



# Greetings

SPECIAL HOLIDAY NUMBER  
of "OUR TIMES"



# The Miracle of Christmas

By G. Elliott



By D. Mastroianni

© Three Lions

In the stable of Bethlehem.

★ THROUGHOUT the Christian world the twenty-fifth of December is honoured in commemoration of the nativity of Jesus Christ. Upheld as a festival, it has become also a symbol. The warm glow of friendliness is the measure of a concord to which millions subscribe whose opinions in other respects may be violently dissimilar. And in this country, especially since Dickensian times, Christmas has become so identified with "home," that each recurring season many of its exiled sons and daughters in far-flung fields make gallant efforts to recapture its unique "atmosphere."

Who is not familiar with all those gay externals which serve to make the occasion so exhilarating? The decoration of houses and shops with holly, ivy, and mistletoe, with paper chains, flowers, and coloured lights, the richly laden fir-tree, the yule log, and the crackers are

intriguing indeed. While the special dishes, the plum pudding, the fancy cakes, the nuts, and the fruits, are all eloquent of good cheer! Entertainment has a special flavour and music plays its important tribute. The taskmaster of toil slips away as the spirit of happiness takes over!

It may be observed, of course, that the exact day of the year which witnessed the birth of Jesus has never been satisfactorily settled. Neither is there any specific command in Holy Writ for this annual celebration. Undeniably, too, its association with feasts and ideas of pagan origin has resulted in a somewhat confused blend of the sacred and secular. But shall we then discount the benefit of glad reunion or repudiate the blessing of human fellowship? For our part we would look for the ethics behind the embellishments and for the sense underlying the sentimentality. For there is no doubt that behind the tinsel and glitter of the pageantry and topical imagery of Christmas there is a solid foundation of fact. There is Christian verity beneath the enchantment of custom and tradition.

## A Supernatural Witness

The background of the advent of Jesus is both princely and primitive. It is a paradox of majesty and humiliation. In a retrospective panorama of some nineteen and a half centuries a Judean village emerges. It is about to make history yet, in its tranquillity, it is seemingly unconscious of its date with destiny. Certainly it is unaware that from the courts above a celestial messenger with lightning speed is

winging his way to earth. He is the harbinger of the most thrilling good tidings ever to be conveyed to mortal man. Heaven is about to link its life with earth.

The radiance from the angel bathes the dark fields with light and a few humble shepherds are caught in its silvery embrace. Expectantly, myriads more of the angelic host stand by. Why, it may be asked, are the minds of the lowly about to be enlightened and the palaces of potentates and priests passed by? Why the astounding lack of general recognition and preparation for the event high Heaven is about to announce? Simply because, in its neglect, the church of that day was blind to the imminent fulfilment of a divine promise. All the converging lines of messianic prophecy were now focused upon Bethlehem and the chosen nation knew it not!

#### The Identity of Jesus Christ

The stupendous revelation of God's love for man in John 3:16 finds its practical genesis in this occasion. The Father loved the human race so much that in pity for its plight He sent forth at the appointed time a Deliverer. He it is whose birth a mighty angel proclaims. He appears, as all men first appear, as a Babe, to pass, in the purpose of the Most High, through the normal stages of childhood to adolescence and early manhood, before He went to the cross to become our Saviour. The essential thing is to grasp, with awe-struck realization, just who this particular Babe really was. The understanding grapples immediately with the mystery of a divine-human Personality as the words of that sentinel angel, spoken so long ago, strike home: "For unto you is born this day, . . . a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

How, say you, can a man, let alone a baby, be the Lord? How could a child be Immanuel, God with us? The answer is two-fold. Christ—the Logos—had lived as deity before He took unto Himself humanity. (John 1:1; Col. 1:17.) In His pre-existence He was "equal with God," Phil. 2:6. He had existed "from everlasting," Micah 5:2. In the oneness of deity He was God, yet for the purpose of redemption He was "made flesh," very God and very man in a fathomless merger.

This was no ordinary birth. It could not be. It was the outcome of the holy mystery of the Incarnation. (Luke 1:35.) This miracle of "God manifest in the flesh" should dominate our whole conception of Christmas.

The prime reason why the Lord and Saviour came down to our world is made abundantly clear in the Scriptures. It was to die for a condemned race, to give His life for ours that we might live again. Were nothing else involved, however, He might conceivably have appeared on earth not as the Babe which Christmas denotes, but as a fully grown man! The sequel in God's perfect plan could have been the same. But that would not have sufficed to reveal to human beings God's loving care for them from the cradle to the grave. It was only in a life of loving ministry from His youth up that He who is "one" with God could show that "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Never more than now does the world need to mark the work which was given to Christ to perform in His assignment from God. As He testified: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim Good News to the poor; He  
(Continued on page 12.)



