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The Message of the Manger: A Christmas Meditation.

F. J. Sivyer, B.A.

LET us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass" (Luke 2: 15). We are not told why those shepherds of the hills were so honored in being the first to receive the news of the birth of Jesus. One can hardly think that it just happened that they were the only folk awake at that hour. Rather would it seem that they were watchers like the wise men of the East, or like the aged couple who waited in the temple, and of whom the poet sang—

"I am a watcher whose eyes have grown dim
With looking for a star that lights on him."

The crucial thing in the experience of each was the element of expectation, belief in the promise of God. Faith is a reciprocal thing. God answers faith with vision. He commits himself to those who commit themselves to him. The shepherds believed the Scriptures, were watching for the fulfilment, and to them the heavenly messenger came with the wonderful message, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

With them let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, so that for ourselves we may learn the message of the manger.

Sublimest of mysteries.

"Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." As we stand around the Bethlehem manger we realise the truth of Paul's declaration, and feel like joining him in his eloquent apostrophe, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" The Incarnation is the primary miracle of Christianity. It is the necessary prelude to the unique life of Jesus, his sinlessness, his miracles, his sacrificial death and his resurrection. The one explanation that satis-

fies the mind is that Jesus was the Son of God as well as the son of Mary. When this fact is believed it flings a light both upon the mystery of Christ's personality, and the wonder of his redemptive work. By its light Robert Browning was able to declare: "I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ, accepted by the reason, will solve for thee all problems in the world and out of it."

The gentleness of greatness.

God might have revealed himself in a thousand different ways. He might have impressed his greatness and grandeur upon us by startling phenomena in the heavens and in the earth, or by a series of miraculous exploits akin to the legends of the Greek gods and goddesses. But he did not wish to overawe his creatures. His purpose was to lead us back to himself and back to the paths of peace, and so he chose to reveal himself in the form of a little child. Well did David sing, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Dr. J. D. Jones tells of a visit he paid to a home where there was a cripple boy. The father asked if he, Dr.

Jones, had any children, and on being informed that he had two, a boy and a girl, replied, "God has not given us a girl." "No, dear," replied his wife from the other end of the table, "but he has given us our invalid boy." It was easy to see, observed Dr. Jones, how the needy child had drawn out the parents' love, and thereby had made the homelife beautiful. But no child has ever touched and changed the human heart like the Christ-child.

Enthusiasm for humanity.

The phrase was first used by Matthew Arnold, but God himself was the first to exhibit it. At Bethlehem we see his belief in and his hope for humanity at flood-tide. Civilisation had reached a breaking-point. Pagan philosophers had failed, and God's chosen people had bitterly disappointed him. When another deluge might have been expected to wash the world clean, instead there came the message of the angels, the glad tidings of great joy.

Guarding the gates of the Mediterranean, between Spain and Africa, stood "the Pillars of Hercules," the extreme westward limits of the then known world. It is recorded that on the Spanish coins of the day was a picture of the straits, with the proud words inscribed: "Ne plus ultra"—nothing beyond. And then Columbus sailed away and discovered that there was a whole world beyond, and the proud motto had to be changed to "plus ultra"—ever more beyond. Only further failure and worse defeat faced the human race. From the human standpoint there was "nothing beyond" until Jesus came, and now there is "ever more beyond." Bethlehem is but the dawn of that better hope. From there we look out across the centuries to the coming again of this same Jesus. When he returns it will be to complete in us his good work, and present us faultless before his Father. Until that is accomplished we know "He will not fail nor be discouraged."

CONSTANT CHRISTMAS.

O never-failing splendor!
O never-silent song!
Still keep the green earth tender,
Still keep the grey earth strong.

Still keep the brave earth dreaming
Of deeds that shall be done,
While children's lives come streaming
Like sunbeams from the sun.

O angels, sweet and splendid,
Throng in our hearts and sing
The wonders which attended
The coming of the King.

Till we, too, boldly pressing
Where once the shepherds trod,
Climb Bethlehem's hill of blessing,
And find the Son of God!

—Phillips Brooks.

Love to the uttermost.

Finally, the Bethlehem manger speaks of God's unfailing love, for as Christina Rossetti beautifully puts it—

"Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine.
Love came down at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign."

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

Lionel B. Fletcher, of the London Missionary Society, relates the following story told him by a wealthy but very unhappy ship-mate. "I was born," he said, "in a little village in England. When I was nineteen somebody who had achieved success came back from America, and I made up my mind to go there too. I packed my bag, said good-bye to my mother, and when I landed in New York I registered a vow that I would make my fortune. I made myself useful to a certain firm, and I worked up until, as the years went by, I began to see the fulfilment of my ambition. To-day I am the firm. Just before Christmas my chief accountant laid on my table a statement of the affairs of the firm which told me I was a millionaire. In all those years I had never written to my mother. When that statement of my business affairs was laid on my table her face flashed across the page, and I thought to myself, Where is she? And a dread seized me lest she should be in the workhouse. I very quickly booked a passage on the next liner, and when I landed in Liverpool I took train to my native village and arrived there just as the evening was falling. I knocked at the old cottage door, and my mother opened it, and there she stood. She did not express any surprise at seeing me. She just said, 'You are late for your tea to-night. It is all ready.' I went in, and there was my tea set. I was so amazed I could not say a word. After I had had the meal she said, 'Son, you are tired and I am tired; we won't talk to-night. Your room's ready. Good night.' And she kissed me, and I climbed up into the little garret where I had slept as a boy. But I could not sleep. I tossed and tossed until morning and then said to myself, I will go to her and ask her forgiveness. I went down the little passage and knocked, but there was no answer. I opened the door and there she lay, and, flinging myself by her bedside I said, 'O, mother, forgive me.' I pressed my cheek against her, but it was as cold as ice. She had waited and waited until she could hardly wait any longer, and when at last I came it was too late! I would give all the money I possess to have my mother back again."

As we in thought stand around the Bethlehem manger this Christmas-tide, let us not keep the great love of the Father-heart of God waiting, but realising something of the cost of his gift to mankind return him with gladness and without reserve love for love.

God's Glory Manifest in His Works.

W. Smedley.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.—Ps. 19.

A strong sense of the sublime in nature and in thought is a precious gift, and it was bestowed in large measure upon the "sweet singer of Israel." To him and to others of the biblical writers, the illustrious Isaiah in particular, the world is indebted for much of its noblest literature. As we listen to the exalted strains of these heaven-inspired souls, we readily subscribe to the dictum of Coleridge that "Sublimity is Hebrew by birth."

This sense lifts its possessor above the dust and commonplace of life into loftier regions where he beholds the marvel and the mystery of the universe, with all its implications, and realises his own dignity as an intellectual being—an interpreter of the divine thought. As he gazes upon a lovely landscape, he is conscious of an uncommon elevation of mind. His emotions are deeply stirred; he is lifted out of himself. He breathes "an ampler ether, a diviner air." The beauty and the grandeur of the scene fill him with awe and delight, whilst "a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused," takes possession of him and lifts his adoring thoughts heavenward and to the great Creator. How much there is in nature to excite wonder and admiration. The wide extended plain, the solemn forest, the everlasting hills, the sun shining in his strength, the river gliding tranquilly to the sea, the green carpet under our feet, the blue dome overhead, the gorgeous hues of sunset—these and a thousand other objects make a deep impression upon the mind. But when, in the stillness of night, we look up, and in the light of modern astronomy, survey the amazing pomp and glory of the heavens, the mind is overpowered by the stupendous spectacle, and we can only exclaim, "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty, sought out by all them that have pleasure therein, in wisdom hast thou made them all." "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all his praise?"

"Millions of torches lighted by his hand,
Wander unwearied through the blue abyss."

There they shine in their beauty—mute, yet powerful witnesses for God from age to age proclaiming his eternal power and Godhead. Logicians tell us we cannot prove the existence of God, but surely in the starry hosts we have a practical demonstration of a truth, which is the foundation of all religion and of all commonsense as well. If it be not so, then are we given over to "permanent intellectual confusion" and reason is extinguished. With Tennyson we say—

"The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the
hills, the plains,
Are not these, O soul, the vision of him
who reigns?"

When Fabre, the celebrated French naturalist, was asked, Do you believe in a God? he replied, "No, I see him everywhere and in all things." "The noblest ministry of nature," says Emerson, "is to stand as the apparition of God; it is a projection of God in the unconscious, a remoter and inferior incarnation of God." In a thought of profound truth and beauty, he says, "If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown. But every night come out these envoys of beauty and light the universe with their admonishing smile." Yet in vain do they shine for some whose minds are so darkened by sin and false philosophy that they tell us the heavens declare, not the glory of God, but the glory of Kepler, Galileo, Newton and others who have found out the plan of the heavens. When Dr. Lardner visited Paris at the time of the great revolution, he was told by the *savans* that he was the only great man they knew who believed in a God. Their great astronomer, Lalande, had swept the heavens with his telescope for years in search of a God, but had seen no sign of one. They had no need for the "hypothesis of God." All things in the heavens above and in the earth beneath owed their existence to the interaction of matter and force which were eternal, and accounted for all phenomena. The gross materialism of these men excited at one time the scorn of Voltaire, who declared it to be the extreme of raging madness and imbecility. These men could see that intelligent energy had been at work in the production of a pin, a boy's marble, the flint axe of a savage, but they could see no evidence of an intelligent Creator in the "brave overarching firmament, fretted with golden fires." Twenty millions of suns appealed to them in vain. What strange delusions take possession of the mind when God is ignored. Intellectual degradation always follows in the wake of unbelief. Men who reject the revelation of God in his word wind up by rejecting the evidence of their own senses and of nature's most obvious teachings. The theist says, "Wondrous truths and manifold as wondrous God hath written on those stars above." They tell us the material points to the immaterial, the visible to the invisible, the finite to the Infinite, that an intelligible universe demands an intelligent Author, and that Author is revealed to us in the sacred page where his spiritual glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ who is over all God, blessed forever. To this august Being who made all things, who is immanent in all things yet transcends all, be glory and honor by Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

Greeting the Unseen with a Cheer.

On the very day of his passing—December 12, 1889—Robert Browning's "Asolando" was published. Among the last lines of the epilogue are found the words which suggest this meditation:

"Greet the unseen with a cheer!"

If they reveal the attitude of his soul to that great Unseen which he was approaching—as they surely do—they as certainly unveil the attitude which that great soul had assumed through all the years of his poetic prophesying. As the well-known lines from that same epilogue suggest, he was indeed—

"One who never turned his back, but marched
breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight
better,
Sleep to wake."

