's faith."

Did she fully understand? I do not know. She "wondered" when the angel came; she "pondered" over the visit of the shepherds; she "pondered"

over the episode in the temple twelve years later. But over all this, and through all this, and beyond all this, she believed!

### HE TELLS OF HER CONFLICT

"And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The scene is in the temple just after the rite of circumcision.

But come back to the time when Gabriel has announced her prospective motherhood. Try reverently to think of her position—in sinful Nazareth with its questionings, suspicions, gossips and scandalmongers. And remember this—that explanation is an impossibility. To whom can she tell it, for who will believe her? No wonder Dr. Whyte also said: "On a thousand sacred canvases throughout Christendom we are shown the angel presenting Mary with a branch of lily as an emblem of her beauty and a seal of her purity. But why has no spiritual artist stained the whiteness of the lily with the red blood of a broken heart? For no sooner had the light of the angel's presence faded from her sight than a deep and awful darkness began to fall upon her." And so we read what we do read, that "Mary arose . . . and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda." In haste? Between her and



God is absolute purity, but all around in Nazareth are prying eyes, malicious tongues—and she arises “in haste.” And I daresay she often prays in prayer the words of Psalm 31: “Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues,” and also Psalm 37: “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.”

She goes to Elisabeth, for she needs sympathy and understanding. What of her own mother? We do not know. But at least she has three months of peace in Judæa. And yet—the sword is piercing! Again, think of later years. Her Son is busy in His great work, and she listens, she hears, she knows, she senses the bitter hatred. Blood is thicker than water, and she feels it when He is called a lunatic, glutton, drunkard and demoniac—and especially this: “*We* were not born of fornication.” The sword goes on piercing and cutting, for she knows the full truth of His wondrous birth, but what can she say? Once more: Calvary. She knows He has been arrested and she nerves herself to stand the strain of witnessing His last ghastly hours, and in those hours the sword

pierces to its deepest. For, after all, He is her Son, and has nestled under her heart. “Can a woman forget?” asks the evangelical prophet, and of all women and of all mothers she cannot forget!

Then what “keeps her going” through all the years while the sword pierces her heart? Once more I turn to Gabriel’s announcement—“Thou *art* endowed with grace; the Lord *is* with thee.” Two things, two promised supplies: the enabling grace and the abiding God. And these two promises, as they are realised, keep her firm and unmoved.

So we leave this wonderful woman. “Blessed art thou among women” sings Elisabeth. “Blessed is she that believed.” Blessed! Jesus hears a woman say “Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked.” Blessed! And what does Jesus say? “Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” “Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?” And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, “Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.”



### ***TO the Shepherds first***

When the angel brought from heaven  
Tidings of the Saviour's birth,  
God so willed that humble shepherds  
Heard it first on earth.

For Christ came as our Good Shepherd,  
In compassion for the lost,  
Sought His sheep until He found them,  
At love's utmost cost!

Oh the wondrous revelation!  
When they to the manger trod,  
Shepherds filled with adoration  
Saw the Lamb of God!

Lamb of God for sin's atonement;  
Shepherd's life so freely given!  
“Unto you is born a Saviour”—  
God's great gift from heaven.

—F. D. WALKER.

## *Summer Holidays*

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# "Merriment isn't happiness"

By Hugh Sawyer

**T**WO thousand years seems a long time ago. According to God's reckoning a thousand years are as one day, so that in His eyes the miraculous advent of His Son into this troubled world is but a couple of yesterdays gone.

The celebration of this popular event has undergone many changes through the years, for the modern commercialised "Xmas," despite its sentimental appeal, has practically nothing in common with the sacred Messianic Christmas. The object of the business world, remembering the old adage "There is no sentiment in business," is to make monetary hay while the sun of benevolence shines. To the worldly minded it is a season of high jinks, gluttony and the gulping down of much intoxicating liquor. For the kiddies, if fortunate, it brings the gratification of yearnings for some desired treasure, supposedly brought while they sleep by a mythical benevolent Santa Claus!

The restless craving of natural man, sighing for the flesh-pots of the world, is far removed from the peace of mind enjoyed by those who have got rid of their load of sins at Calvary through the redeeming sacrifice of this same Jesus whose birth this season commemorates. To them it is good will and thanksgiving all the way, and not only an occasion for good living and the exchange of presents. Walking in the footsteps of the wise men of old, they gather from near and far, worship, adore and join with the invisible angelic choirs around the heavenly throne in singing praises to Him who was born to be the Saviour of mankind; this same Jesus, later to be despised, rejected and slain by unrepentant wickedness.

With the speed of thought let us reverently peep into that holy spot. Removing our shoes of worldliness lest we contaminate the sacred atmosphere, and donning the mantle of adoration, let us take our place with the unseen watchers from the heavenly spheres. Save for the contented sighs of the oxen bedded down nearby, the manger wherein

the infant lies is stilled by a deep silence. The influence of guardian angels makes their presence felt, and over and above all Almighty God smiles, extending His loving arms in blessing upon His Son, even as He nestles close to the bosom of His devoted mother.

Never before was an infant conceived in such a Divine fashion. Never before was an infant born without the taint of original sin. Never before was an infant born an actual king. "Where is He that is *born* King of the Jews?" inquired the eastern wise men as they came seeking to worship Him. Within His tiny grasp was Divine power more than enough to cause the greatest power-crazed Cæsar this world could produce to fade into insignificance. He held supreme lordship over the mighty angelic hosts, any one of whom at His royal command could wield devastating destruction far in excess of any nuclear bomb devised by the ingenuity of man.

What a privilege is ours to share in this wondrous worship; to be associated with Jesus, King of all kings; to share in His glory; to know that, despite His Divine regality, His power and magnificence as He now sits at His Father's right hand, He ever intercedes for us, and to be aware that He knows each one of us by name individually. He offers freely to every man the greatest present it is possible to receive: the gift of eternal life! Have you accepted yours yet?

Remember at this season that merriment is not happiness. One is the gratification of the senses, a stirring of the emotions, which, when it subsides, still leaves misery in its wake. The other is joy unspeakable, springing from a heart at peace with God, having the blessed assurance that all is well with the soul through Jesus Christ.



## OVERSEAS MISSIONS

# Retrospect brings rejoicing

By Samuel Gorman (Missionary Secretary)



AS Christmas once more approaches with all the exciting preparation that precedes it—the purchasing of gifts, the choosing of Christmas cards, the hanging of decorations, the making of Christmas cake and puddings—we are compelled in our joyful activities to pause and remember every beloved missionary of Elim who must celebrate this great and happy festival far away from loved ones, yet with those they love for Christ's sake.

As Christmas is, apart from its spiritual significance, the festival of the home, we know that their thoughts will often turn homeward. For years there hung on the wall of our living room a little framed verse sent by a loved one who was far away. It read:

“East, west, home is best,  
Each hearth some wanderer's goal,  
For as at night the wild bird seeks her nest  
So homeward flies my soul;  
And I who may not come,  
Though loved ones call,  
Send home my heart instead;  
God bless you all.”

This surely reveals to us just how our dear fellow workers overseas must feel as Christmas approaches, yet we know they resolutely put their own feelings on one side and devote themselves to giving happiness to their coloured friends—the family they have adopted for Christ's sake.

The wise men from afar came to worship the Babe in the manger, to make their direct and personal contact with the Saviour-Child, and in contrast our missionaries have travelled to lands far removed from home and loved ones to take the message of the Gospel to those who sit in darkness. How thrilling it is for them and us to know that during the year that is drawing to a close they have succeeded in leading many to the Saviour and establishing them in the faith.

And so, together, the great Elim family over here unites in sending all Elim missionaries everywhere

its loving Christmas wishes, assuring them of its continued thoughts and prayers.

Our heading bears the words “Retrospect brings rejoicing,” and how true this is, for as we look back over the history of the Elim Missionary Society for the past year our hearts are filled with rejoicing and thanksgiving to God for the wonderful way He has blessed and undertaken.

The generous giving of our members has been maintained in spite of the fact that no special appeals have been made for increased giving since our last financial year which ended October 1959.

