

UPLOOK

DECEMBER 1993

• Bethsaida

And without controversy
great 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 Timothy 3:16

Bethesda • Bethphaze
Bethlehem • Bethany • Bethabara

TRAVELLING INCOGNITO



TRAVELLING INCOGNITO

THEY CAN BE BLUE OR WHITE, yellow, orange, or red. I should be able to see about 3,000 of them on a clear, dark night. But astronomers tell us that there are more than 200,000,000,000,000,000,000 (200 billion billion) stars, more than 40 billion *per person* on our little planet-home. There was a day that scientists, ignoring the inference of Scripture that man cannot count them (Gen. 15:5)—though God has even named them (Ps. 147:4)—said there were a thousand stars or so. Or so! Every time astronomers build a larger telescope, they find we have a larger universe.

The figures concerning the heavens are, well, astronomical—not only the number of stars, but their temperatures, sizes, and distances from us. It is no wonder that David wondered, “What is man that Thou art mindful of him?” after considering the starry hosts.

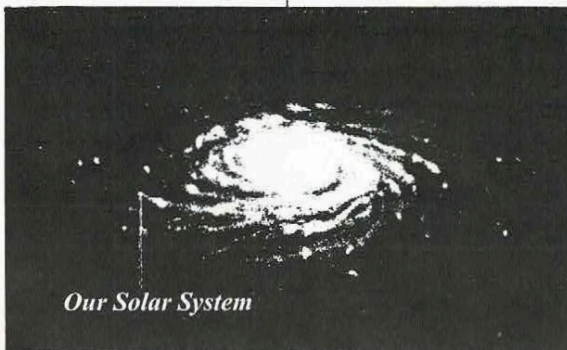
Stars range in surface temperature from a chilly 5,000° F. (3,000° C) to a torrid 37,000° F. Our sun falls about into the middle of the category at approximately 10,000° F. But temperatures at the centers can approach 2,000,000° F. Interestingly, red stars are the coolest, blue stars the hottest.

And what of their sizes? Stars vary from extremely dense neutron stars to the supergiants. *Antares*, sixteenth brightest star to our view in the heavens (a mere 400 light-years away) has a diameter 330 times that of the sun—which is 109 times that of the earth. *Betelgeuse* (*Alpha Orionis*) appears to expand and shrink, but varies between 375 and 595 times the diameter of the sun. That means that if this one star was centered in the middle of our solar system, the sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars could continue in their orbits inside *Betelgeuse* with 365,200,000 miles to spare.

Is your brain holding up? Not tired yet? Then think, if you can, of the distances between the stars: “Behold the height of the stars, how high they are!” (Job 22:12). As you know, the distances are measured in light-years, the distance traveled by light at 186,282 miles

per second for one year—5.88 million million miles (9.46 million million km). Did David know that light was the limiting speed in the universe when he wrote: “If I take the wings of the morning (the first rays of light that shoot across the morning sky), and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea” the Lord would be there waiting to look after him (Ps. 139:9-10)?

The sun is just 93 million miles from us; the next nearest star, *Proxima Centauri* is 4.3 light-years from the sun. Some stars on the farside of our galaxy, the Milky Way, are 80,000 light-years from us.



Our Solar System

Now let's step away from our galactic cluster of 100 billion stars into *real* outer space. Our nearest galaxy-neighbor is 200,000 light-years away! The most distant stars we know about are billions of light-years from us. It's a bit lonely out here, wouldn't you say? Let's return to that little blue planet, three from the sun.

Now go back in time with me nineteen centuries and across the globe to a ridge of hills just south of Jerusalem. Night has fallen. It has been almost two years since news that a King has been born nearby, born in an outbuilding normally reserved for livestock. We are startled to see a camel train upon which ride men who obviously are strangers to these parts. As we watch, they glance heavenward. A brilliant star shines above, seemingly the means by which they are directed to a modest building in the town of Bethlehem.

Wise men they are indeed, having left their homeland in search of the King, “for,” they say, “we have seen His star...” His star? They are *all* His! He made them, named them, and they glorify Him every one. Then what is He doing here? Why is the King of glory travelling incognito? I'll let the psalmist tell you He was the One who linked the mighty stars and the inhabitants of this sad little planet in Psalm 147: “*He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds (margin, griefs). He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names*” (vv. 3-4). **U**

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IRS UPDATE

In an effort to keep Christians informed of changes that affect them, we have included the following notice regarding charitable contributions:

As in the past, the US Internal Revenue Service will accept cancelled checks to substantiate charitable contributions for 1993 tax returns.

However, due to a recent change in federal income tax laws, commencing January 1, 1994 (for 1994 returns and thereafter) the Internal Revenue Service will require a "written substantiation" from the recipient charitable organization to substantiate charitable contributions of \$250.00 or more. A cancelled check alone will no longer be accepted as sufficient proof. This new rule applies to contributions to churches as well as other charitable organizations.

Some assemblies are already using the "envelope system" which should enable the treasurer to issue an appropriate letter of substantiation at the end of each

year. We are aware, however, that a number of assemblies do not yet have a system which would collect the data required for its treasurer to issue an appropriate receipt.

Inasmuch as the new provisions of the law become effective for charitable contributions made on January 1, 1994 and thereafter, if contributions to your assembly are to be tax deductible, you should institute an "envelope system" or other method of recording individual contributions which will enable your treasurer to issue annual receipts meeting the "written substantiation" requirements.

It has been suggested that assemblies contact their local tax advisor promptly for assistance in implementing such systems, if they desire contributions to be tax deductible.

—Gerald V. Keller, CPA

(This requirement is only applicable to churches in the United States.)

Famous Men Are Not Always Faithful Men

"...Mighty men of valor, famous men, and heads of the house of their fathers. And they transgressed against the God of their fathers."

1 Chronicles 5:24-25

That men with such a heritage and with such reputation should "act treacherously" is unthinkable, yet they did; and their descendants do today. There are men in high places in evangelical circles who secretly deny truths that we suppose they hold dear. This is nothing new. Satan's ministers disguise themselves as servants of righteousness (2 Cor. 11) and their "good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:18). Our trust must never be in "princes," but in God and His Word.

—Colin F. Anderson

*The watchword in life's battle,
The chart on life's dark sea;
The everlasting Bible,
It shall our teacher be.*

BETHLEHEM: MANIFEST IN FLESH

ONE OF THE MOST PICTURESQUE places in all the world is the little town of Bethlehem nestling in the Judean hills. A visit is a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Not far away are the shepherds' fields where wondering men heard a wonderful message centuries ago. How often we enjoyed singing the Christmas carols in the same fields when we were living in the land of the Bible. Whenever the word Bethlehem (which means "the house of bread") comes to mind, certain memories spring to life about a Sign, a Son, and a Saviour.

A SIGN

From the days of David, the man after God's own heart, Bethlehem was like many other towns, quietly hidden away for centuries. Then one day a mysterious star appeared in the heavens over the place where Jesus was to be born. It led the way for the wise men to come to the Babe with their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The message of the angel of the Lord was expressed in the word "Saviour," who was the Christ, the Lord. The star went before the wise men once more, not to show them the way to the city—this they knew—but to lead them to the Babe.

The sign was a baby and in this lies the mystery of the Incarnation. Truly it is both mysterious and wonderful—the Son of God, the great Creator, the Lord of glory, humbling Himself to become the Son of Man. No one at Rome, the imperial capital, knew of His arrival, and the event was not announced in the high places of the earth.

What lessons are to be learned from the travelers in their guidance and gifts. It is obvious that when they obeyed the leading of the Scriptures and turned towards Bethlehem, the star of promise led them to the Star of destiny and deliverance. The star appeared to guide them. As we obey the light we have, God gives us more. It is still true, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way."

A SON

In reading the Old Testament, we are first introduced to Bethlehem in the days of Jacob. Though he

lived some 1800 years before the coming of Christ, the hand of God was on him, leading him right to the house of bread, Ephrath. Coming along from Bethel a halt was made and, just on the outskirts of Bethlehem, Rachel, his beloved wife, gave birth to her last child. As she died, she cried out in pain, "Benoni," which means, "son of my sorrow." Jacob called the boy Benjamin, the "son of my right hand," and built a pillar there which remains to this day. Often I have sat by the way into Bethlehem and thought about this scene. It speaks of the birth of another Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely He was the Man of Sorrows, but also the Son of God's right hand (Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:13).

*He came as a babe, in the manger was laid
Christ Jesus, the blest Son of God,
He came from on high, that here He might die,
To ransom us by His own blood.*

"At Bethlehem," said Leo the Great, "two natures met together in one Redeemer. Nothing is wanting in either; entire majesty and entire littleness; His the infirmity whose is the power. The selfsame Person is both capable of dying and conqueror of death. God knit Himself to manhood in pity and power; either nature was in the other; and yet neither in the other lost its own property."

Centuries before, Micah had assured us that He is not circumscribed by time. His goings forth, His activities, have been from old, from everlasting. These goings forth were before creation, in creation, in His appearances to the patriarchs, and throughout the Old Testament history of redemption. How wonderful to read Psalm 90:2; John 1:1, 14, and the early chapters of Matthew and Luke, and also Paul's interpretation of them in Colossians 1. Surely then His vision will fill the soul and this season of the year will be deeper and fuller, for great is the mystery of the Incarnation. The central figure in the story of Bethlehem is not Joseph or Mary, the shepherds or the sages or the angels, but Christ, the holy Child, the Son of God.

A SAVIOUR

While we gaze with adoring wonder on the birth of

BETHLEHEM

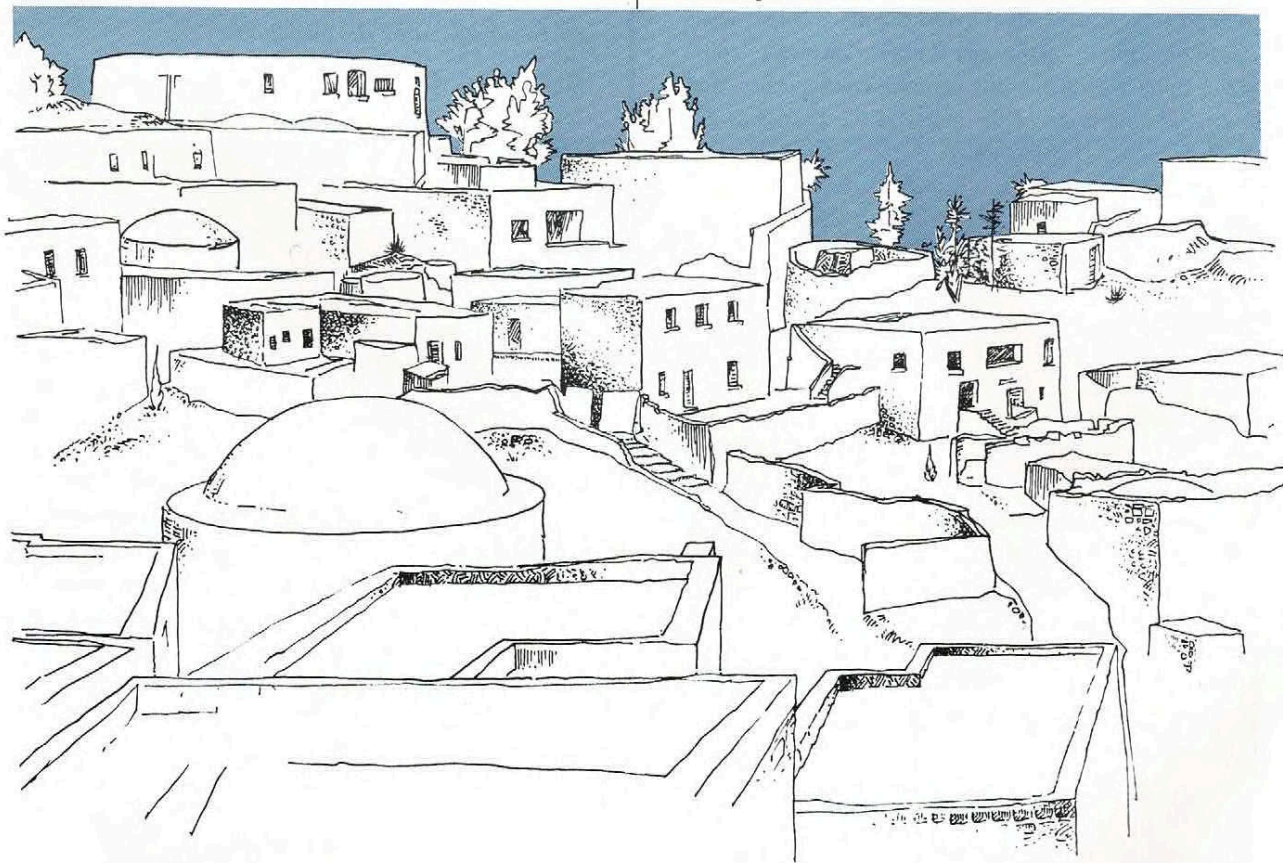
the little baby in a manger, we must never forget that He was of noble descent. For He was one of the family of David and of Abraham. The wise men knelt and worshiped Him and the sky shone with a wonderful light from heaven. The beautiful name, Jesus, simply means "Jehovah the Saviour." In the Old Testament there are three books that contain the name of Jesus—Joshua, Isaiah, and Hosea. In all these books the Spirit of God has a special purpose in the meaning of the names. Joshua puts the emphasis on His Person, Isaiah on His work, and Hosea on His people. So when Matthew records, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21), the Holy Spirit unites these three books in testimony to the Christ of God, Immanuel, "God with us."