## Hearty Christmas Greetings



from  
**THE EDITOR**



By Carl Bloch

© Camera Clix

The Annunciation.

# Must I Accept the Virgin Birth?

By R. Wilson

velop a character in keeping with God's noble purpose he was expressly commanded not to eat of one forbidden tree. But the sad record reveals that Eve saw that the tree "was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." Gen. 3:6. Through that first step in disobedience the whole creation came under the curse of sin.

God could have left the world to its own selfish course, but He did not. The Creator of man, with the ugly cross reared in His pathway, offered Himself as surety for mankind. In the first promise made to Eve are words that have filled countless men and women with hope. In Genesis 3:15 God says: "I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

This promise of the Redeemer to come was the hope of every Hebrew woman who ever bore a son. Eve named her first-born Cain, or begotten, thinking it was he. Then as the purpose of God began to unfold she named her second son Abel, or transition, clearly showing that she realized that the time was not yet. Her godly descendant Enoch prophesied of the second advent when he said that Christ would come one day with ten thousand of His saints. (Jude 14.) Thus the delay became accepted as the natural concomitant of the plan of salvation, but the expectation of the Saviour to be born still inspired every family with that sweet hope.

## The Child of Promise

Just 2,008 years from creation, Abram was born. When he was seventy-five years of age, God revealed to him that the promised one

★ FOR myself I have never had the slightest difficulty in accepting the simple yet awe-inspiring statement concerning the birth of Jesus, that He was born of a virgin. (Matt. 1:25.)

Perhaps the difficulty to most people is not so much the possibility as to whether God could touch the secret springs of life and bring forth His Son, but rather the complete failure of even eminent churchmen to make clear why He must be so born.

## The First Promise

The world that came forth from the hand of the Creator was a reflection of His love for His creatures. Everything to delight the senses and gratify the needs of man was bestowed upon the infant race. That man should de-

should descend through his family, although he had as yet no son. (Gen. 12:1, 2.) Because of the great faith of this man, God was able to demonstrate how Jesus was to be born. Consider Abraham's reaction to God's revelation of the promised birth of Isaac, shared by his wife Sarah, now well past the age when she could hope for a son. Genesis 18:12 says that Sarah laughed at this suggestion from God, although she immediately denied that she did so. Then in verse fourteen God asks, "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." Genesis 21:1, 2 tells us that God kept His word and Sarah bore Abraham a son, Isaac, in his old age. Abraham was a hundred years old at this time and Sarah ninety. Her incredulity is set forth clearly in the few verses which follow the above, especially verse seven: "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah would have given children suck?"

Thus the remarkable birth of Isaac was, in the providence of God, to be an assurance that Christ the true Seed should be so born, for surely Isaac was a child of promise. Even if we admit the human agent as present, it was a child none the less born of the direct promise made to Abraham twenty-five years before.

Thus the virgin birth of Christ could have been foreseen by every descendant of Abraham.

#### Unfolding the Promise

The early yearnings of the stricken race slowly became obscured by tradition and selfishness until one reads at the close of their history under the Judges that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges 21:25. It was to keep in the minds of His people the substitutionary work of Christ that the delightful book of Ruth was added as a sequel to this unhappy story. For the book of Ruth is the story of the kinsman-redeemer.

When the land of Canaan was divided among the tribes, God instituted a system of inheritance which made impossible the greedy acquisition of land and possessions by the rich against the poor. Every parcel of land which the owner was too poor to maintain could

eventually be recovered by the rightful descendant in that particular line. But the claimant had to be the nearest of kin. Thus no stranger could claim land that was not rightfully in his own family. With this provision was a stipulation that the childless wife of the deceased should bear seed by the dead man's nearest kin, so maintaining issue that would inherit this property or possession. These just laws regarding property are to be found in Leviticus 25.

But there is another aspect that is not so apparent. The redeemer, having to be a near kinsman, showed clearly that all redemption involved the original owner. And this kinsman-redeemer principle was a clear indication to the Jewish people that He who was the promised Seed to redeem fallen man must be a near kinsman also. In other words the promised Seed of the woman must be both Son of man and Son of God.