Now let us remind ourselves of God's blessing upon our society during the past year. In January we were concerned to receive the news that Dr. R. C. Brien was seriously ill, and that Pastor A. Tate had entered hospital with suspected typhus. All who heard the news immediately commenced to pray and God answered prayer. Pastor Tate was soon out of hospital and Dr. Brien restored to a measure of health and strength. Then came an exciting period extending over several weeks when we were busy meeting and welcoming home on furlough many of our missionaries. How active the Commer was, plying between Woodlands and the London stations, being loaded up with luggage by willing Bible College students and then speeding the missionaries to the homes of their loved ones which were within reasonable distance of London, or conveying them to other stations so that they could continue their journey to relations who lived farther away. In some cases the Commer returned to the Bible College bringing those to whom Elim Woodlands is a beloved home of choice and happy memories.

Among those we had the joy of welcoming home

were Pastor and Mrs. A. D. Bull and their young daughter Heather from Tanganyika, Pastor and Mrs. D. C. Lewis and their little daughter from India, Miss Vera McGillivray from Hong Kong, and Miss Ruby Simms from Southern Rhodesia. But there have to be farewells as well as arrivals, and during the year, with mixed feelings, we said goodbye to Miss Elsie Wriglesworth (India), Miss R. Simms (who only took six months furlough), Miss Marion Paint (India), and Miss Winnie Loosemore (Southern Rhodesia). With Miss Loosemore travelled a new missionary, our young brother Peter Griffiths, who was bound for Penhalonga as a teacher-missionary.

In February we said another kind of farewell. This had to be done by letter, for Pastor and Mrs. J. B. Troke, faithful Elim missionaries for many years in Bombay, retired, and early in March sailed from India to New Zealand. The work in Bombay has been taken over by Pastor and Mrs. Jenkins, of the Elim church of New Zealand.

Later, in July, the news in the press regarding the situation in the Belgian Congo caused us grave concern for all missionaries stationed there and, of course, in particular we were very anxious about Miss C. Picken and Miss Olive Garbutt, our own two representatives, who were in the danger area. However, God undertook and our two sisters were able to get away safely, and made their way to Southern Rhodesia, where they were warmly received and cared for by our missionaries there. Work has been provided for them. Miss Picken helps in one of the schools and Miss Garbutt is nursing until such time as (D.V.) they are able to return to their former field of service, which still has a special place in their hearts.

In September Pastor Tom Johnston was taken seriously ill, but as in the case of our other two brethren God heard and answered prayer and raised him up.

Space does not permit of our telling of all the instances of God's great blessing on the work of our missionaries. Certainly they have had their times of disappointment and frustration, but all the time, everywhere, they have had the joy of seeing precious souls saved.

Before Miss Picken had to leave the Congo she wrote telling of a baptismal service which included among the candidates fifteen scholars from the

school, and Pastor Norton (Transvaal) wrote early in the year of the baptism in water of two men who had been witch-doctors. Most encouraging news was received from Mrs. B. Christie, also of the Transvaal, who told of a visit to the site of a timber company, where by permission of the manager an open-air gathering was held. The Gospel was proclaimed by Mrs. Haws and a party from Sabie. Following the altar call many came forward signifying their desire to follow Christ.

From Inyanga North Miss Margaret Gwynne tells of five souls being saved in a few days. These included a village headman who had resisted the Gospel for eight years. Then from far-away Formosa Pastor Ken McGillivray, speaking of one community where Roman Catholic influence is very strong, said: "God has moved in a remarkable way and over sixty families have turned to Christ." In Pastor Ron Gull's last letter from Tanganyika we heard of eight decisions being made for Christ during recent open-air meetings.

And so from British Guiana, Hong Kong, Formosa, India, Transvaal, Tanganyika, Southern Rhodesia, Kenya and Belgian Congo has come the encouraging news of well-attended meetings, the salvation of souls, the healing of bodies and a moving of the Spirit of God upon the people.

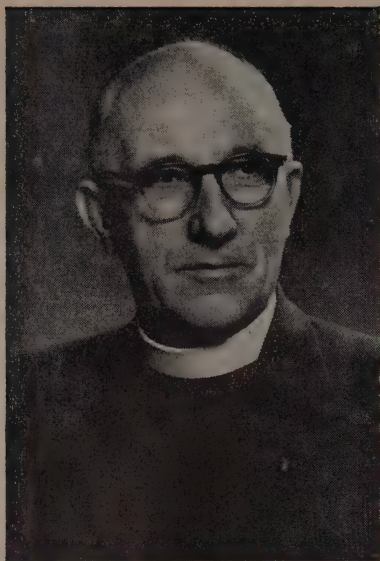
With this knowledge rejoicing and encouraging our hearts we finish this article with the words of the hymn-writer:

"We praise Him for all that is past  
And trust Him for all that's to come."



*Some of the members of the Elim Missionary Council.*





Rev. John Woodhead

# A Christmas message

REV. JOHN WO

*“For God so loved the world, that He gave*

545

**I**n spite of the fact that John's Gospel records not a word about the birth of our Saviour, it gives us the shortest, simplest and most wonderful statement of the coming of Christ to be found in the whole of God's word, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is a truth, blazing and scintillating with the presence and power of God.

I can think of no more vital scripture than this one as we go through Christmas time. What a wonderful opportunity to proclaim the supremacy of our Saviour, to exalt and lift high the glory of Him whose name was called Jesus when He was born into this world "because He would save His people from their sin."

I heard of a boy who was said to have quoted our text: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only *forgotten* Son." The lad misquoted the words "only begotten" as "only forgotten." Although he misquoted the wording of John 3:16 he did not miss the actual conditions which prevail only too often at this season. Our time is taken up with what we can get and give to each other, and we forget to stop and meditate upon the One whose birth we celebrate. Let us seek at this time to promote the person of Jesus and proclaim His message to this dark and dying

world. I appeal to our readers to magnify Christ more consistently and invest the season with its true significance. Let us remember that above and beyond all the gifts, the fellowship of family and friends, is One whose coming into this world was paramount. This will bring back some of the awe, mystery and

## MIRACLE OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Let us present to Him our gifts—the pure gold of our love, the frankincense of our praise and the sweet-smelling myrrh of our faith. The shepherds had no treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh like the wise men, but they had hearts to feel and lips to express their feelings. They could tell what they had heard, seen and experienced and their testimony was blessed.

You remember that when the angels finished their revelation to the shepherds, the shepherds turned to each other and said: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass." That is the plea, the invitation, the appeal that I press upon your hearts.

The manger was more than all the thrones; the swaddling clothes were more regal than purple robes. The Child was truly King of kings and Lord of lords. From that humble birth there has come One whose touch transforms every situation and from whom there proceeds a dynamic which overthrows every power of evil. That Babe is destined to wear the diadem, for "the kingdoms of this world [shall] become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ." That little hand will sustain a sinking world. That infant, the sovereign Saviour of the world, will lead captivity captive, will conquer death and dispel hell of its hopes and reopen the gates of heaven.

# from the President HEAD (F.R.G.S.)

*His only begotten Son*” (John 3:16).

When we think of the birth of Jesus let us not think of Him as we think of others born into this world; His birth was supernatural and unique and invested with a glory all His own. He had no earthly father; God was His Father, as declared so clearly in our text “His only begotten Son” (see also Isaiah 7:14). To deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is at the same time to deny His sinless life. The truth of the virgin birth of our Lord is the keystone in the arch of Divine revelation; take it away and the whole citadel of salvation is insecure.

## THE REASON FOR BETHLEHEM IS CALVARY

“He was manifested to take away sin.” He came down from the throne of glory to the tree of Calvary. He came down from the worship of angels to the persecution of men. He came from the hallelujahs of heaven to the hate of earth. For while Isaiah speaks of the birth of the Prince of Peace, the increase of His government and peace and the establishment of His kingdom (Isaiah 9:6, 7), he also tells of His rejection and suffering (Isaiah 53). But His deep descent was the dawn of mercy; because we could not ascend to Him, Jesus descended to us. He became the Son of man so that we could become the sons of God.