Joshua means Saviour, and so the name of Jesus is the same. Isaiah makes much of the work of the Re-

deemer, and the meaning of His name is "Jehovah is salvation." Thus, as Matthew says, our Lord came to save from sin. Finally, Hosea is another reference to the Saviour, and in his book we find Jehovah's great concern for His people. So the coming of Christ was to save His people from their sins. No wonder we sing:

*I cannot tell why He whom angels worship
Should set His love upon the sons of men,
Or why as Shepherd He should seek the wanderers
And bring them back, I know not how or when.
But this I know: that He was born of Mary,
When Bethlehem's stable was His only home,
And that at Nazareth He lived and labored
And so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.*

Yes! He came, a Saviour long desired and long expected. And now, as the Messiah of promise, the Lord Jehovah, God Himself, we announce Him as heaven's great gift and earth's greatest gain. At this season, may the knowledge of His love fill our hearts with adoring worship.



FRONT LINES

GREENWOOD HILLS 1994 CONFERENCES

A Congress Retreat will be held January 7-9, 1994, at Greenwood Hills. The speaker, Lord willing, will be Larry Batts (Greensboro, NC). Price is \$60.00 for a 2-night stay and 5 meals. Register soon:

Congress Retreat
2721 Oberlin Drive
York, PA 17404

A more complete listing of the upcoming conferences to be held at Greenwood Hills will appear in the next issue.

WINTER RETREATS

JANBOREE takes place at Camp Li-Lo-Li (Randolph, NY) on January 14-16, 1994. Director Nathan Thomas has lots of special surprises in store, both indoors and out. Kids ages 9-13 are invited to attend as the Bible is applied through many lessons and illustrations throughout the retreat.

Teen POLAR BOWL is a winter retreat held February 4-6, 1994, at Li-Lo-Li. An exciting weekend is planned with Bible lessons and plenty of winter activities. Contact:

Cathie Whitcomb
Camp Li-Lo-Li
8811 Sunfish Run Road
Randolph, NY 14772
(716) 945-2747

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Prospect Bible Chapel (Hartford, CT) will be hosting the Northeast Leadership Conference on Tuesday, March 22, 1994, at 9:30 A.M. All elders, full-time workers, and those

interested in the Lord's work are invited to attend. The speaker, D.V., will be Charles Fizer (IA). Contact:

Don Dunkerton
112 Cranford Avenue
Cranford, NJ 07016
(908) 709-1373

ONTARIO WORKERS' & ELDERS' CONFERENCE

The second annual Ontario Workers' and Elders' Conference will be held May 3-5, 1994. The site for this year's conference will be St. Catharines, Ontario. This year's theme—*Thy Word Have I Hid in Mine Heart*—will focus on the authority of the Word of God and how it relates to the world in which we live. For more details:

Steering Committee
206 King Street E.
Box 26044
Oshawa, ON L1H 8R4

FELLOWSHIP ON PURPOSE

The saints at Burkehaven Chapel, Waynesboro, GA have tried something new in their fellowship and it has turned out to be a source of encouragement to all. They have heard of other larger assemblies in the southeast doing this, but thought it might have some appeal to the Christians in the Burkehaven assembly. They are a small group of believers with Wednesday evening attendance running in the area of 30-40 people. They have several young families with small children, several families with middle school/junior high age young people and a number of older couples.

These believers are faithful in attendance at the midweek meeting, but have found there is little time for fellowship due to the busy schedules that come with life in the 90's.

It was suggested that the chapel provide a simple supper each Wednesday evening, served about 45 minutes before the regularly scheduled meeting. A designated couple makes the arrangements each week. The goal is to provide a light supper at a cost of \$1.00 per person. The menus are announced each month in the bulletin. If families wish to contribute to the cost, they may do so.

Menus have included a do-it-yourself sandwich buffet, spaghetti dinner with tossed salad, pizza, taco salad, hot dogs and fruit salad, baked potato bar, etc.

This has met a need in the lives of many who have previously had to scramble to get supper on the table and then try to get to the meeting on time. It has also provided fellowship which is sorely needed in our assemblies today. Maybe you'd like to try this.

CHECK YOUR LIBRARY

Ronnie Crotts of Greensboro, NC has informed *Uplook* that he would be interested in purchasing used Christian books. If you have any old books you are thinking about getting rid of, please contact:

Ronnie Crotts
(919) 378-1999

THIS IS NO MTV!

Maclean Hunter Cable TV

FRONT LINES

(Channel 10), the local television station in St. Catharines, ON, has offered 3 months of free airtime to Clarence Low. The programs will be aired February 13-April 1994 at 10:30 AM on Sundays with a re-



broadcast on Thursdays at 6:00 PM.

They plan to have interviews, music, and a gospel challenge for each program. In the spring, brother Low plans to conduct his third gospel mission with the assemblies in Andhra Pradesh, India.

WHAT'S NEW IN NEW YORK

Ray and Becky Blais (Rochester, NY) write, "We are off and running into the fall season ministering to the saints in Rochester, NY and beyond. The youth ministry is exciting with 35 meeting at our house for our first time this year. Twenty-six of these traveled with us to reach out to the poor of downtown Philadelphia on November 4-6.

"Also, 85 teens from around the town met at the Northgate Chapel to be encouraged to take a stand in their local schools for their faith. Materials to motivate them were given and a Bible study was initiated in the public school.

"We also have a burden for what appears to be an untapped area of ministry. It appears that from south of Rochester (central NY state) to Pennsylvania, virtually little or no New Testament work is being carried on. 'Pray ye . . . the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest' (Mt. 9:38)."

COMMENDATION

The Christians gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus at the West Hill Gospel Hall (West Hill, ON) have commended Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hanna to return to the work of the Lord in Zambia, Africa.

Since April 1986, they have proven to be a blessing and assistance to the work of the Lord, particularly in Chitokoloki at the mission station where they have made their home. Pray on that the Lord's hand may be upon them as they continue in His service.

RECUPERATING

Please pray for Mobin and Gladys Khan who were hit by a drunk driver on November 19. Mobin was released from the hospital on December 2, and has a cast on his right leg from his toes to his hip. He also suffered injuries to his ribs, cheek bones, and left eye socket. Gladys suffered a broken left wrist and thumb, and has had pain in her chest since the accident. She learned only recently that her toes and knee caps were also broken in the accident. Their return to India has been postponed until their health improves.

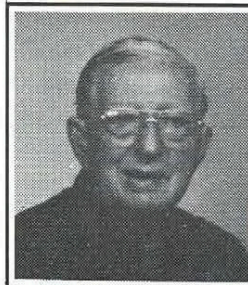
DYING FOR ONE'S FAITH

In the October issue of *Uplook*, we reported the story of Wally Tope. The day after the riots erupt-

ed in Los Angeles, he went into the streets to preach Christ to the looters. Brother Tope passed into the presence of the Lord on November 24, 1993. He had been in a coma in an area convalescent hospital since the attack, and never regained consciousness. A memorial service was held on December 10 at the William Carey University in Pasadena.

PRESENT WITH THE LORD

After a long sickness, the Lord called Carl Ostertag home on September 30, 1993, at age 90.



Carl was saved at the age of 15 in a tent meeting in north St. Louis,

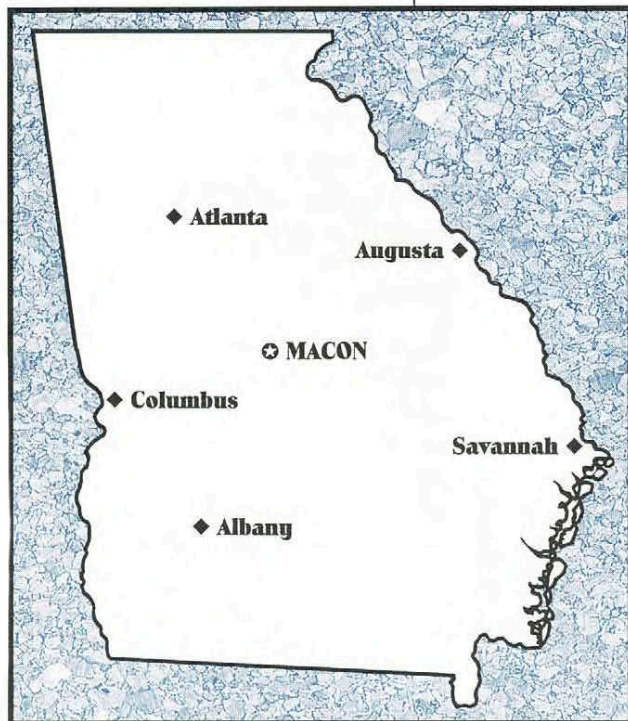
MO. As a timid young man, Carl was concerned about the lost and getting the gospel to them. He was not a public speaker, but used his printing press to sow the Word in the hearts of millions. Working for Faithful Words Publishing Company by day, he was granted permission to print *Palabras Fieles*, a Spanish gospel tract, at night. By 1948, nearly 3,000,000 copies had been sent out. In 1940, he appeared in *Ripley's Believe it or Not*, for printing in Spanish while not being able to read, speak, or write in that language. It has been estimated that in his lifetime he reached 200 million people with the gospel.

The work is being continued by his step-grandson Tim McNeal. The prayers of the Lord's people would be greatly appreciated as he seeks to continue this ministry.

U

MIDDLE GEORGIA

Macon, one of the largest cities in Georgia, has a metropolitan population of almost 300,000. It is the home of Three Oaks Bible Chapel.



Bill and Barb Gustafson, commended to the Lord's work in 1985, make their home in Waynesboro, GA.

On October 16, 1993, the saints at the Three Oaks Bible Chapel in Macon, GA, hosted a Christian Missions in Many Lands conference which was a time of real encouragement and blessing to all who attended. Though a small assembly of 30-40 believers, Three Oaks hosted around 80 saints for the day. Visitors came from Augusta, Atlanta, Waynesboro, Wrens, Albany, and elsewhere.

They provided a lovely buffet-style noon meal which gave ample time for further fellowship.

There was ministry from the Word by Larry Price (FL) and J. B. Nicholson, Jr. (MI). Mitch Geesey was the subject of a missionary interview.

One who drove from a distance said, "I can say that it was worth the effort. I might encourage other small assemblies to contact CMML for such a gathering in their area."

CMML also had their book table, a great source of materials at excellent prices. Many wish to extend a hearty "thank you" to both Three Oaks Bible Chapel and CMML for the time and effort to make the day one in which the name of the Lord was honored in middle Georgia.

Similar regional conferences have

been held by local assemblies and CMML throughout the country for years. If you are interested in hosting a regional conference, you can contact:

CMML, Inc.
P.O. Box 13
Spring Lake, NJ 07762-0013

For some years the ladies at Three Oaks Bible Chapel in Macon, GA have had a combination Bible study and handcraft meeting once a week during the school year. This year, there has been an increase in attendance which has really encouraged the saints.

The meeting begins at 9:15 AM, giving them time to arrive and place their children either in the nursery, or for preschool children, "Papa Jim's Bible Club," a time of games, songs, and a Bible lesson by Jim Leaptrot. The study begins at 9:45 AM with one of the ladies from the chapel leading the discussion on the book of Matthew. After the study, at 10:15 AM, the handcraft begins.

