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The Seminarian

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ADVENT, 1954 VOLUME XVI NUMBER 2

ON PROPHECY AND FULFILLMENT

Professor Robert E. Bornemann

Advent is traditionally the season of the Old Testament. Its atmosphere is one of expectancy and hope. The days are filled with a sense of imminence, the nearness of the event that will bring meaning and purpose to life -- that will bring even life itself. In preparation for this event in which 'the hopes and fears of all the years are met' the church turns her attention to the proclamation of those who before the event gave testimony to it. The season is characterized by the familiar formula of the First Evangelist, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet." Advent, above all other seasons of the church year, is the season of prophecy and fulfillment:

Behold, a Branch is growing
Of loveliest form and grace;
As prophets sung, foreknowing,
It springs from Jesse's race.

This traditional emphasis of Advent raises a serious problem. Biblical criticism has shaken to the roots the traditional view of inspiration and has revolutionized our understanding of the nature of prophecy. We can no longer accept the view of the Scriptures held by the Evangelist and the medieval hymn writer, nor as a consequence can we accept their exegetical method. We find ourselves in a quandary. Piety and tradition, for example, lead us to accept the assertion that Micah foretold the place of Jesus' birth (Matt. 2:5,6); intellectual honesty prevents us. Does this same conflict arise in our confession of Christ in which we acknowledge with Paul that Christ died and rose again "according to the Scriptures," that is according to the Old Testament? The problem rests basically in the question, How are we to view prophecy and fulfillment? It is with this problem that we are concerned here. A detailed discussion is not possible, but within the limits of our space it is at least possible to set forth certain principles which in my view are basic for a right understanding of the relation between prophecy and fulfillment.

THE FUNCTION AND MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS

At the center of the religion of Israel is the covenant. Its nature and content are perhaps best suggested by Exodus 19:3b-9a (J; c. 950 B.C.). Here the covenant is described as a

personal relationship between Yahweh and the people; it is a relationship established by Yahweh in his deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 19:4,5). This covenant relationship, based on what was regularly interpreted as a saving act of God, involved obedience to the will and purpose of God (Ex. 19:5). God's act in choosing Israel and Israel's responsibility of obedience result in the formation of a kingdom and holy nation (Ex. 19:6). This nation refers in the first place to Israel. The notion that Israel was not an end in herself, but pointed beyond herself to something greater is not expressly stated in the Exodus narrative, but is suggested elsewhere by J (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) and implied by the prophetic interpretation of history. The essential features of the covenant may be summarized as follows: Yahweh in a saving act in history has chosen Israel to be his own people, a holy nation, obeying his voice, that through them he might perform his will and achieve his purpose.

To recognize the centrality of the covenant relationship in the faith of Israel is essential to an understanding of the message and function of the prophets. By nature Israel was a covenant people and owed her very existence as a people to the covenant. The Israelites were not a unity by reason of common ancestry, nationality, or race, but by reason of their common worship of Yahweh. Israel was in fact created by the covenant. It is thus that she is called not a nation, but a congregation (qahal). By origin and nature Israel was not a nation just like the other nations. To maintain within Israel a proper understanding of her nature as a covenant people was the primary function of the prophets.

It was to this end that they preached, and it is in view of this function that we are to understand their message. In whatever situation they spoke -- cultus, social life, politics -- it was to make Israel conscious of her covenant responsibilities. The word which they brought was the proclamation of the will and purpose of the covenant God for Israel, and it was spoken in a specific situation at a definite point in Israel's history. The prophets proclaimed the Word which God had spoken for the prophet's own times. They were concerned with what God proposed to do in Israel in 'this moment.' They spoke to their own 'present and now.'

If this is so, then it is clear that the word they brought was intelligible and relevant both to them and to their hearers. This is to say that the attempt to justify prophecy and fulfillment by asserting that the prophets spoke more than they knew is wrong; for this assertion not only involves an erroneous view of inspiration, but also a misapprehension of the prophetic function and word. The prophets knew exactly what they were saying. They proclaimed the word which the covenant God spoke to their own day.

To proclaim this word, however, meant retrospection, because

"what God has done is intrinsically related to that which he is doing." (Minear, Eyes of Faith, p. 204) The present crisis created by the coming of the Word of Yahweh was illuminated by what had happened in the past. At the same time the present crisis cast light upon the events of the past, so that they were seen in a new perspective. The prophetic word not only made clear the issues of the present, but also reinterpreted the meaning of the past.