This requirement is fully met in the divine birth of Christ. Like the figure shown in the birth of Isaac He was a Child of promise. Following the lesson taught by the kinsman-redeemer He must be both God and man, which as we know was met perfectly in the fact of His virgin birth.

So we are left to consider not so much whether Christ was born of a virgin, but rather the impossibility of the plan of salvation had He come into the world by any other means. Galatians 4:4 says simply that when the fullness of time was come God sent forth *His Son, born of a woman.*

Thus Christ can speak of Himself equally as the Son of man (Luke 19:10) and the Son of God (John 19:7).

Speaking for myself, therefore, I find the Bible teaching of the virgin birth inescapable.

#### The Star of Hope

(Continued from page 9.)

jects of this kingdom and will know eternal rest and peace. While God's mercy still lingers, may we heed the message of the Star of hope and make sure of a home in that better land.



# OUR KINSMAN-REDEEMER

By J. A. McMillan

★ THE greatest event of all time was the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem some two thousand years ago. Every calendar, every postmark, every important date in history bears mute testimony to the profound impression that the birth of Jesus made when He came into our world of time and space. His advent divides history into two great epochs, known as B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (The year of our Lord). Christmastide serves to remind us of this stupendous happening and it stirs our hearts as we recall the story in sermon and carol.

Actually the story of Jesus goes back in the history of Bethlehem thirteen centuries before Mary brought forth her first-born Son. In the tender narrative of Ruth, the Moabitess, there are inspired foreshadowings of the meaning attached by the Holy Spirit to the advent of our Lord. Let us glance at this delightful little cameo enshrined in the Old Testament Scriptures.

## Ruth Finds Her Kinsman

There was a woman of Israel, Naomi by name, who had been bereft of both her husband and her two sons, while living in the strange land of Moab. She had two daughters-in-law, and when she decided to return to Israel, one of these daughters deserted her. But the second, Ruth, resolved to accompany her mother-in-law to Judah and uttered those immortal words: "Treat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. . . . So they two went until they came to Bethlehem." Ruth 1:16, 17, 19.

It was not long before this devotion on the part of Ruth was richly rewarded. While Naomi kept house, Ruth went forth to glean in the barley harvest fields. It so transpired

that she came to the fields of Boaz, a pious and upright man, who treated the stranger with marked kindness. He had heard of her fidelity to Naomi and determined that she should be treated accordingly. When Naomi learned who had befriended Ruth, she set in operation the ancient law of kinship. This law ordained that when an Israelite fell upon hard times, a near kinsman had the duty of redeeming his heritage. It also stipulated that when a widow was left childless, the near kinsman should have the privilege of marrying the widow and so maintaining the family name. (Deut. 25:5-9.) Boaz took the virtuous Ruth to wife and to them was born, in the city of Bethlehem, Obed, the grandfather of David.

## Jesus Our Kinsman

This law of the Goel, or kinsman, as exemplified in this tender love story from the ancient past, has a most significant bearing upon our redemption through Christ. The human race—through sin and disobedience—had lost its inheritance and its very life was forfeit. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12. Since all mankind was involved in this ruin, no human being could deliver another. If man was to be saved from this disaster, the help would have to come from outside humanity.

The original sin of man had affected the will, the mind, and the emotions of the human personality to such an extent that salvation must change the feelings, the desires, thoughts, and choices of man so as to bring them back into harmonious relations with God. This could be effected in no other way than for God to bridge the gulf set up by sin and restore man to communion with his Maker. This is precisely what Jesus came to do: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the

just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." 1 Peter 3:18.



### The Virgin Birth

When we consider the implications of this text, we begin to sense the reason and necessity for the birth of Jesus and the unique character of His person and mission. If He were truly "just" then He must in some way have been immune from the moral corruption of mankind. Scholars and sceptics have engaged in wordy battles about the virgin birth. But the virgin life of Jesus is the outstanding miracle of all time. He is proclaimed among men as the only one who "is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Heb. 7:26. Dogged by implacable foes, He could successfully throw out the challenge: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" John 8:46. This life untainted by sin makes feasible the statement of Gabriel: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

The virgin birth of Jesus is linked with the dire need of man for a Saviour who is outside of our human corruption, and yet is linked to

us with the closest ties of humanity. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Heb. 2:14-17.

This then is the stupendous teaching of the incarnation. The One who was with the Father in eternity, sharing His effulgent glory, through whom all things were created, stooped down to our lowly estate and "was made flesh." The birth of Jesus was the fullest demonstration of the love of "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Jesus laid aside His divine glory when He "took upon Him the form

of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." John 1:1, 14; Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7. This Babe, then, cradled in a manger, was none other than the Majesty of heaven, the Commander of the hosts of Light. He was Immanuel, "God with us."