This is a fine attitude, heroic, daring, and for the moment, at least, wholly admirable. But is it justified? This is certainly an inevitable question when the clouds are so thick that it seems as though the light of the sun were put out, when wrong is actually triumphing, when we fall again and yet again, when we are completely baffled, when we are so weary that we almost desire to sleep so as never to awake. And these are the conditions under which we have been living. Can we reasonably "greet the unseen with a cheer" to-day? Dare we enter the New Year hopefully, confidently, with the shout of assured victory for all our highest ideals?

That depends entirely upon the outlook we take on life, or, should I not rather say, upon the viewpoint from which we look out upon life as a whole.

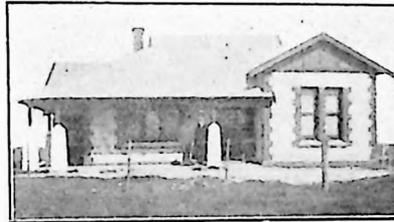
Let me at once say that I have no competence as an expositor of Browning. I love his message because it ever seems to me to ring with the holy joy and hopefulness of the Biblical conceptions. My mind instinctively travels to a great word of the New Testament from which, I cannot help believing, Browning drew inspiration when he wrote these words. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews, in that wonderful passage, vibrant with the passion of absolute assurance, when speaking of the pilgrims and warriors of faith, said of them: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them, and greeted them from afar."

Observe, carefully, the facts. These people had, in a sense, received the promises. That is, they had been promised the very things which created the inspiration of all their pilgrimage and their warfare. Let it be most carefully noted that the promises made were not those of a heaven beyond this world, but rather those of the establishment of a divine order upon the earth, the building of the City of God, the full realisation of the highest good of humanity in

this world. But they never received the promises in the sense of seeing them fulfilled. They all died without doing so. As they did so, there was no disappointment in their hearts, no whining in their voices. The light of the coming day was on their faces. Songs were on their lips. They died in faith, greeting the unseen with a cheer.

Can we greet the unseen in the New Year in this spirit? We have been living through cataclysmic hours. The shrewdest statesmen are unable to forecast the future. The problems are profound. The perils are manifold. How shall we go forward? With sighing or with song? Shall we face the unseen in dumb despair, or greet it with a cheer?

Again I say, everything depends upon our viewpoint. If we stand where these



Church of Christ Manse, Long Plains, S.A.
Recently purchased by the church.

men stood, where have stood all the noble souls who have dared and suffered and died in confidence, we shall join them, and greet the unseen with a ringing cheer, as we move breast forward toward the day when the promises will be fulfilled.

Let me, then, name some of the things which these souls have possessed, and which we possess, which give us the right on the darkest day, and under its severest tribulation, to greet the unseen with a cheer. In doing so I shall drop the past tense and speak of these things as our present possessions.

The promise of perfection.

First, then, we have the promises. The conception of the high order which we desire is in itself a promise. Of course, our trouble is that the crippled men are everywhere, and we ask: Is there any healing? We do not believe that men were once one-legged, one-eyed, and so hope for the development of the perfect out of the imperfect. Where, then, is our hope? Here the only satisfactory answer is that of the Biblical revelation of God. There he is seen to be not only Creator, but Redeemer—the God who makes again the marred vessel, the God who, brooding over all ruin, is for ever saying: "Behold, I make all

things new!" In him, then, we have the assurance that the promise suggested by the imperfect shall be realised. Our cheer for the future, if I may reverently say so, is a cheer for the God who ever brings order out of chaos, and who works toward the result through all apparent confusion.

Again, we have the clear teaching of the writings, and of all human experience, that it is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom. That means that tribulation is the assurance of the coming of the kingdom. It was that conviction that made Paul urge the saints not only to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, but to rejoice in tribulation also. The very groaning of creation is travail—that is to say that the pains are birth-pangs. Through the anguish the new life is born, through the agonies the new order is coming.

To both these reasons for confidence the victories already won bear their unceasing testimony. True that there are hours—and we have been living in such—when it seems as though all the ground gained is lost, that the more stately and noble things of life are razed to the dust. It is false seeming. Nothing truly noble, once realised, can ever be destroyed. For a while it may be hidden from our eyes by blood and fire and vapor of smoke, but it is these that will pass and perish, and in their passing we shall find that they also have been ministers of the Day of God, wherein he moves with might and majesty forward towards the realisation of his purposes of mercy.

It is impossible not to speak, also, of that strange, mystic, but none the less powerful and persistent, inspiration of confidence which is the possession of all Christian souls, the witness of the Spirit of God with our spirits that we are the sons of God. That to the truly godly soul, the soul in real fellowship with God, is at once the inspiration of a passion to serve and to suffer, and the absolute assurance of the final victory of our Father, and of that mighty divine life, the power and blessedness of which we know in our own experience.

The certainty of God.

All this is, perhaps, included in the one supreme inspiration of confidence, the certainty of God. To be unsure of God is not to be sure of anything except darkness and defeat. To be sure of him is to have no room for uncertainty as to the future, however dark and desolate the hour may be. When I refer to the certainty of God, I am thinking of him as he is made known to us in Christ. We see not yet all things put under man, but we have seen, and we see, God's Man. In seeing him we have seen God, and by that vision we are sure of the ultimate victory of all the grace and truth which shone forth upon the darkness and desolation of the world.

And may we not add a final reason for confidence? We have ourselves. All

our weakness and wickedness we know; but, in spite of it all, we are God's own creation, and, being by his grace redeemed, we are the very instruments he needs for carrying out his purposes. Here, perhaps, faith falters, and fear grows strong, but it need not be so. In proportion as we are truly yielded to our Master, we may march with him, rejoicing first of all in him, but rejoicing also that we can have fellowship with his suffering, his service, and presently in his victory. Therefore, let us move forward, to serve, to suffer, if need be to die, without receiving the promises, but always greeting them with a cheer.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

CHARITY OF JUDGMENT.

"What did you preach about yesterday?" asked an elderly minister of a brother, one Monday.

"On the Judgment," was the reply.

"Did you do it tenderly?" inquired the old man.

Among the Levitical laws, there was one which said, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." But to obey this command, the utmost tact and gentleness are needed. The region of motive is very difficult to explore, and serious mistakes are possible regarding it.

In a small town in France there once lived a man who used only the barest necessities and wore the meanest clothes. The children jeered at him as a miser. But the poor of the town had long suffered from bad water, and this man had really been saving for years to build an aqueduct for the introduction of pure water. At his death the sum he had amassed was found sufficient; and the inestimable blessing of clean water from the hills was installed. The man's motive was entirely different from what his conduct had suggested. In this world there is constant need for charity of judgment.

"If we knew the cares and trials,
Knew the efforts all in vain,
And the bitter disappointments,
Understood the loss and gain,
Would the grim, eternal roughness
Seem, I wonder, just the same?
Should we help where now we hinder?
Should we pity where we blame?"

"Many an unlovely oddity," wrote George Eliot, "many an irritating fault has come of a hard sorrow which has crushed and maimed the nature, just when it was expanding into picturesque beauty. And the trivial, erring life which we visit with our harsh blame may be but the unsteady motion of a man whose best limb is amputated." The man whom we coldly discuss may all the while be shedding hot tears because his sacrifice is hard and strength is falling him to speak the kindly word and do the Christlike deed.—"Exchange."

LIFE—WHAT IS IT?

Life is more than idle hours,
More than merely fruit and flowers;
More than constant pleasure sought,
More than joys that can be bought.
Life that really is worth while
Tries to cause the sad to smile,
Brings new hope to those in pain,
Wishing only good to gain.

Life that yields the rarest joy,
Seeks not ever to destroy,
Causes never tear or groan,
Striving ne'er for self alone;
But that life is rich indeed
Which supplies another's need,
Which in darkness sheds a light,
And in service finds delight.

—Florence N. Hoagland.

Religious Notes and News.

John Livingstone Mott, son of Dr. and Mrs. John R. Mott, is returning to India as a social worker of the Y.M.C.A., at Nagpur, Central Provinces. He was married last June to Miss Celeste Goddard, of New York City.

HOW THE GOSPEL IS BLOCKED IN THE ORIENT.

Miss Lillian F. Abbott, who is teaching in the University of Nanking, writes:

"It seems to me that the opportunity for service in the university is very great. The students are thinking and studying about Christianity to see whether it will be helpful to their country. However, they have not only the problems which face the non-Christian students in our own country, but the fact that the so-called Christian nations treat the weaker nations in such an unchristian fashion. If Christian principles could only prevail in international relations, our difficulties out here would be greatly decreased."

A REVIVAL TO SHAKE THE WORLD.

Speaking at the deaconness anniversary service at Wesley Street Church, Ossett, Mr. J. E. Rattenbury discussed the place of ordinary people towards the bringing about the great revival in religion which people were looking for. The thing that most mattered for the church and the country to-day, he said, was that the rank and file in the church should realise that if God's work was to be done they would have to do it. It was essential that the ordinary man or woman should be "set on fire." He did not wish to deprecate revival missions as reported in the papers, but when he spoke of a revival he was thinking of that great revival described by Charles Wesley in his hymn:

"See how great a flame aspires,
Kindled by a spark of grace;
Jesu's love the nations fires,
Sets the kingdoms on a blaze."

The sort of revival that shakes the world was needed to-day.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR IN PALESTINE AND SYRIA.

An interesting piece of Christian Endeavor news comes from Jerusalem. Two years ago a Norwegian Christian Endeavorer and his wife went to that city with the intention of starting, if possible, a Hebrew Christian Church. Just a year ago this idea was realised, and the first Jewish Christian Church, since the Apostolic Church in Palestine, was organised. It was Dr. Arne Jonsen's plan to organise also a Christian Endeavor society, and no doubt that plan, too, has been realised before this time.

In the city of Aleppo, Syria, there are four Christian Endeavor societies, one of them in a refugee camp. This society alone has 100 members. These four societies recently held a rally at which the orchestra of the boys' school furnished the music. About three hundred and fifty persons were present.

MRS. YAPP'S REMINISCENCES.

Mrs. Yapp, mother of Sir Arthur Yapp, of the Y.M.C.A., has celebrated her 93rd birthday at the vicarage, Bradford, where she is living with her daughter. In her young days Mrs. Yapp heard many of the great Nonconformist preachers. Sixty years ago Spurgeon was announced to preach in a tent at Uppingham, where she was then living. Admission was by ticket, and seeing an open doorway with a table on which was some literature, she asked, "Is this where one gets tickets for Mr. Spurgeon's meeting?"

To her surprise Mr. Spurgeon himself advanced, saying, "Yes, I am Mr. Spurgeon." His simplicity impressed her. There was nothing of the "great man" about him. On going in, Mrs. Yapp remarked to the friend who accompanied her, "I can't imagine anyone being converted in a tent; there are so many distractions." At the close of the meeting she turned to her friend and said emphatically, "I shall never say again that one cannot be converted in a tent."