In a similar way the prophetic proclamation of God's Word in the present was prospective. What God speaks today has consequences for tomorrow. The word is not empty sound; it is dynamic and creative; 'it accomplishes that which God proposes.' The prophet, because he spoke God's word, is of necessity not only a forth-teller, but also a fore-teller. But what the prophet had to say concerning the future was intimately bound up with the word spoken to the present. This means that the prophet's vision of what was to come was not just a guess or wishful thinking; his message for the future was determined by the word of God he spoke. On the other hand, this also means that the prophetic visions of the future were not, as Scott puts it, "glimpses of a predetermined future which is shortly to pass through the present moment into the past, like a motion-picture film passing the lens of the projector. The future is not so mechanically determined. What is about to happen is the necessary consequence of a moral situation; at the same time it will be the concrete realization of the prophetic 'Word' which expresses in relation to that situation the righteous will of Yahweh." (The Relevance of the Prophets, p. 10).

To see the prophetic message and function in these terms is to distinguish the prophet from the 'social reformer,' whose concern for the betterment of present conditions lacks the inner-dynamic of the word, and from the 'fortune-teller,' who reads tomorrow's papers today. The prophetic function was to declare the word -- the will and purpose -- of God to the present situation. As this proclamation to the present involved the past, it meant the illumination of the present and the reinterpretation of the past; as it involved the future, it meant the assurance that this purpose would be fulfilled.

JESUS CHRIST, THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHETIC WORD

The coming of Christ, the Word, precipitated a crisis not unlike that created by the word of Yahweh as spoken by the prophets. Like the prophetic word, this event was closely related to what God had done in the past. The issues and meaning of the event of Christ were made clear by the events of the past. The apostles were certain that they were following no cleverly devised mythoi when they made known the Christ and the power of his coming; not only were they eyewitnesses of his majesty, but

also "we have the prophetic word made more confirmed, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." (II Pet. 1:19) The prophetic word made clear the meaning of the event of Christ and by this event was itself confirmed.

At the same time the past was made clear in this coming of Christ. By the prophetic word Christ was seen to be the fulfiller and fulfillment of the purpose of the covenant God; but as the fulfillment of the purpose of God he became also its revealer. He declared the mystery of the purpose of God. This dual nature of the relation between Christ and the prophetic word is suggested in Romans 16:25,26. "Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God...." The purpose of God, proclaimed in their day by the prophets, is revealed in Christ because he fulfilled it; but Christ himself is proclaimed by the very prophetic Scriptures which he made clear.

The belief that Christ is the fulfillment and the revealer of the Scriptures asserts that there is an organic unity between the purpose of God as witnessed in the Old Testament and the event of Christ. The earliest Confessional formula is a clear testimony to this unity: Iesus Christos.

PROPHECY AND FULFILLMENT

In view of the function and message of the prophets and of the Christian confession of Christ as the fulfillment of the prophetic word, the following conclusions are suggested as being essential to an understanding of prophecy and fulfillment.

(1) The relation of prophecy and fulfillment is to be understood in terms of the covenant purpose of God. The function of Old Testament prophecy was the proclamation of the Word of God to its own day. The prophet was charged with the task of making clear to his contemporaries the purpose of God as it affected them. The proclamation of God's purpose had implications for the future, and thus the prophets spoke of impending doom, of the ideal king of Israel (Messiah), of the joys of the Messianic kingdom, and of the day when the covenant would be fully and truly realized. But when they spoke of these things, they were not thinking of Jesus of Nazareth, nor were they predicting the events and details of the New Testament. They were simply drawing the implications of the word they were proclaiming to their own time. The prophets declared the purpose of God as it pertained to their day. This covenant

purpose of God, however, is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, in whom the unity of this purpose is revealed. Insofar, then, as the prophets bore witness to this purpose, it can be said that they bore witness (however indirect) to Christ, who is both its fulfiller and fulfillment.