God’s first promise to fallen man was that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15). As to the flesh, our Lord is the seed of the woman, but He is infinitely more. The Bible says: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth *His Son*, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5).

May the joy  
of the Lord  
be yours this  
Christmas  
season, and  
abide with you  
throughout  
1961

The virgin-born Jesus was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” therefore able to become sin for us because He knew no sin. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh. God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, was made flesh; so Deity was displayed before the eyes of mankind.

There is one point to which I wish to call the attention of our readers: if we desire to give Christ His rightful place at this season He Himself must become incarnate in the hearts of His people. He dwells within the believer by faith and His presence and power become manifest as we yield ourselves fully to Him. Bible truth becomes effective when it becomes personal.

We do rejoice in the fact that Jesus has been born into this world and that He has tabernacled among men. We thank God that the Infinite became finite and lived within the limitations of a human body. But has this Infinite One been born in us? Have we allowed Him to come into our lives and rule the throne of our hearts? Paul could say

### “CHRIST LIVETH IN ME”

(Galatians 2:20). May He be able to come and take full possession of us so that this Christmas time and at all times and in all places we can “show forth the praises of Him who hath called [us] out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

(Continued on page 835)

### (3) PATTERN FOR PRAYER

By Evelyn Green

*"Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him . . ." (Hosea 14:2)*

A LITTLE child needs not only to be encouraged to speak, but also to be taught *how* to speak; an alien who has become a naturalised citizen of another country, in order to participate in its social life and business affairs, must learn its language, must know *what* to say, or else live in a bleak little world all of his own; an ambassador to a foreign nation, whose mission calls for great tact and discretion, needs (almost as much as anything) to know what *not* to say.

We, as believers in Christ, are the Father's little children; we are former aliens who have a new citizenship and a new function to fulfil in this spiritual Zion, new speech to acquire; we are ambassadors for Christ, and learning how to address ourselves to our heavenly Sovereign is actually the finest training in the art of approaching those whom we have to persuade to become reconciled to God (Romans 8:15, 16; Ephesians 2:11-22; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

The child, the new citizen, the ambassador—each needs, and usually receives, his instruction from a higher authority. And so do we.

If we feebly excuse ourselves from praying by pleading that we do not know what to say, our continued ignorance is a reproach to us, in that it is because we have not obeyed His command. For God has taken fully into account our "newness" and the fact that we are comparatively unversed in the things Divine and eternal (even though many years may have passed since we were "born anew," since we received heavenly citizenship, and since we became His ambassadors); and, because we know not what we should pray for as we ought, the Spirit of God helps our weakness by unspoken intercession on our behalf, and, by instructing us in the Word of God, teaches us to pray according to the will of God (Romans 8:26, 27).

You have no words with which to pray? You do

not know what to pray for as you ought? This latter condition is common to us all. "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord." Study the prayers and supplications contained in the Scriptures, go beyond the grandeur of the language in which they are framed, and perceive their essence. For there is a Spirit-directed pattern about them, and a certain similarity even though the phraseology varies greatly.

Consider the prayer of David (1 Chronicles 17:16-27), of Solomon (2 Chronicles 6:12-42), of Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:5-12), of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:4-11), of Job (Job 42:1-6), of Daniel (Daniel 9:3-19).

These prayers, though uttered by greatly differing personalities, in a variety of circumstances and places and over a considerable space of time, have these things in common.

1. Homage. "O Lord . . . there is no God like Thee."
2. Honesty. "We have no might . . . neither know we what to do."
3. Humility. "Who am I?" "We have sinned!"—the innocent identifying himself with the guilty.
4. Hope. Reliance upon God's faithfulness and mercy—"which keepeth covenant."
5. Hunger. A longing for God and the demonstration of His mercy and power.

Coming over to the New Testament we shall see, if we make comparison, that the prayer outlined by the Lord Jesus for the benefit of His disciples follows the same lines. There is the homage—"hallowed be Thy name"; the honesty—"lead us not into temptation" (this is a tacit admission of our possible inability to withstand the same); the humility—"forgive us our sins"; the hope—"for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever"; and the hunger—"Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done" (Matthew 6:8-11; Luke 11:2-4).

Just before His atoning death, the Lord issued further prayer-instruction. It was that after His resurrection and return to His Father all who believed upon Him as the Son of God and their Saviour were to present their petitions to the Father in the name of the Son. His name would be the authorisation for the presenting of their requests; for what His name is that is He. His name . . . the Prince of Peace. He is our peace, having made peace through the blood of His Cross.

No holy angel in the Father's presence, no demon in hell, no human power, priestly or political, can therefore successfully contest our right to stand before the blazing splendour of the Holy One and to ask favours of Him.

Not only is His name our authorisation, entitling us both to request and to receive the fulfilment of the same; it is also the *antidote* against human pride, pretentiousness and pusillanimity (lacking courage, faint-hearted, shrinking from taking risks).

If the publican in Jesus' parable had been able to address the Father through the authority of His Son's name, he, self-confessed sinner though he was, would have had no need to stand "afar off," nor any need to refrain fearfully from lifting his eyes to heaven.

On the other hand, the Pharisee, praying by the same authority, would hardly have dared to utter statements so odiously reeking of self-righteousness and arrogance (Luke 18:9-13).

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT (continued)

Amid all the bright illuminations of this season never forget there is a deplorable darkness prevailing in the world around you: the darkness of sin and unbelief; the darkness of moral depravity through the incapability of unregenerate people to reach high moral standards; the darkness of hate lurking within the hearts of the nations; the darkness of fear and dread for looking after the things coming upon the world. But amid the terrible darkness of our times let us emphasise the fact that Jesus said "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (John 12:46). In Him is God's provision for our recovery from sin and sin's ruinous darkness and damage. Because Jesus came, the prophecy of Isaiah is an experience enjoyed in the lives of multitudes. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. . . . For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:2, 6).

Luke reminds us that He is "a light to lighten the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32). As the wise men got their light by looking up, so will each of us this glad day.

Let us be wise and give our blessed Lord the pre-eminence which is His on this day when we celebrate His coming into this world, and with it let us celebrate the hour when He came into our hearts and brought His light, His love and His life.

### WE ARE PLANNING NOW—

**Easter Monday—1961**

### TRAFALGAR SQUARE AND ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Personalities of the day:

REV. RAY H. HUGHES (U.S.A.)  
REV. HOWARD P. COURTNEY (U.S.A.)  
REV. JOHN WOODHEAD (President)  
REV. H. W. GREENWAY (Secretary-General)  
REV. DOUGLAS B. GRAY (Director of Music)  
REV. J. HYWEL DAVIES (National Youth Director)

Choral singing by

LONDON CRUSADER CHOIR  
and  
MASSED ELIM YOUTH CHOIRS

### HOW ABOUT YOU?

# “God...hath...spoken unto us...”

(Hebrews 1:1, 2)

By C. J. Watkins (*Minister of Elim Church, Bolton*)

Reading: Hebrews 1:1—2:4

**I**N these verses you will catch something of the activity of the Godhead. God has spoken . . . the Son has appeared . . . the Holy Spirit has confirmed. I want you to feel at least in some measure, as you read the passages of Scripture here before us, the powerful movement of the Trinity, working with one end in view, namely your salvation and mine.

