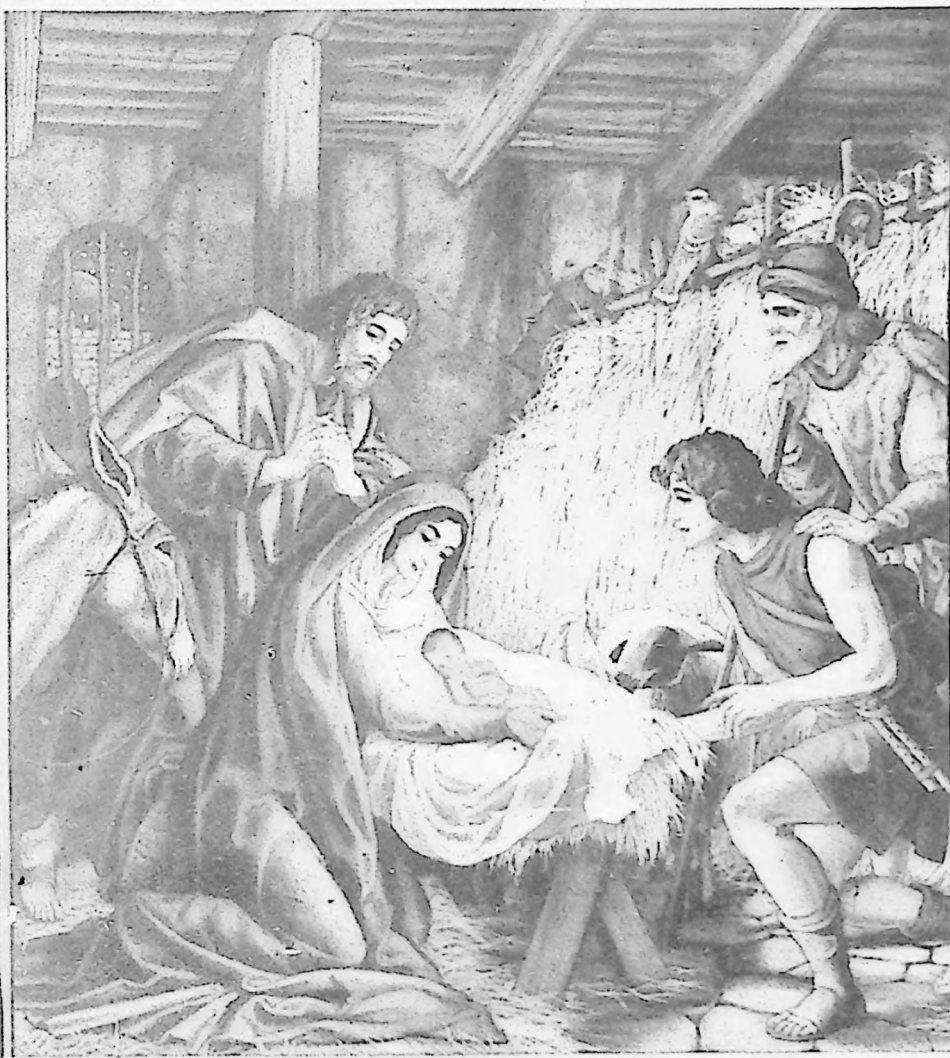


THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN





The Poetry of Christmas

WHAT man with any soul can stand at the foot of a towering mountain, rising to a peak covered in eternal snows, and not marvel at nature's grandeur! Who can gaze over the vast expanse of ocean, see it lashed by tempestuous winds into mountainous seas, and not feel the presence of a mighty power in the universe!

The ancient psalmist was overwhelmed by awe for God when he turned his eyes to the heavens, and cried, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him?"



WHEN a man ceases to marvel and to wonder at the mysteries of life he really dies. Every man must be a poet in some sense to enjoy life and to live. He must feel in his soul a thrill of appreciation for the little acts of devotion and service rendered by relative or friend. When upon a bed of sickness, a man's spirit is stirred by the kind attention of nurses and doctors; that emotional response makes the man more than a stone or a tree. Because of these feelings of appreciation for value-bearing acts, a man reveals the life of the spirit within.

Every man is something of an artist. Who is so dull of spirit that he is not moved by the shape, color and perfume of the rose, or by the rose-flush flesh of a little baby lying in a crib?

Perhaps this machine age and the prevailing materialistic philosophy of life have robbed people of much of their appreciation for the beauty of life. Since scientists are the kings of this age, worshipped almost as gods, and are considered to be the final judges as to the nature of life, the poets and artists have been ignored. What are the use of poets and artists anyway, in a world that is only measured and weighed? The scientist is not far removed from the grocer who weighs out sugar or potatoes. He is not on such a high plane that we can say he is very much different from the carpenter who measures his timber. After all the scientist only weighs atoms and measures distances between stars. The scientist is concerned with quantities, like grocer and carpenter. He does not trouble about things in themselves — what beauty and love may be. A scientist lives only in a little part of the universe. He is not, as a scientist, a poet or an artist. When he is poet or artist, he forgets he is a scientist. Then as a poet his heart is stirred by beauty and love. The surgeon who declares a man has no soul because he cannot find it dissecting the human body, forgets that beauty cannot be weighed on the balances nor measured with a foot-rule.

The soul of a man and the beauty of a flower are qualities, they belong to the very nature of the universe, and these lie beyond the range of weights and measures. Therefore, to understand Christmas we must cease to be scientists, we must become poets and artists.



SINCE business has become scientific these days, we ought to add that we cannot appreciate Christmas unless we cease to commercialise life. Just as scientists have judged the world to be something that can be weighed and measured, passing over the Soul of the universe, so the businessman has considered the end of life to be nothing more than the measure in his profit and loss account. The workman also is ceasing to see his work as a vocation, and tends to measure its suitability by the measure of money in

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wages. Men work and slave in commerce for something that is measured and weighed. They have ceased to look for a spiritual purpose in their vocation. The sense of mission in their enterprise of life has been lost, now that the drive of life arises from the measure of wages offered. We need to become poets and artists in the commercial world so as to restore balance and beauty to life.

God is found in the beauty of the universe and in the love of man for man. We may say he is the Artist who created the beautiful universe. We say he is the Poet who created the Poem of love in Christ the Lord — the Word who became flesh.

Therefore, if we would understand God and appreciate his love, we must become artists and poets, and must cease to consider life only in relationship to weights and measures. When God revealed himself to men, he did not choose the standards of life respected by the men of the Roman world.

The acts and setting associated with the birth of Christ have made an appeal to the artistic temperaments of men. Artists of every generation have delighted to paint the rustic scene in the ancient stable, with humble shepherds adoring the little babe. Poets have appreciated the divine beauty of this Lord who became flesh, and have expressed their wonder and joy in peerless verse.



WHAT place has the modern, commercial world for the artist and the poet? It is a very small place. While scientists can get their thousands of pounds, genuine artists and poets can hardly get a living from the fruits of their vocation. That does not trouble the true artist or poet, but such a state of affairs indicates the sad trend of life.

When the great Artist and Poet of life came to portray and express divine beauty and love, there was no room for him in the Bethlehem inn. The shepherds, a few wise men and one or two humble saints became aware of the significance of that great event. We wonder to-day that men could have been so callous and indifferent to him. Still we ought not condemn that age for we have advanced little if at all in our appreciation of those values which appeal to the true poet and artist. Because this age rejects the world of beauty and love, we may venture to suggest that Christ would find no place in a modern hotel. He would be shown to some out-house. What Christ had to offer the ancient inn-keeper was beauty and love in life; such had no commercial value then. To-day he does not offer material wealth or mighty machines. He does not offer the modern inn-keepers the comforts of modern civilisation. It is evident the commercial world does not value highly what he has. What commercial value is placed upon the ministry of the preacher of the gospel or the poet or artist?

Christmas brings its judgment upon man. It reveals the poverty of man's spirit. Its only value to some people is how much money it can provide by commercialising certain pagan aspects associated with it. To others, it has importance because it offers worldly pleasure. The lack of appreciation of the genuine message of Christmas reveals the barrenness of this modern generation. At Christmas we see again how much we fall short of true beauty and love in life, because we have allowed the pursuit of a materialistic science and a selfish commercialism rob us of the poetic and artistic spirit which Christ revealed in life and word. Only a spiritual revival and genuine repentance can enable this generation to appreciate the poetry of this Christmas season.