(2) The starting point for understanding the prophetic word is Jesus Christ and not the prophetic word itself. It is of the nature of Old Testament prophecy that the mode and character of its fulfillment cannot be determined beforehand. Prophecy is not a matter of precise prediction. The relation of prophecy and fulfillment is not that of correspondence. One cannot begin with prophecy and come out with the picture of Jesus. The fulfillment is always something other than the prophecy, and it is only when the prophecy is fulfilled that it can truly be known. As the fulfillment of the purpose of God, Christ is also its revealer. Apart from him the prophetic word is a hidden word.

(3) At the same time the event of Christ is to be understood in the light of the prophetic word. In Christ the prophetic word is confirmed; the Old Testament enables us to see in Christ the fulfillment of the purpose of God. What happens in the gospel is made clear by what happened in the past, for past and present are organically related in the purpose of God. In view of this, the prophetic word becomes an integral part of our understanding of the person of Christ (Messiah), of the nature of the New Covenant, and of the Church. "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty... ..And we have the prophetic word made more confirmed, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place..."

The Wives' Club has been carrying on an ambitious program this fall.

Nov. 11: Mrs. J. Robert Mayer, wife of the pastor of Immanuel Church, West Phila., gave a talk on her "Seven Years Experience as a Minister's Wife." Mae Bryant led devotions. Refreshments were prepared and served by Betty Buehrle, Mae Bryant, and Shirley Griep.

Nov. 16: Workshop meeting: The Rev. Lawrence M. Reese, Board of Parish Education, spoke on "Education in the Church."

Nov. 23: Gloria Ziegler, Marge Gibbs, Marianne Walton, and Lea Messner met at the home of Marion Hinman to fill two baskets of Thanksgiving delicacies, including a 20-lb. turkey. The baskets were then taken to the Lutheran Settlement House for distribution to the needy.

Nov. 30: Mrs. Robert E. Bornemann, wife of Seminary professor Bornemann, spoke on "What the Church Should Offer Young Adults."

Dec. 10: Seminary married couples attended the annual Wives' Club Christmas party in Ascension Church basement. Committees planned an evening of fun and fellowship, with appropriate refreshments, entertainment, and decorations. Wives bought and dressed dolls to be given at Christmas-time to the children of Haverford Center and the Lutheran Settlement House.

Dec. 14: The Rev. Ralph I. Shockey, superintendent of the Lutheran Home of New Jersey, spoke on "What the Church Should Off-

Senior Banquet chairman Luther Kistler has announced Friday, April 22, as the date for the annual affair.

The program committee, chaired by Carl Weaver, plans to entertain with skits staged by the Junior and Middle classes. John Roth's speaker and invitations committee is deciding on a possible speaker and preparing the list of invitations. John Ziegler is in charge of the dinner committee.

Further details, including the speaker's name, are to be announced later.

SENIORS HEAR LAYMEN'S IDEAS

Seniors were confronted with the challenge of the layman at the Senior Program, held Nov. 17. Mrs. G. Elson Ruff and Mr. Paul Smith presented and led a discussion on "What the Layman Expects of the Pastor." William Rittberger, chairman of the event, has announced that a similar program is planned for February. Topic for the second evening is to be concerned with the pastor's role in the legal aspects of juvenile delinquency.

er the Golden-Agers." Contributions of canned goods and staples for the Christmas Basket were brought to this meeting.

Dec. 15: Wives' Club members and their husbands went Christmas caroling at Chestnut Hill Hospital and Germantown Home.

--Lea Messner

STUDENT FEES TO CHANGE

Following the Nov. 16 Board of Directors' meeting, un-married students decided to head for the altar for reasons other than to conduct services. Reason for the "flight for wife" is the fee change voted by the Board.

To become effective September, 1955, the change will lower expenses of off-campus students by \$25 per year. On-campus dwellers received a \$45 per year hike in fees.

The present \$175 contingent fee, paid by all students, will be reduced to \$150. A new \$70 per year fee for dormitory use will apply to all students living on campus.

HEYER PLAQUE BEING BROUGHT UP TO DATE

The Heyer Plaque listing Mt. Airy graduates now in foreign service is being brought up to date for the years 1920-54. Now in the library, the plaque requires much research and presents problems in deciding who is to be included.

PAUL HUDDLE, MISSIONARY TO JAPAN, SPEAKS HERE

Former missionary to Japan, the Rev. Paul Huddle spoke to interested students on Dec. 7. Currently attending Mt. Airy and Temple U. graduate schools, the Rev. Mr. Huddle discussed the work in Japan and the latest post-war attitudes and situations there. Slides were shown.