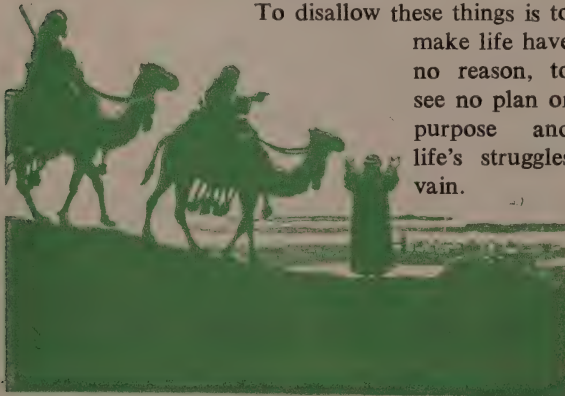
The very first word in the text is an expression of eternity in itself: “God.” The mind immediately thinks of the opening words of the Old Testament: “In the beginning God . . .” (Genesis 1:1). There is no going back beyond that point; everything we know of ourselves and of human life and experience reaching back into the mists of the past leads back to Him. Farther back we cannot go. Again, there is no going forward beyond Him. Everything comes from Him and heads up into Him. Now at present we are in Christ the sons of God; as to the future it would be vain to speculate, “and it doth not yet appear what we shall be” (1 John 3:2). But we know that though much has not been revealed, and though mankind outside of Christ has no certainty or assurance, “when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2). When we reach back into history we come ultimately to God; when we feel forward “with faith’s warm finger through the veil” we see, with faith’s sublime certainty, God.

To disallow these things is to make life have no reason, to see no plan or purpose and life’s struggles vain.

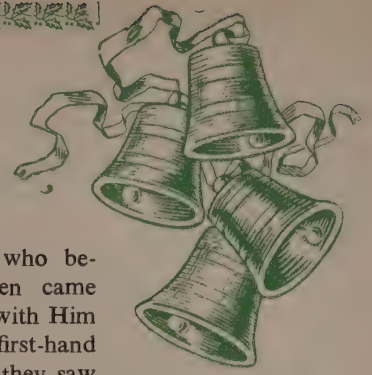
## SEE WITH ME THE CONTINUITY OF DIVINE REVELATION

God has always sought to make Himself known to mankind. At first He took one man, Abraham, and made Himself known to him. Then the revelation opened itself upon that man’s family. The family eventually became a race of people through whom the revelation of God was made known. They were a different people, a people apart from all other peoples; they were God’s chosen people. Our text informs us that God spoke to the fathers of that race, the descendants of whom were now the recipients of this epistle, by the prophets. But now a smooth flow or progress of Divine revelation has taken place, leading out of the Old Testament into the New: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.” The Old Testament revelation prepared for the New Testament; the latter consummates the former. At this season of the year we shall do well to contemplate these things.

The thought of the supremacy of Christ and the sufficiency of Christ dominates the whole of this letter to the Hebrews. He is superior to and supercedes all other mediators between God and man. We may say that Christ’s glorious advent is much more than a romantic story of a babe in a manger; He is God’s final word to mankind. Let us remember that at such a time as this lest the true meaning of Christmas be lost to us, being swamped by the gaiety, feasting, revelry and over-indulgence of the festive season. The sad fact is that when He came there was no room for Him, and in the end His own nation did away with Him. It is certain also that many nowadays have no room for Him and He is still despised and rejected. But those who received Him and those who now receive Him have the gift of eternal life through faith in Him (John 1:11, 12).



The stable at Bethlehem reminds us that God is reaching through to mankind and speaking to them in love—not through an angel, nor yet a prophet, but through His Son.



### THE SON IS THE VEHICLE OF THE REDEMPTIVE PURPOSES OF GOD

“God . . . hath . . . spoken unto us by His Son.” Not only is there expressed here the continuity of Divine revelation, but there is an expression of Divine activity, energy, movement and vitality. God is the mainspring of the activity connected with mankind’s redemption. He took the first great strides towards bringing it about. God in grace moved towards the race when the race itself was drifting farther away. The whole of the redemptive activity centres in the Son. Notice what it says about the Son in verse 3: “Who being the brightness [outshining] of [God’s] glory, and the express image of His person [the impress of God’s substance] . . . when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” The Son of whose lowly birth into this world we now think in particular is none other than God manifest in the flesh. “And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

This Son is furthermore described as the *Author*, *Sustainer* and *End* of creation, for we read: “by whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:2); “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3); “whom He hath appointed heir of all things” (Hebrews 1:2). Again, in relation to mankind *He is Prophet*, for He brings God’s final word to man; *He is Priest*, for He brings man to God; *He is King*, for He now sits enthroned at the Father’s right hand enjoying a position far above all principality and power (Ephesians 1:20, 21; Philippians 2:9-11). May we each one reflect upon these things this Christmas period, knowing that Jesus came not to give us a succession of Christmas days but to introduce us to eternal life and to cause every day of our lives to be Christ-filled and Christ-blessed days.

### CHRIST’S ADVENT TO BRING US ETERNAL REDEMPTION IS CONFIRMED BY THE HOLY GHOST

(Hebrews 2:1-4)

The progress of the message is clearly seen here. The Lord Jesus came and began to declare a great

salvation to all who believed Him; then came those who were with Him and could give a first-hand account of what they saw and heard. But God did not leave the confirmation of His eternal plan of salvation to men. The Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Trinity, confirmed the Word of God preached by the apostles. There was the super-added testimony of God-given miraculous signs and wonders coupled with miracles and distributions of the Holy Ghost according to God’s will. So we may say that the Holy Ghost preceded the advent of Christ, bringing about Christ’s conception in the womb of the virgin (Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35). The Holy Ghost also succeeded the advent of Christ in glorious manifestation to confirm with super-added testimony the witness of the apostles to the atoning work of Christ at the Cross and His resurrection and ascension to the Father’s right hand. As Pentecostal believers our joy this Christmas ought to be exceeding great joy, for these things are so real to us since we have experienced something of the confirming ministry of the Holy Ghost. May it indeed be the experience of us all.

Let me finish with a note of warning. If these things are true, and indeed confirmed by the Holy Ghost, “we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip” (Hebrews 2:1). To neglect the things of Christ may result in our slipping past or out of reach of them, forgetting them; our only prospect judgment.

But we dare not neglect these truths; in fact we revel in them. We consider Jesus in all His eternal offices on our behalf and have great joy. This Christmas season we will rejoice in the Lord, we will give steadfast mental attention to Jesus, for He is worthy of all our study. Heeding the advice of the writer of this Hebrew letter we will “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1).



# THE FAMILY ALTAR

Scripture Union Portions.

Notes by F. D. Byatt and J. Osman.

**Monday, December 26th.** Luke 2 : 15-24.

"And see this thing which is come to pass" (v. 15). This was a God-planned thing, planned before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1 : 20); an angel-announced thing. How surprised Gabriel must have been to be sent to a lowly maid in the despised town of Nazareth instead of to the palace at Jerusalem, to a princess. This was a devil-opposed thing. The Devil tried to prevent it taking place by destroying the seed of David through the wicked queen Athaliah (2 Kings 11 : 1-3), when all were slain except a little boy who was hidden in the temple. An indispensable thing. He had to become man to be our kinsman redeemer and take a body that He might be able to die for us. An eternal thing. He will always be man, for He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever (Hebrews 13 : 8). A God-foretold thing. The prophets all spoke of His coming; He was the theme of prophetic utterance (Acts 10 : 43).

**Tuesday, December 27th.** Luke 2 : 25-40.

"And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost" (v. 26). The first evangelists to speak of Christ were both aged, Simeon and Anna the prophetess. The wise men received their revelation of the birth of Christ through a God-chosen star. An angel was chosen to announce the great event to the shepherds in the field. Simeon received his revelation from the Holy Ghost and was led by the Spirit into the temple to the Babe. It must have been a tremendous thrill to Simeon to know he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. With what eager expectation he looked for the consolation of Israel. Simeon could depart in peace, his eyes having seen, his arms held and his heart received Him who was the salvation of God. To see the face of Christ prepares us for everything, even death.

**Wednesday, December 28th.** Luke 2 : 41-52.

"I must be about my Father's business" (v. 49). Christ was devoted to His Father's will and work; it was His chief concern. His Father's business can be likened to many things in which we are co-workers. It is likened to fishing, and we are called to be fishers of men (Matthew 4 : 19); to building, in which we are exhorted to take heed what material we use (1 Corinthians 3 : 9-15). We are also called shepherds, and Christ is our chief shepherd (1 Peter 5 : 4). Again, the world is likened to a field to which we go to sow the seed of the Word to gather in the sheaves. Let us not be so taken up with our own business that we neglect our Father's business.