Christmas in

Many Lands

CHINA

Christmas Amid Snow

CHRISTMAS morning breaks cold and crisp. Throughout the night snow has fallen softly, covering the grime of the cobbled streets.

On the side walk a vendor is hunched behind a small charcoal stove, over which a pan of chestnuts are popping. An old granny holds between her knees a small pot filled with ashes and a few live coals in an effort to keep warm, her almost frozen hands being used to serve hot noodles to shivering customers.

Peddlers cry their wares. Coolies and rickshaw men move slowly along in the hope of being called for hire. Shopkeepers are removing shutters, and beggars call upon the "heavenly born" to gain merit for themselves and succeeding generations by filling their rice bowls.

The city is astir—a new day has come to life. This is the traditional background, and save for seasonal changes, one day succeeds the other with monotonous regularity for most of China's four hundred and fifty million people.

For the tens of thousands of Christians in China, Christmas day is a day apart. They do not call it "Christ's Mass," but "The Birthday of Christ" or "Christ's Holy Birth." Perhaps in no country in the world is a birthday so regarded as in China. Since Christmas celebrates the birth of a child services for children predominate.

Chinese Christians seldom celebrate Christmas in their own homes, but as a church group. They decorate church buildings. Streamers and flags are hung, pot-plants and shrubs are generously loaned. The place is gay, the people are happy.

Breakfast is partaken of, after which a service of commemoration is held. Then the young people sing traditional carols and stage their plays. Another church family meal is partaken of, and the evening is given over to happy entertainment.

The happy day ends. The congregation pours out into the snow-covered streets.—A. Anderson.

AUSTRALIA

How Harry Enjoyed Christmas

CHRISTMAS to the mission children at Carnarvon, W.A., is a very special event. For Harry and others it is a new experience. Some children have parents, and wait for them to come and take them for a short holiday. But Harry has no parents.

The mission school closes, and holiday longings become almost unbearable. But the Christmas tree, before the holidays begin, is the big event.

Children begin to practise special hymns; favorites like "Once in Royal David's City" are brushed up. When parents are in town, they come to the mission to see how their children are progressing.

Gifts are supplied by friends throughout Australia.

Native adults in town crowd the meeting, and children sing and recite in an anguish of sudden shyness, while adults make audible comments in praise of their efforts. The Christmas story is told, and many hear it for the first time.

Father Christmas arrives! The "old stagers" amongst children have been through this before, and are prepared to welcome the gentleman with whiskers. But some, like Harry, hang back. Presents are distributed from the



tree to children whose eyes open wide in wonder. Harry receives his presents warily, but on opening the parcel makes a fearful noise, showing others what he has.

Children without parents to take them for a holiday receive a gift bundle for Christmas Day. Then special parties and picnics help to make up for lack of outside holidays.

At the service, once again the story is told of how the Son of God became a little Child to become the Saviour. I wonder if Harry can connect the joy of Christmas as he has come to know it with the joy of Christ's coming? Could we teach him to think that as Christmas is a lovely time . . . the Saviour whom we remember is the altogether lovely One? —David G. Hammer.

INDIA

Christmas Dinner at Dhond

INDIA is a land of religious festivals. The Hindu, Muslim and Parsi festivals are enthusiastically celebrated, and Christian missionaries feel that it is good for our Indian Christians to have festivals of their own, when the great events in the life of Christ may be fitly celebrated.

On Christmas eve a service is held in response to the request of many of the people, so that they may commence Christmas Day in prayer, after which bands of the younger folk go carol singing.

At eight o'clock, at the special request of



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the Anglo-Indian population, the missionary in charge conducts a service, in English, at the Railway Institute, for the benefit of the English-speaking residents of Dhond.

At nine o'clock the special service in the chapel commences. The chapel is altogether too small for those who come. Frequently there are baptisms at this service.

In the afternoon, in the hospital grounds, gifts are distributed to every Christian family, to Sunday school children, and patients in hospital. When it is possible a communal dinner is provided for the Christian population; but the present regulations forbid any large dinner parties, and so, when it is available, rice or some other grain is distributed so that all may enjoy an Indian Christmas dinner.

In the evening a bhajan is arranged, when young men play musical instruments and sing Christian hymns until late at night.

The message of Christmas is emphasised from earliest morning to midnight, and Christians retire tired, but very happy in the knowledge that Jesus Christ their Saviour was born in Bethlehem.—G. H. Oldfield.

NEW ZEALAND

Votes For a Holiday

THERE are distinct features about a New Zealand Christmas. The nation votes itself a seasonal holiday, inasmuch that there is wholesale abandonment of office, factory and home for the great out-of-doors. Before vacating the city for the holiday rendezvous there is a climaxing of the spirit of goodwill in greetings, parties and "shouting." Where there is no Christian restraint intoxication is sometimes in evidence.

New Zealanders on the whole seek their pleasures in healthy pursuits. While the racing fraternity provides a Christmas programme to suit its needs, the great company of people engage in leisurely holiday fun; sporting programmes favor yachting, fishing, tramping, camping, bowls, tennis and cricket. Most people are in reasonable distance of the seaside, lakeside, holiday reserve, or bush glen. Christmas is the signal to cut the workaday moorings and quit the artificialities associated with commercial and industrial life and seek relief in God's great out-of-doors. The geography has been a dominating factor in determining the character of a New Zealand Christmas season. So liberal has been the Creator that there is variety in the nature of holiday pursuits and resorts.

Religious bodies have exploited the spirit of abandonment in God's out-of-doors for spiritual gains. Youth departments plan camps for the young. This use of Christmas holiday season has brought spiritual enrichment into the life of the church. The pattern of a New Zealand Christmas accounts for fraternisation between religious communions, because many Christians when away from the "home" congregation, show a readiness for worship with congregations in the holiday resorts. The magnifying of the Christ of Christmas by church is often supplemented by secular newspapers and journals by articles of outstanding merit.

A New Zealand Christmas, it will be judged, is a community affair and a wholesome abandonment for holiday pursuits that may contribute to the building up of the nation's physical, mental and spiritual resources. The intermingling of people on a grand scale in happy mood will prove an important factor in maintaining a spirit of oneness and goodwill in the life of this young nation in the Southern Seas.—W. R. Hibburt.

Christmas is not fragile. We are the fragile things.
Christmas is strong and goes on relentlessly.

Christmas

in Spite of Everything

By J. E. BROOKE, of SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

CHRISTMAS doesn't need our compassion. Bethlehem stands unbeaten and unbroken by all the world's battles. Christ's ideals are strong enough and sure enough to outlast all the temporary violence and folly of men. Christ makes his patient way through all men's stupidities and sins, more real and more relevant, more a fact and more a factor to be reckoned with because of the condition of the world and the state of human affairs.

As we read the Christmas stories, there is, beneath all the beauty and wonder of them, a certain inevitability and relentlessness. There is a divine independence of human wishes and reactions. There is about it all a sense of complete competence—of power—power held in restraint out of consideration for human freedom—but power nevertheless ready to overcome every obstacle to the achievement of its purposes. For Christmas is a great act of God, and although men may hold out against God for a time, in the end God will have his way.

When Christmas came at first, God was fully prepared for the worst that men could do. It didn't take him by surprise. He was prepared for all the indifference, the inhospitality, the brutality he had to meet. But Christmas came—in spite of everything.

If there was no room in the inn, then Christ would be born in the stable. If some would not receive him there were others who would, and so he passed by the indifferent, the inhospitable and the hostile, and came to the humble and the receptive. But nothing could hinder his coming. This inevitability and relentlessness of Christmas is expressed in the songs that were first sung to welcome it. In the song of Simeon, as the aged saint took the Babe in his arms, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy words, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people," he went on to say, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against!" "This child is set"—there is no insecurity, no changeableness about him—whatever happens, he is set. "He shall be spoken against"; but what are men's poor words against God's eternal fiat?

He is set—and their reaction to him will determine the destiny of all men. Those who reject him will be brought down; those who accept him will be exalted. The same great confidence breathes through Mary's song: "He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. . . . He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree." He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away!

And so it was! The proud, the mighty, the rich, would not accept him, so they fell. The humble and hungry-hearted gladly accepted him, so they were exalted. Herod is by-passed; left on his throne "in heaven's contempt apart." The glory of the infant Saviour is revealed to shepherds and simple souls, like the wise men, and gracious old saints like Simeon and Anna.

It is easy to see who were the losers—not Christ whom they rejected, but the poor, miserable souls who rejected him. The glory shines on the stable; the inn, with its crowd of selfish guests, and the palace, with its proud occupant, are in the shadows.