The attendance by women from the community is what has encouraged the ladies of the assembly. Approximately two-thirds of the audience are neighbors and friends from outside the chapel family. Perhaps this is something that your assembly may be interested in? If you would like more information, feel free to contact:

Linda Leaptrot
Three Oaks Bible Chapel
3350 Avondale Mill Road
Macon, GA 31206

WHAT'S GOING ON?

A LEGGE UP

Jim Legge reports from Serowe, Botswana, how the Lord has blessed His Word in that country.



"We are encouraged to push on in our little magazine and I am trying to encourage our African brethren to contribute, some of which are doing very well.

"A woman teacher read some of the tracts that some children had taken home from Sunday School and told me, 'I want what you folks have.' Arrangements have been made to speak further with her about the Saviour.

"We have two fine, young Christian men, who were at secondary school here in Serowe. They had three other friends who were not saved. They have all left school and the Lord has graciously saved each one of them, the last one saved just last week.

"We continue to press ahead in the translation work—some are at the printers, others are being typeset and some we are still working on. We had a group of believers up at our home recently, who would like to be baptized." Please pray as the Word is sown in these hearts, that it may reap precious fruit for eternity.

BUDDHIST OPPRESSION

In Sri Lanka, radical Buddhists—69% of the 17 million in Sri Lanka—are pressuring the government to ban conversions. Newspapers have printed several articles that could incite violence against the Christian minority (8%). According to a reliable source, "The upside of this is that we are getting free publicity and people are getting converted." —*Pulse*

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Here is a list of schools that may be in need of teachers. They are:

Rift Valley Academy
Post Office Kijabe
Kenya, East Africa
Contact: Roy Entwistle

Missionary School
Ika, Nigeria
Kogi State, Nigeria
Contact: Spencer & Phyllis Dibble
Box 85
Ankpa, P. O.

Sakeji School
Box 20
Ikelenge Post Office
via Kitwe, Zambia
Contact: Dennis Brubacher

Christian Academy
1-13-34 Kanahodo, Asao Ku
Kawasaki, Japan
Contact: Peter Clift

Clarence High School
Bangalore 560 005
Contact: Emma Horton
7 John Armstrong Road
South India, Bangalore 560 005

Faith Academy
P.O. Box 2017
1260 Makati, Metro Manila
Philippines
Contact: Peter Ford

Murree Christian School
Hall Road
Murree 47150, Pakistan
Contact: Principal

Martyn International Academy
Istanbul, Turkey
Contact: Tom Aiken
3925 Chevron Drive
Highland, MI 48356

Emmanuel High School
St. Vincent, West Indies
Contact: Grace Eustace
P.O. Box 98
St. Vincent, West Indies

Puerto Plata School
Dominican Republic
Contact for information only:
Marian Iverson
Park of the Palms
720-C Hebron Avenue
Keystone Heights, FL 32656

Black Forest Academy
Postfach 1109
7842 Kandern 1, West Germany
Contact: Principal

Vienna Christian School
Vienna, Austria
Contact: Floyd Schneider
Heitzingerstr 76
3034 Maria Anzbach, Austria

Missionary School
Sucre, Bolivia
Contact: Phil and Janice Train
Casilla 215
Sucre, Bolivia

Missionary School
Camiri, Bolivia
Contact: Mark and Carol Mattix
Casilla 89
Camiri, Bolivia

School
c/o Brian and Sheran Killins
Apartado Aereo 50049
Bogota 2, D. E. Columbia
Contact: Brian Killins

Alliance Academy
Casilla 17-11-06186
Quito, Ecuador
Contact: Principal

Technical School
Pucallpa, Peru
Contact: John Hocking
Apartado 25, Pucallpa, Peru

GROWING IN THE 90'S

John Bardsley, a research associate of Patrick Johnstone (*Operation World*) with WEC International in England, reports the following religious growth trends:

Share of the world's population

Group	1960	1990
Roman Catholics	18%	16%
Orthodox	4.4%	3.8%
Protestants	7.9%	9.2%
Evangelicals	2.7%	5.7%
Muslims	15%	19.5%

"SOUTHERN" CAMPS

Although it is winter for the northern hemisphere, in the southern hemisphere it is now summer. Special prayer is requested for the summer camps and Bible studies going on during the next few months.

In Hernandarius, Paraguay, there is a Bible school being held at *Campamento Maranatha* during the month of December. Also, there will be Bible camps for boys and

girls during January 1994.

As we have prayed for the camps and conferences in our hemisphere, and have seen God work in the hearts of our young people, let us not forget those who are hearing the gospel at summer camps held below the equator.

EGYPTIAN HARVEST

Please pray for Miss Helen Voorhoeve in Tema, a city in Upper Egypt. She has seen fruit for her labor with the school children and many mothers who have come regularly for Bible studies. Approximately 1,000 children and 700 mothers are reached with the gospel.

ISLAMIC PERSECUTION

The military and Islamic regime of Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan Al-Bashir has made it clear it wants Sudan to become an Islamic state at the expense of the life and religious rights of the non-Muslim minorities.

Christian leaders, especially pastors and evangelists, are clear targets of torture and abuse. The MEC (Middle Eastern Concern) report gives graphic examples: "These include inverted crucifixion (suspension by the feet with arms outstretched—sometimes over fire); barefoot incarceration in a cell, the floor of which is carpeted with nails and freezing ice. These may be accompanied by beatings." The torture ceases as soon as the person professes conversion to Islam.

A BREAK IN VISITATION

Willi and Bea Gyger have been serving the Lord in French Guiana, South America. Recently their visitation efforts have been hampered due to Bea falling down the steps of



their home while cleaning. X-rays revealed that her left foot was broken, and doctors have placed her in a cast up to her knee. Hopefully, the cast will come off December 20th, and they plan to travel to the States on December 23rd. The prayers of the Lord's people would be appreciated.

KIDNAPPED!

"Five heavily armed men" kidnapped linguistic researcher Charles Walton, 60, from his home in Simbahan, Sulu Province, the Philippines, on November 14, according to the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The Bible translation agency says it has had no contact with the unknown abductors.

Meanwhile, New Tribes Mission reports that the kidnappers of its three missionaries to Panama have resumed radio contact with the mission.

Continue to pray that the negotiators will have wisdom in how to deal with the captors, and that a release will occur soon.



AMONG US

The Incarnation is not mere theology; it is the story of God drawing near to men. It illicitly the most practical response. J. Wilbur Chapman put it this way: "Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it."

*I know not how that Bethlehem's Babe
Could in the Godhead be;
I only know the Manger Child
Has brought God's life to me.*

*I know not how that Calvary's cross
A world from sin could free:
I only know its matchless love
Has brought God's love to me.*

—Harry Webb Farrington

"Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass."
(Matthew 21:5)

"The Christian faith is firmly rooted in the Incarnation, in the conviction that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." To believe in Christ is to believe that God has come to earth to dwell with men... The Lord Jesus is more than a religious genius or a holy man or a spiritual pioneer. To believe in Christ is to believe that the living God has come.
—Earle W. Crawford

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."
(Micah 5:2)

*The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymn for Thee?
My soul's a shepherd, too; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts and words and deeds:
The pasture is Thy Word;
The streams Thy grace
Enriching all the place.* —George Herbert

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
(Isaiah 9:6)

God be thanked for that good and perfect gift, the gift unspeakable: His life, His love, His very self in Christ Jesus.

—M. D. Babcock

*Not only on Judean hills,
Where He in distant ages trod,
Are seen the footprints of the Christ,
The gentle Messenger of God;
For in the midst He walks today,
In busy marts, in quiet ways,
And speaks to every soul that hears
And fills each waiting heart with praise.*

*Not only by blue Galilee
Did He the leper cleanse, the dead
Raise unto life, and on all hearts
That mourned His matchless glory shed;
Today He speaks, in homes of men,
To heal each spirit sick with sin,
And at the door of every life
He stands and seeks to enter in.*

—Thomas Curtis Clark

Robert Stevenson, grandfather of the well-known writer by the same name, was renowned in his own right as a brilliant engineer, famous for constructing 23 lighthouses and inventing the high intensity flashing light for warning ships. Born in 1772, a great celebration was held in his honor one hundred years later in the city of Newcastle. In the procession that marched through the streets was a group of laborers from the village outside Glasgow where Stevenson was born. They had come to do him honor and carried a small banner with the hand-lettered message: "He was one of us."

The joy of brightening others' lives and supplanting empty hearts with gifts should not come but once a year!

BETHABARA: JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT

FOLLOWING THE PROLOGUE of John's Gospel comes the first main division from 1:19 to the end of chapter 12. This narrates the public testimony of Christ by word and work. The narrative begins by resuming the witness of John the Baptist at Bethabara where he was baptizing.

John had by this time drawn the attention of the Sanhedrin. He had proclaimed the approach of a new era (Mt. 3:2). Hence the sending of the priests and Levites to inquire whether he himself was the Messiah. These came from the Pharisees. The Sadducees were not so interested; they were more submissive to the Roman power. For John it was a time of crisis. Hence his emphatic declaration that he was neither the Messiah nor Elijah nor "that prophet" (Deut. 18:15) but "the voice of one crying in the wilderness (an intimation of the spiritual state of the nation), Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet" (v. 23).

Then came the question as to the reason for his baptizing. It had the appearance of treating Jews as if they were mere proselytes, and of implying that they were defiled and needed cleansing. The answer he gives reveals that to him the Lord Jesus is more than all his credentials. He has no time to argue about himself; his answer is to point them to Christ. "I baptize with water; in the midst of you standeth One whom ye know not, even He that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe (i.e., the thong of whose sandal) I am not worthy to unloose" (vv. 26-27), one of the most menial acts of slaves.

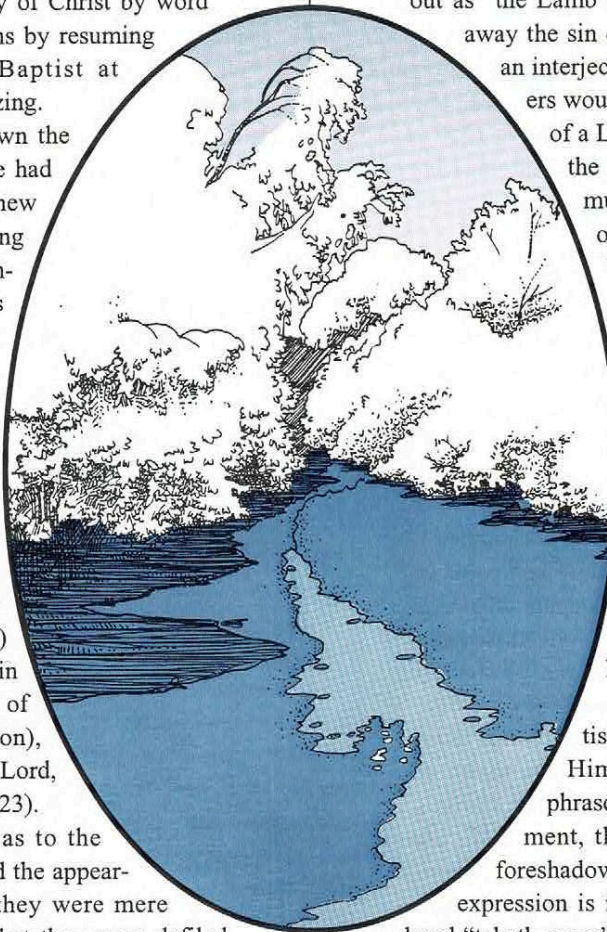
THE LAMB OF GOD

Verse 29 begins the Baptist's testimony to the peo-

ple, by reason of Christ's coming on the scene in Person on the following day. He who has been described as the Word, the Creator, the Son of God, is pointed out as "the Lamb of God," the One "who taketh away the sin of the world." The "Behold" is an interjection, not a command. His hearers would understand what the mention of a Lamb signified, and might recall the language of Isaiah 53. But they must know that He is the Lamb of God, and that as such, that is by the atoning efficacy of His sacrifice, He takes away, not merely the sin of Israel ("my people," Isa. 53:8), but the sin of the world. Christ will restore the world's broken relation with God. In this matter it has been necessary for God to take the fact of sin into consideration, but Christ's sacrifice will be the foundation of the renewed relation.

It was given to John the Baptist for the first time to designate Him as "the Lamb of God." The phrase is not found in the Old Testament, though typical intimations and foreshadowings abound there. The nearest expression is in Genesis 22:8. The verb rendered "taketh away" denotes either to lift and bear, or to take away; here both senses may be combined, for the word points to Christ's expiatory sacrifice and its effects. This is here said of "the sin of the world"; not sins, but that which has existed from the Fall, and in regard to which God has had judicial dealings with the world.