**Thursday, December 29th.** Psalm 148 : 1-14.

"Praise ye the Lord" (v. 1). The last five psalms are called the hallelujah psalms because they begin and end with hallelujah. They are Pentecostal in

their atmosphere and spirit. David calls upon creation to join him in praising God, the great Creator (v. 5). The psalm begins and ends with the exhortation "Praise ye the Lord." Our day should begin and end with praise to God for all the benefits and blessings bestowed and mercies manifested. An old divine said: "A line of praise is worth a leaf of prayer and an hour of praise a day of fasting." Prayer is the inbreathing and praise the outbreathing of the soul.

**Friday, December 30th.** Psalm 149 : 1-9.

"Let them sing praises unto Him" (v. 3). David delighted to sing his praises to God accompanied with every sort of instrument. The psalmist turned every experience and deliverance into a testimony and a song of praise to God (Psalm 40 : 3). Paul through the Spirit exhorts us to sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord (Ephesians 5 : 19), and David exhorts us to come before His presence with singing (Psalm 100 : 2). The army that went into battle singing praises to God was victorious (2 Chronicles 20 : 21, 22), Paul and Silas in the dark, dirty inner dungeon prayed and sang praises to God with amazing results. God moved, the Philippian jailer and his household were saved, and Paul and Silas were released. Praise brings the victory: praise is the victory.

**Saturday, December 31st.** Psalm 150 : 1-6.

David in this psalm has on the garment of praise (Isaiah 61 : 3). If we would be comely in the sight of God, we too must put on this garment (Psalm 147 : 1). It must be worn when entering the courts of God (Psalm 100 : 4), and the wearer of it glorifies God (Psalm 50 : 23). Praise is the livery of heaven. David never took off the garment of praise even when he went to bed; there too he sang the praises of God (Psalm 149 : 5). It is said that in the monasteries of old the song of praise never died out, for as one choir finished another took up the song, and so there arose the incense of perpetual praise to God. Let us never put off the garment of praise, for praise is God's due, desire and delight.

**Sunday, January 1st.** Psalm 19 : 1-19.

In this psalm we have the two greatest books in the world, the book of creation and the book of the Scriptures. The first is the book of God's works, the second the book of God's Word. The first declares there is a God, the second tells us about God. The book of creation is old and worn and will pass away (Hebrews 1 : 11); the book of the Word is eternal and abides for ever (1 Peter 1 : 23-25). Christ used many things out of the first book to illustrate the truths of the second. The message of the first is universal (v. 3), reaching places unreached as yet by God's Word. Both books speak of God; the book of creation of His mighty power, the book of His Word of His Divine love. Both declare the glory of God; the first the glory of the great Creator, the second the glory of the great Redeemer of mankind.

**Monday, January 2nd.** Psalm 31 : 1-11.

"For Thy name's sake lead me, and guide me" (v. 3). David most assuredly knew what it was to be tried, troubled and tempted. This is the common lot of those who seek to follow the Lord, but it is no reason for despondency and melancholy. David shows us here how to react, for this psalm, written probably at the time of his trouble with Absalom, is interspersed with expressions of faith and confidence in God and breathes the spirit of prayer. You can do no better thing in adversity than to pray for God to lead you and guide you, and reaffirm your confidence in Him. He will help, for His name's sake, for in this respect God is jealous of His good name.

**Tuesday, January 3rd.** Psalm 31 : 12-24.

"My times are in Thy hand" (v. 15).

If the psalm had ended at verse 13 what a woeful, doleful plight our writer would have been in. But as he turns his thoughts away from his own troubles and pins his faith in God he starts to enumerate his blessings (vv. 19, 20, 21). We share with him in his mounting delight in contemplation of God's might and mercy. Coming up from the slough of despond into the place of delight, he desires to help and encourage all who are similarly troubled and fearful. Your present experience is given to you, Christian, in order that you might know how to help others who feel the same. "Blessed be God . . . who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God (2 Corinthians 1 : 3, 4).

**Wednesday, January 4th.** Psalm 32 : 1-11.

"I kept silence" (v. 3).

Silence is not always golden. Here David is reflecting about God's dealings with him after Nathan had accused him of sin. He had undoubtedly lost blessing and become dried and withered in his soul because he had kept silent and failed to confess his sin. It was giving voice to his penitence that brought him back to blessing. Reader, how much blessing are you missing because you have kept silence? Penitence, praise, supplication, witness, all need a voice, and its exercise will bring back the lost joy.

**Thursday, January 5th.** Psalm 33 : 1-22.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (v. 12).

One cannot help feeling that there has been a tremendous lowering of standards in this beloved country of ours: the ever-increasing secularization of our Sunday, the sale of the most pornographic literature, the mushrooming of gambling shops and strip-tease clubs, etc. We need to pray for an awakening of the national conscience which will lead to a crusade against these evils. The national church and several other denominations have the most surprising views expressed by some of their ministers. The trumpet is giving an uncertain sound. Let us, who are Pentecostal, see to it that our witness is clear and uncompromising, that we may play our part in leading the nation back to God.

**Friday, January 6th.** Psalm 34 : 1-22.

Why, oh why, do we not trust the Lord more? David had been full of fears when, in full flight from Saul, he had sought refuge in Gath only to find that the people remembered him as the one who had slain their champion, Goliath (1 Samuel 21 : 10-15). He escaped after feigning madness, but it had been an anxious time for him. Yet God was near and had not forsaken him. Looking back, he can trace the hand of God, and in this psalm he asserts time after time that even if the righteous is afflicted or troubled he can count upon the Lord's help and deliverance. We are on the victory side, so cultivate the victory outlook.

**Saturday, January 7th.** Colossians 1 : 1-11.

Epaphras had done a great job in founding, fathering and feeding the church at Colosse. Paul had never visited it, but had heard of it, and rejoiced therein. Now, from prison, he writes to this flourishing church because of the dangers arising from those who seek to mix Gentile philosophy and Christian principle (2 : 8), worship of angels and worship of Christ (2 : 18), keeping law and dwelling in grace (2 : 16, 17), and who are not established upon the greatness of Christ and the sufficiency of His redemption. We must still beware

especially of those who under the false garb of intellectualism would seek to turn us away from the simplicity which is in Christ.

**Sunday, January 8th.** Colossians 1 : 12-23.

"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (v. 19).

The fulness of the Godhead (2 : 9), the fulness of all creation (1 : 16) and the fulness of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1 : 23). It is God the Father's pleasure to have it so. Glorify Christ and it follows that you please God. This is true worship. It is no wonder that worship services prove to be a little foretaste of heaven. Furthermore, in Christ we find all that we need: fulness of joy; fulness of pardon for the sinful; fulness of power for the weak; fulness of wisdom and knowledge, and above all fulness of love. Ephesians 1 : 23 seems to suggest that He pours this fulness into His Church. Are you receiving your portion?



## PRAYER AND PRAISE FELLOWSHIP

Conducted by F. H. Coleman.

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus" (Matthew 1 : 21)

At this wonderful season of the year we are thinking of the incarnation; God coming into the human race. Jesus was not a product of history, so was named not by Mary and Joseph but by God Himself.

The name of Jesus is blessed by multitudes. To them His name is as ointment poured forth. But to many the name of Jesus is not only that of Saviour and Friend, but is the name high over all. "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2 : 9). Jesus Himself left us His name and has told us to pray to the Father in His name. It is the New Testament revelation which reveals God as Father. Jesus brought us this lovely name—Father. Wonder of wonders, we can approach a loving God, a heavenly Father, and pray to Him in the name of Jesus. We are not to pray in the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. One has even heard people when praying approach God through the precious blood. While it is true that it is because of the blood of Christ we can approach God, we are to offer prayer in the name of Jesus. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace.