That first Christmas was inevitable. It came—in spite of everything, and the people to be pitied are not the Babe in his rough manger-cradle, but those who were not ready to receive him, and who, through their reaction, confined themselves to the outer darkness.

And so it continued to be, right through our Lord's life. He was rejected, but it was not he who suffered. He was dependent upon no man. He came, he offered himself to them, but if they rejected him they simply shut themselves out from the greatest glory ever offered to man.

As John says, in the opening verses of this gospel, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and (we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth). "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, but his own received him not. But to as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." The scornful



Christmas in Hall and Cottage

Hope blossomed into
flower
When Christ was
born;
He came with love
and power
On Christmas morn.

Adown the years he
comes
On Christmas day—
To halls and cottage
homes
He finds his way.

With joy his heart
is filled
For love is born
Anew, and tumult
stilled
On Christmas morn.
—M. Tulloch.

scribes and Pharisees, the proud priests and rulers thought they were setting him at naught—they were really cancelling themselves out. The glory had come to them, and they shrank back into the gloom.

In spite of all the opposition he met, Jesus was never dismayed or disappointed for himself. His one emotion was that of pity for his enemies. He said that they rejected the counsel of God against themselves and to their own loss and condemnation.

And when at last he came to the end, and saw the cross looming up ahead, it was not himself he wept for, but his tragic rejectors: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," he cried, "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate!"

So it was always. He came into this world and went on his way, inevitably, imperturbably. Nothing could defeat or deter or deflect him. He was "set" like a rock, with a face of flint and a spirit of steel. He was "set" for the falling and rising of many—they sealed their fate according to their reaction to him.

Christ goes on in spite of everything right to the end. He came once in lowliness as the Saviour of men, but he is destined to come again as the Judge of all and the consummation of all. And about that final coming there will be the same inevitability and relentlessness. Again there are many who will not be ready. And it is they who will suffer.

So Christmas comes again, in spite of everything—comes again, whether men accept it or not. It is in the world as a permanent challenge and rebuke and a prophecy of eternal triumph. Perhaps this Christmas some will be ashamed and accept its message at last. But whatever happens Christmas will continue; Christ will go on. Christmas is not a fragile, pathetic, pitiful thing. We are the fragile, pathetic, pitiful things. Christmas is strong, tremendous, inevitable, relentless. It is the only strong, realistic enduring thing in this weak, foolish, transient world.



Christmas Carols



THE SONGS TO SET THE WORLD A-SINGING.

BY WILKIE J. THOMSON.

TWO thousand years ago the angel choir sang the first Christmas carol to the shepherds who watched their flocks in the historic field of Bethlehem. The words of their song have echoed and re-echoed down the centuries sounding above the clash of strife and the clamoring voices of the materialists. Homer the Greek bard sang of the destructive wrath of Pelus' son and of the wanderings of Ulysses. Virgil the Roman poet sang of the armed Aeneas who wandered far until he finally came to Lavinian shores. The Hebrews sang songs of a far richer and nobler strain. Moses had sung of the triumph of God over his enemies and of his leadership. David had left to his people the most sublime songs of worship in his psalms. But now the heavenly chorus outdid them all. It was a song of glorification, of peace and goodwill because the Saviour was born. And around this great song has grown up a wealth of wonderful hymns which never fail to inspire and bless those who sing them. For no matter how sordid and chaotic the circumstances of the world may be, they do not loom so darkly when we blend our voices in singing the Christmas carols. Let us but hear the strains of a Christmas hymn from some street musician and we are conscious of "a feel in the air," which is more easily felt than defined. Dickens gave to us much of the modern joy of Christmas giving, but the spirit of happy jubilation lies as deep as the truths of the carols which we sing.

As you join in singing the carols this Christmastide, I would have you think of their charm, their irresistible charm.

Can any songs be more simple than the hymns of folk-song character such as "Whilst shepherds watched their flocks by night," "Once in royal David's city," "The first Nowell"? Old and young sing them just as heartily. How spiritually sweet are such pieces as "O little town of Bethlehem" and "It came upon a midnight clear." No poem of praise ever penned concerning the birth of a royal babe in a palace has in any way approached the winsome charm of these simple, lovely hymns. It is certainly true that (and here I quote as the lines are so oft repeated):

"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,

To soften rocks or bend a knotted oak,"

and it is never evidenced more than in the singing of our Christmas carols. In a front-line sector of France in World War I. German soldiers on Christmas Eve commenced singing, in their own language, "Silent Night." British soldiers listened intently, no doubt with many a tear shed. When the Germans had finished the Tommies sang it in their language, and so carol for carol rose above the snow-clad parapets of the trenches. Is it to be wondered at that the next day the opposing troops fraternised on No Man's Land?—and had it been left to those men the war would have finished there and then.

Then, too, I would have you think of the cheer of the Christmas carols.

What Christian is not made glad to sing or to hear sung the great message of hope—"For unto you is born . . . a Saviour—peace, goodwill."

Many of us have had happy experiences carol singing on Christmas Eve. I recall one occasion when the world was just lifting itself from the financial depression. With a small utility on which were a folding organ and a band of young people, not one of whom could claim any special gift as a singer, we set out after prayer to tour our district. Early in the night people gathered around us and asked

for more, and as the night drew on lights were put on and householders gathered on their front verandahs. They offered us cordials and suppers, invited us to hold services on their lawns or in their homes, and tried to press money upon us. We later received several letters of thanks, and the city morning paper had such a letter expressing the appreciation of someone who did not know who we were or where we belonged. It was a wonderful experience for us all, and when we concluded we thanked God that so many had been helped by the message of the Christmas hymns.

There are many who are fearful and afraid. The icy hand of some spectre grips their hearts. Frustrated hopes cast many a soul into the pit of despair. But the message of the celestial carol was preceded by the words of the angel, "Fear not," and the warming glow of the truth that Christ was born into the world frees the heart from fear and gives hope in place of despair.

"O may we keep and ponder in our mind
God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind;
Trace we the babe, who hath retrieved our loss,
From the poor manger to the bitter cross;
Tread in his steps assisted by his grace
Till man's first heavenly state again takes place."

And will you, as you join in singing the Christmas hymns, consider the challenge of these carols?

We cannot sing these hymns without realising we have a mission to fulfil. It is to carry forward the work of the angels, and let it be known to all that the babe born in the stable in Bethlehem was the Saviour of the world. It is a task that must not cease until the Lord comes again. It must be declared to all peoples and to every generation.

Again may I say we are challenged to that simple trust and radiant faith which was possessed not only by the shepherds and wise men but by the early Christians. The power that Christianity wielded in the world by a few trusting disciples can be repeated to-day, for the lever (the gospel of Christ) will move the world if Christians bring sufficient weight to bear upon it. It all depends, of course, on how much Christ means to us.

"Though Christ in Bethlehem a thousand times be born,

If he's not born in thee thy soul is still forlorn." And a forlorn soul never inspired anyone. Such hymns as "Oh come, all ye faithful," "Hark the herald angels sing" and "As with gladness men of old" should be hymns that stimulate our faith, and as we sing them, we should re-dedicate ourselves to the task of making the glorious fact known that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. If only more people were singing these songs with us at Christmas time we could be more hopeful of the future.

And last, the Christmas season and its carols challenge us to carry out the spirit of goodwill and to be upholders of the banner of peace.

During the long stretch of human history, the world has never enjoyed more than two hundred and seventy-five years of peace. National hatreds, national prejudices and national lust for supremacy are prolific sources of war. Such ultra spirits must give way before the Lord of life in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female.

The very complexity of modern life presents a greater challenge than ever before to promote goodwill among men. If the Christian fails in this recognised task he fails both God and man. Goodwill toward men in all social, economic and industrial relationships, brotherhood among the nations of the earth—this is the challenge in the angels' song and the great hymns we sing at Christmas.

"Then sound the bells more loud and deep,
God is not dead, nor doth he sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, goodwill to men."

May the charm, the cheer and the challenge of the carols not only combine to make this, for each and all, a very happy Christmas but may we inspire others to join in singing these songs of faith and love.



The Story of "Christmas Bells"

★ F. J. Funston has selected as the
"Hymn for December," No. 75, planned
for December 19.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW is best known to "the man in the street" as the writer of "Hiawatha," but to great hosts of us, other poems of his, such as "The Slave's Dream," "The Village Blacksmith," "Excelsior" and "The Psalm of Life," remain as childhood memories.