(Continued on page 12.)

By P. H. Calderon  
Ruth  
determines  
to accompany  
Naomi to  
Canaan again.





★ "WE have seen His star," were the words of the wise men as they inquired in Jerusalem as to the whereabouts of the newborn King of the Jews. That was nearly two thousand years ago. Then, as now, the world was passing through a period of darkness and fear. The Holy Land was groaning under the iron hand of the oppressor and in the hearts of many, hope was fast dying out. But there were some who studied the ancient prophecies and looked for the advent of Messiah, the Deliverer.

It was these faithful ones who saw the star on that holy night. Amid the darkness of the night, there arose a star which had never been seen in the heavens before. It was the Star of hope which was to light the world and bring hope to the hearts of men.

#### The Wise Men's Faith

The wise men, in faith, rose and followed the star until it led them to the manger in Bethlehem. Here they found a Babe, born under lowly conditions, lying in a manger. There was little to impress the travellers that this was the long-looked-for Deliverer, but under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they worshipped and rendered homage, presenting the costly gifts which they had brought. What a blessing the wise men would have lost, had they not had the faith to rise and follow the star to the journey's end.

To-day we have reached a time which is in many ways similar to the days of the first advent of Christ. The hour is dark, and the future is full of forebodings and uncertainty. Hope is fast fading from the hearts of men, giving place to a fear of what is coming upon the world. Everyone who thinks seriously realizes that the greatest crisis that this world has ever known is rushing fast upon us. With the advent of modern weapons, such as the atomic and hydrogen bombs, we live only from day to day, not knowing what to-morrow may bring.



# THE STAR

By D. A.

These days of peril were foreseen and foretold by the prophetic Word and are exactly described in Matthew twenty-four, and the other gospels. In Luke twenty-one we are told that just before the second advent of Christ there were to be "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; . . . men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:25, 26. Matthew twenty-four

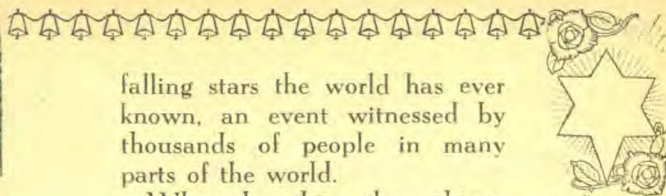


By Jean Francois Portaels

The wise men from the East

OUR TIMES





# OF HOPE

Aufranc

tells us that the stars would fall from heaven when that great day was approaching. Just as the birth of Christ was heralded by a star, so He promised to use these celestial bodies as a sign that He is about to come a second time.

## Signs in the Heavens

Actually these wonderful events in the heavens have already taken place, the last being the falling of the stars in the year 1833. At this time was seen the greatest display of



falling stars the world has ever known, an event witnessed by thousands of people in many parts of the world.

When describing these things to His disciples, the Saviour added these solemn words: "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled."

The question therefore arises, How near are we to that great event which shall put an end to all things earthly and usher in the reign of the King of peace? At the time of the Flood, God set the days of the generation at one hundred and twenty years, and the end of that age came within that period. Next year, 1953, we shall be one hundred and twenty years from the last sign in the heavens, the falling of the stars. These things should cause us to ponder gravely on the shortness of time that remains before the end.

Just as in that dark hour before the birth of the Messiah, God used a star to bring hope to the wise men, so in this even darker hour, He has used not one star but many to bring hope to all who look for His second appearing. These faithful prophecies are omens of cheer, telling us that the night is far spent, the day is at hand, and that midnight's hour is soon to give place to the dawn of perfect day.

However hopeless may seem the events in the world to-day, there is hope for every heart bowed down with sorrow and the cares of this life. The Star of hope sheds its light on the pathway of every weary traveller, guiding him on the last stage of the journey to a better land. Soon will the things of earth be swept aside and Christ will appear as a King to "destroy them that destroy the earth," and establish a reign of justice and perfect peace. "Behold, I make all things new."

Those who have been faithful will be sub-

(Turn back to page 5.)



How the star to Bethlehem.

---

# Wise Men

## —Then and Now

By Ernest Cox

---

★ CONSTANTLY the Lord uses those means to arrest our attention which are most suited to our individual outlook and environment.