8.

STUDENTS ATTEND IOWA ALS MEETING

Giving up their Thanksgiving feast, five Mt. Airy students attended the annual conference of the Association of Lutheran Seminarians, held Nov. 25-27 at Wartburg Seminary (ALC) in Dubuque, Iowa. Seventeen seminaries sent representatives.

In addition to local ALS secretary Harold Weiss, Mt. Airy delegates were Arthur Henne, Walter Huegel, Walter Miller, and Richard Swanson

ALS president George Handley, currently interning in the Virgin Islands, was unable to attend. He appointed ALS Newsletter editor Charles Lutz of Capital Seminary to act as president pro-tem.

Capital Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, is to be host to the 1955 convention.

THE SEMINARIAN

L. Alex Black, Editor; Fred Auman, Don Bravin, George Fehr, Calder Gibson, Harold Markert, Lee Mull, Don Safford Al Schrum, Joe Schwartz, John Bucher, Allan Gibson.

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STUDENT DIRECTORY

(At the suggestion of several members of the student body, there is included here a directory of the student body along with home addresses. The information will be helpful in many respects, not the least of which is the annual Christmas card mailing.

(The directory is placed in the center of this issue of THE SEMINARIAN, in order that, if you wish, you may remove this page without disturbing the rest of the magazine's contents.

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ADVENT SERVICE, THURSDAY, FEATURES BUXTEHUDE CANTATA

Annual Seminary Advent Vesper service is to be held on Thursday, Dec. 16, at 5 p.m. announces choir director Mr. E. E. Zieber. The choir, accompanied by the organ and two violins, will present one of the cantatas of Dietrich Buxtehude.

Selections from Bach's chorales and Max Reger's compositions are also to be included in the service.

Caroling by the choir will take place immediately after the refectory Advent dinner. Following this, the members of the choir will be entertained by the faculty and their wives at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Martin J. Heinecken.

Dietrich Buxtehude is regarded today as the typical representative of the North German school of Lutheran organists.

Of Danish ancestry, Buxtehude succeeded Franz Tunder, his father-in-law, as the or-

ganist and general overseer of the Marienkirche at Luebeck.

At Luebeck, Tunder had introduced the Abendmusiken, or evening concerts, which were given on the last two Sundays of Trinity, and on the second, third, and fourth Sundays in Advent.

Buxtehude was responsible for the growing popularity of these concerts. J. S. Bach became interested in these Abendmusiken and eventually became a pupil of Buxtehude.

"Many of Buxtehude's cantatas and much of his organ music were written for these concerts.

"Buxtehude's greatness comes to light particularly in his organ works, though his cantatas are by no means insignificant. His works are imbued with the spirit of Lutheranism as well as with the spirit of the North and of the Baroque Era." (Lutheran Cyclopedia).

The service includes the lighting of the Advent candles.

-- Lee Mull

SEVEN TO BE GRADUATED IN JANUARY

The seven members of the class of January, 1955, are to be graduated on January 19.

The service, to be held in the chapel at 10 a.m., will be for Walter Huegel, Karl Laantee, Robert Lezenby, William Maki, Klaus Molzahn, Harold Norris, and George Scherer Jr.

SENIOR GIFT CHOSEN

Jerry Miller, senior class gift chairman, has announced that this year's gift from the senior class to the seminary will be a three-speed record player and an audio-visual aid kit.

TWO THOUGHTS AND A WISH

Christmas affords an excellent occasion for discrimination -- laying hold of what is essential, even while and in spite of enjoying all its many non-essentials. It is my hope that none of us may miss the glorious truth of the glad day itself and that while we make room for so much else we be sure to make room for Him.

Christmas, too, affords a marvelous opportunity for not only seeing the Christ but for showing Him forth. We need to remember that as people look upon us who are of the Seminary, they expect to see in us something of what the Seminary stands for and teaches, something of the power of Christ in our lives. May His Spirit find expression in the things that we say and do in the course of our holiday behaviour.

With these two reminders, I wish for you a good vacation. Be sure we'll be glad to see you back, ready for what the new year holds, refreshed by your stay with your family and friends.