This will be the last column for this year, and we praise God for this wonderful fellowship of prayer and praise. I am so glad we have cause to praise God for answered prayer. Let me cite one or two answers. A man was desperate for accommodation, and after prayer a flat was found. These are still hard to find in the big cities. Another requested prayer for her brother, who had met with an accident. God wonderfully healed the man. Another was a case of a woman bound by evil power. The Lord set her completely free.

May God bless you with a Christ-filled Christmas.

### Prayer is requested for

- Revival throughout Britain.
- All Elim missionaries.
- All who will face temptation at this season of the year, that God will give grace to stand true to Christ.
- A man suffering from piles.
- A man with a serious heart condition.

### Thought for Christmas:

Christ, the light of the world in this darkening land.





# SUNSHINE CORNER



## THE LITTLE STAR

Hello Sunbeams.

A happy, wonderful and blessed Christmas to you all. I hope you have a lovely time, with lots and lots of presents and parties. I'm quite sure that on His birthday the Lord Jesus would want all girls and boys to be as happy and joyful as they possibly can be.

Now I know you'll all be very busy at Christmas, reading Christmas cards and opening presents and having a truly nice time, but after dinner is over and you've all gathered round the fireside to wait for the Queen's speech you might just have time to read the Christmas story that I'm going to tell you now. It's called "The Little Star."

Did you know that stars could sing? If you look in your Bible and find Job chapter thirty-eight and verse seven you will see that this is true. There was great excitement in the sky. The angels had whispered to the stars that this was the night of the grand chorus when all the stars and all the angels would join together to sing a hymn of welcome to the King who was to be born in the city of David. One of the stars was to be a special one and was to sing the solo part. "How lovely to be the *one*," thought the little star. "It couldn't be me because I'm the newest and least of all the stars. It's sure to be one of the great glittering planets like Saturn."

While the others practised their parts she was too busy to think of singing. There were travellers to be guided over land and sea. It was so dark and gloomy and the travellers were glad and comforted to see the stars twinkling overhead. The stars reminded them that God was still on the throne.

The little star looked down from the heavens and suddenly saw a beautiful young woman riding on a donkey and a man walking by her side. They stopped now and then and looked up at the stars, glad of their bright, twinkling light. These travellers seemed so tired and weary that the little star was full of concern for them and shone with all her might. This was the only way she could tell them that she cared for them and was trying to help them. "This is the way" she tried to say. The little star wept for them as they were turned away from house after house trying to find somewhere to sleep for the night. When they had to go into the dark little stable the little star tried her best to throw as much light as possible into the corners. Then the little star saw the tiny baby in the manger. "How lovely he is," she thought. "I must sing my little song for him." She sang softly at first and then began to rise higher and higher in praise. Quite suddenly the other stars and great planets began to join in with all their different harmonies and parts. A multitude of angels, thousands and thousands of them, burst into song. All the stars and great planets turned towards the little star so that their great light shone on to her, making her look like the greatest of all the stars. This was the grand chorus that all the heavenly host had practised

so carefully. The little star looked up in wonder and understood what had happened. The star that was to sing the solo part had been kept secret until the great night came, but it was—the little star! She was *His* star, the star of the great King of kings who was born in the stable, though she was the least and the newest of them all. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" sang the great chorus of heaven.

The wise men looked up from their camels. "Look! His star!" they exclaimed. "We must go and worship Him." The little star led them joyfully to the stable and stood over them as they presented their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The baby Jesus looked up and smiled and Mary whispered "Look, Joseph, the star." But the little star was filled with wonder as it shone down on the little King. "I'm *His* star," she said. "I'm so glad!"

The little star was still shining and singing and leading the grand chorus when they met the shepherds on the hillside and told them of the birth of the baby King. This time the people on earth could hear them. The shepherds ran to Bethlehem to see Jesus and they too worshipped.

God loves to take little things and make them great, and if the lives of boys and girls are given to Him He can make them great in His service. I called you sunbeams, but I hope you will all be starbeams as well, shining in the dark places and leading others to Jesus.

A happy Christmas again to you all and a bright and wonderful New Year.

Lots of love,  
AUNTY DOROTHY.



## SENT FROM THE HEART OF GOD

BETTY and I were having tea together. She was expecting her firstborn.

"When is the baby due, Betty?" I asked.

"Christmas!" she answered.

We both looked at one another.

"Christmas!" I echoed.

"Yes," she said, "and if it's born on Christmas Day I'll feel sorry for it."

I nodded understandingly. "Because——"

"Because of having birthday and Christmas presents together," she finished for me.

After tea we sat around the fire and Betty noticed that I looked slantingly at some periodicals on her husband's desk, which stood on the right of where I sat.

"These are the books given you by the clinic. They are very helpful. For everything I'm experiencing, the answers are all there," she said, handing them to me.

Looking at some pictures of women doing exercises, I asked, "Do you do these exercises given here Betty?"

"Oh yes. Here, and at the clinic. They look after you well. They watch your weight and your diet and constantly teach you how to relax." She stood up. "Come upstairs and I'll show you the baby's garments." Betty opened drawers and from them took the daintiest and loveliest of baby clothes. I had a severe attack of "babyitis." Ever had it?

"These vital months," I mused. "The *preparation!*"

"Where did you come from, baby dear?" asks Dr. George Macdonald; and he answers his own question by replying "Out of the Everywhere into Here!"

The birth of a baby is such an ordinary event, yet of such importance. But Betty's baby will not rank among the ordinary. All the care and *preparation* involved in the months of waiting will cause her heart to awaken to mother love, and at the culminating moment when it is placed within her arms she will thrill with the wonder and joy of it. "He is mine, *mine!* No ordinary baby this!"

"A babe in a house is a well-spring of pleasure, a messenger of peace and love;  
A resting place for innocence on earth; a link between angels and men,  
Yet is it a talent of trust, a loan to be rendered back with interest;  
A delight, but redolent of care; honey-sweet, but lacking not the bitter."

Betty and her exemplary, godly life caused me to contemplate on the long ago when Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel.

Startled and awe-struck, she was reassured by the angel: "Do not be frightened, Mary, for you have found favour with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son; and you are to call His name Jesus. He will be great, and He will be called Son of the Most High!"

"How can this be?" she replied. "I am not yet married."

Gabriel explained: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

"Be it unto me according to thy word," she said in simple faith and quiet decision. Dr. Moffat's translation puts it: "I am here to serve the Lord."

God's channel was ready and *prepared* for this stupendous project. It is wonderful. God could have created the babe in a moment of time, or worked upon Mary while she slept as He did upon Adam when He created Eve. But after the miraculous conception the birth was in accordance with the natural laws of womanhood. Before time began to tick its seconds, minutes and hours into centuries and ages, God in eternity devised the Saviour's birth. Nothing was left to chance. God is the greatest economist; He wastes nothing, and all things combine to bring about this marvellous birth. The *plan* in eternity and the *preparations* through time find their fulfilment in a godly young woman whose body is prepared by the Holy Spirit for nature to function normally within her and through her. And so Jesus came: *sent from the heart of God*. The Creator and Preserver of countless worlds came in the form of a human baby. He who upholds all things by the word of His power, in infant form was upheld by  
(Continued on page 846)

# JOSEPH THE CARPENTER

By H. Palliser

*A sequel to the article on pages 826—828*

**I**F we have been guilty of neglecting the Virgin Mary in our fear of falling into the sin of Mariolatry, I fear that when we get to heaven we will need to apologise to Joseph for our treatment of him! "The butler soon forgot Joseph," we read of our Joseph's great ancestor, and we are in danger of forgetting Joseph the carpenter also.

And yet what a man Joseph must have been! For if God was so careful in choosing the mother, would He not be just as careful in choosing the man who was to bear the paternal responsibility? Then what kind of a man was Joseph? We know that he was a carpenter. We know that he was a poor man, a man of the working class, a peasant. And we know that in those days a peasant or working man was despised. Said Cicero: "The mechanic's occupation is degrading. A workshop is incompatible with anything noble." A despised, poor, working-class man—but only all that by *the world's* standards; for character is not a class matter, and saintliness does not depend upon social standing. A man may be financially poor and spiritually rich, and the hands hardened by work can still be holy hands. In our assessment of Joseph we are not to be guided by man's ideas, but by the estimation of the Holy Ghost as given through Matthew.