To Moses, meditating alone in the desert, was presented the enigma of a continually-burning bush. To the royal idolater, Nebuchadnezzar, himself the creator of beautiful and imposing structures, was shown the grandeur of an immense metal statue. To the shepherds, at the birth of our Lord, who must often have beguiled the long nights of watching with song, there came a rapturous burst of heavenly melody. And to the eastern Magi, doubtless often pondering the probable fulfilment of Balaam's outstanding prediction, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob" (Num. 24:17), was given the definite and sustained guidance of a brilliant heavenly body.

Moses was wise when he determined to fathom the reason for the undiminishing flames. Nebuchadnezzar could not rest until he understood the dream. The shepherds at once caught the spirit of the angels' exultation and hastened to bid the Babe a humble welcome. The Magi immediately recognized God's stellar leading, and followed their star until they too found the infant King.

All these, in their day, were wise men. They were quick to see and accept the divine intervention in their day-to-day affairs. They realized that God was revealing Himself to them, and they were eager to learn His will.

Are we, who live in these "enlightened times" always as wise as they? How often does God seek to arrest our attention, not only by sacred words and memories, but also often

by secular happenings—an unexpected blessing or perhaps a personal calamity. But we press blindly on, and unlike the godly Moses, we will not "turn aside and see" what our heavenly Father would show us or say to us. (Exod. 3:5.)

How often we forget that the Lord Himself is most unwilling that we should neglect Him and perish (2 Peter 3:9), and that He will use every means, every circumstance, every mode of appeal that He can, to woo and win us to Himself. How often are we engrossed with the interests of the present to such a degree that eternal issues, affecting ourselves and our loved ones, become unreal or unimportant.

### Wise in Their Generation

Moses was deeply learned in Egyptian culture, and, without question, was conversant with some botany and physics. But in the awful presence of the Author of all the sciences, his own attainments were forgotten, and as reverence then demanded, he quickly removed his shoes.

Nebuchadnezzar was himself an extremely skilful architect. He had great dreams of what he could and would achieve. But, heathen though he was, he was swift to recognize that this special dream which so much troubled him, was really given to enlighten and encourage God's children in a future age. (Dan. 2:1, 28, 47.)

The same keen discernment characterized both the shepherds and the Magi. They perceived, if but dimly, that they stood on the very threshold of tremendous events. It was theirs to rise above their own immediate interests and surroundings, and to welcome and adore the One who, by His quiet word and blameless life, would "shake all nations" (Hag. 2:7) and rock the twin strongholds of a pharisaical bigotry and a blatant heathenism, to their very foundations.

All these, Moses, Nebuchadnezzar, the shepherds, the Magi, were wise men. Wise, not because of education, or privilege, or opportunity, but wise because they were quick to sense God's intervention. And in the case of those living when our Lord was born, because they allowed that divine intervention to bring them, as it always will, to the feet of the world's Redeemer.

Even if only the humble shepherds saw and heard the angelic chorus, there must have been many others, besides the eastern travellers, who saw His star.

The priestly class were well versed in authentic biblical astronomy. They understood the astronomical allusions in Job. They sensed the significance of Balaam's prediction. According to Micah's, Isaiah's, and Daniel's foretelling, together with their own admission, they even knew where, how, and approximately when, the Messiah would come. (See Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14; Daniel 9:25; Matthew 2:5-6.)

The priests had God's Book open before them. They had God's star above them. They even had far less privileged messengers from a distant land to remind them that the King was at their door.

They were the acknowledged and respected ministers of God. They wore, with much parade, the temple robes and phylacteries. But they were not the wise men.

They were "willingly ignorant." They closed  
(Continued on page 15.)



By J. Pander

© Three Lions

The wise men arrive in Bethlehem.

# Will the Herald Angels Sing Again?

By J. R. Lewis

★ It was Christmas Eve. A subdued warm glow of light from lamp and coal fire filled the parlour, and the family, arm-chaired and comfortable, eyed the radiogram cabinet expectantly. A scratch of the needle, the hum of the pick-up, and there filled the ears the sweet notes of "Holy night, silent night." One could visualize falling snowflakes, huddled sheep on the Bethlehem hills, and dozing shepherds around low fires. "All is still, all is bright."

"Holy Night" is the Christmas carol *par excellence*. The youth of Dublin, candles in hand, pour its melody from the O'Connell Street shop doors as they collect from the passers-by. Under the shadow of the Malverns, the country children sing not so silently along the village streets, and the sheep-hand on Mynnyth Merthyr can hear the voices of the chapel choir echoing it around the black spurs of the Rhondda.