The real Longfellow was a romantic figure. For 18 years professor of modern languages at Harvard, he discoursed with a silvery courtesy of the years he had spent in almost all the lands of Europe. His associates were literary men—Washington Irving, Holmes, Lowell, Agassiz and Hawthorne amongst them. His mind was charged with the poetry of the world. And so his own poems came—here a reverie or a dream, there an echo of far-off European voices or a whisper of the winds; now a translation from any one of a dozen languages, then a scholarly effort in a tongue not his own. Indian warrior and Pilgrim Father alike live again under his graceful touch.

For over 60 years this went on. Longfellow was in some ways a mouthpiece for New England, but often there was a shadowy unreality—the voice came from cloister or library rather than from marketplace or field. He did write of slavery, but it was not with the challenging hostility of Whittier or of Harriet Beecher Stowe; to this knightly old-world figure, even slavery held a shadow of romance.

His reactions at the Civil War Christmas of 1864 are typical. To him, chiming bell and roaring gun blend in a strange harmony. His spirit oscillates between faith and fear and into that borderland where carol, hymn and poem merge, he projects his "Christmas Bells." Time has silenced the war-time notes, but it is instructive to hear again the clash of arms that mingled with the bells some fourscore years ago:

"Then from each black accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound the carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

"It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn the households born
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

"And in despair I bowed my head;
'There is no peace on earth,' I said;
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!'"

So must our hymn 75 be read and sung (its verses now rearranged for peace-time use)—it is a lyric of hope born in the war-torn days of the Civil War.

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Here and There

We received the following telegram on Dec. 9: "Hinrichsen-Machin, Subiaco (W.A.) mission, eighteen adults decided last two nights; thank-offering, £456."

After seven years of excellent service Miss Jean Andrews has resigned her position as secretary of office of Young People's Department in Victoria.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Smith and Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Finger and family, missionaries returning on furlough from New Hebrides by the "Morinda," are due in Sydney on Dec. 20, and will proceed immediately to Melbourne.

In the interests of the cause in Gippsland, we draw attention to the advertisement appealing for a car to be purchased and used by a brother in the interests of the church at Morwell. We hope someone may be able to help. A successful conference of Gippsland brethren at Morwell, Dec. 11, revealed a genuine desire to make advances to meet the opportunities in this new industrial area of Australia.

Under the auspices of the Overseas Missions Committee, a series of ten presentations of a Visual Recorded Recital of "The Messiah" is in progress around the Melbourne suburban churches. Not only is the programme presented first class, but the cause is vital, as the proceeds are going towards sending out much-needed equipment for the evangelistic work on the mission field. We urge all to study the announcement of future programmes and lend their support to this very worthy effort.

On Nov. 25 Mr. Brown presided over a large gathering at South Yarra, Vic., to say farewell to Miss Skuce, who has been a teacher in Sunday school for a number of years. Mrs. Taylor delighted with solos and Miss Mackinnon with recitations. Mr. Bolduan spoke on behalf of F.M. Board. Mr. Walters spoke in glowing terms of her work, and on behalf of school Miss P. Brown presented her with a basket of flowers. Mr. Hargreaves, on behalf of church, presented her with a case-clock and an envelope containing money. Farewell was also said to secretary of church, Mr. Wilson, who has been transferred to W.A. Mr. Searle, on behalf of church, presented him with a clock, and Mr. Pitts, on behalf of cricket and football clubs, presented him with a shaving outfit. Evening closed with supper served by ladies. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson are having an anxious time over illness of their son Leslie in Children's Hospital. On morning of Dec. 5 Miss Russell, who made the good confession during week of visitation evangelism, was baptised.

Contacting eighty Victorian churches who have as yet sent no progress report of the crusade in their local church! Do you know that the brotherhood is anxious to know what progress it is making in the crusade? Your church has everything to gain by participating in the crusade. Co-operate by letting the director have your reports promptly. From forty-eight crusading churches we learn of 178 decisions for Christ, 36 restorations to active fellowship, and 166 new Sunday school scholars for the three months ending Oct. 31 last. Do you know that one church mustered 26 auxiliary leaders on a recent Monday night to discuss local crusade plans for 1949? The director has helped Middle Park and Chelsea churches in Visitation Evangelism and Restoration Visitation. These churches have both been greatly encouraged. The Victorian committee has adopted the South Australian daily Bible reading guide January-April, 1949, and will have supplies in all churches before Christmas. Secure your copy. Commence planning now for Membership Visitation, Church Loyalty Month, Christian Literature Week, Stewardship Education programme. Pray and plan now. Forward together in forty-nine.—Stan. Neighbour.

Splendid meetings with large attendances were characteristic of work at Northam, W.A., during November. Sunday evening particularly, building has been filled, and church is in great heart. There were four baptisms on Nov. 21 and six confessions of faith. Following Sunday four were baptised and a married woman decided for Christ. P. R. Thickins commenced a men's Bible Study Fellowship on Nov. 6, and first month's meetings averaged 16. A Y.P.S.C.E. was started on Nov. 14 with 15 active members. Mr. Greenwood visited midweek meeting on Nov. 25 and spoke on behalf of home missions. Bible school reports record attendances, and a successful social was enjoyed on Dec. 4. Last month a Young Women's Fellowship was commenced with meetings in various members' homes each fortnight. Mrs. Thickins is president, Mrs. Putland secretary. Practical plans are being formulated to help local church and other missionary enterprises.



Greetings

With this special Christmas number we offer sincere Christmas and New Year greetings to readers, agents, correspondents and writers. We appreciate the help of many who co-operate in the production of the paper from week to week. Please accept our thanks.

A. W. Stephenson, Editor.
D. E. Pittman, Manager.

Preacher of church at St. Kilda, Vic., Mr. Randall, has been absent owing to illness, but is slowly recovering, and was able to take a small part in service on Dec. 5. Brethren of church continue to take services and carry on the work, despite much illness amongst members. Church rejoiced over baptism of Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson on Dec. 5; they made their confession at E. C. Hinrichsen mission. Good reports come from all departments. C.E. has had excellent and bright meetings, and has done good work in visits to guest home and hospitals. Bible school has had a few setbacks over past few weeks, but superintendent and teachers continue faithfully.

On Nov. 27, Northern District quarterly convention was held at Hamilton, N.S.W., when a good representative gathering enjoyed splendid addresses by P. E. Thomas, of Marrickville. Hamilton folk were happy to renew fellowship with Mr. and Mrs. Thomas. Sunday school anniversary services were held on Dec. 4 and 5, with Mr. H. Wilson, from Mayfield Baptist Church, special speaker. His addresses to young folk were appreciated, and items and singing from school were enjoyed. School report showed encouraging increase in scholars over past year, particularly since school has been meeting in morning. Church is still without a preacher, but local men and visiting speakers carry on acceptably. W. C. Willis and D. Evans were speakers on Nov. 28, their addresses being appreciated. Aged Mrs. McGee is a patient in Newcastle Hospital.

At Forestville, S.A., work continues happily, and a fine spirit prevails in church and auxiliaries. Attendances during month were good. On Nov. 10, annual church business meeting was held. Reports showed work in sound position, happy and progressive. Nine decisions have been recorded. On Nov. 28, church anniversary services were held with good attendances and appropriate addresses by W. A. Russell and P. R. Baker. On Nov. 30, an excellent programme was presented by Churches of Christ Choral Association under leadership of A. Glastonbury. One young married man recently made the good confession, was baptised, and has been received into fellowship.

On Nov. 24, at Adelaide (Grote-st.) weekly prayer meeting, Miss L. Downs and W. Palmer gave interesting talks on trip and experiences at Federal Conference. Women associated with Miss Leedham's Monday afternoon meeting held an enjoyable annual outing at Port Noarlunga. Good meetings were held on Nov. 28, W. Beiler preaching. H.M. offering was received. At meeting on Dec. 1, a letter from Ross J. Manning in Congo, Africa, was read, expressing thanks to church for parcel of goods sent from harvest thanksgiving, and asking for continued prayer on behalf of work. They were holding a baptismal service, when over 80 converts were to be immersed. Mrs. T. Glover is laid aside with painful illness, and is able only very occasionally to get to meetings.