Mrs. Yapp first heard Dr. Parker at Leintwardine, where he was opening a new Congregational Chapel. She has a vivid recollection of the text, "Satan hath desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat," and of the opening words of the discourse—"We consecrate this church by saying there is a devil." The next time she heard Dr. Parker was at Llandudno, when she was accompanied by a sister and niece. At the morning service the famous preacher said, "There is character in everything anybody does. There are two sisters dressed exactly alike, and yet what a difference is apparent to us all! Character is evident even in the way each puts on her things." As they were on their way to the evening service the niece said, "Don't let us sit near that man, or he is sure to talk about us."

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST MISSIONS.

One thousand seventy-five missionaries have been sent out during the past six years by the mission board of the Seventh Day Adventists, according to their magazine, "The Watchman." This is an average of 179 a year. They support missionaries in 124 countries and preach the gospel in 224 languages. Their gifts to missions during 1924 were per capita, for foreign work, \$14.01; for home work, \$22.69.

A SCIENTIST'S TESTIMONY.

Special interest attached to the paper read at the recent Anglican Church Congress at Southport, England, on "The Eternal Spirit in Nature." It was written by Dr. J. George Adami, late Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University, who has died since accepting the invitation to present this subject to the Congress. As the testimony of a scientist on the verge of his departure into the beyond, the following is of more than ordinary interest: "My part has been to show that the methods of science and religion are identical. I want to make it clear that the scientist may come to a clear knowledge of religious truth by the very methods he has employed at his own work. A man's faith is not built upon reason, but upon conviction, and that conviction may arise from a series of assumptions made and accepted as in the case of natural laws. In brief, we cannot prove that there is a God, but our conviction of His existence may be arrived at by progressive assumptions. . . . In this world we can see but through a glass darkly, we must wait for further revelation and fuller knowledge."

Here is the scientist's testimony of the love of God: "The more and the longer the student of science ponders upon the workings of the Eternal Spirit, the more, in my opinion, will he thrust back upon the life of Christ as the expression of that Spirit. And conversely, if he dares to build in religion as he does in science, and relies upon the experience he has gained, he will find that he will grow into ever wider and wider knowledge of spiritual truth and spiritual apprehension. . . . More and more, as the years have passed, I become convinced that the love of God is everything, and that if a man possesses this, all other things are secondary."

The Home Circle.

Conducted by J. C. F. PITTMAN

THE CHILD.

Along the crowded city street,
There passed a little child;
With rosy hands and dimpled feet,
And body undefiled;
So winsome and so strangely sweet,
A lily 'mid the wild.

This little child long years ago,
Was in a stable born;
Amid the cattle dull and slow,
Amid the hay and corn;
And the old stable 'gan to glow,
Like sun at early morn.

His tiny hands held out to bless,
His lips that sweetly smiled;
Spoke eloquently of Love's caress,
The beauty of a child;
The strength of childish helplessness,
Within a world defiled.

This was the Babe of Bethlehem,
That greets us every year;
Wearing a new Love's Diadem,
Upon this lower sphere;
Who with his little hands shall stem
Greed, Passion, Hate and Fear.

Sweet Christmas time, blest Christmas
time,
We greet with happy lay:
It falls on every land and clime,
It travelleth every way;
And the old stable 'gan to glow,
This Sacred Christmas Day.

—R. Herbert Millington.

CHRISTMAS GIVING.

It's not so much the gift that you send along at Christmas time to your loved ones that really counts, but it's the spirit of love and good wishes that accompany the gift.

This giving of gifts from one to another at the Christmas season has been a custom of centuries; we count it back to the birth of Jesus Christ when the wise men of the East, weary of ludy and sore of foot, found the Christ-child, and, having found, bestowed their gifts of frankincense and myrrh upon him.

To think of that first Christmas on earth should bring joy to our hearts—the one night of nights when the doors of the heavens were thrown wide and the angels came close enough to earth for their voices to be heard by the shepherds attending their flocks of sheep on the hills about old Judea.

The giving of gifts was not the motive, however, that prompted the wise men to follow the star. Ah! no. The belief that the prophecy spoken by the prophets of old was about to be fulfilled caused them to march across the desert sands to old Jerusalem, and there finding the babe of which the old prophets had spoken, they through pure joyousness of heart laid before him the best of their possessions. Simple, yet sweet, were these gifts, and well would we do to pattern some of ours after them.

How many people make of Christmas a great bugbear! How often people, just for show, burden themselves with debt through over-generous giving. Such a gift, however, is not a real Christmas gift, for the Christmas gift, be it big or little, must be a gift of love, and anything else is a mockery.

I love to think of Christ as the giver of all good gifts—the impartial Giver, for he gave to those who loved him and to his enemies. Not only that, but his gift reached out and out far beyond those who knew him personally, and his gift is imperishable. On and on down through the ages his gift has lasted, and will continue to last so long as man calls on him for help.

Because the gift he gave was one of love, it shall last throughout eternity.

Therefore, let us, who make a practice of giving gifts at the Christmastide, measure our possessions well, and then make our gifts accordingly, remembering all the time that it's not so much the gift we give that counts, but the love and good wishes that go with it.—Selected.

NO ROOM FOR JESUS.

O plodding life! crowded so full
Of earthly toil and care!
The body's daily need receives
The first and last concern, and leaves
No room for Jesus there.

O busy brain! by night and day
Working, with patience rare,
Problems of worldly loss or gain,
Thinking till thought becomes a pain—
No room for Jesus there.

O throbbing heart! so quick to feel
In others' woes a share,
Yet human loves each power enthral,
And sordid treasures fill it all—
No room for Jesus there.

O sinful soul! thus to debase
The being God doth spare!
Blood-bought thou art! no more thine own;
Heart, brain, life, all are his alone—
Make room for Jesus there.

Lest soon the bitter day shall come
When vain will be thy prayer
To find in Jesus' heart a place:
For ever closed the door of grace,
Thou'lt gain no entrance there.

—Selected.

THE WAY TO THE MANGER.

The Way to the Manger is ages old,
But still is fair,
And kings and beggars, and young and old,
Have crowded there:
Breath of frankincense, and gleams of gold,
And Wings are there.

The Way to the Manger is open still,
To you and to me;
Earth's greatest and wisest go that Way still—
Their souls' eyes see:
Shall we not follow with hearts full to spill
Love he should see?

—Jessie Annie Anderson.

A GOOD GO-ER.

Pat had just compared his watch with the famous clock of St. Paul's Cathedral, and burst into a fit of laughter. "An' what are ye laughin' at?" asked his companion, a Londoner. "How kin I help it," said Pat. "Here's my little watch, made in Oireland by Mike O'Flaherty, and cost me £3, has beat yer big London clock an hour since yesterday."

WANTED TO MAKE SURE.

Sandy had placed all his savings, amounting to £300, with a certain bank. Some weeks later he called and demanded his money from the cashier. The cashier forthwith obtained the money and passed it through the grating. With great deliberation Sandy counted the money, and then handed it back to the astonished man. "Mister, that's O.K.," he said. "I just wanted to see if it was all there."

The Family Altar.

— J. C. F. P. —

Monday.

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets, for God hath judged your judgment on her.—Rev. 18: 20.

Dr. Adam Clarke, commenting upon this passage, writes: "This is grand and sublime: the fall of this great city (Babylon) was cause of grief to bad men. But as this city was a persecutor of the godly and an enemy to the works of God, angels, apostles and prophets are called to rejoice over her fall."

Reading—Rev. 18.

Tuesday.

And it was given unto her (the Lamb's bride) that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.—Rev. 19: 8.

"O great Absolver, grant my soul may wear
The lowliest garb of penitence and prayer,
That in the Father's courts my glorious dress
May be the garment of thy righteousness."

Reading—Rev. 19.

Wednesday.

And books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works.—Rev. 20: 12.

"Lo! the Book, exactly worded,
Wherein all hath been recorded;
Thence shall judgment be awarded."

Reading—Rev. 20.

Thursday.

And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.—Rev. 21: 4.

"That made me count the less of the sorrows
when I caught a glimpse of the sorrowless
Eternity."—Tennyson.

Reading—Rev. 21.

Friday.

He that testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen; come, Lord Jesus.—Rev. 22: 20.

F. W. Robertson wrote: "The last words of our Lord to his church, uttered by the feeble lips of his last apostle, grey-headed, and already bending over the tomb, were, 'Behold, I come quickly.' I wish we could with our whole heart and soul repeat the answer, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' But we are most of us too devotedly buried in the shadowy nothings of time and space, and too deeply attached to them, to avoid feeling in the very spirit of unbelief, that it is a day whose postponement is to be desired, since they will be torn from our grasp for ever."

Reading—Rev. 22.

Saturday.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.—Gen. 3: 15.

"In his 'Postilla' for the first Sunday in Advent Melancthon reminds us that the first Advent of the Son of God took place in the Garden of Eden. The divine logos or Son of God himself addressed Adam in the giving of the promise: The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. And while these words were proclaimed outwardly, the logos was working also within the hearts of Adam and Eve, and cheering them with his comfort, lest they should fall into everlasting death."

Reading—Gen. 3: 1-3.

Sunday.

Enoch walked with God.—Gen. 5: 24.
"Enoch walked with God; there would have been no merit in walking in front."—Frederic Godet.

Reading—Gen. 5 (4: 8-15; 6: 9-33).

Prayer Meeting Topic.

January 5.

BREAKING THROUGH THE HEDGES.

(Micah 2: 13.)

F. J. SIVYER, B.A.

"The breaker is gone up before them: they have broken forth and passed on to the gate, and are gone out thereat: and their king is passed on before them, and the Lord is at the head of them." As Arethusa, the famous fountain of Greek legend, sunk into the ground on the side of the Dorian mountain, passed under the sea, and emerged again in Sicily, so many of the ancient prophecies sink out of sight in the Old Testament page and emerge long after in the New. Whatever reference these words of Micah had to local politics, they certainly find their ultimate fulfilment in the redemptive work of Jesus.

God is represented as bringing the remnant of Israel out of captivity and is likened to "the breaker," the bell-sheep, who forces a way through the hedges and leads out the flock to pasture and freedom. The thought has in it a message for the New Year. We are all, in a more or less degree, in the grip of Giant Circumstance. We are imprisoned by so many hedges that, were it not for the leadership of Jesus, our chance of living the victorious life would be very remote.

The Monotony of Work.

Dr. L. P. Jacks, in "The Faith of the Worker," instances certain factory-women who stand all day at benches doing nothing else but chipping the tops off eggs. One such woman has been doing nothing else for 30 years.

For most of us the opening year means the facing of another round of monotonous tasks, and life would indeed be confined and cabined for us were it not for the fact of Jesus. Because he labored for fourteen or fifteen years as a common carpenter, honest labor has been given a new name—service. The word of the apostle is Christ's word to the worker, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." This is Christ's way out through the thronging press and monotonous round of everyday and every-year duties—to look upon work as service, not only for humanity but also for the Lord, and therefore to do it heartily.