And it is right that the world should sing on the Eve of the Nativity, for when Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, the melody and deep harmonies of the angelic choir rolled and trembled around the heads of the shepherds as no music had ever sounded before.

## Jesus the Saviour Is Born

For nineteen and a half centuries the world has commemorated the birth of the Prince of peace. For the same number of endless years the world has wept for peace. This Christmas, the never-ending reverberation of round upon round of exploding shot and shell still drowns the cooing of the dove of peace.

## The Miracle of Christmas

*(Continued from page 5.)*

has sent Me to announce release to the prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind; to free those whom tyranny has crushed, to proclaim the year of acceptance with the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19 (Weymouth).

How many to-day are spiritually "poor" in their weakness and separation from God? How they need the "good news" of His offered pardon.

How many to-day are "prisoners," victims of wrong habits, captives of sin? How much they need the "release" which Christ alone can give.

How many are "blind" to their true condition, and recklessly indifferent to the grace of God? How they need Jesus!

How many to-day in so many lands are virtually "crushed" and hopeless, slaves of a "tyrannical" regime? Christ can compensate!

How woefully many are they who are still "broken-hearted" as a result of bereavement from the scourges of war? Jesus Christ is the same tender, sympathizing Friend now as when His feet hallowed the streets of Nazareth and Jerusalem. Make Him "the unseen Guest."

As we, in short, enter into the happiness which may come to us under the influence of the spirit of Christmas, shall we not also consider the fullness of joy which may be for ever ours if only we will give ourselves to the Lord of Christmas and hasten the coming of His kingdom?



## Our Kinsman-Redeemer

*(Continued from page 7.)*

It is impossible for the human mind to understand the incarnation of God in human flesh. Many queries come to our minds for which there has been no answer provided. Indeed, the birth of Jesus into the human family is called a mystery. It is "the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3:16. We cannot understand it, but we can and do believe it.

We can furthermore see something of its significance in the setting of Ruth's experience. She was destitute and childless. Her inheritance and hopes for the future could only be

Howbeit, another night is coming soon, which will be a truly holy night, for peace, permanent peace, will come, never to be broken; and the weapons of war will be destroyed never to be manufactured again.

This peace will return when Jesus Christ returns a second time to the earth. The Christian church, which has always celebrated the first advent of her Lord, has ever cherished the glorious hope of the second advent. Untold millions have gone to the grave with the sure conviction that the Lord who was crucified as King of the Jews, will one day reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

One night soon, human eyes will once more be startled by the appearance of angelic visitors, and human ears will again hear the angels sing, for the cherubim and seraphim who heralded the Saviour's first coming will also herald His second. Matthew records: "They shall see the Son of man coming. . . . He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet." Matt. 24:30, 31. Again: "The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him." Matt. 25:31. Further: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels." Matt. 16:27. These angels will have cause to sing, for their Commander will stop war for ever. (Psa. 46:9.) He will destroy evil men (Rev. 11:18). He will heal the sick (Mal. 4:2). He will raise the dead (1 Thess 4:16), and death will be swallowed up in victory as the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

Once again the lips of Jesus will be seen to move and His voice will be heard, not this time as the plaintive crying of a babe for its mother, but the powerful, commanding tones of a King inaugurating His kingdom and assembling His subjects. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel." 1 Thess. 4:16. "The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His habitation." Jer. 25:30.

That voice will roll through the chasms of the Himalayas, echo in Alpine fastnesses, and greet His children in the cities and hamlets of the earth, calling upon them to "inherit the kingdom" prepared for them "from the foundation of the world."

God grant that you may hear it with joy.

realized by a near kinsman taking pity on her plight and in love coming to the rescue. We too, are destitute, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23. We too need a near kinsman to redeem us and to give us an inheritance for the future. So Jesus came to share our humanity in order that we might share His life and eternity. We become "partakers of the divine nature" through accepting the exceeding great promises of His Word, which provide us with a kinsman "able . . . to save . . . to the uttermost all that come unto . . . Him."

The first dominion given to man, and lost through disobedience, is restored to the believer through union with the Christ of God, the Tower of the flock. (Micah 4:8.) We can take to ourselves the salutation made by the women of Bethlehem to Naomi: "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman [margin, Redeemer], that His name may be famous in Israel. And He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life." Ruth 4:14, 15.