At Bayswater, Vic., on Nov. 28, F. Langford gave farewell addresses to good congregations. On Nov. 30, a social evening and kitchen tea were held in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Peck, recently married. Presentations were made on behalf of church and Sunday school. Farewell gifts were made to Mr. and Mrs. Langford. A wallet of notes was given on behalf of church and a case from young people. Mrs. Langford received a silver sugar basin and two butter-dishes from Ladies' Mission Band. Eleven 10/- food parcels have been sent to England. Combined choirs have been practising for carols by candlelight, under leadership of Claude Gadge. H. Edwards has commenced interim ministry with church. All auxiliaries are in good heart.

At Reservoir, Vic., on Nov. 7, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, Fred and Rosie Edwards, Marie Hueston and Mrs. Mounsey were received into fellowship; on Nov. 14, Winnie Hannah, June Hillgrove and Gwen Knox; on 21st, Phyllis Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Mounsey, who are sisters, were received by transfer from Preston. The others were by faith and baptism. On Nov. 17 a social was held at home of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Thodey to celebrate tennis club winning B grade premiership. Pennant was handed to church secretary to place in school hall. Annual thanksgiving day was held on Nov. 28. Almost all members excepting those who were ill were present at morning worship. Evening service was conducted by ladies of church. Building was crowded. Mrs. McInnes, president of Ladies' Guild, presided. Ladies' choir sang two anthems. Solos were sung by Mrs. Stanley Francis and Miss Bette McInnes. A splendid address was given by Mrs. Ploog, president of Victorian Women's Conference. Members of guild helped in various ways. Thanksgiving offering amounted to £76/17/-, of which £35 was given by Ladies' Guild. Ladies have raised over £75 for year. £25 was donated to Guest Home hospital. Sympathy is extended to Mrs. D. Cameron, who was in membership at Reservoir for some years, and is now at Fairfield, in passing of her husband on Nov. 27. Phi Beta Club has been sending parcels to England. Phi Beta Club at Bournemouth has sent a book on England as a gift in appreciation. This is the only Phi Beta Club in England.

ADDRESS

C. E. Berg (secretary Balwyn church, Vic., from Jan. 1, 1949).—110 Mont Albert-rd., Canterbury. WF3921.

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News of the Churches

Queensland

Albion.—On evening of Nov. 14, Children's Day service was held and offering taken. During preacher's absence on Nov. 21, addresses were given by Mr. Burdeu and Mr. Burgin. Young people's auxiliaries arranged two social evenings during month, one to raise funds for tennis club and second in honor of approaching marriage of four young people. On Nov. 25, annual concert and display of youth auxiliaries took place.

Tasmania

Sandhill.—On Nov. 14, Bible school anniversary was held; children were trained by Mrs. M. Alderton. Afternoon service was conducted by H. Stevens, and evening service by R. Edmunds. School picnic was held following Saturday at Relbia.

Hobart (Collins-st.).—Attendances at all meetings are good, and Mr. Burt's addresses appreciated. Wednesday night prayer and Bible study cottage meetings have been held in homes of Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Schultz, Mrs. Cummings, Mrs. Duncan and Mr. Burt. A social hour was held after evening service of Nov. 14 to bid farewell to Mr. and Mrs. J. Boxhall, who have left Hobart to live in Oatlands. Expressions of love and appreciation were made by Mr. Heard, S. Cooper and Mr. Burt. Mrs. Clifford spoke on behalf of women of church in appreciation of Mrs. Boxhall's valued service, and presented her with a posy of flowers and silver cake-stand. A social was held in school hall on Nov. 20 to express good wishes of church to three young men recently married—Les Staples to Joan Gates, Douglas Staples to Mavis Freeman, and Fay. Clifford to Lavrance Hughes. All three couples received nice gifts. Mr. and Mrs. L. Hughes have gone to live in Adelaide. Members were pleased to renew friendship with Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Hughes, and Miss Eileen Hughes, who visited Hobart for their son's wedding. Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Heard, Rita and John Heard went to Melbourne to attend their son's wedding to Miss D. Berry on Dec. 4.

Western Australia

Perth (Lake-st.).—On Oct. 17, 231 communed in morning and 181 supported gospel service. On Oct. 24, V. Stafford, director of Federal Board of Christian Education, set out activities of his board. At prayer meeting on Oct. 27, A. Anderson conducted a missionary service, illustrating with moving colored pictures. A helpful address was delivered by L. Peacock at communion service on Oct. 31. Half-yearly rally of C.E. Central District was held at Lake-st. on Oct. 30, J.C.E. rally at 3 p.m.; basket tea at 5.30; combined rally for all grades at 7.45, with Mr. Badley, of China, speaker. Young people's monthly basket tea with visiting speaker preceded evening service on Nov. 7. Church welcomed reconsecration of Mr. and Mrs. Hislop as result of Hinrichsen mission at Subiaco, and their children as well as Miss Moira Higgins were received as new members. As result of months of hard work, well aided by men of church, Dorcas Society conducted a successful fete on Nov. 13 (over £70). Average weekly offerings for month, £26 for all purposes. Church continues to appreciate addresses of J. K. Robinson and his leadership in all activities.

South Australia

Fullarton.—There was a good attendance at morning worship on Dec. 5. B. W. Manning's addresses on parables from morning lessons are well received. Gospel service was preceded by a song service under leadership of Peter Mau, followed by a baptismal service,

when Helen Whittenbury (Methodist), desiring to follow her Lord more closely, was immersed. She afterwards gave a testimony. B. W. Manning preached monthly prophecy address, and male choir sang two items. Chapel was full. The whole service was impressive, and appreciated by numerous local visitors.

Prospect.—Continued progress has been made, as a result of working bees, to church grounds. Tuesday night meeting continues to provide opportunities for Bible study and fellowship which is enjoyed by many members and friends. Attendances at all youth groups are kept at a good average. Church services on Dec. 5 were addressed by R. Vincent.

Owen.—There were good attendances on Nov. 28. J. Baker, circuit preacher, gave helpful addresses. A fully attended officers' meeting was held to discuss crusade and how its aims could best be carried out. M. Jenkins, of Long Plains, exhorted church on morning of Dec. 5. On Dec. 12, during gospel service, a young lady from Long Plains was baptised in Owen baptistery owing to Long Plains losing theirs in fire last January.

Kilburn.—Cradle roll Christmas tree on Dec. 1, under leadership of Mrs. R. J. Peacock, assisted by teachers, was a great success. Mrs. Collins presided, and about 100 mothers and babies had an enjoyable afternoon. Kindergarten was also catered for by these ladies on Dec. 4, when 77 little ones received gifts from Father Christmas (H. C. Meadows, of Prospect church). Many parents attended, and at both functions children were treated to a party. Nearly all of 178 gifts were made and donated. At 10 a.m. Bible school on Dec. 5, attendance was 116, including two new scholars. A. Fax, of Prospect, conducted 11.15 a.m. service and addressed 26 young worshippers, and F. Collins preached splendidly to 26 adults, as well as addressing gospel service at 7 p.m. Mr. and Mrs. J. Edwards are on holiday, and are missed from services and Bible school work.

Henley Beach.—Meetings have been well maintained during past few months. On Nov. 28 a Masonic parade was held, and chapel was filled to capacity. Special speakers for month included Dr. Turner (Rest Home), Mr. Burrow (Bible Society), A. Wilson. Sacred picture, "Fisher of Men" was appreciated on Nov. 7. On that day Bible school scholars were entertained at tea. Mrs. Ryder passed away on Nov. 22, four months after sudden death of her husband. Girls' Brigade held Christmas party on Dec. 1, when a large gathering of parents and friends enjoyed the evening. The captain, Miss V. Lander, and her officers have done excellent work with brigade since its inception. Sunday school teachers are doing excellent work in making of toys for Christmas tree. Mrs. J. R. Lawrie entertained ladies of church at lunch in Botonic Gardens on Nov. 25, to close year's work of Ladies' Guild.

Semaphore.—During November, members appreciated visit of several preachers. Dr. Turner (conference president) addressed morning meeting on Nov. 21 on "crusade" movement, after which church accepted recommendation of officers, "that we become a crusading church." R. Vincent preached in evening, and Mr. Matthews occupied pulpit at Prospect. Mr. Fenn, missionary on furlough from Papua, gave a talk on his work in mission field on Nov. 28, and Mr. Matthews was evening speaker. Tennis club has opened season of play. Church welcomed back from Federal Conference Mrs. Tirrell and Mrs. Foote. Mrs. Tirrell gave conference echoes at Mission Band meeting. A social evening was given

by Endeavorers on Dec. 3 to Betty Selby prior to her marriage, also to Mr. and Mrs. Glover, who are leaving district. Don Glover has been church organist and a deacon of church. On Dec. 5, members of J.C.E. took part in evening service, Mr. Matthews preaching. Captain Packer, of Salvation Army, was speaker at bi-monthly tea of Men's Fellowship.