John recalls his testimony of the previous day (v. 15) and the reason why he baptized with water (v. 31). It was that Christ was to be manifested to Israel. But there was more than this. That which would identify to the Baptist the Person in a twofold way was the descent



of the Holy Spirit upon Him.

THE SON OF GOD

This was the crowning point of his witness, namely, that the Lamb of God is the Son of God: "He (the Father) that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (1:33-34). The two facts regarding Him were that He was the One who would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and that He was none other than the Son of God.

The three Persons in the Godhead combine in making John the Baptist the instrument of this witness. The Father sent him as His messenger (1:6); the Holy Spirit directed him by His supernatural demonstration; Christ Himself was the center and object of the testimony, as to His deity as the Son of God (v. 34), His humanity, "a Man which is become before me" (v. 30), His atoning death as the Lamb of God (v. 29), His exaltation as "the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit" (v. 33).

THE THIRD DAY

Now comes the third day (v. 35). On the first Christ was proclaimed; on the second He was pointed out; on the third He was followed by disciples. John still proclaimed Him as the Lamb. "He looked (fastened his gaze) upon Jesus as He walked (not now coming to him) and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God" (v. 36). Nothing is added now. That was a sufficient intimation to the two who had been his disciples that a greater than he must now become their Master. Christ's first disciples were won by the testimony to His atoning sacrifice. He is mentioned as the Lamb elsewhere only in 1 Peter 1:19 and in the Apocalypse. There, however, the word is always *arnion* (not *amnos* as here), a diminutive term, but the diminutive idea is not to be pressed; it lost its diminutive significance. The difference between *amnos* and *arnion* lies in this, the *amnos* points to the fact, the nature and character of His sacrifice; *arnion* presents Him, on the ground indeed of His sacrifice, but in His acquired majesty, dignity, honor, authority and power.

THE CHOOSING OF DISCIPLES

The two disciples who "followed Jesus" were Andrew and, no doubt, John (the writer). From the con-

versation that ensued (vv. 38-39) two things arise. First, just as the disciples' knowledge of Christ only gradually increased (they knew Him just as the Messiah, v. 41), so he who receives Christ by faith receives Him in the fullness of His Person, but the perception of His excellencies, His power and glory is gradual. Secondly, Christ's knowledge of them and His direction of their lives give intimation of His authority and Headship. "And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?" He did not ask "Whom seek ye?" That they were seeking Him was evident. He asked them what they sought in Him. His invitation and their acceptance, resulting in their abiding with Him for that day, must have meant a wonderful unfolding by Him of the truth relating to Him.

That third day produces three, if not four, disciples, Andrew, John, Peter, and perhaps James. On the fourth day a new circumstance arises; for the Lord Himself goes to seek a disciple. Hitherto they had come or had been brought to Him. Now "He was minded (or as the word *thelo* commonly means, He willed) to go forth into Galilee." He finds Philip, who was of the same city as Andrew and Peter and bids him follow Him. Philip finds Nathanael (a name meaning gift of God) and gives a special testimony to Christ, firstly, as the Subject of the Law and the prophets, secondly as to His coming from Nazareth, thirdly as to the belief about His being the son of Joseph.

NATHANAEL'S CONFESSION

To say the least, Galileans were the objects of contempt owing to their lack of culture, their rude dialect and their association with Gentiles. Hence Nathanael's surprised question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip does not stop to argue but bids him come and see.

At the interview, the Lord immediately reveals His divine powers of knowledge, which at once elicits the confession, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art King of Israel." The absence of the definite article before "King," while grammatically serving to stress His Kingship, perhaps indicates Nathanael's hope of an earthly King. But the promise that he and other believers would see the "Heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," points to the coming day when Christ will come in His glory and manifest Himself as the King of Israel in a far higher sphere than was in the mind of Nathanael.

BETHESDA: SEEN OF ANGELS

IF THE MAN AT THE POOL of Bethesda learned anything (John 5), it was certainly the lesson of his utter helplessness. For others at that pool there had been healing on the principle so popular with men, that God helps those who help themselves. For in mercy an angel stirred the water, and man had to do the rest—get into the pool, and get there first.¹ However, nothing had availed for this paralytic. He could never reach the pool. In the same way, every human being is helpless when it comes to the question of saving himself, a fact which this story forcefully illustrates.

This man had been afflicted for thirty-eight years, the very length of time that the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness to learn the lesson of their sin and unbelief (Deut. 2:14). That pool around which the multitude of impotent folks lay is a symbol of the law given to Israel. The purpose of the law was to prove not only man's sin, but—what is even more important—his helplessness.

The law of God reflects man's helplessness, even as did the waters of the pool the condition of those lying around it. All of them knew they

were afflicted, for it was their very condition that had drawn them to the pool, but it probably took years for this man to fully learn his absolute inability to help himself. Anyone you meet knows underneath that he or she is a sinner, but to acknowledge that he is unable to do one thing about his sinful condition is something else. Man will not admit that he is "without strength" (Rom. 5:6). Every sinner talks, or thinks, of doing something for his own salvation, doing the best he can.

This man at the pool of Bethesda learned by bitter experience that he could do nothing. Neither can the sinner do one thing to save himself. Salvation is "by grace, ...through faith...not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

When Jesus came on the scene, there was no longer any need of waiting. The pool that had for so many years reflected this man's helplessness was now about to reflect the mighty power of the Son of God. When asked if he wanted to be made whole, the man talked about his own efforts or the lack of help from others. He speaks of having "no man." He needs no man when the Lord Jesus appears on the scene. He is instantly healed at Christ's word. So sinners are saved through faith in the Word of God.

It seems to me that this paralytic might also preach a message to Christians who are waiting for the moving of the water. There is much impotence among us; there should not be, for the Lord Jesus Christ has come, to furnish the power we need for Christian life and service.

There is no need of waiting. The disciples were once told to wait at



GOD HELPS THE HELPLESS

Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. That power, the Holy Spirit, has come, and there is no excuse for any Christian to be without it. The New Testament speaks often of power available to the believer. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). We are urged to be strong in the Lord.

When Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be made whole, the man spoke of having no man to carry him into the pool. Christians, too, are often looking to man to help them. We do not need man; we have God. It is amazing how much we wait upon man, whether in our private Christian life or in our church life.

Let me ask each Christian, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Then, "Rise." God never commands without enabling. The believer is bidden to rise from among the dead (Eph. 5:14). A sleeping Christian looks very much like a dead sinner. He is called on to rise from among sinners and to stand up for the Lord.

"Take up thy bed." Once we were a burden; now we not only carry our own burdens, but should carry those of others, too. When this man carried his bed, he drew the attention of the Pharisees. "Pharisees" are still excited when they see a Christian live to the glory of Christ, manifesting power over his former sins and failures.

Jesus also told him to walk. All was done instantly. Likewise, a Christian should be diligent, active, earnest. The believer's walk is evidence of the reality of our being "made whole."

What caused this paralytic's condition? Verse 14 tells us it was sin. "Sin no more"—that is the exhortation to the Christian. If we are to live Christlike lives, it is necessary to walk in the light of God's Word. Let us show men that we are truly made whole, even as the apostle prayed for the Thessalonians that they might be sanctified wholly, and that their whole spirit, soul, and body might be preserved blameless until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹The latter clause of the verse, "waiting for the moving of the water," and the whole of verse 4, is omitted by many mss., including the Sinaitic and the Vatican. It is found in the Alexandrian ms. and in the Latin and early Syrian versions. Tertullian refers to it. This points to a wide acceptance from the second century downwards.

Joy & Peace in Believing

*Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in His wings:
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining
To cheer it after rain.*

*In holy contemplation,
We sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new:
Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say,
E'en let th' unknown tomorrow
Bring with it what it may.*

*It can bring with it nothing
But He will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing
Will clothe His people too:
Beneath the spreading heavens,
No creature but is fed;
And He who feeds the ravens
Will give His children bread.*

*Though vine, nor fig tree neither,
Their wonted fruit should bear,
Though all the fields should wither,
Nor flocks, nor herds, be there:
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice;
For while in Him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice.*

—William Cowper

BETHSAIDA: PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES

The first memory of Gennesaret is appropriately connected with a fishing-scene. It must have been now about the end of November or beginning of December, when the sultry heat of summer had disappeared; when the trees were either bared of leaves or seared with autumnal tints.

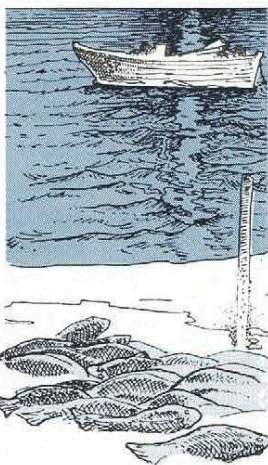
Our blessed Lord had recently returned to His native Galilee after a summer absence in Judea, and several eventful months were now to be spent on the shores of the lake before the next passover, in March or April, summoned Him again to the capital. As He was now walking along the sand that fringed the beach, we may suppose it to have been at that morning hour when nature was waking up again to life and energy. The wonted traffic had been resumed in the little seaports of Bethsaida and Capernaum, and the fishermen, who had been out all night, were returning with their catch.

Four of these seafarers, Andrew, Peter, John, and James had reached the shore. They had been unsuccessful in their labors and were in the act of washing their nets before repairing to their hamlets for refreshment and rest. But One had been noting their unrecompensed toil. There was a deep reason for the dispiriting results of their midnight industry which they did not know at the time.

Simon is accosted by a voice whose music he was often in the future to hear. His Lord "as one that serveth" begged from the lowly fisherman the accommodation of his boat, that He might make it a platform from which to address His Galilean audience.

We may imagine the scene. The lake, so often fretted with storms, exposed to sudden gusts sweeping down the ravines, was now hushed into a calm. Tree and rock, fishing-hamlet and villa, were mirrored in its quiet waters. Hushed, too, was the dense multitude that crowded to the shore. The great object of their eager curiosity—Jesus of Nazareth—sat in meek majesty in Peter's fishing-boat, about to speak the words of life!

With grace poured into His lips, this "Chiefest



among ten thousand" proceeds to unfold the great revelation for which, during four thousand years, the world had waited. It was a momentous day in history. It was the inauguration of the first noble band of missionaries.

Not many months before the transaction here recorded, these fishermen from Bethsaida had met Him on the banks of the Jordan, probably after the celebration of the Passover, when, on returning to their native lake, they paused to listen to the Baptist's stirring words. The Messiah, of whom he bare witness, was then pointed out to them. They hailed Jesus as their Lord and Master, and cast in their lot with Him as disciples. Whether they met during the brief intervening period we cannot tell. But we may surely well believe that oftentimes would these four fisher-

men beguile their lone midnight hours on the lake by discoursing about Him whom His great forerunner had so recently pointed out to them as "the Lamb of God."

It must have been, at all events, now with a joyful surprise that His longed-for voice was heard. How would the lost labor of that midnight be forgotten and the thought of fatigue banished when they beheld Him standing on the shore ready to unfold to them and to the multitude the mysteries of His kingdom!

Let us pause at this point in the sacred story, and gather a few practical lessons.

1. *Observe here how God honors industry.*

These fishermen, though enrolled among the disciples of Jesus, did not on that account forsake their honest callings, as if discipleship and daily work were incongruous. No; with all the hallowed recollections of that day at Bethabara, no sooner did they reach Bethsaida than they were out night after night on the sea, patiently waiting subsequent communications of their Lord's will. And now, when He meets them again, how are they engaged? Still at their work—their hands ministering to their necessities—knee-deep in the water, in the shadow of their fishing boats, "washing their nets."

What does all this tell us but that Christ honors and consecrates daily industry. He would here, as else-

THE FISHERMEN

where, proclaim that the world's dullest tasks and most drudging toil can be hallowed with the newborn spiritual element; and that, while men may be "not slothful in business," it is a higher thing to also be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

2. Jesus gradually prepares His people for service.

As in mental training, so in spiritual, there is an education—a gradual progressive discipline. They are brought to their exalted attainments in grace—the consecrated heights of His kingdom—not by some sudden or miraculous elevation, but step by step.

The fishermen of Bethsaida may have received the earliest seed of the kingdom from the teachings of the Baptist. This had been still further nurtured by a solemn personal interview with their Lord. Months had elapsed to allow all these to take root. They had been left to themselves during this intervening period to a secret work of faith and prayer. And now, when love has been deepened, and faith strengthened, He demands loftier services; imposes heavier responsibilities. The nets and boats of Galilee are to be left for the mightiest embassy ever entrusted to human hands.