The Hedge of Criticism.

Any who attempt any definite service for the public good will sooner or later feel the blighting effect of undeserved criticism.

When Socrates was told what men said of him, and when asked if it hurt him, he replied, "Not at all, for there is nothing of me in what they say." Jesus, when falsely accused, went on with his task unflinchingly. He knew the future would vindicate his cause. One other thing Jesus did, he constantly sought consolation from communion with his Father. By so doing he made a gap in the hedge; and for us also, it is the way through.

Fears for the Future.

Anxiety about money matters, concern about health, dread of old habits, and old age, and "the last enemy"—these fears for the future, which would hem us in and rob us of freedom, peace, life—all have been faced and vanquished by Christ our Leader.

In the battle of Sempach, 1386, Arnold von Winkelried, the Swiss patriot, forced a gap in the dense ranks of the Austrians by grasping an armful of pikes and burying them in his body, thereby making a way to victory for his troops.

Jesus by his life, and death, and resurrection has forced a gap in all the hedges which would hem humanity in. "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

TOPIC FOR JANUARY 12—GETTING READY FOR BLESSING—Malachi 3: 10.

Our Young People.

Conducted by Leslie C. McCallum, M.A.

MERRY CHRISTMAS.

The one who conducts these columns would like to step right out of these pages, take you by the hand and wish you a Merry Christmas. Since we cannot do that, we want to assure you, just as sincerely as we can, that our heart is with you at this joyful Christmas season, and we hope that the fullest measure of the season's happiness may be yours.

To-day it seems to us that we are standing on the threshold of great things. As we view the wide field of Christian endeavor it seems to us the present is especially an opportunity time for the church of Jesus Christ to push on with her task. Much of the bitter opposition that prevailed against the church after the closing of the Great War has died down. True, there is still on every hand great indifference towards spiritual things, but opportunities for Christian service and devotion were never greater. Men are learning to appreciate more the intangible values of life. Materialistic motives are not so pronounced. Succor for the needy is more spontaneous and generous.

The world is coming to realise more and more that the human family is one. Amid all the frenzied rush of the Christmas season there is perceptible a deeper note of peace and good will among men. The men and women of our Bible Schools who, week by week, give themselves to the teaching of our young people in the things of the kingdom of God are doing their part in bringing about the perfect Christmas. With full appreciation of your important place in the world, and with a deep realisation of the significance of the expression, let us again wish you and yours "A Merry Christmas."

"To me the greatest happiness

That comes throughout the year

Is thinking better things to say,

New ways to wish you cheer.

For sure as Christmas time comes 'round,

I strive with might and main

For something new to say to you,

And say the old again."

"Under a flourishing sweet-apple-tree was a hog-pen. The hogs liked the sweet apples. When one fell into the pen the brutes fought over it and ate it and grunted and growled for more. Not once did they look up in gratitude to the source of supply. Many of us are like the hogs. God is continuously showering us with blessings, but we seldom look up to the source of them all and thank him. Let us cultivate the grace of gratitude. Let us daily thank the Giver of every good and perfect gift."

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND.

It was Christmas Eve. The night was very dark and a warm north wind was blowing as Delbridge, the road-mender, made his way homeward. He had been working a long way from home, and now was looking forward with pleasure to a happy evening with his family. Although he worked very hard he was poor, gaining merely enough to supply the wants of his wife and five little children. He was thinking of them when in the distance he heard a faint cry. Guided by the sound, he went forward until he found near the roadside a little child, with torn clothes and bleeding feet, sobbing as though his heart would break.

"What are you doing here, little one," he said.

The child answered nothing, but looked up piteously into the road-mender's face.

"Well, I cannot leave you here, little one." So saying, Delbridge raised the little thing in his arms and started homewards. When he arrived at his house he put the child down and tapped at the door, which was immediately thrown open, and the children rushed out to meet him.

"Here, wife, is a guest to our Christmas Eve supper," said he, leading the little one, who held timidly to his fingers with its tiny hand.

"And welcome he is," said his wife.

The children all pressed around to welcome and gaze upon the little new-comer. They showed him their Christmas-tree decorated with bright colored lamps in honor of Christmas Eve.

Then they sat down to supper, each child giving of its portion for the little guest, looking with admiration at his clear eyes and golden hair, which shone so as to shed a brighter light in the little room. As they gazed it grew into a sort of halo round his head, and his eyes beamed with a soft radiance. He grew larger and brighter before their eyes; and as they gazed in wonder and admiration at the sight the beautiful vision disappeared, with hands outstretched over them in benediction.

Delbridge and his wife fell on their knees, exclaiming in awestruck voices, "The holy Christ-Child!" and then they embraced their wondering children in joy and thankfulness that they had entertained the heavenly guest.

Every year, as the time came round, they put aside a portion of their meal and gave it to some poor little child, according to the Master's words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."



Castlemaine (Vic.) Kindergarten Party.

Foreign Missions.

Conducted by G. T. WALDEN, M.A.

UNSUNG MISSIONARY HEROES.

In the "American" for November, Mr. Powell, who is one of America's leading writers, gives unstinted praise to missionary heroes. He says, "They preach in advance of the army and skirmish ahead of the church." Mr. Powell gives as a proof of his impartiality as a witness that he is not a church attendant, nor a member of the Y.M.C.A., or Christian Endeavor, Bible Class or any church. We hope, however, after his words of appreciation of the missionary that he may be all these.

Maligned but Heroic.

He writes: "It has often seemed to me that no class of public servant—I use the term in its broader sense—has been so persistently maligned, and is so generally misunderstood, as the missionary. He has been showered with abuse by slave-traders, opium-smugglers, rum-runners, brutal employers, tyrannical officials. He has been held up to ridicule as a smug, Psalm-singing individual with a Bible in his hand and a hymnal under his arm. Yet though maligned, misrepresented, miserably underpaid, often desperately lonely, frequently facing death from disease, savage animals, or still more savage men, he has pursued the tasks assigned to him with a courage and devotion which merit the admiration of every right-thinking man and woman, and the gratitude of every government having colonial possessions.

Caricature and Reality.

"To those of us who have formed our estimate of the missionary at first hand, in the dark and far-off places, the caricatures of him which are presented to the public in the comic papers and on the stage are screamingly funny—but not in the way their authors intend. Far from being meek and submissive, as he has been painted, the average missionary, as I have found him, is a hard-as-nails, tough-as-rawhide, two-fisted he-man. If you want to know of the missionary ask the Swahilis of the East Coast why David Livingstone's native porters bore the dead body of the great missionary-statesman across two thousand miles of malarial swamp and steaming jungle to Zanzibar. Ask the people of Oregon and Washington whether it was the frock-coated politicians, squabbling in the halls of Congress, or the buckskin-clad missionary, Marcus Whitman, riding on horseback across the continent in the depths of winter, who saved the Pacific North-west to the Union. Ask the Eskimos and fishermen of Labrador of Wilfred Grenfell, who, for a third of a century, jeering at storms, which have appalled the stoutest seamen, has driven his little mission steamer up and down the terrible Starvation Coast, saving thousands of human beings from death by consumption, scurvy or famine.

What America Thinks of Missions.

"Last year some twenty-six millions contributed fourteen million pounds for the support of Foreign Missions, and this, mind you, does not include the enormous sums (of which I have no record) given for a like purpose by American Roman Catholics. This means one of two things: Either a very large number of our people are contributing their dollars to a cause which they do not respect, or, which seems to me more likely, the slurs cast at the missionary are highly offensive to an important and influential section of the community.

Mr. Powell Visits Bolenge.

"One of the most interesting American missions I have ever visited is the station maintained by the Churches of Christ at Bolenge, on the Upper Congo. Bolenge is situated at the point where the river intersects the equator, so

that in pursuance of his daily routine a missionary may be in the Northern Hemisphere one moment and the next moment in the Southern. When an Englishman patronisingly asked one of the women workers at Bolenge, whom he met on the ocean liner, if she had ever crossed the Line, she replied demurely, "Why yes, I suppose I must have. You see, the equator runs through my kitchen." But what really aroused my interest and admiration was the amazing variety of activities in which the four Americans and their wives, who comprise the staff, were engaged, and in all of which they displayed marked competence. To begin with, they had themselves designed and built the plant, which consists of four residences, a church, a hospital, a school, a girls' dormitory, and a large well-planned industrial building. In addition to conducting the large main school for boys and girls of all ages, and one hundred and twenty-two outpost schools scattered over a territory larger than some of our Western states, these eight Americans operate a sawmill, a wood working shop, a blacksmith shop, a shipyard, where they repair and even build small river steamers and launches, a brick kiln, which provided all the bricks used in the construction of the large industrial building, a printing plant, where a weekly newspaper and numerous textbooks are printed, a hospital, a dispensary, and an up-to-date experimental farm, a dairy, a citrus grove, and a large vegetable garden. Where in the United States could you find four families capable of carrying on so many and such diversified activities, and carrying them on efficiently, aided only by negroes not long emerged from savagery and cannibalism? The only parallel that I can recall is the story of the Swiss Family Robinson.

A Mother's Thrilling Experience.

"Encounters with wild animals are commonplace in the lives of many missionaries, as witness the story told me by Mrs. Emery Ross, the young and charming wife of the head of the American Mission at Bolenge. A few months before our visit to the station she, with her two small children, had accompanied her husband on a tour of inspection up a tributary of the Congo, making the journey in a mission launch. One morning, her husband being absent on a visit to a nearby village, Mrs. Ross was seated on the deck of the launch, which was moored alongside the bank, busy with her sewing. Her children were playing on a spit of sand which projected into the river a hundred yards away. So quiet and peaceful was the scene that, had it not been for the tropical vegetation and the dense wall of jungle which rose a few yards back from the river's edge, she might have been on a stream in New England. But the brooding silence was suddenly interrupted by a chorus of piercing screams. Their cause was apparent at a glance. Two hippos, emerging silently from the river, had cut the children off from the bank. Realising that she could not hope to reach them in time, she darted into the cabin, snatched up her husband's rifle, and before the terrified youngsters fully realised their peril, had driven off the monsters with a stream of well-aimed shots."

Bro. and Sister A. Anderson, missionaries from China, are returning to Australia by the "Tanda," which is due at Victoria Dock, Melbourne, on Jan. 2.

VACANCIES.

Sister Shields, Netley House, Main-rd., Eltham, Vic., has vacancies for Adults and Children. Invalid and Convalescent Patients. Telephone: Heidelberg 354M.

COMING EVENTS.

JANUARY 2, 1927, 11 and 7.—Bro. S. H. Mudge, lately of Fremantle, W.A., commences his labors with Oakleigh church. Come and welcome our brother.