Balaklava.—C. Hughes, of S.A. Temperance Alliance, was speaker on Nov. 28. On Dec. 5 young people closed year with a special church meeting. Wilford Woolford presided and Marjorie Shepherd gave an address. Other young people rendered items. Dorcas ladies held a successful gift afternoon on Nov. 24. The preacher is now in possession of his car, and isolated members have been visited. Communion services and teaching meetings will be held soon where isolated members are living. Church is preparing for a mission early in new year. Prayer meetings are being held in homes where members cannot attend. All services of church have been well attended.

Stirling East.—Good services have been held and progress is encouraging. On Nov. 21 G. Cox spoke on home missions at morning service to a congregation of 56. In evening a good congregation enjoyed inspiring address of J. H. Cain. On Nov. 27 a house party for young people, arranged by Crusade Committee, was held in home of Mr. and Mrs. Baxter. There were 25 present, and an excellent programme arranged by G. R. Stirling was enjoyed. On Nov. 28 Mr. Stirling gave stirring addresses both morning and evening. There were 40 present in morning and 70 at night. In afternoon Mr. Stirling spoke to young people. A happy time followed with a tea at chapel. Home mission offering on Nov. 28 amounted to £19. A sale of gifts afternoon resulted in £27 for Christian Rest Home. Sunday school attendances keep up; 44 present on Nov. 21 and 28.

Croydon.—Bible school anniversary services on Oct. 31 and Nov. 7 were successful. Mr. Stirling conducted singing which was appreciated at each service. Prize-giving took place on Nov. 2. 39 scholars received shield for attachment to diploma for not being absent one Sunday over period of two to seven years. Others to receive shields for longer terms were Margaret Hoskin, 8 years; Barbara Hoskin, 9 years; Marjorie Hoskin, Dorothy Marriott and Bruce Bailey, 10 years; Muriel Marriott, 11 years; Lance Webb, 12 years. After serving Bible school as superintendent, A. H. Pearce has resigned. Finding it difficult to obtain a successor, a new system has been adopted and is in operation. A committee of five has been appointed. The five men in turn will officiate at school session. The committee will meet regularly to discuss all phases of school work. On morning of Nov. 14, an impressive teachers' dedication service was conducted by W. N. Bartlett. Ladies' Dorcas held evening for benefit of Christian Rest Home; proceeds, £20/11/-. Men's Fellowship met on evening of Nov. 10. The president, C. Battle, had charge. Evening service on Nov. 28 was devoted to youth. Bob Willcocks led meeting which was followed by a well-attended fellowship hour. Three young ladies from Bible school were immersed. Average attendance for month: a.m., 110; p.m., 104.

New South Wales

Earlwood.—Meetings on Dec. 5 were helpful, with uplifting addresses from A. Hinrichsen. Joan Wymer rendered delightful service in song. One lad made the good confession. Bible school regrets termination of N. Matthews' period as superintendent. He was presented with a leather brief case. An induction service was held, and God's leading asked on his successor, O. Turner. Mr. Greenup is commended for his efficient service as school secretary. Thanks are extended also to their youthful pianiste, Audrey Wall.

Victoria

Warracknabeal.—Church is still carrying on without a resident preacher. Mr. Earl and Mr. Rogers have delivered helpful addresses, and speakers have come from Horsham, Stawell and Berwick. Sister Cattenach is up and about again, although unable to attend meetings. Broadcast service from Swan Hill was appreciated.

South Richmond.—Under ministry of C. Fletcher, Sunday evening attendances have improved. Intermediate Christian Endeavorers have commenced meetings on Sunday mornings. On Nov. 2, church held a social evening to welcome C. Fletcher as preacher. A good number attended, and an enjoyable evening was spent.

Footscray.—On Nov. 28, speakers were Mr. Cleland in morning and Mr. Jones, of College of Bible, in evening. On Nov. 22 K.S.P. club entertained dads and ex-members. An enjoyable time of fellowship was spent. K.S.P. and P.B.P. combined on Dec. 4 to present third annual social and banquet. Mrs. Carter is home from hospital and progressing favorably.

Middle Park.—Church experienced joys associated with visitation evangelism during week commencing Nov. 21. Four teams were welcomed into 31 homes during three nights of visitation. Instead of usual 20 worshippers in evening service, 50 united in a rich spirit of worship. Leadership of S. Neighbour was an inspiration, a comfort and a guide. Members also appreciate assistance of Mr. and Mrs. McGregor.

East Preston.—On Nov. 21 and 28, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., Sunday school anniversary services had splendid meetings. A record number of children took part in singing, led by C. Watson. Annual concert and distribution of prizes took place on Nov. 30. An excellent programme, arranged by Mrs. Watson, was enjoyed by a gathering which packed chapel. With many new scholars enrolling in kindergarten, present building and facilities are inadequate to enable work to be carried out satisfactorily.

Berwick.—At Bible school anniversary on Nov. 7, J. Turner, North Fitzroy, was speaker for day. His addresses were appreciated and his talk to children in afternoon impressive. Afternoon offering was given for school equipment, and offering at evening service towards hospitals. On Nov. 8, anniversary concert and distribution of prizes took place in Soldiers' Memorial Hall. L. G. Armstrong, of college, exhorted on Nov. 14 in K. Dixon's absence. On Nov. 21, promotion of Bible school scholars took place. Mr. Dixon continues to give helpful addresses.

Geelong.—On Dec. 1, Mission Band and Ladies' Aid Society combined for final meeting for year. On evening of Dec. 2, Y.P.C.E. took charge of prayer service. Christmas tree for kinders and cradle roll on Dec. 4 proved a success under direction of Mrs. A. Carr and helpers. Dec. 5 was Endeavorers' anniversary. Mr. Gavros and helpers from Sunshine assisted. Mr. Gavros spoke morning and evening. Endeavorers conducted service. A duet was sung by Sister Spowart and Mr. Stevens, from Sunshine, and a solo by Sister L. Anderson. One young man reconsecrated his life.

Red Hill.—On Nov. 25, Ladies' Mission Band held final meeting for year. Mrs. B. Prossor sang a solo. "Bring a gift and buy a gift" resulted favorably. Y.W.L. held Christmas party on Nov. 27; after tea children had a concert. On evening of Nov. 27, farewell social was given to N. Moore, who is going to W.A. on full-time ministry. A presentation was made from church and Endeavorers. On Nov. 28, N. Moore spoke to Y.W.L. and addressed congregation. Offering for home missions was taken. At evening service Mr. Moore's address was helpful. On Dec. 4, members of Y.P.S.C.E. visited Chelsea church for a concert. W. Torney conducted morning service on Dec. 5. A. Salmon preached at gospel service, when Misses P. and B. Holmes sang a duet.

Colac.—Recently W. Atkin, of Social Service Department, spoke morning and evening. He was accompanied by other visitors, including Sisters Brownrigg and J. Scott, of Northcote church, who sang a duet. Members entertained visitors at tea in vestry, and thanked them for interest and assistance. Roy Dixon, who had arranged the visit, concluded his ministry. Opportunity was taken to thank him for his addresses and ministrations each week-end during past year, and a presentation of a book was made.

Doncaster.—G. T. Black closed his interim ministry with church on Dec. 12, and on Dec. 19 L. Dudley takes up work. Preacher's residence has been painted. Men of church put grounds in order. F. N. Lee recently addressed church on home missions. Annual offering on Nov. 28 amounted to £40. Women's Fellowship held final meeting of year; Mrs. Nankivell gave a talk on United Nations. Mrs. R. A. Banks was a visitor at Women's Mission Band meeting, which was final for session. Bible school picnic was held enjoyably at Mordialloc on Dec. 4.

Ormond.—On Nov. 28 Mr. Hunt took both services, as Mr. Martin was at Warragul. On evening of Dec. 2, Ladies' Aid held a successful concert, when several radio and stage personalities took part, including Alan Rowe. On Dec. 4, Sunday school held a successful picnic at Carrum. On morning of Dec. 5, J. K. Bond, from Springvale, gave a stirring address. Worship services have been a little better attended. After-church prayer meeting in lieu of Wednesday nights has proved a success. Youth Council has procured lantern for club's use and Bible school and youth in church.