There are exceptions to this great rule. A persecutor may be struck down, and in a moment transformed into an apostle. A felon may be arrested by grace amid the agonies of crucifixion, and in the twinkling of an eye be translated from a criminal's death to a believer's crown. But God's processes in the spiritual economy are, generally speaking, gradual and progressive. The temple rises stone by stone.

3. In our seasons of trial we should never despair.

Peter had been toiling all night and nothing had been caught. But his Lord gives the word: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." All night (the best time for catching) they had labored in vain. But, addressing Jesus as "Master" and expressing his concerns, he adds, "Nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down the net." The result was the enclosure of such "a multitude of fishes that the net brake."

When was the soul ever disappointed which followed the Lord fully? How often, in our night seasons of despondency and trial, are we prone in our short-sighted folly to exclaim, "All these things are against me"? How often do we feel as if all efforts in Christian attainment were worse than hopeless? The heavens have become as brass, and the earth as iron, our prayers are unavailing, our sun is waning amid clouds. The net of faith is let down amid the promises of God; but un-

able to appropriate them, we are ready to say in this long night of spiritual toil, "Surely my Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me."

No! Pray on, labor on, trust on! "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Resolve with Peter, "Nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down my net into this unfathomable sea." Have we not His own recorded promise? "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

Let us seek to value more and more that precious Word. The multitudes on Gennesaret's shore, and the disciple in the boat, who with fond eagerness listened, and with joyful haste obeyed, read to us solemn lessons. Of the one it is said, "They pressed on Him to hear the word of God." Of the other we read that, triumphing over carnal doubts and reasonings, he exclaimed, "Nevertheless, at Thy word."

Oh, what a blessed formula for us! This path of mine is dark, mysterious, perplexing. Nevertheless, at Thy word I will go forward. This trial of mine is cutting; it is hard to breathe through a broken heart, "Thy will be done." But, nevertheless, at Thy word I will say, "Even so, Father!" This besetting habit or infirmity or sin of mine, is difficult to crucify. Nevertheless, at Thy word, I will lay aside every weight. This idol I will utterly abolish. "Nevertheless, at Thy word, I will count all but loss for the excellency of His knowledge."

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly! Let it be the man of your counsel, the ultimate court of appeal in every perplexity. If your own proud reason or self-will or corrupted nature should dictate an opposing line of procedure, let this lofty determination settle and silence all doubt: "Nevertheless, at Thy word."

Sit as a meek disciple under this infallible Teacher. Silence the temptations of the great Adversary as your Lord silenced them before you, by the rebuke, "It is written." And when the Lord's Day comes round, go eagerly thirsting for the Word of eternal life, not the words of frail mortals, worms of the dust. Despising all the excellency of man's wisdom, seek only to have declared unto you the whole counsel of God. Be earnest in prayer that He may send forth His light and His truth to lead you and guide you. Then shall a Savior God be invisibly present by His Spirit, to bless and lighten, to gladden and refresh your souls, and the Beatitude will be made good in your experience: "Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound. They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance."

BETHANY: BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD

WHEN WE STUDY and compare the four Gospels, we find John altogether different. It is interesting that while we learn much from what is similar, we learn most from what is different. It is well known that John as he writes, omits several events, which receive special attention by his three fellow evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke. John makes no mention of the Temptation, the Transfiguration, the two on the Emmaus Road and several other important events. No reference to the Lord's supper either is found in his pages. He does on the other hand devote more space to the upper room ministry than the other synoptists, and writes at greater length than all of them together about the supper at which the Lord's Supper was first instituted, this makes the omission significant.

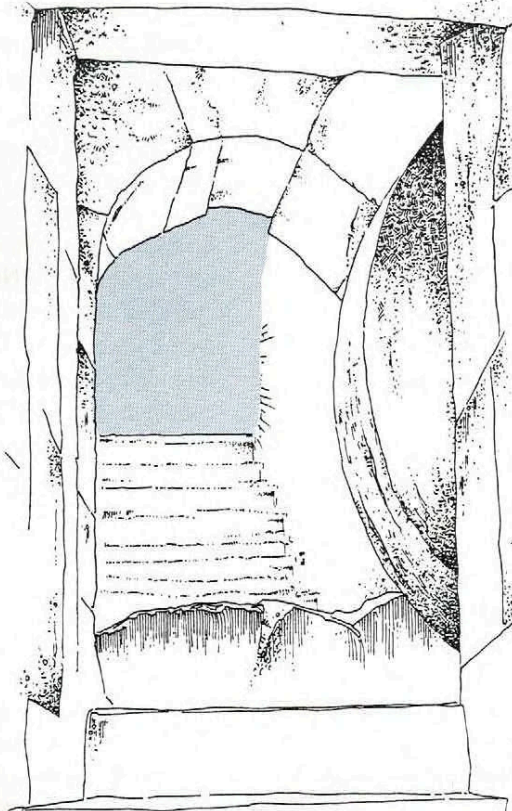
It cannot be that he wishes to detract from the importance of the Lord's Supper, an event at which he was present on that first memorable night, we can safely say that about John. When he wrote the gospel, the ordinance was already well established in the local churches. It was normal for it to be observed on the first day of the week.

There is no doubt that John was in full accord with what the Lord Jesus taught when He took the bread and the cup saying, "This do in remembrance of Me." All true ministry is timely, the prophets spoke to a present local need, but their message had a far-reaching effect. The early public ministry of the Lord Jesus was to meet needs which were present at the time when He spoke, but the Spirit of God is still using that word to us today. Likewise, each book and epistle of the N.T. was written to meet a particular existing need, it was no dif-

ferent with the gospel of John.

He connects incidents with small recurring links like a word or a phrase. In this way he connects the supper of chapter 12 with the supper of chapter 13 by a reference in each to the last Passover. He says that the one at Bethany was six days before it, while the other was at Jerusalem on the night before it. The student of John will enjoy detail like this from the pen of so contemplative an author.

John tells us that because Jesus was at Bethany, there they made Him a supper. It was a home He often visited, so the place is significant and the time has special meaning. Bethany is mentioned 11 times, only two of these refer to the resurrection of Lazarus, which John shows, was just prior to the upper room ministry where the shadow of Calvary was beginning to be felt.



It was from Bethany the triumphal entry into Jerusalem of the Messiah was made on that long foretold date, and in the predicted manner. In this home He found rest that evening after coming from the inhospitable capital. It was from there He went to cleanse the temple for the second time, it was to there He returned, the rejected King. There He was honored by the few who accepted His Messiahship, believed in His deity and appreciated His personal worth. The warm fellowship, the heavenly Stranger knew on earth, most often seems to have been found with the loving hearts in that home at Bethany. The impressive events of the week prior to the Cross brought a strange hush of love and sorrow as the shadow of Calvary was cast over them all.

The record of this supper is full of what the disci-

THE SUPPER AT BETHANY

ples did, Martha was there and for her it was again an opportunity to serve the Lord Jesus and His own. Previously Martha had been taken up with much serving, but now there is no rebuke from the Lord, perhaps on account of her spiritual growth, maturity attained in the school of experience, having spent some time in His presence. All who remember Him, in the same manner need to learn the same lesson Martha did. Present-day activity is often too superficial, and life often much too fast to be as deep as necessary if any real worship is to be found when we "make Him a supper." We need to learn what John is teaching here, the spirit of activity that must always be doing something at the supper in order to keep things going should be restrained. More place then would be given to that ministry of deep devotion by means of suitable expression. The leading of the Spirit at the supper would be more obvious, and Spirit-led brethren would have more liberty to lead the assembly in suitable expressions of acceptable worship.

We are told that Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him, enjoying the new life that the Lord had given him, and new liberty from the hand of the disciples at the command of the Lord. His enjoyment of resurrection life and his freedom from all the grave-clothes of this dead world fitly illustrates a desirable condition for us when we sit at the table with Him. Activity did not mark him, but heart occupation, passive enjoyment and fellowship with his heavenly visitor was his to enjoy. The wording that John uses seems to point to the fact that the man Lazarus was silent, and that the women Martha and Mary were active. In scripture thought, masculine characters usually suggest what Bible students call the objective, that is the work of Christ for us. While feminine characters suggest the subjective, that is the work of Christ in us. The supper is the place for the prominence of the subjective, the work of God in us. Then, what the Spirit has done in us will find greater expression, than reiteration of the facts, as to what Christ has already done for us.

How many worship meetings have been spoiled by undue exposition of doctrinal facts with which we are all familiar. Better it would be, surely, that more complete teaching be given elsewhere, at another time, then the Lord would have His place, and the enjoyment of life and liberty which is ours in Christ might result. This would contribute much more to an attitude of worship by all at the supper than the ministering of doctrine at the time. When we worship, like Mary we

come to give back to Him, not so much to minister to one another. What value there would be if we had that Lazarus-like heart occupation, too deep for words, what a depth of worship would result.

Mary, who up to this point had been sitting at His feet, hearing His word, enjoying His presence, found this occasion an opportunity, to express in her own way, her admiration of the one whose worth she had been learning. The love of her heart had guided her, so that, without any special preparation for the supper itself, her affectionate heart had treasured up ointment which is described as both genuine and costly. The supper and the presence of the Lord Jesus became the opportunity she had waited for, then as she poured out the fragrant ointment, in the truest sense, she worshipped, even though the word does not appear.

When we come to remember Him and these spiritual elements are present, the place in which we meet would also be filled with the fragrance of worship. Order and harmony would be evident, and all formality gone. Our celebrations of the supper would then make a Bethany for Him today in a world that is still as inhospitable to Him as was Jerusalem of old.

We must also note that while this noble act was being lavished on the Lord, an unworthy one was present at the same time. There is even in this, definite instruction for us. There was one in the company who would have given to the service of man that which was intended for the Lord. The suggestion was soundly condemned, in contrast to the outpouring being commended. It was not every day that this expression of devotion and worship was possible, because it was not often enough that the Lord Jesus was with them in this way. Every hour is full of opportunities for doing good to men who are present with us, both physically and spiritually. This occasion was unique and if missed might not be recalled.

Let us learn from this, to render to men the things that are men's in every normal hour, and the things that are the Lord's in the hour of remembrance. The service of men is a poor exchange for the worship of Christ, and the events that followed proved that it was by no means as genuine as it was professed to be. If we put man first we are not likely to give the Lord His place at all, and even less likely to be of service to man either. When we in all sincerity put Him first, then it will help us to be to our fellowman what He desires us to be, and so serve them best.

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BETHPHAGE: RECEIVED IN GLORY

THE REINS OF LIFE are never rightly held until Jesus has been glorified. When the Spirit of God has entered in His fullness and power, the problem of guidance will at once be raised; this is seen and solved in the incident of the colt which our Lord found and claimed. The facts are clear and simple, but they could not be understood until Jesus was glorified (Jn. 12:12-16).

In the narratives of the earlier Gospels, two disciples are sent to find and fetch the colt; the evangelists record the conversation which took place between the messengers and the owners, and much else as they acquired this conveyance at the town of Bethphage. John bypasses all these details, simply stating that Jesus found the colt Himself and mounted it.

Throughout the Old Testament, the ass is used to represent the natural, self-willed man, "void of understanding...born as a wild ass's colt...and scorning the control of a driver" (Job 11:12; 39:5-8). It is a striking rebuke of human pride and stubbornness that, under the law of Moses, the foal of an ass and the firstborn son of a Hebrew family stood side by side at the altar of sacrifice, and had to be redeemed at the same price. Unless the blood of the lamb was shed as a token of their redemption, the neck of the colt must be broken, and the life of the firstborn forfeited (Ex. 13:13).

Here then is the picture as drawn by John. The Lord has need of the colt and claims it for His service. If the colt could speak, as a dumb ass once did, it would say, "Lord, I am ready to yield myself to Thee, but I have never left my mother's side, nor have I been broken in. I have no strength to sustain Thy weight and I do not

know the road by which I must travel." Our Lord would reply, "I have all the strength you need for every burden; moreover, I am the Way, and if my hand rests upon the reins, every yard of the dusty road will become bright and clear."

At the time, the disciples merely saw the colt and the crossroads, and had no inkling of any deeper meaning. It was not until Jesus had been glorified and they

themselves had received the gift of the Spirit, that they remembered that Jacob and Zechariah had spoken of these things and, with that remembrance, every detail of the narrative shone with heavenly light.