Henry H. Bagger

ABOUT THE COVER

The cover illustration is a photograph of the stained glass panel in the History Room of the Library. It is an example of the fine type of true stained glass produced by the Nicola D'Ascenzo Studio of Philadelphia.

This panel and a companion piece, which is hung in Dr. Bagger's office, were executed for an exhibit of church art on the west coast. After the showing they were presented to the Seminary as "thanks" for the assistance given by Dr. Reed in the area of church art and symbolism. Dr. Reed had consulted with the studio in the design for the windows in the Muhlenberg Chapel.

The window in the library is the best example of the ancient art of stained glass illustration on the seminary campus. The fine sense of line design in the figure and the richness of the various color tones are its outstanding features. More than a passing glance at the original will reveal the great variety of shades of blue that predominate in the background representing the sky; and a closer inspection will show some of the glass texture, the dull and uneven surface and the bubbles fused into the glass during the firing, which mark the finest quality of true stained glass.

The photograph was taken by Allan R. Gibson.

A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

George N. Fehr, Jr.

If I were asked to characterize the times in which we are living, I think I would say that this is not so much the atomic age as it is the era of the hotrod. For this deadly toy has traits which seem to be quite symptomatic not only of our teenage drivers, but indeed of this whole generation. We thrive on speed and noise. Civilization is literally whizzing by, leaving behind only a thundering uproar. Efficiency experts are hired to expedite assembly lines. Individuals plunge through life caring only about shattering the record book. The mile run in three fifty-eight point two. Six hours and twenty-two minutes from Los Angeles to New York by air. And the end of it all is not yet in sight.

The twentieth century pressing on as if it were working against time - and letting everybody in on what's going on, too. For this is an age of promotion, press agents, and public relations. It's not just the automobiles that have lost their mufflers. For subways, TV, and junior senators all help to deafen this world.

What an obvious contrast, then, between this world's speed and noise and the peace and quiet of the nativity. For as the angels' "glorious song of old . . . came upon the midnight clear," the whole "world in solemn stillness lay." "How silently, how silently, The wondrous Gift is given" ...in the "little town of Bethlehem."

And so we try to look back over the centuries, to throw off the speed and the noise, and once again to find the "silence of eternity." We ask for a "deep hush" to subdue "all Our words and works that drown The tender whisper of Thy call." Your cry and mine goes up - "O how shall I receive Thee, How greet Thee, Lord, aright?" And in answer to our quest for Christmas there comes a sure word - "Be still, and know that I am God."

But you might tell me that if there is one season of the year when it is really impossible for you to be still, that season is Christmas. True. These past few weeks have been busy ones - weeks of hurrying in and out of crowded stores, of planning for holiday dances and parties, and of attending to the rather tedious task of addressing Christmas cards. And then the last minute matters of buying a tree, ordering the mince pies, stuffing the turkey, and putting the finishing touches on the Christmas yard.

i n t h e b e g i n n i n g w a s
t h e W o r d



a n d t h e W o r d
w a s m a d e f l e s h

And yet this intense activity which is especially heightened during the holiday season is characteristic of our whole life the year round. We as Americans are charged with being activists, good problem-solvers, people who know how to make all sorts of gadgets. For take a look at the passing parade of the great inventors - those responsible for what we call modern life - and notice that they are all our fellow countrymen.

Edison, Marconi, and Bell - Fulton, Ford, and Wright. We could go on and on quite easily. And then there's the business world.

If anyone ever wants to caricature a typical American, it is usually the rather well-fed and somewhat balding business man who suffers as the object of our laughs. We always caricature the obvious. And the obvious fact here about this country is its genius for industrial production. For most historians of the Second World War would agree that it was the American "know-how" in this production which was the one single factor that tipped the scales to bring about the defeat of the Axis.

And yet this still is not the whole story. For on a far more personal level each one of us acts out this mania for activity - acts it out negatively with a fear of being alone.

Is there any one among us who at one time or other in his childhood did not experience a fear of the dark? I wonder whether this almost universal fear of darkness is not really the same fear which haunts us in our maturity - a fear of being alone, of loneliness. Hurricane Hazel made it only too plain, for without electricity, without television and radio, without the daily newspaper, many families found that there was really nothing for them to do but call it a day and go to bed. Left to himself, man is more lost than a Democrat at the Union League.