JANUARY 15 to 18, 1927.—Back to Stirling East, to celebrate the Sixtieth Anniversary of the church. A very cordial welcome awaits all who have had fellowship with the church in the past to be present at some or all of these meetings. Come home. Everybody welcome. Write Jas. T. Train, Stirling East, S.A.

BIRTH.

CLAY (nee Grace Hall).—On Dec. 13, at "Nooralie" private hospital, Ormond, to Mr. and Mrs. Les. Clay, 46 Ulupna-rd., Ormond—a daughter (Valerie Florence).

MARRIAGE.

WHITTINGTON—HOGAN.—On November 20, 1926, at Congregational Church, Malvern, by Mr. A. Deans, M.A., Wallace, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Whittington, 36 Elphin-gr., Glenferrie, to Mayne, eldest daughter of the late D. B. Hogan (late of Chewton), and Mrs. E. Felstead, 55 Kooyong-rd., Armadale. Present address, "Clytonia," Oberwyl-rd., Burwood.

IN MEMORIAM.

LEE-ARCHER.—In loving memory of Albert Lee-Archer, who fell asleep in Jesus on Dec. 21, 1925. Loved and honored by all who knew him.

We shall sleep, but not for ever!

There will be a glorious dawn!

We shall meet to part, no, never,

On the resurrection morn.

PAYNE.—In memory of mother, who was called home on Dec. 23, 1921.

Calm is thy slumber, as an infant's sleep,
But thou shalt wake, no more to toil and weep;
Thine is a rest so sweet, secure and deep—

Good night! Good night!

—Inserted by Will and May, Echuca.

STEVENS.—In loving memory of our dear mother, Elizabeth Stevens, who entered into rest Dec. 19, 1924.

The warm devotion of a mother's love,

The beautiful fragrance of a gracious life;

The gently influence of noble deeds,

A life spent for others, soothing their strife.

—Inserted by her daughters, Dorothy, Mabel and Elsie, and son-in-law, P. C. Bennett.

TIDD.—In fond and loving memory of our dear son and brother Ernest, who was called home to a higher life on Dec. 27, 1920, aged 17 years and 3 months.

We leave him in God's keeping.

The rough road safely o'er;

He is not lost to loving hearts,

But only gone before.

How joyful is the thought that lingers.

When loved ones cross death's sea,

That when our labors here are ended

With them we'll ever be.

—Inserted by his loving father, mother, sister and brothers, 30 William-st., Glenferrie.

VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE.

Benevolent Section.—Churches are invited to send articles of clothing and other useful material, addressed to the "Churches of Christ Mission, Burnley." All packages are carried free on the railways. Advise Will H. Clay, 49 Elizabeth-st., Melbourne, when sending.

Employment.—Employers of labor and those seeking employment are invited to get into touch with the Department.

Christmas Relief.—It is not too late to forward money for the relief of the poor. Wise distribution guaranteed.

Laundress (member) seeks employment Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.—Apply Social Service.

Here and There.

We wish all our readers a very happy Christmas, and abundant blessing in their New Year of service for the Master.

"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. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

Burwood Church of Christ, N.S.W., has almost completed a new brick building. It is intended that a preacher will be located there early in the new year.

On Sunday afternoon, Dec. 19, the Sunday Schools of Arncliffe district, N.S.W., united for a special Christmas service, at which Mr. A. L. Haddon was the speaker.

Victorian church treasurers are asked to forward Home Mission offering money as speedily as possible to the Home Mission Office, 313 Little Collins-st., Melbourne.

In last week's issue appeared a report of the opening of the new Bible School building at Fullarton, S.A.; but by an unfortunate error it was made to appear that the new building was at Knoxville. We are glad to insert this correction.

The financial year for the College of the Bible closes at 31st December. The Board of Management will appreciate it if all church treasurers and others holding money for the College will remit promptly to the Organising Secretary, Fred. T. Saunders, 250 Tooronga Road, East Malvern, Vic.

Enmore tabernacle has just purchased a home for its preacher in Cambridge-st., Stanmore. It is a comfortable place about five minutes' walk from the chapel. Bro. and Sister Paternoster expect to move in early in the new year. About £400 in cash and promises has been received toward the purchase.

On the suggestion of Mr. A. M. Ludbrook, there will be, in next year's "Family Altar," not only the daily selected portion but reference to the complete scriptures selected by him for the help of those who wish to read right through the Old Testament. The complete selection will be in parentheses.

The Austral office will be closed for printing from Dec. 24 to Jan. 4. In harmony with our usual custom, this will be the last number of the "Christian" for the year. Our next issue will be published on January 6. Church reporters will greatly oblige by regarding this notice and refraining from sending duplicate reports.

This is the season of goodwill. The presidents of the World Alliance, League of Nations Union, and Council of Churches made an appeal for the observance of last Sunday as Peace Sunday. They rightly said that "no more suitable time could be found for the proclamation of the gospel of goodwill, and for the calling of the people to seek by prayer and the exercise of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ all that makes for peace and breaks down the spirit that makes for war."

The Schwab-Stewart tent mission at Shepparton, Vic., closed on Dec. 12, there being three decisions at the final meeting. A good thankoffering was made, and on Monday evening a final service was held in the chapel, farewells being said and presentations made to Bro. and Sister Schwab and to Bro. Gale (tent caretaker). All served splendidly, and their fellowship was much enjoyed. On Dec. 15, the clubs held a united social evening. Meetings on Dec. 19 were good, Christmas messages being given morning and evening by Bro. Stewart. One young man decided for Christ at the evening service, and two were baptised.

At Glenferrie, Vic., on Sunday morning Bro. T. H. Scambler gave a special address for Peace Sunday. A young man from the Bible School was received into membership on confession and baptism. In the evening a crowded congregation attended the Christmas choral service. The choir under the leadership of Mrs. Bennett rendered with much acceptance a number of carols, Mozart's "Gloria in Excelsis," and selections from Handel's "The Messiah," including the "Hallelujah Chorus."

The Melbourne "Argus" of Friday last contained the following paragraph: "Word has been received by Dr. John L. Brandt, the minister of the Swanston-st. Church of Christ, that the severe hurricane which devastated Miami, Florida (U.S.A.), recently, totally destroyed the home of his son and the Alliance Tabernacle, of which his daughter is pastor. Dr. Brandt's son escaped from his home with his wife and family as the hurricane struck Miami. Everything they possessed was lost. Dr. Brandt's brother, who lived about two miles from Miami, did not suffer any loss as the result of the hurricane, as his home was not in the path of the storm."

Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Harward spent last weekend in Melbourne, and had the opportunity of getting in touch with a large number of old friends. Bro. Harward was the preacher at Swanston-st. on Sunday morning, and preached to a full meeting at Gardiner in the evening. On Monday evening the Victorian Home Missionary Committee, with other brethren, entertained Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Harward at tea. The meeting was a representative one, including many who were associated with Bro. Harward in his work many years ago. Opportunity was taken to express appreciation of Bro. and Sister Harward, and to express the good wishes of the Victorian brotherhood for their work among the British churches.

During Christmas the Adelphian team of cricketers representing Grote-st., Adelaide, will be visiting Melbourne to engage in matches with the Victorian Church of Christ Association; a two-day match on Dec. 27 and 28, and one day on Dec. 30, commencing at 11 a.m. Matches will be played on Malvern cricket ground. Luncheon will be provided at 1/6 per head. The visitors have a full round of entertainment provided, the chief one being the official reception being given by the President, Bro. W. C. Craigie, at the Cafe Royal, Flinders-st., on Tuesday, Dec. 28. Tickets can be had from delegates, or ring U 7485 or Cant. 403, 3/6 each. On Wednesday, Dec. 29, an all-day picnic will be held at Mornington, cars leaving 9.45 from corner of Russell and Collins-st. On Friday afternoon, Dec. 31, cars leave the same place at 1.15 for Belgrave. Friends with cars are invited to these outings.

A short bill forbidding the opening of theatres on Christmas Day and Good Friday passed all stages in the Victorian Legislative Assembly last week. There was no opposition to the measure. In moving the second reading, Dr. Argyle (Chief Secretary) explained that the bill was an amendment of the Theatres Act. The principal act dated from the days of James the Second. It would not be possible for him to introduce all the amendments which were required that night. By adding the words "or on Christmas Day or on Good Friday," after the word "Sunday" in section seven of the principal act the bill gave power to cancel or suspend the licence of any theatre which opened on those days unless it had a special permit. As non-licensed picture theatres were not included in the principal act, a special clause was included in the bill forbidding performances in them without a special licence.

City Temple, Sydney, had good attendances on Dec. 12, Bro. J. Chapple speaking in the morning, and in the evening Bro. H. G. Harward delivered his farewell message to the church. On Thursday evening, 9th inst., a united farewell was tendered to Bro. and Sister Harward, who were to leave for England on the "Moreton Bay" on the 15th inst. There was a large representative gathering, and a presentation of notes valuing £108 was made on behalf of the N.S.W. churches. The sympathy of the church is extended to Bro. J. Stimson and family in the passing away of Bro. G. Stimson, of Canley Vale.

The Hinrichsen-Brooker mission at North Perth has been most successful for a three-weeks' effort. The first week was encouraging and fruitful, but toward the end of the second week a hardness was felt, and for several nights there were no decisions. On the last Sunday there was a break, and in the closing nights there were sixteen decisions, making a total of thirty-five for the three weeks. The average of non-members attending throughout was 120. House-to-house visiting enabled Bro. Ingham to secure new scholars for the school. The thankoffering reached £126, about £20 being promised by members of sister churches, and over £100 from Nth. Perth members and converts. The church is grateful to the Home Mission Committee for arranging this mission, and to the mission party for their earnest endeavors.

The Victorian Social Service Department welcomed to Victoria from England by the s.s. "Beltana" last week two families, both of which were entertained at a specially arranged tea in the Swanston-st. lecture hall by members of the Department and a few leading brethren, among whom was the Conference President, Bro. Shipway, and a representative of the Y.M.C.A. under whose auspices the Department is operating. After the good things provided had been partaken of, Bro. Bardwell, who presided, welcomed the new arrivals, and called upon Bro. Shipway to extend the official welcome. Mrs. B. Lyall and Mrs. C. Gill welcomed the ladies, and several other speakers supported. Each of the adult migrants spoke very appreciatively of the welcome received at every Australian port, and of the excellent reception accorded in Melbourne. Both families have been placed in splendid positions.