On his deathbed, the patriarch Jacob, in vision, had seen the Messiah, Shiloh the rest-giver, binding his foal unto the vine and his ass's colt unto the choice vine (Gen. 49:11). The prophet Zechariah had cried, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9). The reception and fullness of the Spirit had altered their whole mental outlook, and as they thought upon

the scene at "the place where two ways met," they recalled the Scriptures, saw their meaning and realized the glorious possibilities of a life surrendered to God.

In the Lord Jesus, they recognized the pattern of absolute authority, resting in the hands of Him who said, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." In the colt they saw stubborn self-will in the presence of Him whose service is perfect freedom. Thus, the enthroned Lord claims the service of those who have received the gift of the Spirit.



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JOHN BUNYAN

BEHOLD, WE COUNT THEM happy which endure. John Bunyan (1628-1688) the Puritan preacher from Bedford, England, was one of these happy men. He grew up in poverty, his father being a tinker (mender of utensils). He says, "Notwithstanding the meanness and inconsiderableness of my parents, it pleased God to put it into their hearts to put me to school, to learn both to read and write; the which I also attained, according to the rate of other poor men's children; though, to my shame I confess, I did soon lose that I had learned, even almost utterly, and that long before the Lord did work His gracious work of conversion upon my soul."

He served as a soldier from 1644-1646 in the civil war. Those were perilous times; John was almost killed twice. "Through mercy I was delivered when once in marching I fell into an arm of the sea; and once on my return from a march into the West I found one that had taken my place had been slain by the enemy." Another soldier asked that he go as a replacement for Bunyan; that man was shot in the head while on sentry duty.

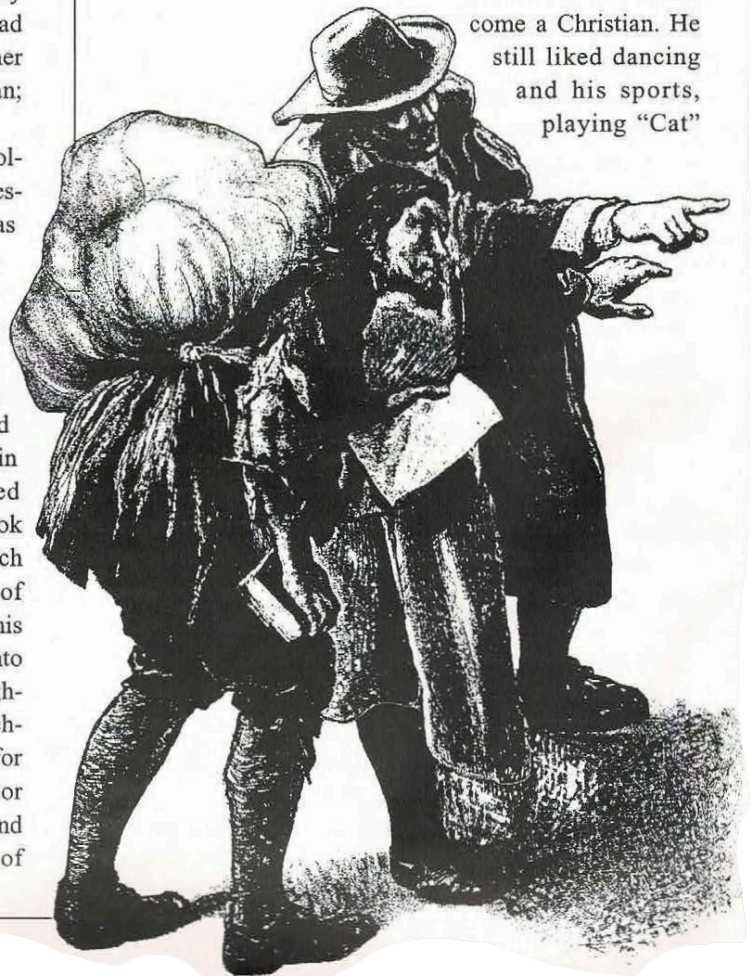
On leaving the army, he returned to Elstow to follow his father's trade as a tinker. By his own confession, he was a godless, profane, young man. He was not a drunkard, but his speech was so foul that people wondered if he ate his food with the same mouth.

John's first wife was from Leicester. J. J. Ellis tells us that her father was a preacher in the north country, and suffered under Archbishop Laud. Laud was vexed because he would not put up altar rails in his church, or wear vestments that he considered "Popish." Toward the end, he published a little book called *The Mask Torn off; or Popery Unveiled*, which he anonymously published as "a humble servant of Jesus Christ." Accused and convicted, they cut off his ears and slit his nose, and then cast him bleeding into jail. This was all done with such an air of self-righteousness that when they gave this sentence, the Archbishop lifted his eyes to heaven and thanked God for the suffering and shame that were to come! The poor man died in prison. His daughter was left homeless and might have starved to death, but a godly family of

Quakers took her in. One day, Bunyan happened to pass that way. "I met her as she sat weary and faint on a bank by the roadside. I gave her of my food, and when I heard her tale, we went to the justices, and were wed.

"She had nought but yon two books; indeed we had nought between us both, not so much as a dish or a spoon." Those two books were *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*. John's bride was as poor as he, but a praying Christian who led him to serious spiritual thought. His morbid temperament tortured him at his workbench and crept into his dreams at night. He kept up a jovial exterior, but secretly was miserable. He dispensed with some of his more pernicious habits, went to church regularly and was outwardly reverent enough to convince most of

Bedford that he had become a Christian. He still liked dancing and his sports, playing "Cat"



on the village green on Sunday afternoons.

One Sunday, after striking the cat and getting ready to hit it the second time, mid-swing he seemed to hear a voice, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?" This incident cast him into a period of despair. He felt he was too far gone to ever be saved, but too tormented not to seek salvation.

Realizing that his repentance was shallow, he overheard some women talking about the new birth while sitting on their front doorstep. Bunyan confessed he needed "the true tokens of a truly godly man." These women referred him to John Gifford (who was in real life the character "Evangelist" in *Pilgrim's Progress*). Gifford helped Bunyan see how utterly corrupt he was. Then "a great storm came down upon me, which handled me twenty times worse than all I had met with before." He only began to emerge after a year of despondency through Gifford's counsel and by reading Luther's *Comment on the Galatians*, when another temptation, "to sell and part with the most blessed Christ" came on him. Feeling he had not been resolute enough in resisting the devil, he feared that he had committed the unpardonable sin. He was so torn by this, that only after another conflict of eight or nine months, his mind cleared and he enjoyed assurance.

In 1655, John was baptized and became a member of the nonconformist church in Bedford. His first wife died that same year, leaving four small children (two sons and two daughters). He remarried four years later.

Soon after baptism, he began to preach. Horror-struck by the gravity of his mission, he kept on when, before his skeptical eyes, he discovered that his messages comforted the believers: "I preached what I felt...even under that which my poor soul did groan and tremble to astonishment." Under threat of persecution and imprisonment, impoverished by fines and driven from one meeting place to another, he and the others continued their ministry unabated. About that time, he began his writing career with a book warning against the Quakers: *Some Gospel Truths Opened*.

Though baptistic in doctrine, Bunyan refused to make baptism the foundation of fellowship: "I will not let Water Baptism be the rule, the door, the bolt, the bar, the wall of division between the righteous and the unrighteous." He also claimed 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, "Since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be, and hope I am, a Christian, and choose if God should count me

worthy, to be called a Christian, a believer, or other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost."

At the Restoration (1660), those who ministered the Word outside the authority of the State church were threatened with severe penalties. At first, Bunyan disguised himself when he went to preach. But feeling that that was cowardly, he went openly to his preaching appointments. On November 12, 1660, he was arrested while preaching in the town of Samsell on the text: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Refusing to flee or agree not to preach, he went to Bedford county jail. The next day, without any witnesses for the defense, he was found guilty. Judge Keeling said, "Hear your sentence. You must be had back again to prison, and there lie for three months following; and at three months' end, if you do not submit and go to church to hear divine service and leave your preaching, you must be banished from the realm; and if, after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, you must stretch by the neck for it."

Bunyan replied, "If I were out of prison today, I would preach again tomorrow, so help me God!"

He remained in Bedford jail for 12 years except for a few weeks of liberty in 1666. During his imprisonment, Bunyan had some access to the outside world, even visiting the church and preaching a few times, and once traveling as far as London. Perhaps the heaviest toll was paid by his young wife Elizabeth and children during his imprisonments. John welcomed the visits of wife, children and friends, especially that of his little blind daughter, Mary.

In 1672, the Declaration of Indulgence of Charles II freed him. He immediately resumed preaching to the Bedford congregation where he served the rest of his days. In prison again, however, for six months in 1675, he began writing *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

*Though men may keep my outward man
Within their locks and bars,
Yet by the faith of Christ I can
Mount higher than the stars.*

Despite another imprisonment in 1685, Bunyan's last years were surprisingly energetic. His preaching and writing ran the length of England. Bunyan's few sermons which we have, show that he spoke as he wrote. He melted his hearers. His talk was tender, telling, triumphant, and spiced with a quiet, keen satire. The largest buildings in London strained to contain his

audiences. One eyewitness says, "I have seen about twelve hundred at a morning lecture, by seven o'clock, on a working day, in the dark winter time. I have computed about three thousand that came to hear him one Lord's Day at the town's-end meeting house. Himself was fain, at a back door, to be pulled almost over the people to get upstairs to his pulpit."

John Owen was probably the most scholarly preacher of his day. The biographer, James Moffatt, recorded how much he admired Bunyan's preaching, "Perhaps with the noble envy felt by an academic nature in the ministry for the power of an evangelist or a popular preacher to speak effectively to the common people. Charles II once asked him, in wonder, 'how a courtly man such as he was could sit and listen to an illiterate tinker.' 'May it please your Majesty,' said Owen, 'could I possess that tinker's abilities for preaching, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning.'"

Bunyan set sail for the Celestial City when on an errand of mercy. A young man had run away from home and had deeply offended his parents. Having repented, he asked Bunyan to visit the offended father in Reading. Bunyan succeeded in getting the father to promise to take back his son. Mission accomplished, the pilgrim continued to London, but was caught in a rainstorm. Soaked and chilled, he arrived at a friend's home where he died a few days later. He was 60 years old.

The truths Bunyan embraced are wholesome and needed. The old doctrine of perseverance has been replaced. The old school said, "Yes, the true believer will ultimately be in heaven. But he is to persevere as he goes there. Not only will he persevere, but he is explicitly told that he must persevere." The replacement doctrine states that "once you believe you are guaranteed heaven. You should persevere, but if you do not, you are not to worry." Bunyan felt that we should never think we are home-free until we are home. His hymn, *To be a Pilgrim* expresses the burden of his ministry. It seems sad but appropriate that Bunyan's hymn is not in most hymn books since his message is also absent.

*He who would valiant be 'gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy follow the Master.
There's no discouragement shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent to be a pilgrim.*

*Whoso beset him round with dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound—his strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might: though he with giants fight,
He will make good his right to be a pilgrim.*

*Hobgoblin nor foul fiend can daunt his spirit,
He knows he at the end shall life inherit.
Then, fancies, flee away! I'll fear not what men say.
I'll labor night and day to be a pilgrim.*

THE BOOK THAT MOVED THE WORLD

Pilgrim's Progress has been translated into more languages than any other book except the Bible. Before his death it had already sold 100,000 copies.

The early pioneers to America typically owned three books: *The Bible*, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, and *Pilgrim's Progress*. Many schools used it as a textbook.

The Pilgrim's Progress is remarkable for its simplicity, imaginative fervor, and universal appeal. No book has been more widely received or freer from sectarian dogmas. Bunyan is a master of a simple, direct vernacular style. As John Gulliver put it, "We are in no mood to criticize the artistic execution, as if a dramatist were exhibiting before us. Here is living suffering and actual happiness. A human heart is uttering itself, not a musical tone or an elocutionary inflection. The preacher who speaks out his own experience has a power which transcends all the canons of art. Art will unquestionably add to this power and bring it to a polished perfection, but it will not create it. The preacher who moves men must learn to say, not only 'Thou art the man,' but also, 'I am the man.' The former without the latter will be scolding, not preaching."

C. H. Spurgeon, who read *Pilgrim's Progress* once a year, said, "I regard the style of John Bunyan as being the nearest approach to the style of the Lord Jesus than that of any man who has ever written."