Dean Pike sums it all up when he says that "If a man cultivates inwardness, he will make conscious to himself that which he unconsciously knows: that he is really united - to the core of his being - with no one. It may mean the tottering of a house of cards. Then he will feel really alone. . . . This is a real crisis. Or, it may mean the opening of the door to the deepest reality which can come into his life - the practice of the presence of God. . . . Our loneliness is the God-given thirst that makes us ill-content with anything but Living Water."

So "Be still." Shut out the clang and clatter of this present world. Cut away the cancerous growths of the human ego which tries to make man more than he really is. Know that you stand alone - that you need this child - and then receive this miracle at midnight. The miracle of the Incarnation - of God becoming man. So beautiful that it surpasses by far the songs that praise it and the art which portrays it. "Be still."

"Be still," - - "And know that I am God." Not just a child lying in a manger with a special star to call all its own. Not merely one more baby to evoke our more tender sentiments -

but God. For we have come to Bethlehem to be filled with more than just the warm glow of a holiday season. What we call the "Christmas spirit" does charge us with joy and hope, but this "spirit" is about as permanent as a cool drink on a hot day. For we have problems waiting for solutions, fears that have to be overcome, and a soul that has to be saved. We need help. We yearn for more than a sentimentalized and sugar-coated religion. For today's clean white blanket of snow will be tomorrow's slush. The tinsel and twinkling Christmas tree will be thrown out with all the rest of the trash, all brown and dead and shriveled-up. The roast turkey will be nothing but a hollow carcass and the once jingling bells will be mutely silent. All we have left will be a memory that sighs "once upon a time." For holidays, honeymoons, and vacations all end, throwing us back to a more grim reality.

But this child was no stranger to reality. Carpenter, preacher, teacher, healer, miracle worker - but above all, redeemer, saviour. A God in human form - A God who identified himself with man, who knew all the inadequacies that we know - and a God who did something about it. This is the Christ-child that we see in the manger. This is the God come to earth.

And this Christ seemed to defy all the laws that man has tried to set up - for his motto appeared to be "how not to win friends and influence people." The child of an unwed mother, born in a barn in some obscure, out-of-the-way town. A man who skipped over the blue-bloods of society and chose fishermen for helpers. A starry-eyed idealist who threw conventions to the wind - who wasn't too proud to mingle even in the Palestinian Bowery. A common criminal who seemed to bow out of the world as a defeated man, who probably should have had psychiatric treatment before it was too late. This was God.

And yet history has tried to forget him. But the world just can't let him go. For twenty centuries now the nativity story has been told and it will continue to be told for as many more centuries as mankind has left. I think I know now what Paul meant when he asked, "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For . . . it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe." A folly which caused Edith Pierce to tell us to

Blow cold against the flame,
 Throw sand upon the spark;
 You cannot keep the Light
 From shining in the dark.

And the joy of it all (in Luther's words) is that the light "has swept the house of this whole world in every nook and corner with its broom; and it continues to seek, sweep, and find even until the last day." For look at the power of this light - this silent light - as it brings its panoramic rays to focus on

literally everyone. Angels sing of "a great joy which will come to all the people;" the light "enlightens every man;" "he gave power to become children of God . . . to all who received him;" "And from his fullness have we all received." It's as persistent as a theme in a Bach fugue.

"Glory to the new-born King;"
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"

This is the song of the angelic heralds - and this is the good news of what happened at Christmas.

And the Darkness at Noon, that one of our more literate authors has written about, becomes a light at midnight. And so as the clock chimes out another Christmas midnight to announce once again the birth of this child, we ask For Whom the Bell Tolls. And the answer comes right back - "It tolls for thee."

"Be still, and know that I am God."

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THE COMING CHILD

Welcome! all Wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span.
Summer in winter, day in night,
Heaven in earth, and God in man.
Great little one! whose all-embracing birth
Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heav'n to
earth!

Richard Crashaw, 1613?-1649

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Christmas Day

Unto you is born this day a Saviour -- and yet it was night when he was born.

That is an eternal illustration: it must be night -- and becomes day in the middle of the night when the Saviour is born.

This day -- that is the expression for eternity, just as when God says: this day, and like the books which come out 'this year'. It is repeated from generation to generation, to each one of all these millions -- and every time someone really becomes a Christian the same thing is said: unto you is born this day a Saviour.

Kierkegaard, 1849.