The name of Dr. Thomas Porter is a familiar one to many of our readers. He was for many years a prominent preacher amongst us. His was a remarkable personality, and his vigor at an advanced age was wonderful. The "Argus" of Monday contained the following paragraph: "Dr. Thomas Porter, who for many years was a leading pastor of the Baptist Church, died yesterday morning at his residence, Coronation-ave., Petersham (N.S.W.), aged 88 years. Dr. Porter was a notable figure in the church life of Australia, and was also well known in the United States. Born in Belfast, Ireland, he came to Melbourne with his parents in 1810. Two years later the family went to Launceston, and returned to Melbourne in 1847. Some years later Dr. Porter spent some time prospecting on various goldfields in Victoria. As a young man he went to the United States, where he qualified as a doctor of medicine. Returning to Australia, he did not practise medicine, but in 1857 decided to enter the ministry. He first preached near Doncaster, then a bush neighborhood, and later accepted an invitation to the Hindmarsh (S.A.) Church of Christ. In 1881 Dr. Porter entered the Baptist ministry, and retired about ten years ago. Dr. Porter is survived by his widow (who is aged 86 years), three sons, and four daughters. The sons are Dr. W. S. Porter of Oakland, California, and Messrs. T. H. Porter (artist, of Sydney), and J. G. Porter (marine engineer, of San Francisco). The daughters are Mrs. G. A. Green (of Vancouver), Miss Porter (of Petersham), Mrs. E. J. Womster (of Melbourne) and Mrs. McIndoe (of Dee Why)."

What the Federal Conference Meant to W.A.

Albany Bell, President W.A. Conference.

The 1926 Federal Conference is over, and reviewing the event, what advantage has been gained by the Western State in which it was held? Much every way, but chiefly in the wonderful fellowship which has helped us in this far-off State to realise that we belong to a great brotherhood. The most prominent brethren of the Australian church have been brought personally into our lives, and from now on the "Australian Christian," and its news items, will have a new interest to scores of our Western brethren. Yes, I would place the fellowship as the greatest advantage accruing to the West as the result of the conference, for one of the most precious things of this Christian life is its fellowships, and whatever else may be transient this will be permanent.

Then we will always be encouraged to attempt "big things" for the church as a result of our experience. When our brethren returned from Sydney with the news that they had secured the conference for W.A., many thought that a few more such "glorious victories" would crush us entirely. It seemed impossible for the few to arrange accommodation for the 50 or 60 expected, but when we heard that over 100 had booked we became enthused with the spirit of hospitality (one of the N.T. virtues becoming atrophied), and many more homes were available than could be supplied with visitors. Great demands bring forth great responses. Another great lesson to be learnt in our Christian experience! Every motor car in the metropolitan brotherhood was at the disposal of the visitors for the week. One or two who hung back at first were the most anxious to be in the rush. Some of the cars were brought or sent for miles out back to be at the brethren's disposal for the week. It is so in all our work if we profit by the lesson. Our visiting brethren stood right up to it, and never seemed to notice whether the car was a Rolls Royce or a Ford, or the home a bungalow or a cottage. This sort of spirit will surely do both sides a permanent good.

The meetings held in the largest hall available in Perth and packed every night have certainly put the church of Christ in the public eye in a way that could not otherwise be done, and the fleets of motor cars placarded "Churches of Christ Federal Conference," the civic reception at Kalgoorlie coming just at the psychological moment on top of the great tent mission, daily columns in the newspapers of the proceedings, etc., gave an advertisement which we could not otherwise obtain; of great moment to those who value all these things in which the Gentiles trust.

We were concerned about the expense of the conference in a State of limited numbers and resources, and no wealthy men to get at the back of things, but large hearts are better than big purses, and we found that the conference not only financed itself but left a substantial margin to hand over to the incoming committee. I do not mention the real business of the conference. I think it will be generally known from the records that this did not suffer from the "Small State" innovation, whilst as to the charms and resources of the Western State most of our Eastern brethren admitted (to paraphrase Caesar), We came, we saw, we were conquered.

Yes, on our experience, I should say that no State is too small or weak to tackle a Federal Conference provided the necessary enthusiasm is there to stir the members into activity, thus reaping the benefits accruing from such a great event.

"When a man rights himself with God he takes the first step toward righting himself with everything else."

Born at Bethlehem.

Galatians 4: 4-7.

Stuart Stevens.

This Scripture gives us the fact of the incarnation. "God sent forth his Son." Jesus speaks of the Son of man as "He that came down from heaven." He was pre-existent to his birth. The birth of Jesus was, therefore, the incarnation of Deity. We propose to consider briefly three things:—

1. The preparation for the Incarnation.
2. The process of the Incarnation.
3. The purpose of the Incarnation.

The preparation for the incarnation.

"When the fulness of time was come" for this event there was a remarkable preparation. There was a political preparation. The Roman empire did not care very much about religious views or forms. Hers was a revenue-seeking affair, consequently there was given the widest toleration in all religious matters. For the time war had ceased. The temple of Janus was closed. Who can truthfully declare that there was not a divine movement in these things? As well, there was a linguistic preparation, for the Greek language, in process of formation for centuries, had reached the very perfection, which made it a fit medium by which the gospel might be preached in the world. Through the Jewish nation there was a religious preparation. This people was scattered to the four winds, and had carried with them the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament and the traditions of the fathers. This would stimulate the hopes of the people concerning a coming Deliverer. The moral condition of the world also demonstrated the need of a Saviour. In his Roman epistle, Paul had shown the decadent state of society. This statement is well supported by revelations secured from the ruins of Pompeii. In this way Jehovah prepared for the coming of his Son.

The process of the incarnation.

Some who heartily agree with the foregoing will, perhaps, in some cases at least, not agree with statements made here. Opinions are to be set aside in the quest for truth. "Made of a woman [not a man], made under the law." There was in Jesus the union of the human and the divine—just as divine as if he were not human, and just as human as if he were not divine. Except as God becomes flesh he cannot be known to men. "He became flesh and dwelt among us." Thus it is that God made himself thinkable as well as lovable.

The purpose of the incarnation.

It is threefold. "To redeem them that are under the law." Jesus Christ came into this world to die for the sins of men. He also came "that we might receive the adoption of sons." That the sons of men might become the sons of God! Marvellous! The third purpose of the Incarnation is that the sons of God should recognise and express the fact that they are the sons of God. The heirship which men are to enjoy is "through Christ." We become acceptable in the Beloved."

Let those who wish it, argue about and question the fact and mystery of the Christ born in Bethlehem. I am willing to stand where the writers of gospels stood, and like the wise men kneel down and worship HIM.

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE.

On Friday, Dec. 3, Mrs. Hayward presided over a large attendance. Mrs. Reg. Clark conducted the devotions, giving some nice thoughts from the "Sermon on the Mount." We were pleased to welcome Sisters Griffin and Laidlaw, from America. Both sisters responded, Mrs. Laidlaw giving an interesting talk on "Vacation: A Study of Life." Mr. Clay spoke on the benevolent work, and asked that a committee be formed and a representative be appointed from each church so that the work could be organised. After some discussion, it was decided to co-operate with the Social Service Department in the work at Burnley. Loving greetings were received from Mrs. Cosh, of W.A. Mrs. Sutton was asked to convey Christian greeting to the sisters of N.S. Wales.

Miss Rea Lawson told of her work amongst the children in the hospital. Mrs. Meyer, superintendent of hospital visitation, thanks the sisters for gifts of cheer distributed at the various institutions.

Home Mission committee visited Surrey Hills during the month. The paper by Mrs. B. J. Kemp and the address by Mrs. Main were much appreciated.—G. Lee, Supt.

General Dorcas committee held their usual monthly meeting. A busy time was spent in preparing parcels for Christmas; some were sent to a mission in Richmond, the Homoeopathic Hospital, and needy cases. Parcels have been sent to us for distribution for which we sincerely thank the senders, as the need is great, especially for men's and boy's clothing and boots.—E. Hunter, Supt.

Women's Mission Band committee visited Blackburn on the occasion of their first anniversary. There was a large attendance. There were several speakers, including Mr. J. E. Allan. These with musical items were much appreciated.—M. Dines, Supt.

Prayer committee visited Ringwood and Richmond. Meetings were well attended, and a fine spirit prevailed.—Mrs. Edwards, Supt.

Girls' Mission Circles are doing steady work. All have sent parcels to India and China. A visit was paid to South Yarra P.B.P., where there was a splendid meeting of about 30 girls. The girls' efforts for Home Mission tent amounted approximately to £5/10/-. Interest is still maintained at Carnegie. Members are making jackets for the Children's Hospital.—M. Smith, Supt.

Members of Moreland church visited the Benevolent Home and distributed comforts. Mr. Gale conducted a service.—E. Tuck, Supt.

Foreign Mission reports all missionaries well. Things are quiet at Hueillehow. We hope soon to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Anderson and family, and farewell Miss J. Gibson in January.—Mrs. Pittman, Supt.

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Hospital visitation committee has paid 53 visits during the month to the various institutions. Papers, magazines, home comforts distributed. Brighton is thanked for donation of £1/6/- for Christmas cheer.—S. Meyer, Supt.

Next meeting of Executive will be held on Feb. 4, 1927. Mrs. Shipway will lead devotions. —Miss Rometch, Secretary, 17 Bowen-st., Kew.

WOMEN'S MISSION BAND.

Receipts: August-November.—Ascot Vale, £1/4/6; Balwyn, £5/5/-; Bambra-rd., £1/2/-; Bordertown, S.A., £1/4/-; Boronia, £5/8/-; Brighton, £3; Brim, 10/-; Brunswick, 7/3; Carlton, Lygon-st., £2/2/6; Carnegie, £2; Cheltenham, £1/6/-; Collingwood, 8/-; East Camberwell, £1/15/6; Emerald East, 15/-; Footscray, 11/-; Gardiner, £4/5/9; Geelong, £1/6/6; Goroke, 6/6; Hawthorn, £10/17/6; Malvern, £1/17/6; Melbourne, Swanston-st., £5/10/6; Middle Park, 18/9; Montrose, 19/6; North Fitzroy, £3/12/-; Pyramid, £1; Red Hill, 12/6; Ringwood, £1/13/-; Shepparton, £2/3/9; South Yarra, £4; Total, £66/2/6.

Expenditure: Paid to Mr. R. Enniss, for Home Missions, £33/1/3; to Mr. R. Lyall, for Foreign Missions, £26/9/-; to Mr. F. Saunders, for Bible College, £6/12/3; Total, £66/2/6.—J. E. Huntsman, Treasurer.

CHRISTMAS.

Christmas, merry Christmas,
What bringest thou to me?
Messages from the loved ones
Across the deep, blue sea.
Peace and goodwill to all mankind
Now rings from shore to shore,
Christmas, merry Christmas,
Welcome here once more.

Christmas, happy Christmas,
We lift our eyes above,
To the Father who has sent thee—
A token of his love.
We hail with glad rejoicing
The day of Jesus' birth,
The day when he to die for man,
Came down from heaven to earth.

Christmas, fleeting Christmas,
The years roll by so fast,
And Christmas follows Christmas
To join the silent past.
Thou bringest memories of old,
Of friends no longer nigh
Who used to join the carols,
Who are singing them on high.