Bunyan's other works include *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), and *The Holy War* (1682). In all, Bunyan produced 60 books and tracts.

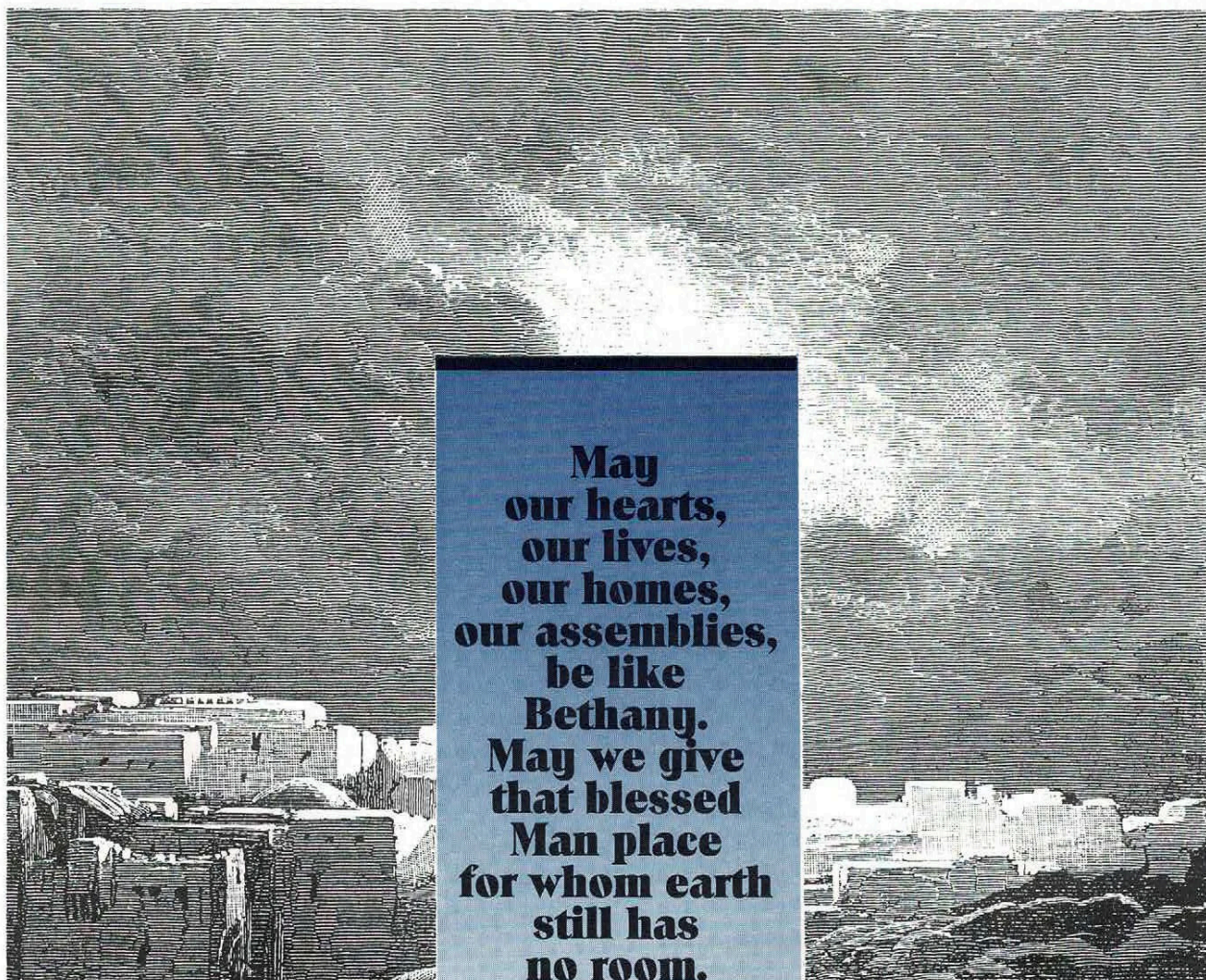
A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

ON THE EASTERN SLOPE of the Mount of Olives, on the farther side from Jerusalem, and about two miles from that city, lies the village of Bethany. Today it is known as El Azariyah, the Town of Lazarus; sometimes it is called Betania. A dusty street or two; a few small dwellings; and a fragrance of Christ that lingers still. It was here that loving hearts made room for Him when others had rejected Him. It was here He found fellowship, and

love, and appreciation of His Person.

There is a stony path from Bethany over Olivet and down into the city. How well our Lord knew this path. During His last week on earth, He walked it twice every day. In the morning, He came from Bethany over Olivet to Jerusalem. In the evening, He returned to lodge there. In a world that knew Him not, it was there at Bethany that He found a welcome.

Beginning with "Beth," the name Bethany means



**May
our hearts,
our lives,
our homes,
our assemblies,
be like
Bethany.
May we give
that blessed
Man place
for whom earth
still has
no room.**

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

"The House of—," but the full meaning has become obscured. Indeed, there are no less than four suggestions. Some say, "The House of Sweetness." There are varieties of this, like "House of Dates," or "House of Figs." Others say, "The House of Sorrow," and yet others, "The House of Singing." Locally, however, it is agreed that the name means "The House of the Poor," or "The House of Poverty." In fact, Bethany was all of these.

THE HOUSE OF THE POOR

Our Lord had begun His ministry with "Blessed are the poor in spirit." It is the opposite to pride. It is a man with poor thoughts of himself. How the Lord Jesus had taught His disciples that in the Kingdom things were different from what prevailed in the world. "He that is least among you shall be the greatest." But they had never learned. Still they disputed as to which of them should be the greatest. But at Bethany He was supreme. In the House of the Poor, He alone was great. The Bethany spirit exalts no one but Him. Men with the Bethany spirit have no rich thoughts of self; they are poor in spirit and have high thoughts of Christ only.

THE HOUSE OF SWEETNESS

At Bethany an ancient desire of Jehovah's heart was at last fully met. Centuries earlier, the God of the Hebrews had said, "Let My people go that they may serve Me." He wanted service. "Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me." He wanted fellowship. "Let My people go that they may sacrifice unto Me." He wanted worship. But redeemed Israel often disappointed Jehovah, and still His heart yearned for a people who serve, fellowship, and worship. Until at last in a home in Bethany that same God of Israel sat incarnate, in the midst of adoring hearts who gave Him all His desire. Martha served; Lazarus sat; Mary worshipped.

Martha's service was appreciated by the Lord, who never complained about her (as preachers have done). It was just that, like many of us, the bustle of service had distracted her from Him. He showed her gently that there was something more than busy service.

Lazarus sat silent at the table. How he must have adored the Man who had raised him to new life. To sit quietly, meditatively, at the table with the Saviour was Lazarus' joy—the silence of communion with his Lord. Lazarus never speaks, at least, not in the records; not one word. Of him it is simply said that he sat at **U**

the table with Him. This is fellowship indeed.

Mary teaches us how to worship. She breaks her alabaster flask of precious sweetness on the Saviour's person. With a fragrance which John calls "very costly," she pours her love upon Him, and fills the house with it too. She must have had it clinging to her own self as well. It is the sacrifice of praise. It is the extravagance of love which does not stay to calculate, but lavishes its store upon the loved ones. In the house of sweetness, our Lord found service, and fellowship, and worship.

THE HOUSE OF SORROW

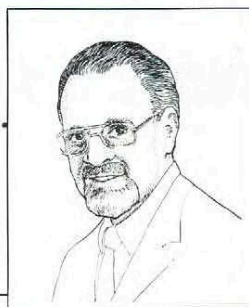
Those who love Him are not immune to suffering. The choicest saints have known their share of sorrow, and it was so at Bethany. There was sickness, anxiety, bereavement, and sorrow. In His wisdom, and in the working out of His plan for them, Jesus tarries at Bethabara while they wait for Him at Bethany. They cannot understand His delay. As yet they do not know that it is because He loves them, and that all things work together for good to them that love Him. Lazarus dies. Our Lord's word to Martha is simple. "If you will believe, you will see the glory." Trust, and wait, and watch, and eventually see the glory of His purpose for you. And so it was, that out of the sorrow came the Bethany which bore the sweetness that we have seen.

THE HOUSE OF SINGING

It is not to be wondered at, that when the Lord Jesus was leaving the earth in the Ascension, He chose to leave from Bethany. It was as if He would linger longest at the spot where He had been made welcome. And from the slopes of Olivet, at Bethany, He went up in glory. He left them with the joy He had promised them, and in that joy they returned from Bethany to Jerusalem. It was a house of singing. The Lord had gone up, and gone in, and He had blessed them as He went up. There was a Man in the Glory, gone up from Bethany, and their hearts were full.

May our hearts, our lives, our homes, our assemblies, be like Bethany. May we give that blessed Man place for whom earth still has no room.

This article is taken from Footprints of the Saviour, available from Gospel Folio Press, publishers of Uplook magazine.



A SHAFT OF LIGHT

IT'S A GRAY DAY here in Michigan . . . again. November brought just 27% of possible sunshine, which is about average for November. December and January are about the same kind of months. That means it will be gray for 73% of the time. Not good advertising for Michigan to you folks who live with a great deal more sunshine. But we here in Michigan get used to it. We don't really notice it much—until there is a day like one last week where the sun shone all day and the sky was so blue. Everyone wanted to get out and enjoy it. But then we settle back into the gray of Michigan winters and don't think about it much.

We live in a world of humanistic relativism as it is called. That's a fancy title for gray. No right or wrong; no black of evil or sunshine of right. A world where power is right and compromise is the order of the day. Where our political leaders buy votes and compromise principles. Mr. Reagan called Russia "the evil empire" and was harshly criticized because being politically correct those days was detente with Russia. Detente—that's an interesting word. It means, "live at peace with the enemy."

This thinking rubs off on us as Christians too. We begin to think power is right and detente with sin is politically correct. We begin to think that the compromise of principles is noble and ecumenism (unity) becomes enshrined as the goal. We begin to think that the thinking of this world is right when in reality it is the enemy.

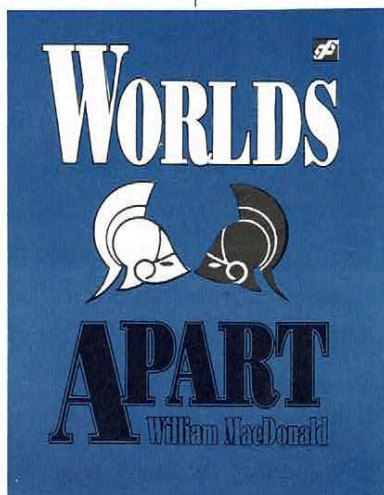
Then a book comes along to shake us back into our senses. A ray of sunshine breaks through the gray and causes us to see the blue sky of right and wrong, black and white. It tells us that there are really just two kingdoms. One is controlled by Satan and he is the father of lies. He might appear as an angel of light, but he is the epitome of "the evil empire." His goal is clear. Do whatever it takes to bring dishonor to the person of Christ. Even if he has to use religion to do it. His kingdom is the enemy and there can be no detente. If we

will win in this war we must be loyal to our King and He has already defeated the foe. That means all who are on the side of the Lord Jesus are assured of victory—so why compromise? That is the essence of stupidity. For an uncompromising view of these two kingdoms, Bill MacDonald's new book "Worlds Apart" is must reading. Be challenged and refreshed with some real sunshine in the midst of all the gray.

How do you live this kind of life Bill speaks about? Are there any real life examples of men who have stormed the gates of the enemy and rescued those in his clutches? Men who have hazarded their lives giving up all to follow the King? Yes, there are. Mr. Harold MacKay was one of them. As I read his autobiography the verse that kept coming to my mind was "whose faith follow." From Galt, Ontario, he followed his Lord to the back woods of West Virginia. There he pioneered new territory for the Lord and pushed back the strongholds of Satan.

From there he went to North Carolina and labored for many years seeing many turn from darkness to light. In each place he worked, he didn't just leave them, but strove to see them gathered together according to New Testament principles. Do they work today? Harold MacKay thought they did and he proved it. "Morning in My Heart," the title of the book and the theme song of his gospel radio program is a delightfully written book of a true gospel pioneer. The last chapter of his life is written by his daughter-in-law. This book is a fitting tribute to a great man of God. Read it; enjoy it; be challenged by it. But most of all, Mr. MacKay would want you to praise his God who still lives and works today and Who will fulfill all His promises to those who trust Him.

Refer to the back inside cover for pricing and ordering information about these books.



