

No Room at the Inn

*Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown,
When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room,
For Thy holy Nativity:
O come to my heart Lord Jesus;
There is room in my heart for Thee.*

E. E. S. ELLIOTT.

We celebrate tomorrow the most mysterious and most publicized birth the world has ever known, the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The greeting cards have been sent by the million again this year, many with pictures of the place where the birth took place. Most of these portray a rather glamorous view of a very clean, modern establishment with no suggestion of lack of warmth or light. The truth of course was that there was no room in the little town of Bethlehem for the family of the Son of God. No room in the inn, no room in the hearts of men and women to offer protection and help to the mother about to give birth to her child. As an after-thought it was suggested that the stables might offer some shelter. So they shared the night and its following experiences with the cattle and animals with their dirt and despised conditions; no real light, only a cattle feeding trough as a cradle and straw for warmth. No wonder in later life it was recorded that the common men heard Christ gladly. He had right from the beginning thus identified himself with them.

There have throughout the ages been men and women who

have been prepared to identify themselves with the common man and Christ and experienced the true fellowship of God. This simple birth had a special purpose; it was to show God to man. The cry of the age had been that no man had seen God at any time. Christ later said 'He that has seen me has seen the Father'.

While the whole host of heaven celebrated the royal, regal birth, the world at large (apart from a few poor shepherds) did not notice or pay any attention to the fact that the Christ of God had been born. Today, millions of people who have found room in their hearts and lives for Christ gather together throughout the world to remember the birth that others have no time for.

The birth of Jesus Christ was unique in another way. He was born for the specific purpose of dying. All men ever born were born to live. The medical and nursing professions fight a 24-hour day to save and preserve life: yet Christ himself said about His birth and forthcoming death, 'For this cause came I into the world . . . that I might give my life a ransom for many.' Joseph was told before his son was born, 'Ye shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.' He alone was to be the object of God's judgement.

So as we as nurses with our colleagues contemplate Christ's birth in the hospital ward, patient's house or with friends in the family circle, let us ask ourselves the question sincerely, is there room in my heart for Thee?

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