There may be times when you feel completely orphaned amid the storms of life. There may be times when the waves and billows overwhelm your soul, when frustration and despair are your companions, when you feel utterly destitute of all earthly comfort or support. At such times, you can flee to your elder Brother. What a wealth of meaning in that old refrain: "Safe in the arms of Jesus." He is acquainted with all your needs, your fears, your sins, and your yearning for a better life, for a cleaner heart. He has shared our heartaches and our trials in order that He might intercede for us before the throne of God. He has shared our temptations so that He might come in and share His victory with us.

This Christmastide we can enter into a closer and more intelligent communion with Him as we embrace Him as our Kinsman-Redeemer. He "was in all points tempted like as we are." He is "touched" with our human feelings and infirmities because He shares our

nature. In the light of His incarnation, His atoning sacrifice, His glorious resurrection, the apostle urges us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:15, 16.

This, then, is the meaning and message of Christmas. Divinity has stooped to share our humanity in order that our humanity might become partaker of His divinity. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, . . . to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." 1 Sam. 2:8. The pathway from grace to glory is a "new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." Heb. 10:20. He was born in Bethlehem in order that He might be reborn in our hearts.

### Wise Men—Then and Now

*(Continued from page 11.)*

their eyes and ears and hearts, so that even God Himself could in no way impress them. Their refusal to admit Messiah's birth, led them later to a disastrous repudiation of His office and mission. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Rom. 1:22.

When we think again of the Magi, those who, by comparison, had so little light, and who, with considerable toil, had come so far, the contrast is the more striking and instructive.

They said: "We have seen . . . and are come." Matt. 2:2. Without delay or hesitation, as soon as they perceived that God was leading and guiding them, they gladly followed. They journeyed many weary miles, through, probably to them, unknown, and certainly dangerous country, that they might bring their homage and their gifts.

May we too, this Christmastide, also perceive and follow whatever is, for us, the divine leading. May we, similarly, be truly wise, in that we also "are come to worship Him."

- **OUR ACHIEVEMENT—**  
A world-wide broadcast from 709 stations.
- **OUR TASK—**  
Opening the Bible to the world.

### Voice of Prophecy Bible School

Stanborough Park,  
Watford, Herts.

The facilities of the World's Largest Bible School are at your disposal.

Listen to our Programme  
**Radio Luxembourg**  
Tuesday 4.15 p.m. (G.M.T.)  
1,293 metres  
Friday 11 p.m. 208 metres

## THE CHILDREN'S PAGES

# Tippie Came Home for Christmas

It was three days before Christmas. Little Hugh was sitting at the kitchen table checking over the list of gifts and toys he wanted at Christmastime for himself and his dog Tippie.

He had worked on the list for several days. Now he had all the things he wished for himself neatly printed on the blue notepaper that Mother had given him on his birthday.

Then he wrote, "A chocolate-flavoured rubber bone for my dog."

"Where is Tippie, Mother?" he called to the living room.

"I am sure I don't know," answered his mother. "I haven't seen him since morning."

Hugh went to the back of the house and called and called, "Tippie, Tippie! Where are you?" But he got no answer.

Tippie did not come home that night, nor the next day, nor the next night, nor the following day. It was two whole nights and days that Tippie had been away. Only one day remained until Christmas.

Hugh was worried about Tippie. "Where could he be? What could have happened to him?" Hugh asked again and again. But all whistling, calling, and searching of the neighbourhood were in vain. Tippie was gone!

It was the night before Christmas. Hugh asked his father, "Daddy, do you think we didn't treat Tippie well enough? Was that why he ran away?" Tears trickled down the boy's cheeks. "Now he won't be here to get his Christmas presents," he cried.

Hugh's father had had a dog for a pet when he was a



boy. So he could sympathize with Hugh. "Let's see," he said, "let's try to think how Tippie may have felt before he ran away."

"How do you think he felt?" asked Hugh.

"It may have been like this," answered his father. "When you were small, Tippie followed you everywhere. He could outrun you then, but he didn't. He never got out of your sight. When you rode your first tricycle, you could move about rather fast, but not faster than Tippie. He loved you, and he never went far away from you."



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than December 25th.

"Yes, I remember," said Hugh. "I love him, too."

"You see," continued Father, "now that you have a bicycle, you can go faster than Tippie, and his short legs can't keep up with you. He has to take a short cut across the fields to catch up. Sometimes he takes the wrong path, so you aren't there when he gets across the field."

"Maybe he got tired of trying to keep up with me," said Hugh, thoughtfully.

"That may be it," said Father. "I am to blame, too. I could have taken him along in the car when he begged to

go, instead of locking him in the garage when we went away."