Carnegie.—At sale of work conducted by ladies of church, £53 was raised towards reduction of church building fund. On evening of Nov. 28, a sound picture film was shown featuring "Barabbas" to a good congregation. Mr. Baensch, of Bentleigh church, was in charge of projector. A working bee was held at manse on Dec. 4, when a large number of men assisted in renovating and painting property. Congratulations are extended to John McCarty, who was successful in winning a scholarship for entrance to University Queen's College. All meetings on Dec. 5 were well attended.

Hamilton.—Women's Mission Band anniversary was held on Nov. 11, when Mrs. Ploog, president Women's Conference, was speaker; over 60 ladies were present. At Sunday school anniversary on Nov. 14, chapel was filled to capacity. Items from scholars were appreciated. T. Weir, of Warrnambool, spoke at all services. Annual meeting of church and election of officers took place on Nov. 17. On Dec. 2 a social evening was organised by Sunday school scholars. All brought a gift and placed it upon a Christmas tree. Gifts were forwarded to Burwood Boys' Home. On Dec. 4, at Sunday school picnic at Byaduk, over 120 scholars and friends enjoyed fellowship.

Thornbury.—On Nov. 23, girls' club held a successful evening, when a programme of items was presented, and gifts on a stall were sold. Proceeds were devoted to building fund. On Nov. 30 a kitchen tea was tendered Betty Booth and Will Nash, in view of their approaching marriage. Presentations were also made from girls' club and Bible school. Farewell was taken of Miss Rhonda Ratcliffe on eve of her departure, with her parents, for Mildura, and H. Hince, on behalf of Bible school, made a presentation of a book. Marriage of W. Nash and Miss B. Booth was celebrated on Dec. 4, the preacher officiating. At morning service on Dec. 5 W. Atkin gave an appreciated address on work of Social Service Department. At night a club's church parade was held.

Sunshine.—Sympathy of church is extended to family of Mrs. E. H. Drayton, who died on Nov. 30. An Intermediate C.E. was commenced on Nov. 28. Junior C.E. visited Burwood Boys' Home on Nov. 27, a happy time being experienced by visitors and boys. A successful sale of work was held on Dec. 4. This effort realised approximately £100, to be used to augment fund for building of youth hall. During absence of Mr. Gavros at Geelong on Dec. 5, morning service was addressed by H. Peitzch, and evening meeting was conducted by K. Jones, of College of Bible. Sunday school teachers are heartened by interest evidenced by scholars in gospel meetings. Over past few weeks several senior scholars have confessed Christ.

Gardiner.—J. R. Story was speaker at Men's Fellowship and 2nd Degree K.S.P., and gave lantern lectures on work of Unevangelised Fields Mission. Howard Earle visited 3rd Degree K.S.P. on Nov. 30. Mr. Bolduan was speaker at each service on Nov. 28, and during gospel service Eunice Buckmaster and Heather Russell were baptised and a Bible school scholar, Lloyd Little, confessed Christ. Miss Dorothy McDonald, who had a serious accident at Canning Dam when in Perth, is progressing satisfactorily in Royal Perth Hospital. She is appreciative of many Perth visitors to hospital. Mrs. Watts is slowly recovering from illness. Mrs. Ploog was speaker at Women's Mission Band on Dec. 1. Miss Caldicott, on furlough from India, was welcomed and gave a greeting. Mrs. Heard, mother of Mr. Heard, missionary-elect for India, was also welcomed. Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. J. E. Thomas have returned from extended visits to Queensland and South Australia. On Dec. 5 Mr. Bolduan spoke at each service. Miss E. Buckmaster was received into fellowship at morning service and Lloyd Little was baptised at night. R. Kemp assisted with a solo. Boys of Explorer Club, under leadership of F. Burbidge, have had a good year, being successful in winning cup for best all-round club, coming first in field games, all-round and in project.

VISUAL RECORDED RECITAL OF "THE MESSIAH"

will be presented in the following churches—
Friday, Dec. 17—FOOTSCRAY.
Saturday, Dec. 18—BAYSWATER.
Monday, Dec. 20—CAULFIELD (Bambra-rd.).
Tuesday, Dec. 21—GARDINER.
Wednesday, Dec. 22—WEST PRESTON.
Admission Free. Offering towards equipment for our Indian Mission Field.

SCRIPTURE CALENDARS.

"Daily Light." Block with daily tear-off text mounted on tinted card with colored picture, 5 designs, 3/3 each.
"Scripture Meditation." Text and devotional reading each day. Full picture back, 5/3.
"Daily Text." Monthly tear-off tab, with short daily text. Tinted card with floral or landscape picture, 1/1. (Postage Extra.)
Write for lists of Gift Suggestions.

KESWICK BOOK DEPOT,
For Everything Evangelical,
315 Collins St., Melbourne.

BIRTHS

FOOT.—On Nov. 12, to Mollie, wife of G. J. Foot, 48 Hill-st., Launceston—a daughter (Jocelyn Sue).

WHITING.—On Dec. 5, to Marj. and Geoff, Wembley, W.A.—a son (David Geoffrey).

GOLDEN WEDDING

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Woodbridge announce with pleasure the 50th anniversary of their marriage at church of Christ, North Melbourne, by Mr. J. Colbourne, assisted by Mr. D. M. McCrackett. Present address—64 Kilby-rd., East Kew.

DEATHS

LEA.—On Nov. 19, at his residence, 50 Ligar-st., Stawell, Charles, loved husband of Sarah and loving father of Ray, Gladys (Mrs. Hardy, Koraleigh, N.S.W.), Sylvia (Mrs. T. Weir, Warrnambool), Wilton, Athol, Winifred (Mrs. Blackford), Marjorie (Mrs. Willcock), Norma and Nina. Aged 76 years. At rest after long illness.

"Sleep on, beloved, sleep and take thy rest."
—Inserted by Gladys and Bert Hardy and granddaughters Nancy, Muriel and Lois.

SMITH.—On Dec. 4, at his home, 21 Wiseman-st., Hawthorn, Sydney, beloved husband of Edith May, loved father of Jack, Jean, Marjorie (dec.) and Donald. Aged 54 years.

"Some day, with eyes grown clear, we hope to see

The loved one whom our Father called away;

And no more partings, then, will ever be,
All will be well on that most blessed day."

TUCKER.—On Dec. 2, at Melbourne, Emma Cordelia Tucker, dearly loved wife of the late Alfred Walter Tucker, and loved mother of Freda (Mrs. A. G. Murphy, dec.), and Gladys (Mrs. E. G. Chislett), Boundary Bend, Vic.; loving grandmother of Lionel and Trevor, Murphy and Douglas, Geoffrey and Shirley Chislett. Aged 77. Interred at Box Hill. "Come unto me all ye that are weary."

IN MEMORIAM

COOK.—In loving memory of my dear husband James, late of Bendigo, who passed away Dec. 18, 1938; also devoted father of Myrtle, Wilson, Verosa, Beryl and Gordon.

"In all the days of passing years
His memory shines through silent tears."
—Inserted by his loving wife, Bessie.

KELLY.—In loving memory of a dearly loved wife and mother, Gertrude Emily, who passed away Dec. 15, 1945, at Port Fairy. "Sleep on, beloved, sleep, and take thy rest."

—Inserted by her loving husband and family.

MORTON.—In loving memory of our dear daughter Thelma Olive, who was called home on Dec. 21, 1946.

—Inserted by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. G. Morton and family, of West Ryde, Sydney.

MUNDAY.—In loving memory of our mother, who passed away Sept. 5, 1934; also our father, who passed away Dec. 9, 1947.

Those whom God has given us to love are ours for ever.

—Inserted by their family.

WANTED

Would anyone desirous of helping work in Gippsland give or sell cheaply a car to assist brother conduct regular services at Morwell? Also an up-to-date duplicator for supplying members with church news is urgently needed. This is a chance to give practical assistance. —C. W. Jackel, 28 Sutton-st., Warragul. 'Phone 433.

TO LET

Chelsea. Double room, use of kitchen. Close shops, beach and station. Gas, electric light. —F. Marriott, 34 Chelsea-rd., Chelsea.

In country (Selby), clean comfortable four-roomed cottage, five minutes from shops, £4/4/- per week. Not vacant Christmas. Apply 87 The Avenue, Coburg.

Four-room bungalow, self-contained, electric stove, four minutes beach, seven minutes station, February onwards.—N. Brown, 20 Kalimna-st., Carrum.