EVERYDAY READING PLAN

Section 37: Romans

January 1	Romans 1:1-17	The gospel of God, the power of God, & the righteousness of God
January 2	Romans 1:18-32	God's wrath against man's sin revealed—God gave them up
January 3	Romans 2:1-16	The sin of the Gentiles exposed and condemned
January 4	Romans 2:17-29	Those given the law (Jews) are condemned by the law
January 5	Romans 3:1-20	The Jews' advantage and the final verdict—None righteous
January 6	Romans 3:21-31	Justification defined
January 7	Romans 4:1-25	Justification illustrated—Abraham and David
January 8	Romans 5:1-11	The results of justification—" . . . we have peace with God . . . "
January 9	Romans 5:12-21	Condemnation and justification contrasted
January 10	Romans 6:1-11	God's grace is not a license for us to continue in sin
January 11	Romans 6:12-23	Sanctification—set apart <i>from</i> sin and set apart <i>to</i> God
January 12	Romans 7:1-14	The believer, married to another, is not made holy by the law
January 13	Romans 7:15-25	Wrestling with myself
January 14	Romans 8:1-13	Two walks, two laws, and two minds—the spiritual and carnal
January 15	Romans 8:14-27	The leading, witness, firstfruits, and intercession of the Spirit
January 16	Romans 8:28-39	The Spirit in us, the Father for us, & Christ with us—eternally
January 17	Romans 9:1-13	God's past purpose in Israel—her position
January 18	Romans 9:14-33	God's past purpose in Israel—His sovereignty
January 19	Romans 10:1-21	God's present purpose for Israel—the gospel to the world
January 20	Romans 11:1-25	God's future purpose for Israel—national Israel set aside
January 21	Romans 11:26-36	God's future purpose for Israel—Israel saved by the Deliverer
January 22	Romans 12:1-8	Christian service; to sacrifice self & use gifts with humility
January 23	Romans 12:9-21	Christian service to fellow believers and the world
January 24	Romans 13:1-14	Christian service to the government and neighbors
January 25	Romans 14:1-12	Personal accountability in our service
January 26	Romans 14:13-23	Recognizing our neighbor's welfare in our service
January 27	Romans 15:1-13	The God of patience, consolation, & hope unites Jew & Gentile
January 28	Romans 15:14-22	Paul explains why he preaches the gospel to the Gentiles
January 29	Romans 15:23-33	Paul expresses his desire to visit Rome after his trip to Jerusalem
January 30	Romans 16:1-16	Paul's personal expressions of greeting and love
January 31	Romans 16:17-27	Final warning against those who divide brethren; a glorious close

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROMANS

HOW CAN THE GUILTY BE FORGIVEN? How can the defiled be made pure? Fallen man has faced these questions since the day Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit. The book of Romans gives God's answers to these all-important questions in clear and timeless brilliance. It is an analytical treatise that exposes man for what he is, gloriously reveals God for who He is, and exalts the work of Christ for what it has provided. And yet for all its carefully formed legal arguments and weighty subject matter, it could best be described simply as "good news." It is the gospel of God (1:1) for He was the planner of it. It is the gospel of His Son (1:9) for He was the provision for it. It is the gospel of Christ (1:16) for only the Messiah, the promised One, could accomplish the work as Prophet, Priest, and King.

The book of Romans has fired the minds of some of the most influential Christians of all time. Augustine, Luther, Wesley and others attest to the pre-eminent place that Romans had in capturing their minds, compelling them to great things for God. Tyndale in his introduction to his translation of Romans said:

"I think it meet that every Christian man not only know it by rote...but also exercise himself therein evermore continually, as with the daily bread of the soul. No man can read it too often or study it too well."

In these days of weightless Bible study, watered-down preaching, and wavering Christians, a challenge such as Tyndale's is much needed for all the Scriptures. But God's people must especially appropriate and appreciate the truths that Romans addresses. Our very faith is built upon it. The rewards will be immense to those who explore this fortress of truth that stands strong as granite, this spiritual lighthouse that shines as a beacon to the soul.

Romans outlines for us the righteousness of God which He desires us to have by grace through faith. But before Paul brings us to the cross to marvel at the work of Christ, he must cause us to see our sinfulness. Only by taking us into the darkness can he fully make us appreciate the light. Paul puts on the lawyer's robes and presents his case before God's great judgment bar. The accused is mankind, the judge is the righteous Creator,

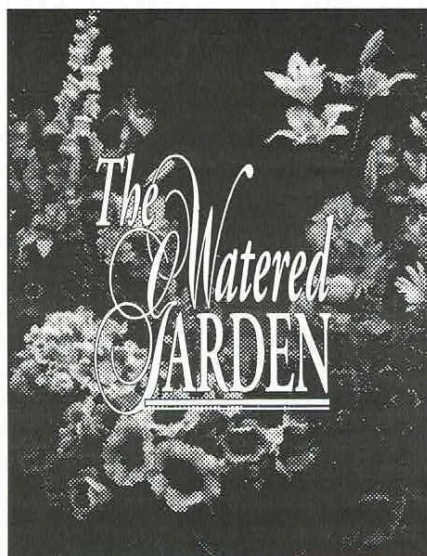
the evidence is irrefutable, the sentence is death. From 1:17 to 3:21, Paul presents his arguments. He deals first with the heathen (1:17-1:32). Man's wicked hellward spiral of evil is presented, his foul deeds cataloged. Guilty! From the heathen, Paul moves to the hypocrite (2:1-2:16), those who cling to their own goodness and despise others. The outside may appear fine, but someday God will judge the heart. Guilty! Finally he turns to his own nation and addresses the Hebrew (2:17-3:8). Privileged holders of the law, God's chosen people, yet they were breakers of that very law. Guilty! The summation is made. Every mouth is gagged (3:19). "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And where will we turn now? We are undone. But God! When all seems to be lost—but God.

Having taken us to the depths of despair, Paul now takes us to the heights of glory. He presents God's remedy for man's malady. God wishes to justify us—declare us righteous—give us the same acceptance before His holy throne as His own Son. The foundation for that justification is laid in the finished work of His Son. Faith is the key to being justified. We are not justified by works—Abraham and David testify to this—but by faith in the blood sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Accepting the finished work of Christ by faith, we are justified and have peace with God.

In 3:21-5:11, Paul tells us of God's dealing with sins, plural—the old nature and its fruits. But what about the source of sin? From 5:12 to 8:39, Paul tells how God has dealt with sin—the old nature itself and particularly its conflict with the new nature. The life of the believer as a new creation is presented. The Christian life cannot be lived in the power of the flesh. In this section, we begin with no condemnation, close with no separation, and are ministered to by the Spirit in the glorious interim.

After his exposition of sin, salvation, and sanctification in the first eight chapters, Paul deals in chapters 9 to 11 with the place of Israel in God's glorious plan, and then uses the last five chapters of the book to clothe with practical examples and admonitions the body of truth he has developed in chapters 1-8, concerning the believer's transformation. **U**

SOME GREAT GIFTS



The Watered Garden by J. Boyd Nicholson

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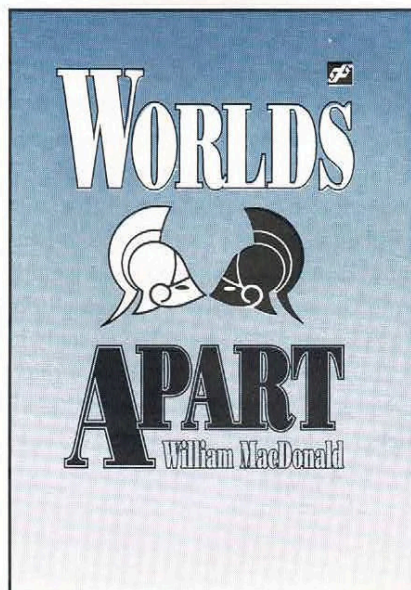
The world is the civilization which man has built up in order to fulfill his desires without God. It is not only independent of God, but opposed to Him. The world system is founded on wrong principles and promotes false values. It is largely self-centered. Actually the world is empty. It is a facade. It is a sick joke. All it offers cannot satisfy the human heart.

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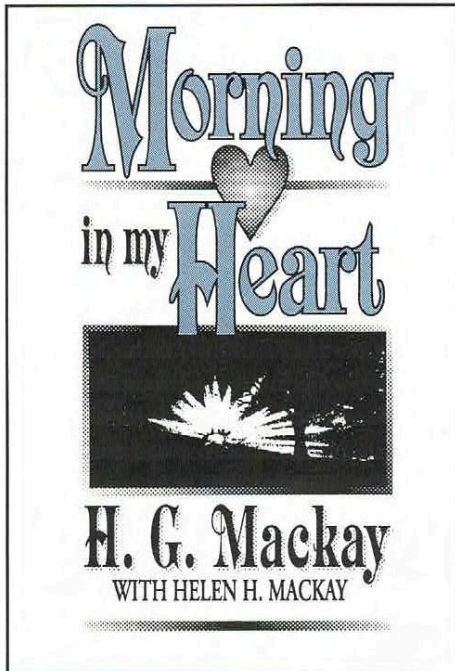
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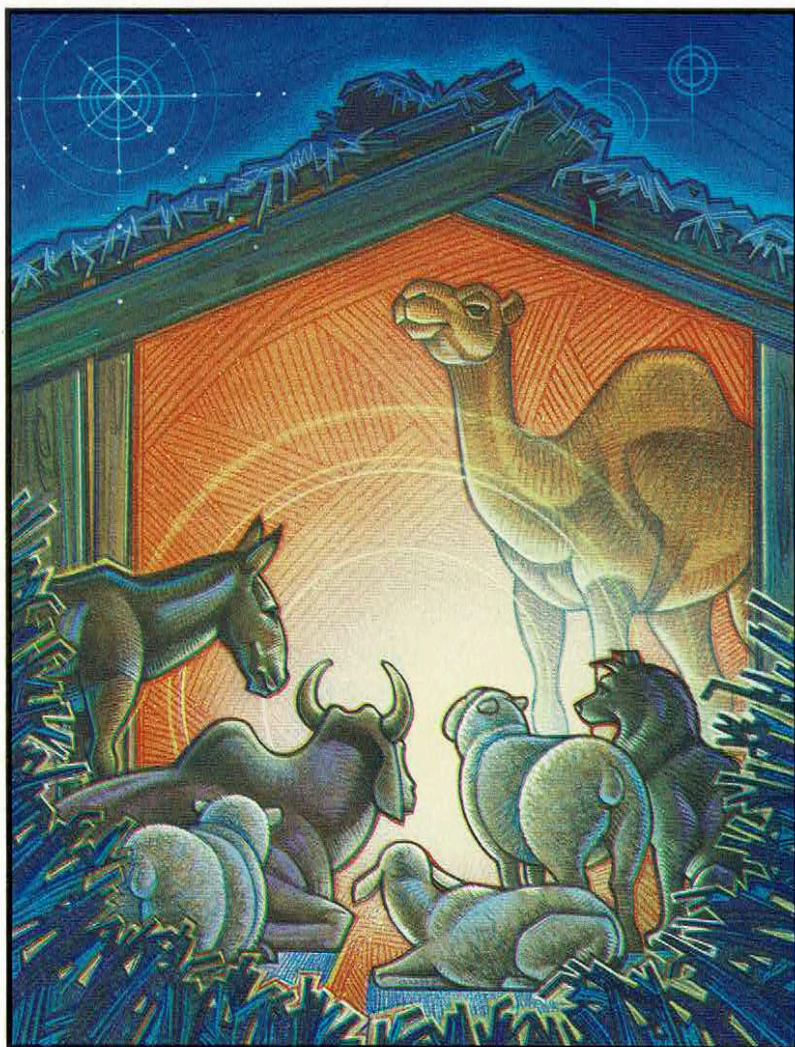
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Coming Again

*The King shall come when morning dawns,
And light triumphant breaks;
When beauty gilds the eastern hills,
And life to joy awakes.*

*Not as of old a little child
To bear, and fight, and die,
But crowned with glory like the sun
That lights the morning sky.*

*O brighter than the rising morn
When He, victorious, rose,
And left the lonesome place of death,
Despite the rage of foes—*

*O brighter than the glorious morn
Shall this fair morning be,
When Christ, our King, in beauty comes,
And we His face shall see!*

*The King shall come when morning dawns,
And light and beauty brings:
Hail, Christ, the Lord! Thy people pray,
"Come quickly, King of kings."*

—Greek Hymn