Christmas, peaceful Christmas—
The harbinger of peace
When God himself shall dwell with man
And strife and bloodshed cease;
When Christmas shall the whole year round
Bring universal love,
And life be one thanksgiving day,
In fuller life above.

—Fairelie Thornton.



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News of the Churches.

Queensland.

Dec. 5 meetings were good at Zillmere. Bro. Willis exhorted the church acceptably, and Bro. Neighbour preached at night. On Dec. 12 Bro. Stabe exhorted, and at night Bro. Enchelmeier, from Albion church, preached on "Obedience." Bro. Neighbour was in Gympie. Bible School is in good order; three new scholars for November.

At Brisbane on Dec. 5 Bro. Alcorn addressed both services. On Dec. 12 Bro. Howard Earle was the speaker at both services. A social was held on Nov. 25, when Bro. A. Green, the choir-conductor, was farewelled. A xylonite shaving set and clothes-brush were presented to him. On Dec. 4 the new kindergarten room was officially opened.

Maryborough church has enjoyed a most profitable week's services conducted by Bro. F. E. Alcorn, President of the State Conference. Rain interfered with the closing nights, but much good has been done. Open-air meetings were held with success. The Christmas tree functions at the Bible Schools at Maryborough and Croydon Junction passed off happily. At the latter school two girls have decided for Christ.

South Australia.

On Dec. 11 the sisters and friends of Williams-town church held a sale of gifts to reduce the debt on the new class-room. The sale was opened by Sister Mrs. A. Bain, senr. After paying all expenses the result was £43/8/-.

Gawler meetings were good on Dec. 19. The Bible School had a special session. Prizes were distributed, and the J.C.E. rendered a Christmas hymn. The evening meeting was the best for a long time. Carols were sung by the choir under the baton of Bro. Albert Dealy. Bro. Oram conducted all services.

Good meeting at Bordertown last Sunday morning. Three were welcomed into fellowship—Bro. Gilbert Howell by faith and baptism, Bro. and Sister T. Price by letter from England. The Bible School is keeping up well, and three new scholars have been enrolled. Bro. T. B. Verco preached in the evening. Some members are still kept away by sickness.

Col. Light Gardens Bible School picnic at National Park on Dec. 4 was a great success. Church social on Dec. 8; chapel full; a happy time. At gospel service on Dec. 12, at the close of a splendid sermon by Bro. Warren, two young men confessed Christ. The church was delighted to have Bro. A. E. Forbes present at all meetings on Dec. 19. 188 at Bible School, including 70 in kindergarten. Eight new scholars.

Last Lord's day evening at Nailsworth, a married lady made the confession. Larger attendances at morning meetings. Sister Raymond has returned from hospital. At a special business meeting the church decided to reduce the Home Missionary Committee's subsidy by 10/- per week. Christmas tree celebrations were very successful. Superintendents of Bible School and kindergarten were recipients of presentations.

At Queenstown on Saturday evening, Dec. 18, the kindergarten department had its annual Christmas tree. On Sunday, 19th, Mr. Cox spoke at Q.Y.P.M. At the morning service the speaker was Mr. English, a Glen Iris student. At Sunday School Mr. F. Harris spoke on "Christmas in England," Mrs. Cox on "Christmas in Foreign Lands" and Mr. Hall on "Christmas in Australia." At the evening service Mr. Brooker spoke on "The Birth of Christ," and the choir rendered several anthems.

Good attendance at Semaphore mid-week service on Dec. 15, when four girls from the Bible

School were baptised. At the kindergarten Christmas tree on Dec. 18, the teachers were encouraged by a splendid attendance of parents of kinders. There was a good gathering at the morning service on Dec. 19, and to an almost full house at night the choir, under the baton of Mrs. L. V. Mathews, L.A.B., gave a splendid rendering of the cantata, "Nativity." Bro. Rootes delivered a brief gospel message.

Bro. W. A. Eagle commenced his ministry with the church at Stirling East and Aldgate Valley on Dec. 12, and conducted the anniversary services at Aldgate Valley; splendid meetings. A public meeting was held on Monday evening, and opportunity was taken to welcome Bro. Eagle into the district. Bren. Collett, Rose, Clark and Train joined in the welcome on behalf of the members at Stirling East and Aldgate Valley and district. Meetings good on Dec. 19.

Kadina last Saturday afternoon had a Christmas tree for the kindergarten. In the evening the Junior Endeavorers had a successful social. On Sunday morning there were fifty juniors present. Bro. E. G. Warren exhorted a well-attended meeting. In the evening there was another good audience, and the choir rendered excellent service with Cornish carols. Mrs. E. Rowland was welcomed back after illness. Bren. Bartle and Wilton were away assisting Mouta church.

Meetings at Balaklava are encouraging. Several have been visiting from other parts. The Junior Endeavorers took charge of the senior meeting recently, and rendered papers, songs and recitations in fine style. The combined clubs held their break-up social on Dec. 13. A very enjoyable evening was spent. Christmas functions are now being held. The gospel meetings have increased in attendance the last two Sunday evenings. On Sunday, Dec. 5, three young men came forward. They have been attending regularly, and had considered well the step taken.

Norwood had two great meetings on Sunday, Dec. 12. P. A. Dickson exhorted in the morning on "The Author and Finisher of the Faith." Eight were received into church fellowship—Miss Mary Bartlett, on confession of faith and baptism; Mrs. Bartlett, letter of transfer Broken Hill; Bro. and Sister Geddes and their son, letter from Queenstown; Sisters Mrs. Gillies, Misses Lily and Daisy Gillies, letter from Bordertown. Over 150 partook of the Lord's Supper. In the evening P. R. Baker spoke to a large audience. Three young lads, brothers, from the Sunday school, were baptised.

At Murray Bridge on Dec. 14 the G.E. subject was "Mission Echoes." At the close of a fine meeting a baptismal service was held. Dec. 15 was the children's treat, when presents were distributed from the Christmas tree. The chapel was filled with parents and friends, and a very happy time was spent. Dec. 19, morning service was well attended, and three were received into fellowship. At the gospel service Bro. Arnold gave a splendid address on "Loving Jesus and Keeping His Commandments." A father and daughter made the good confession. A young married woman was baptised. On Nov. 27 a pretty wedding was conducted in the chapel, when Sister Edna Burgess was married to Bro. Reg. Whisson. Bren. Arnold and Forbes officiating.

The church at Snowtown had the pleasure of a visit of Bro. Bowers, who spoke in the morning. Bro. and Sister Burt, from Boort, Vic., have come to reside in Snowtown. Bro. Burt will be a valuable help as he has had 40 years with the various churches in S.A., Vic. and N.S.W. Bro. Bowers preached in the evening to a fair congregation on "The Unchangeable Love of God." The church has sustained a loss, two

families having removed to other parts. Interest is maintained. Splendid meetings on Dec. 19. Bren. Whiting and Ball, from Balaklava, were present; Bro. Whiting presided. Bro. Ball exhorted on "The Two Resurrections." In the evening Bro. J. G. Bridgeman, from Georgetown, preached the gospel. Visitors from Balaklava and Georgetown were present at the Lord's table. Interest growing.

Bro. A. C. Rankine gave an inspiring address at Mile End on Sunday morning, Dec. 12, the subject being "The Power of the Kingdom." Bro. Ewers spoke in the evening on "Is the New Birth Necessary?" At the conclusion of his address four came forward—the grandmother and sisters and mother-in-law of those who came forward the previous Sunday. At the conclusion of the morning service on Dec. 19, eight were immersed. They received the hand of welcome at the evening meeting. Bro. P. A. Dickson and Sister E. Waldron were present in the evening. The choir sang Christmas anthems. The service was a favorite-hymn one, with introductory remarks by Bro. W. L. Ewers. At the conclusion a number of the congregation went to the residence of Sister Kuhlmann to sing to her. She has been laid aside for some months with hip trouble.

Western Australia.

Bassendeau Junior C.E. held its annual picnic at Como Beach, where an enjoyable time was spent. At the monthly consecration service of the Y.P.C.E. society on Dec. 6 Bro. A. Brooke gave a helpful talk. On Dec. 8 an appreciated address was given by Bro. Jacques. On Sunday, Dec. 13, Bro. Peacock occupied the platform both morning and evening.

At Claremont, during Bro. Leach's holiday, Bro. Lueraft ably occupied the platform on Sunday evenings. The church has invited Bro. Leach to serve as preacher for a further term of twelve months. On Sunday morning, Dec. 12, Bro. Hagger delighted with an address on "The Lord's Day." Sister Miss Porte was welcomed after a prolonged holiday in the country.

At Maylands on Sunday, Dec. 12, the J.C.E. Society held its second anniversary, with special items and anthems very creditably rendered by the members, and a stirring address by Bro. Stirling on "God's Challenge to Modern Youth." The demonstration was held on Monday evening. The superintendent, Sister Mrs. Hall, is highly commended on the efficiency to which the children had been brought.

At Subiaco much interest prevails. Bro. Brooks's messages are very helpful. Evening gospel services are crowded. Bro. A. Bell, from Perth church, addressed the church on Dec. 12. Four have made the good confession to date this month. Average number breaking bread, 225. The junior girls' club has gone into recess after a year's successful work, and is preparing for a ten days' camp at Apple Cross.

At Kalgoorlie on Dec. 8, at the usual meeting for prayer and Bible study over 100 were present. The Y.L.O. had its final meeting for the year. There were large attendances at the Brotherhood and Endeavor meetings. The Goldfields District Union of Endeavor Societies has completed twelve months' campaign, and the Kalgoorlie Church of Christ Endeavorers gained first place, and with it the silver shield. On Sunday, Dec. 12, there were fine attendances. Bro. Hunt exhorted the church, and after his address at night one made the good confession, making a total of 41 since the mission. 230 broke bread for the day, in spite of heavy rain from morning till night. Sunday School attendances were well up to average.

Victoria.

There were good meetings at Chelsea on Sunday last. Four ladies were immersed, Bro. Will H. Clay preaching. Nearly £40 was netted by the recent sale of work for the building fund. This is the second effort of the kind for the year.

Prahran had a fine meeting and an inspiring message from Bro. A. L. Gibson on the 19th. Two

men and the wife of one of them were welcomed into membership upon baptism. At night there was a fine attendance at a special Christmas service, Bro. Connor preaching.

On Dec. 12, at Miram South, at the close of Bro. Benn's address, a young man, lately out from England, made the good confession, and was baptised at Kaniva on Dec. 19, along with a young man, the husband of one of the members. The meeting was one of the best for some time.

Hampton kinders were entertained on Saturday afternoon, Dec. 18. On the Sunday R. Pittman spoke morning and evening, and special singing was enjoyed. In the afternoon the Children's Day offering was made. On Monday Christmas cheer was taken to the local convalescent home.

