

## Reflection Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> Week Advent 2021

Elijah's great symbol is fire. He was taken up to heaven on a fiery chariot. He brought down fire on his sacrifice flooded with water, when the priests of Baal failed completely. In pagan times there was a belief that light symbolised goodness and darkness evil; a belief evident in the Gospel of John. The Druids believed that light and darkness were in a constant struggle. As the days grew shorter and the darkness longer, they sought a way to help light conquer darkness and lit the Yule log which would burn for days. *The Celts thought that the sun stood still for twelve days in the middle of winter and during this time a log was lit to conquer the darkness, banish evil spirits and bring luck for the coming year. If they could keep yule logs burning bright for those twelve days, then the sun would be persuaded to move again, and make the days grow longer. For some Christians, the Yule log represented the need to keep the stable warm for the Infant Christ.* The fire, representing light and cleansing, symbolises Christ the light of the world who came to cleanse the world of evil and darkness so that his Light would shine more effectively and more clearly. The lighting of the Yule log spoke of warmth and welcome offered to all. It gathered people together, spoke of song, dance and laughter. It warded off sprits of evil while offering no place for darkness.

This is the God we serve:

A God of love, of healing and power.

A God who loves us with a Father's love.

A God who laughs as we laugh,

A God who suffers as we suffer.

A God who brings light into dark places.

A God who brings warmth into hearts that are chilled.

A God who sees within us the potential of Spring.

*'Where man sees but withered leaves,*

*God sees sweet flowers growing.'* (Albert Lighton)

**Just as a pastor began the Christmas Eve service, the electricity in the church failed. The ushers found some candles and placed them around the sanctuary. The pastor re-entered the pulpit, shuffled his notes, and muttered, "Now, where was I?" A tired voice called out, "Right near the end!"**