"I am to blame, too," said Hugh's mother. "I sometimes scolded him when he got underfoot."

"I suppose he thought none of us wanted him," said Hugh sadly. That Christmas Eve no one was happy in the house, because Tippie was gone.

Christmas morning arrived. The family unwrapped their gifts early; but somehow, no one was as much interested in his gifts as usual. One small package attracted more attention than all the rest put to-

gether. It was marked, "For Tippie." Yes, it was a rubber bone. Hugh took Tippie's present out to the back garden. He whistled and called with all his might, but there was no answer.

At nine o'clock that morning a weak but familiar bark was heard at the back door. Father and Mother and Hugh rushed to the door. There stood a tired, cold, hungry dog.

"Oh, Tippie," cried Hugh, "we are so glad you are back."

"Yes," said Mother, "it wouldn't be Christmas without you."

"And see the present you got," cried Hugh as he held up the rubber bone.

"Bow-wow-wow," barked Tippie — which seemed to mean, "I'm glad I'm home."

They never let Tippie feel unwanted again!—By courtesy of *The Grade Teacher*.

#### Results of Competition No. 20

*Prize-winners*.—Patsy Pollock, 164 Dale Valley Road, Southampton. Age 10; Connie Freeman, 54 Chestnut Road, Raynes Park, London S.W.20. Age 14.

*Honourable Mention*.—Stuart Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Richard Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Antony Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Jean Simmons (Torquay); Marianne Nyary (Coventry); David Phillips (Eastleigh); Heather Payne (Bishops Cleeve).

*Those who tried hard*.—Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Margaret Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Amy Randlesome (Stockton); Elizabeth O'Brien (Cardiff); Muriel Forder (Norwich); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Dorothy Phillips (Enfield); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Richard Cornwell (London, N.W.5); Daphne Smith (York); W. Coon (Cornwall); David Simmons (Torquay); David Booth (Plaistow, E.13); Sandra Leggett (Garston); Nigel Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Gillian Whitfield (Burton-on-Trent); No Name (Salisbury).

#### The Bible and OUR TIMES (Formerly "Present Truth")

Vol. 68, No. 25 Price 3d.

Printed and published in Great Britain fortnightly on Thursday by

THE STANBOROUGH PRESS LTD.,  
WATFORD, HERTS.

EDITOR: W. L. EMMERSON  
Twelve months ..... 9/9 post free  
Six months ..... 5/- post free

**O**ne night in a town named Bethlehem, a boy was born in a manger, in a rude stable where were oxen and asses. This Babe was Jesus, the son of God. Shepherds were caring for their flocks in the fields when an angel told them the good news. The angels went in search of the Babe and found Him. Wise men riding on camels were guided to Him by a star. When grown up, Jesus was once very hungry, and Satan tempted Him to make bread out of stones. Satan also tempted Jesus to kneel and worship him. Jesus would not do this. Satan then left Him, and angels came and helped Him. One time at a banquet when there was not enough wine, He told servants to fill jars with water, and when it was drunk, it was changed into wine. After this He went to the temple in Jerusalem, and drove out the money-changers who bought and sold there, and overturned the tables of the money-changers. Once He spoke the word that healed a young man who was sick in his bed at Capernaum. Then He cast an evil spirit out of a man, and healed a man sick with a fever. One day He stepped into a boat, and taught the people on the shore. He then told Peter to let down the net, and so many fish were caught it broke the net. Two of the disciples, James and John, were surprised at the miracle. Then Jesus healed a man having leprosy. *And thus He went about doing good.*



## Glad Tidings

*Glad tidings of joy! glad tidings!  
A Saviour for all mankind!  
The Babe who was born in Bethlehem,  
The Man who restored the blind;  
Who healed the sick and afflicted,  
The Lamb who was scourged and slain;  
He rose and ascended—then angels said,  
"This same Jesus shall come again."*

*Glad tidings of peace! glad tidings!  
For a world distraught by fear;  
O listen, ye despondent one,  
The Saviour's own promise hear!  
"Let not your heart e'er be troubled,  
Believe Me, trust not in vain;  
I go to prepare a place for you;  
If I go, I will come again."*

*Glad tidings of joy! glad tidings!  
He shall come—the Prince of peace!  
"The Life" and "the Resurrection,"  
All warfare and wrong shall cease;  
"Behold!" He says, "I come quickly  
To gather the ripened grain,"  
To garner His own in glory;  
He that shall come will come again.*

MRS. M. H. COOPER.