A Christmas service was held at Castlemaine on Sunday, Dec. 19. Bro. Clipstone preached to a good congregation on "God's Unspeakable Gift." A scholar from the school made confession on Dec. 12, and was received into the church on Dec. 19. The Home Mission offering has reached £31.

At Horsham Christmas services were held last Lord's day. Crowded attendance at both services. Special carol singing by choir of 25, and appropriate addresses by Bro. Payne. A sister was baptised at the evening service. Bible School attendance increased to 107. Tennis courts are now completed.

South Melbourne morning and evening meetings on Dec. 19 were well attended. The Sunday School had full classes. In the evening, after Bro. Waterman's splendid address, four of the young people confessed Christ. The kindergarten children had a very enjoyable time at their Christmas tree and party.

Ascot Vale is having good meetings. Bro. Patterson is back after holding a mission in Colac district, where 11 souls were won. On Lord's day, Dec. 12, an "every-member-present" meeting was held, and a "free will offering" taken. The aim was £100, and over £90 was contributed. This money is for the erection of a new school room. Two ladies were received into fellowship, having been baptised the previous Lord's day.

Warrnambool Band of Hope held a successful Christmas tree on Dec. 14, when the building was crowded. Members of the society gave a nice programme, and Father Christmas distributed pledge cards. The toys were distributed to all who had purchased tickets, proceeds being to help the children's ward of the local hospital. Last Sunday morning the definite announcement was made of a Hinrichsen-Brooker mission at Warrnambool in April.

Splendid meetings at Ringwood on Sunday last, with three decisions at night. Bro. L. C. McCallum preaching. The ladies, as a result of their recent sale of work, raised £32. A girls' P.B.P. club has been formed, and the boys' K.S.P. is about to be revived. Club activities terminated for the year with a banquet on Saturday, 18th, at which 60 young people attended. The work is in good heart, and the need of increased accommodation is felt.

Mildura had splendid meetings on Dec. 19. Sister Fowler, of the A.A. Mission, gave a very fine talk on her work. In the evening some 200 were present, including many Orange men and women. Bro. Bird gave an inspiring address on "The Great Fight for Life." The choir under Bro. J. W. Barnden rendered a beautiful anthem. Bro. Bird was to conclude his work on Dec. 26, and a send-off was arranged for Dec. 23. The work is in a splendid condition.

Meetings at Cheltenham on Sunday were of a high order. In the morning Bro. D. Wakeley advised all to follow the Prince of Peace, especially at this Christmas season. Large school and kindergarten. Christmas greetings exchanged by teachers and scholars. In the evening a large audience assembled. An interesting Christmas service was conducted by the preacher, and assisted by the choir. There was one confession. The ordinance of Christian baptism was attended to.

Doncaster had a splendid meeting on Sunday morning, Dec. 19, when nine who were recently baptised were received into fellowship. Sister Laidlaw, of California, was the speaker at the morning service. Bro. Lang gave a Christmas address in the evening. The choir rendered a suitable anthem, and a solo by Miss Clay was enjoyed. The ladies' sewing class was favored with a talk by Mrs. Laidlaw, on "Prohibition and its Benefits to America."

There were nice meetings at Boronia on Dec. 12. Bro. Stafford will be the preacher during vacation, after which Bro. Lyle Williams will take up the work. The C.E. society continues to hold happy meetings. The literary society closed its work for the year on Dec. 11, with an open night, a fine programme being presented. The first wedding in the chapel was celebrated on Dec. 1, when Sister Miss L. Chandler was married to Bro. H. Earle, Bro. Scambler officiating. The church has suffered its first loss by death in the passing of Sister Mrs. Jones. Sympathy is extended to the family.

At Gardiner there was one confession at the prayer meeting last Wednesday evening. On Thursday Bro. and Sister J. W. Enniss returned from their world-trip. On Sunday afternoon the Bible School staff welcomed them home at a tea in the kindergarten room. Six were received into fellowship on Sunday morning (four by letter). Bro. Gebbie gave a fine Christmas message, and at night the chapel was crowded to hear H. G. Harvard deliver an address on "The World knew Him not." The choir gave several pieces splendidly. The Christmas cheer offering amounted to £6/16/6. A young lady was baptised.

Meetings are well attended at Preston. Bro. Dawson's exhortations and addresses are creating a fine impression. During the past two weeks three have been received by transfer. K.S.P. and girls' Sunshine Club closed their year's work by a combined social. On Saturday, Dec. 18, the ladies' guild held a sale of work which should yield satisfactory results. On Sunday afternoon, Dec. 19, Father Christmas visited the kindergarten, and gladdened the hearts of the little ones with gifts. A large number of visitors attended, and the roll-call of the kinders numbered 75. The church business meeting was held on Dec. 16, when a satisfactory state of affairs was revealed. Bro. Vining is assisting Bro. Dawson in the work.

There were good audiences at Lygon-st. on Sunday, Dec. 19. A. G. Saunders, B.A., spoke in the morning on "Is There Room at the Inn?" In the evening a large choir, led by Bro. Ernest Tippet, with Miss M. E. Pittman as organist, rendered Barnby's "First Christmas." A. G. Saunders gave the connective reading. All the pieces were beautifully sung, the solo parts being taken by Miss Hilma Diekens, Miss Edna Bagley and Harry Haines. On Saturday evening a large number of parents and friends of the kindergarten were entertained. The Christmas tree was laden with toys for the kinders. Both the children and adults spent a happy evening together. The superintendent, Bro. F. Prittie, welcomed the visitors. A. G. Saunders gave a short talk, and a vote of thanks was tendered to Miss Elsie Preston, her helpers, and all who had assisted in the function.

At Swanston-st. last Lord's day Bro. and Sister McDonald, of Auckland, also Bro. and Sister Harvard, from Sydney, en route to England, were very welcome visitors. Bro. Harvard's message on "The Significance of Christmas" was much appreciated. Twenty-seven years ago Bro. Harvard delivered his first sermon in Swanston-st. church after his return from America, and the church was pleased to have him on his last Lord's day in Australia. At the evening service Dr. Brandt gave an excellent and interesting sermon on "The Song of the Angels," which was followed by the choir rendering the sacred cantata, "Bethlehem." Valuable assistance was given by friends in the chorus, and solo parts were taken by Miss Elsa Warman, Mr. George, Mr. Brewer and Mr. Watson. These with Miss Olive McKillop,

L.A.B., at the piano, Mr. C. H. Mitchell at the organ, and Mr. J. Harold Barrett as conductor, all gave most efficient service.

Excellent meetings at Carnegie on Dec. 19. Sister Miss Dixon, from North Williamstown, was received into fellowship in the morning. In the evening the gospel service attracted a big audience. Special Christmas pieces were rendered by Bro. Reg. Hayward and choir, and eight Bambra-rd. members contributed a special musical item. At the conclusion of a very fine Christmas sermon by Bro. Shipway, six were immersed. A special "Christmas cheer" service was organised by the sisters on Tuesday, 14th inst., at which Bro. Clay, of the Social Service Department, gave a very interesting address. Many donations in goods, clothing and money were received. Father Christmas paid his usual visit to the eager kindergarteners. Opportunity was taken of making a presentation from the Bible School to Miss Linda Ford in view of her approaching marriage.

New South Wales.

Bro. Greenhalgh exhorted the church at Belmore on Dec. 12. His message was greatly appreciated. One man confessed Christ at the gospel meeting, Bro. P. E. Thomas preaching.

At Epping on Dec. 19 Bro. Fretwell preached both morning and evening. He gave very fine Christmas messages. On Wednesday, Dec. 15, the Bible School held a successful Christmas tree entertainment. Mr. Eric Crawford made a splendid Santa Claus.

South Kensington had special services on Dec. 19. Over 50 broke bread in the morning. S. J. Southgate addressed both meetings. A social evening was given to Bro. and Sister Southgate in the new manse on Thursday evening. Forty people were present, and a beautiful tea-set was presented. A very fitting opening of the first Church of Christ manse to be built in N.S.W. The Dorcas sisters raised £34 in the recent sale of work.

Enmore had a happy Christmas Sunday, the morning meeting being very largely attended, while at night, with the splendid assistance of a fine choir, Bro. Paternoster gave "The Story of the Other Wise Man" to a very large audience. An offering of £11/8/2 for local relief work was taken. A baptismal service brought a memorable day to a close. At the morning service word was received of the home going of Dr. Porter. He frequently attended service at the Tabernacle.

At Lismore, Dec. 12 was observed as a day of humiliation and intercession for rain. Fires were devastating the countryside and people were facing ruin. The weather bureau held out no immediate hope, but rain set in the day following, and the drought has broken. Bro. P. J. Pond preached on "God's Call to Repentance." A youth responded to the gospel invitation. The church has lost by removal Miss Phillips to near Singleton, and Miss E. Brownley to Ballina. The latter was married to Mr. D. J. Hogg, of Ballina. Bro. Pond officiating at the ceremony.

Pe'erham Sunday evening services have been well attended of late. The Bible School picnic was held at Riverside Park. On Friday evening the Christmas tree was held for the Bible School, and about 100 presents distributed to the scholars. A Phi Beta Pi club has been formed with a membership of twelve. Mrs. Arnott has been appointed Chaplain of the club. Sister Mrs. Badger, an old and faithful member of Taree, who has been in membership at Petersham for two years, recently passed to her reward. The church extends sympathy to the sorrowing ones.

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OBITUARY.

STATS.—Sister Annie Staitte, wife of Bro. George Staitte, was baptised into Christ by the late Jesse Colbourne in the old Elizabeth-st. chapel, Sydney, and has been a faithful member till Dec. 9, when she passed into the presence of the King in her 87th year. For the past 31 years she and her husband have been in fellowship with the churches in Western Australia. Since the present writer has been in this State he has known her to walk for three-quarters of an hour in order to meet at the table of the Lord, and after the service she has walked home again—an evidence of her loyalty to the Lord, and her joy in communing with him. Our brother has the deep sympathy of his brethren in his loss, and in the loneliness which he must now feel; but it is only for a little while.—T.H.

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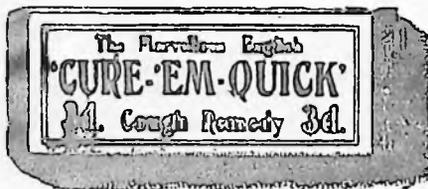
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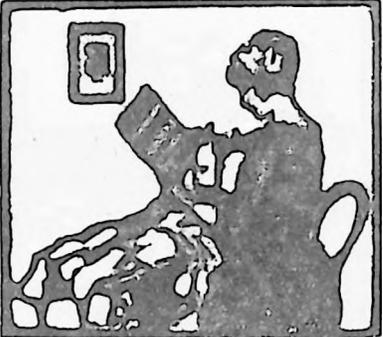
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