## HIS CHARACTER

This is summed up tersely by Matthew in these words: "a righteous man" (R.V.); "a just man" (A.V.). Take your choice. For my own part I think we can use both translations.

He was a "righteous" man. Take it that way first. What does it mean? I read it as referring to his life on its Godward side. But it may help us if we see how the same word was applied to some other people who figured prominently in the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. For instance, Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist: "And they were both righteous be-

fore God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." And then Simeon: "This man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel." And you will have noticed that the emphasis is on the Godward aspect of life and conduct.

There, then, was Joseph, a spiritual man, careful of God's will, zealous for God's cause, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord and looking for the consolation of Israel. And with such a man it is easy to visualise the scene in Deuteronomy 6:6,7 being enacted: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In fact, according to Dean Farrar, the spiritual and mental education of Jesus in early years would be given by Joseph and Mary. What a conscientious teacher Joseph would be!

He was a "just" man says the A.V. And there was Joseph in his social life—in his human relationships. A "just" man—that is to say a straight man, an honest man, a man of honour, of principle and integrity. Yes, Joseph was all that. And is there not a ring about that word "just," suggestive of strength of character and conviction? One of the first things Jesus would learn would be the ten commandments; and here is the fifth: "Honour thy father and thy mother that . . ." Well, somehow I think Jesus would find it easy to honour such a man as Joseph, with his godliness and uprightness.

## HIS LOVE

Then there was Joseph's love. And I want you to try to grasp the situation in which Joseph found himself as that situation is described in Matthew 1:18,19, and in grasping it I think it will reveal the strength and the tenderness of his love for Mary.

Well, to begin with, there was the relationship between Joseph and Mary. In modern language they were engaged; only it meant far more among Jews



then than among us today. The betrothal took place a year before the wedding, but once entered upon it was as binding as a wedding and could only be broken in the case of unfaithfulness. In that event there were two courses open for the man. The girl could be handed over to court and she would be stoned; or he could give her a bill of divorcement and end the betrothal privately.

Now Joseph and Mary were betrothed, and Mary "was found with child." A sword pierced the heart of Mary in those days, but did not a sword also pierce the heart of Joseph? Let me again quote Dr. Alex. Whyte: "As we read Matthew's account of that time, we see how sharp that sword was which pierced Joseph's soul also. His heart was broken with this terrible trial, but there was only one course left open to him. Conclude the marriage he could not, but neither could he consent to make Mary a public example, and there was only left to him the sad step of revoking the contract and putting her away privately. Joseph's heart must have been torn in two." Yes, a sword pierced his heart. All Matthew says of that sword is: "When he thought on these things . . ." What is hidden and what is revealed in those words! What agony, misery, heart-ache! No angel had come to him yet. He fought a lonely battle.

Did I say it showed his love? It does, for look at his decision! It was the one least painful for *her*. I agree with Dr. Campbell Morgan that that decision "is a proof that Joseph loved her. You may always be sure that if a person takes action for breach of promise, that person bringing the action does not really love the other." No, for those with eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to feel, there was love all through. Well then, one night as Joseph tossed on his bed in a restless sleep, and feeling he would somehow have to take that step, an angel appeared; the message was delivered, the mists rolled away, and Joseph sang:

"Weeping may for a night endure,  
At morn doth joy arise."

Now why did we go into all that? To show you his love? Aye, and more than that. To show you that Jesus came into a home where there were love and devotion, trust and affection, and all that these mean.

### HIS OBEDIENCE

And the last thing is his obedience. For my own part I cannot help but marvel at the obedience of

Joseph. Four times was God's will revealed to him, and four times he instantly obeyed. In chapter 1:20 the angel said "Fear not to take Mary," and he took her. In 2:13 the angel warned "Flee into Egypt," and to Egypt they went. In 2:19 the angel said "Return to Israel," and they returned. Lastly, in 2:22, being warned against danger in Judæa, he took the holy family to Galilee.

We read it so casually and thoughtlessly, but what obedience was there! And think, too, of what hung upon his obedience. Suppose in any instance Joseph had refused to obey! Suppose he had relied upon his own wisdom, or had argued that such dreams were the outcome of an agitated and overwrought mind! But no, there was never a question. Joseph knew the voice of God too well, far too well, to be mistaken. As I see it, his obedience reveals a life of close spiritual fellowship with the Lord. What was it Joseph's own foster Son said years later? "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, *for they know his voice.*"

And so it was that obedience to God's will was one of the principles in Joseph's life. How this obedience must have impressed Jesus in His boyhood days—living with a man who said "I delight to do Thy will, O my God!"

So we leave Mary and Joseph—Joseph with his strong spiritual character, his great love for Mary and his obedience to God's will; Mary with her life of fellowship with God, her faith and her grace. And as we leave them within the happiness of their home it is easy to read such words as these: "And He went down to Nazareth with them, and was subject unto them."

One thing more. We have studied briefly these two characters. Let us remember: "all these things were written for our admonition and learning." And it may be that the best way to force the import of all this upon our hearts will be by suggesting reverently a daring supposition. Suppose that Jesus had still to be born—are we living so near to God that He could choose such a woman as you to be the mother, and such a man as you to be the foster father? Could Jesus live in our homes, respect us and mark our example, and have respect for our parental authority?





# Christm

Conducted b

## PITFALLS

**I**N striking contrast against a background of jive-hopping, party-chasing youth the story of the birth of Jesus in an eastern stable, in all its simplicity and truth, comes into the foreground for a few fleeting days. What meaning will it have for young people hysterically swept along in the giddy whirl of party-going ?

This is the time of the year when more people are led astray than led aright. This is Satan's ironical twist. When the Saviour of the world was making His entry, riotous parties were being held in Herod's palace a few yards distant; and today's parties are held in like mood. No thought for Christ, man's Saviour.

Christmas is a time for celebration, an abundance of joy. Parties are good, but they are impoverished affairs if they are held merely for their own sake. It is when we depend on them for our pleasure that we are likely to go astray.

Christmas without Christ becomes an instrument of Satan. It is filled with pitfalls from which many find no escape. On the other hand, the Christian can make Christmas a platform for his witness. Here is real joy; nothing synthetic. A cheerful expression, a strong character, a ready word of explanation

combine to testify of the real pleasure which Jesus gives to those who are prepared to trust Him. This *trust* is for pleasure as well as for sins forgiven, for an interesting life as well as for security in the future.

Not only are members of the Elim Youth Movement representatives of Christianity, but they establish a reputation, good or bad, for Elim youth. When you testify for Christ you must be sure to live up to that testimony, and this is the time when your failures will be given daylight viewing.

What are the requirements for victorious Christian living? Without doubt the foundation stone is confidence in God rather than confidence in self. Step out into victory this Christmas and you will enjoy the exhilarating experience of converting the Devil's pitfalls into Christian platforms to behave as well as speak like Christ.

\* \* \*

There is something highly stimulating in occasions filled with despair and in the shadow of defeat suddenly illuminated with a vision of the possibilities of progress. This seems to me to be our experience during the year 1960. Reports from all parts of the country announce a serious decline in Sunday school attendances; with more money being channelled into youth groups there is lessening interest in organised activities; and in spite of the gallant efforts from social reformers to stem the tide of juvenile delinquency it still flows higher.

In the midst of this dismal national picture, Elim youth are striding into a victorious future. While it is true that many of our city schools have suffered serious falls in their attendance figures during recent



Hearty greetings from the Mem

# is Youth Page

e National Youth Director

## OR PLATFORMS?

months, great strides have been taken to reach out for more boys and girls in the toughest quarters.

Looking back over the past twelve months I discovered that our Sunday school attendance figures have reached the highest-ever mark (one leading nonconformist denomination reported a loss of 30,000 scholars during this period), our Senior Crusaders have shown the greatest increase in post-war years, and Junior Crusaders and Boys' Guilds are on the increase.