**BROTHERHOOD MISSIONARY MEETING,
CHELTENHAM CHURCH (VIC.),
(Chesterville-rd.),**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 8 p.m.,

To welcome Mr. and Mrs. J. Smith and Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Finger, home on furlough from New Hebrides.

Representative Speakers.

Programme arranged by Cheltenham Church.

MORELAND (Davies-st.).

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

at Gospel Service.

7 p.m., DECEMBER 19.

Speaker, E. J. Miles.

When holidaying in the Dandenongs worship at
EMERALD CHURCH OF CHRIST.

11 a.m. and 7.30 p.m.

*Buses leave Fern Tree Gully 9.57 a.m., Belgrave 10.13 a.m. Alight at P.O.
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*A short Christmas story of an
Englishwoman's experiences after
her arrival in Australia.*

Her First Australian Christmas

THAT'S mine! let me have it please!" the woman pleaded.

"Sorry, madam, I must examine all bags," the custom's officer replied. "Orders are orders. I must carry out my duties."

He was opening a black bag which was lying on a large leather case, when the woman attempted to snatch it from him.

"It's mine!" she protested.

"I know, lady," the man said heatedly. "Everything you have brought must be examined. I thought you put it down for me to open."

"I only dropped it there to open these," she said, pointing to the travelling cases. "I never let it out of my hand, if I can help it."

"Unless it's examined: madam, you can't take it from here," the officer said, rather shortly, and with a note of authority.

"It's only got papers and . . . some photos," the exasperated traveller added. Her eyes flashed fire, as she turned and looked at the official. "There, look for yourself." Among the papers opened before the custom's man was a photograph of a baby. The little lips were turned slightly into a faint smile. The eyes were soft, but full of wonder. The hair carefully curled. In brief, a beautiful child of nine or ten months.

"My darling!" the woman whispered half to herself, as the custom's officer gave the rest of the bag's contents a swift glance.

"I'm sorry," the woman said apologetically. "I'm all upset. Traveling these days gets one down. All this reminds me of the way we were examined when we reached England from Germany, years ago."

"Yes!" the man said, as he examined the cases.

"I was alone then, too," the woman went on. "I'd just lost my baby and husband — separated somehow in the rush from Germany. That's my baby," she said as she returned the photograph to the bag.

"Sorry, madam!" the busy man remarked, as he turned to his next task.

Evelyn Whitcliff — Mrs. Evelyn Whitcliffe — was dressed in a neat tailored, dark grey suit. She was not more than 35 years, but streaks of grey touched her black hair. Her face was pale and marked with the lines that come from anxiety. If Mrs. Whitcliff gave the impression of being troubled, nevertheless a second peep at her face revealed a pleasantness that made her attractive.



*H*UNDREDS of new arrivals were upon the wharf, awaiting the final release by custom's officers. Some had come from London to Sydney to take up domestic work in the understaffed Australian hospitals. Mrs. Whitcliff had determined to make a break with the sorrows of the war years and begin life afresh in Australia.

Although it was the first week in December, the breeze was fresh and strong as it came off the blue and dazzling waters of Sydney Harbor. Bright skies and brilliant sunshine were beginning to lift some of the gloom from Mrs. Whitcliff's spirit.

"I'll begin life afresh here," she was saying to herself. Those cruel, sad days of grief, when news had reached her of the loss of husband and child, were to be forgotten. But how difficult that would be for the next few weeks, only Evelyn Whitcliff knew; for David, her baby, had been born on Christmas Day, 1938. Christmas was never merry for her. "Once Christmas is passed, it will be different in Australia," she had confided to an elderly woman who had shared her cabin.

One week before Christmas, Mrs. Whitcliff joined the staff of a country hospital in New South Wales. Despite the heat of Australian summer days, she was happy in her work. Yet, each day brought Christmas nearer. The dread despondency which visited her at that season began to weigh her down. Dreams of a little baby she once held in her arms, began to distress her nights. She dreaded going to bed.

Christmas eve found all in the hospital in gay mood: all but Evelyn



Whitcliff. During the afternoon, the minister of a local church was visiting the patients. Mrs. Whitcliff was in the ward, too, when in another room, children's voices raised the carol:—

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night."

THE local Christian Endeavor Society made it a practice to sing carols each Christmas Eve at the hospital.

As the sweet, measured strains of well-known carols echoed through the hospital, there were cheerful smiles on the faces of the patients.

Then, after a pause, in a voice of childish beauty, one of the choristers began to sing:—

*"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay—
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay."*

Mrs. Whitcliff looked up from her work. Her face went pale. "Isn't Luther's carol beautiful?" the minister, Roy Brown, remarked to those in the ward. "In German, too," he added.

"I hate it," Evelyn Whitcliff said. "Everything German, I hate." The words came before she realised what she had said.

"Why?" said the good man in surprise, coming nearer to her.

"The last time I heard that carol in German was the Christmas Day when my baby, David, was born. A few months later we were still in Germany. War was about to break out. We didn't get out quickly enough. Then I took suddenly ill and was taken to hospital for an operation. I never saw my husband or baby again. The Nazis got them. Somehow, I got out of Germany and back to England, only to suffer in the terrible blitz. Now, you see why I hate Germans!"

"BUT this is Christmas! You must forget your hatreds! Listen! it's in English now," he added.

"Who's singing?" asked Mrs. Whitcliff.

"A boy from the little church down the street. He's one of those displaced persons who came from Europe to the camp. His people now live down Main Street." There was silence, and again the refrain.

*"Be near me, Lord Jesus;
I ask thee to stay
Close by me for ever,
and love me, I pray."*

*Bless all the dear children
in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven
to live with thee there."*

Evelyn Whitcliff listened to the clear notes of the boy-singer. Somehow her breathing became faster, and then she caught her breath. Why was her heart beating so disturbingly fast? Nonsense; it could not be possible. Such things happen in story books, but not in real life.

HOWEVER, Mrs. Whitcliff stole quietly to the entrance of the room where the children were singing. There a boy of nine or ten was singing. How that face fascinated her! Those lips seemed familiar. There was something about the eyes and the expression on the face that carried her back a decade.

Returning to Mr. Ron Brown, she asked, "Where does the boy live?"

"Just down the road, 36 Main Street. Ask for Mrs. Hartmann. She will tell you the story," he replied sympathetically and yet sceptically. He guessed her thoughts and wondered why troubled people grasp at any straw that promises help.

Driven by some force of destiny, the distracted woman gathered her bag of papers and photographs and hurried along Main Street.

"Hartmann, yes, Mrs. Hartmann, that's my name," the lady with a foreign accent replied. "Come inside!"

A story of how a little waif, rescued from a dying man knocked down trying to escape, was told. How, over the years the baby had been reared and how a Christian family held to the Christian faith despite the persecution of the Nazis, was unfolded.

"We have kept these," the German woman remarked as she opened a little parcel of baby's clothes, a few papers and a photograph of a mother and child. "He gave them to us to mind before he died," she added. "We could find no address on them."

THERE was no mistake.

Taking from her bag a photograph of David, Evelyn Whitcliff showed it to Mrs. Hartmann.

"See, he's my David!" and she fell in a faint.

As Mrs. Whitcliff opened her eyes, a boy came down the street singing in the sweetest voice.

*"Silent night, holiest
night,
Darkness flies, and all
is light;
Shepherds hear the
angels sing:
'Alleluia! hail the King,
Jesus the Saviour is
here.
Jesus the Saviour is
here.'"*

"My David!" she whispered. "Thank you, Mrs. Hartmann, for saving him. How foolish I've been to say I hate all Germans. You've been kind to my David. I love you, Mrs. Hartmann. What a wonderful Christmas my first one in Australia will be!"

The door opened. Evelyn Whitcliff did not wait for any explanation. Mrs. Hartmann smiled and nodded approvingly, as the mother gathered her son into her arms.

Children in the street, returning home from the hospital, sang happily on their way:

*"And through all his
wondrous childhood
He would honor and
obey,
Love and watch the
lowly mother
In whose gentle arms
he lay."*



When Christ Was Born at Bethlehem.

<i>"The soft light from a stable door Lies on the midnight lands; The wise men's star burns ever more Over all desert lands.</i>	<i>Unto all peoples of the earth A little child brought light; And never in the dark- est place Can it be utter night.</i>	<i>No flickering torch, no wavering fire, But Light the Life of men; Whatever clouds may veil the sky Never is night again."</i>
--	--	--