This year's National Youth Rally recorded the highest post-war attendance, and plans are now under way for an even larger rally next year. The youth conference in Birmingham for Elim ministers (the first of its kind) received a very high proportion of the presbytery ministers, and a similar conference in Cardiff was attended by every ordained minister and probationary minister in the presbytery. The afternoon conference of youth leaders and church deacons showed the highest attendance of any such event. The evening rallies were also well attended both in Cardiff and Birmingham, and in the case of Birmingham the Graham Street church was packed to capacity when a request reached the pulpit to find room for thirty members of the new Elim church at Shrewsbury who had just arrived.

Although interest in Christian youth work is flagging in many parts the reverse is being experienced in the Elim churches. There has never been more concern for the winning of youth for Christ than exists today, and this augurs well for the future. The Elim Youth Committee has recently planned an all-out offensive for our Crusaders in 1961, a platform to launch us into victory in the sixties.

s of the Elim Youth Committee



From the reflections of 1960, and the cautions for the present festive season, we look to the future with great hope.

We asked ourselves the question: What are the requirements of victorious Christian living? Faith is the beginning. But we must move forward. There are many riches opened up to us by the Holy Ghost. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" One minister, speaking at the Cardiff youth conference, told of the usual difficulties in keeping his young people in the church and enthusiastic for Christ. He encountered failure upon failure until they held a series of special meetings for those seeking the baptism in the Holy Ghost. Within weeks the youth activities of the church were transformed and from that moment they never looked back.

Let us turn our pitfalls into platforms for Christ-mas and the new year.

*Photographs show—Top left: The Elim Youth Committee. Top right: Rev. H. W. Greenway addresses Cardiff youth conference. Bottom left: Section of the congregation at the conference. Bottom right: The Forseth brothers render an item.*



## WOMEN'S PAGE (continued)

a woman close to her breast. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4).

"Wondrous sign is giv'n from God in heav'n—  
A babe in swaddling clothes doth lie  
In rough manger bare  
With maiden fair—  
God incarnate—who willed to die,  
To rescue all men  
From Satan's den;  
And all creatures redeem from sin."

With all the *preparations* for Christmas be careful that you do not miss the Master's presence. Amid the baking and cooking, the organising and what have you, remember the *plans* and *preparations* of God for your redemption which were manifested in the birth of His Son, who gave His life for you.

I wish you, whoever you are and wherever you are, a very happy Christmas. Not as the world interprets Christmas, with its revelry, tinsel, sham and commercialisation, but with the glory and comfort of His presence and the sense of His peace. These are priceless and cannot be bought in the world's markets.

This lovely paragraph is taken from the book *The Testimony of Christ to Christianity*, by Peter Bayne: "Christ has come, the Light of the world. Long ages may yet elapse before His beams have reduced the world to order and beauty, and clothed a purified humanity with light as with a garment. But He has come: The Revealer of the snares and chasms that lurk in the darkness, the Rebuker of every evil thing that prowls by night, the Still of the storm-winds of passion, the Quickener of all that is wholesome, the Adorner of all that is beautiful, the Reconciler of contradictions, the Harmoniser of discords, the Healer of diseases, the Saviour from sin. He has come: the Torch of truth, the Anchor of hope, the Pillar of faith, the Rock for strength, the Refuge for security, the Fountain for refreshment, the Vine for gladness, the Rose for beauty, the Lamb for tenderness, the Friend for counsel, the Brother for love. Jesus has trod the world. The trace of the Divine footsteps will never be obliterated. And the Divine footsteps were the footsteps of One who is Man. The example of Christ is such as men can follow. On! until mankind wears His image. On! towards the summit on which stands not an angel, not a disembodied spirit, not an abstract of ideal and unattainable virtues, but *the Man Jesus Christ!*"

# LOOKING FORWARD TO THE SUMMER

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# COMING EVENTS

(Please pray for these services)

**BELFAST.** Dec. 25-28, Ulster Temple, Ravenhill Road. Annual Christmas Convention of the Irish Elim Churches. Speakers include F. H. Coleman and T. W. Thomson (Irish Superintendent). Singing by Lisburn, Melbourne Street and Ulster Temple Choirs. Christmas Day, 11.30 and 7. Dec. 26, 7 p.m. Dec. 27, 11.30, 3.30 (Baptismal Service) and 7 p.m. (Refreshments between services.) Dec. 28, 8 p.m.

**BIRMINGHAM (Kingstanding).** Dec. 31 to Jan. 5. Elim Church, Warren Road. Special visit of well-known Welsh Evangelist, Idris Davies. Sat. 7, followed by Watchnight Service 11 p.m. Sun. 11 and 6.30. Weeknights 7.30. A hearty welcome to all.

**BURTON-ON-TRENT.** Jan. 8. Elim Church, Moor Street. Minister's Anniversary Services. Speaker: L. R. Mason. Sat. 14th, visit of Blackheath Mixed Voice Choir. Speaker: L. Cowdery. 7.30 p.m. Sun. 15th. John Goddard (secretary, Blackheath Y.F.C.), 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Convener: Ken Smith.

**GLASGOW.** Dec. 31—Jan. 3. Elim Church, Butterbiggins Road. New Year Convention. Speakers: A. D. Hathaway, B.A., and A. Anstey. Sat., 7.30 and 11 p.m. (Watchnight Service); Sun., 11 and 6.30; Mon., 3.30 and 6.30; Tues., 7. Tea provided on Mon. 2nd.

**GREENOCK.** Dec. 31—Jan. 5. Elim Church, Belville Street. Annual New Year Convention. Speakers: G. L. Ladlow and John Harris. Sat., 7.30 and 11 p.m.; Sun., 11 and 6.30; Mon. 3.30 and 7; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7.30 p.m.

**ISLINGTON.** Jan. 7. Elim Church, Lennox Road, Finsbury Park. Presbytery Youth Rally. Speaker: John Smyth. Convener: E. Corsie. 7 p.m.

**LEYTON.** Jan. 3-5. Elim Church, Vicarage Road, E.10. Missionary Movie Coloured Films shown by F. B. Phillips. 7.45 p.m. Jan. 14. London Evangelistic Male Voice Choir. 7 p.m.

**WORTHING.** Dec. 25. Elim Church, Grosvenor Road. Please note that there will be no local bus service. Please contact the minister regarding transport. Meetings 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. (Christmas Pie). Jan. 1 to 7, Week of Prayer.

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Jan. 8, Broadmoor Institution; 14, Bethnal Green; 15, Watford. Jan. 22, Croydon Elim Church, Stanley Road. Thirty-second Choir Anniversary Services. Special speakers and past members taking part. 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

## PRESIDENT'S TOUR

Jan. 3, Clapham; 5, Croydon; 7, Camberwell (Presbytery); 8, Wimbledon; 10, Thornton Heath; 11, Coulsdon; 12, Bermondsey; 14, Guildford; 15, Kingston.

## ITINERARIES

**Miss V. McGillivray.** Jan. 8, Sparkbrook; 9, Langley Green; 10, Graham Street; 11, Oldhill; 12, Coventry; 14, Winson Green.

**Mr. F. B. Phillips.** Jan. 3-5, Leyton.

**J. Smith.** Jan. 7-10, Mason Street, Hull; 11-15, City Temple, Hull; 17-22, Grimsby; 23-26, Newcastle; 28—Feb. 2, Bishop Auckland.

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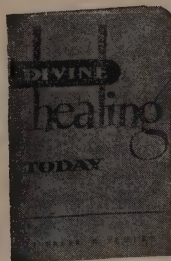
**Bishop**. On December 1st, Lilian Frances Bishop, aged 62; member of Elim Church, Southend-on-Sea. Officiating minister at funeral: J. A. Wright.

**Collins**. On November 9th, Charles Henry Collins, aged 79; faithful member of Elim Church, Graham Street, Birmingham. Officiating minister at funeral: Edward F. Cole.

**Vennall**. On November 30th, Albert Edwin Vennall, aged 89, of Thorpe Bay. Officiating minister at funeral: George Backhouse.

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