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PAPERS (3014)**

BOX 24

FOLDER 19

**CHRISTMAS IN THREE
DIMENSIONS**

DECEMBER 20, 1987

CHRISTMAS IN THREE DIMENSIONS

WELL, IT'S FIVE MORE DAYS TILL CHRISTMAS AND
COUNTING../FIVE MORE DAYS OF MISTLETOE/AND SANTA
CLAUS/AND LOVELY CHRISTMAS CRECHES./IT IS A MAGIC
TIME! THE SINGING OF CAROLS,/THE TRIMMING OF THE
TREE,/THE CANDLELIGHT AND TINSEL,/THE LIGHTS OF
RADIO CITY,/THE CONFUSION OF SANTA CLAUSES ON
EVERY CORNER/RINGING THEIR LITTLE BELLS,/GIVING
THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT THIS OR THAT WORTHY
CHARITY./YES, IT IS PURE MAGIC!

BUT LIKE ALL MAGIC/THERE IS ILLUSION AND SLEIGHT
OF HAND INVOLVED./ FOR THE MISTLETOE IS ^{ARTIFICIALLY} PLASTIC/
AND THE SANTA CLAUS BEARD IS ^{DEFINITELY} FALSE,/ AND THE
FIGURES OF THE CRECHE ARE PLASTER-OF-PARIS/...

ALL PARTS OF A COMMUNITY-WIDE FACADE THAT IS ~~PUT~~
^{ERECTED} UP EVERY YEAR/ LIKE A HOLLYWOOD SET.

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE MERRY',/ THE CAROL SINGS,/ AND FOR ^{A SEASON} SOME,/ TO BE ENDURED../ FOR BEHIND THE FACADE

THERE IS A WIDESPREAD LONELINESS AND EMPTINESS, /
AND THE CHARADE OF GIFT-EXCHANGING UNDER AN OFTEN
MISGUIDED LOVE, / THE PRESSURE OF CONFORMITY, / AND
THE BURDEN OF GUILT. / AND HERE AND THERE MAY BE
HEARD AN OCCASIONAL / 'BAH HUMBUG!'

BUT ~~THE~~ THERE IS NO HOLDING BACK THE CALENDAR, / AND
SO ON FRIDAY MORNING / WE WILL ONCE AGAIN CELEBRATE
THIS LOVELY / AND PUZZLING TIME / WE CALL CHRISTMAS.

JEWISH HANUKKAH

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT? WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?
THE AVERAGE PERSON, / IF HE CAN BRING HIMSELF TO
SEE BEYOND THE SANTA CLAUS SYNDROME, / WOULD SAY IT
IS THE BIRTHDAY OF JESUS. / BUT IF ~~THE~~ THERE IS ONE
THING DECEMBER 25TH IS NOT, / IT IS ~~THE~~ DAY THAT
JESUS WAS BORN. / THERE IS NO HISTORY OF ~~THE~~ THE EARLY-
LIFE OF JESUS AT ALL /- ONLY A VARIETY OF CONFLICT-
ING LEGENDS. / THE DECEMBER 25TH DATE WAS SET
ARBITRARILY / BY A NOW OBSCURE CHURCH HISTORIAN /
IN THE 6TH CENTURY AD. / AND WITHOUT ANY DOUBT IT

WAS INFLUENCED BY THE ROMAN FEAST OF SATURNALIA/
WHICH OCCURRED AT THIS TIME.

IT WAS NEVER INTENDED TO BE /AND UNTIL MODERN
TIMES IT HAS NEVER BEEN /A TIME FOR FESTIVITY.
OH, THERE ARE SOME LOVELY CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS,
BUT MOST OF THEM HAVE A PAGAN OR NON-CHRISTIAN
ORIGIN - /WITH NO CHRISTIAN OR JESUS-ORIENTATION
AT ALL. SUCH ARE THE CHRISTMAS TREE, / THE YULE
LOG, /THE MISTLETOE, /THE EXCHANGING OF GIFTS, /
AND EVEN SANTA CLAUS.

UNDOUBTEDLY MANY PERSONS CONSIDER THE OBSERVANCE
OF CHRISTMAS IS A MATTER OF BEING LOYAL TO A TIME-
HONORED TRADITION, /ALMOST AS IF IT WERE LIKE A
GREAT HISTORIC CREED OF RELIGION. /

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS
AS A HOLIDAY WAS NOT ESTABLISHED IN AMERICA /
UNTIL THE LAST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY? / DOES
THAT SURPRISE YOU?

IT MAY ALSO SURPRISE YOU THAT OUR PILGRIM FORE-
BEARS/NOT ONLY BROWNED ON A SEASON OF 'MAKING
MERRY',/BUT THAT IT WAS AGAINST THE LAW?/IN 1659
THE COLONY OF MASS./PASSED A LAW THAT READ,/ 'WHO-
SOEVER SHALL BE FOUND OBSERVING ANY SUCH DAY AS
CHRISTMAS/EITHER BY FOREBEARING OF LABOR,/FEASTING
/OR IN ANY OTHER WAY,/ SHALL BE FINED FIVE SHILLINGS
/AND FOR MANY YEARS PEOPLE WHO REFUSED TO WORK ON
CHRISTMAS/EITHER WENT TO JAIL/OR PAID FINES.,/
AND LOOK AT US NOW!

A FEW YEARS AGO PHILIP WILIE SOUNDED A STRONG
'BAH HUMBUG' TONE/WHEN HE WROTE/- THAT CHRISTMAS
AS MOST AMERICANS NOW FEEL DUTY BOUND TO OBSERVE
IT/IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE STRESS AND DISABILITY
OF MANY AMERICANS./HE SAID, 'THE HOPPED-UP/
PRESSURE-LADEN,/ ~~CONCRETE~~ STATUS-SEEKING,/
COMPETITIVE DEGRADATION OF CHRISTMAS/IS MORE
INTENSE IN OUR COUNTRY/THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE

BUT WE HAVE EXPORTED IT - AND COUNTRIES
LIKE JAPAN ARE FAST CATCHING UP.

WORLD.

NOW WE CAN'T BLAME THE MERCHANTS, ~~AS~~ ^{MANY} ARE
WONT TO DO. / WHEN WE HEAR THE CRY, / 'LET'S PUT
CHRIST BACK INTO CHRISTMAS', / IT IS ALWAYS THE
INTIMATION THAT THE MERCHANT IS A KIND OF SCROOGE
/ WHO WRINGS HIS HANDS IN DELIGHT / AS JOHN Q. PUBLIC
DANCES TO HIS TUNE.

*SHARING OF LOVINGNESS
AND BECOMING CHANGERS OF PENCE*

A BETTER AND MORE REALISTIC SLOGAN / IS, 'LET'S
PUT OURSELVES BACK INTO CHRISTMAS.' / THE PROB-
BLEM IS NOT THE BUYING OF GIFTS. / AND CERTAINLY
WE CAN'T OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT AS BUSINESS PROS-
PERS AT CHRISTMAS TIME OR AT ANY OTHER TIME, THE
WHOLE NATION PROSPERS.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE PROBLEM IS QUITE SIMPLE / --
CHRISTMAS HAS THREE DIMENSIONS - AND THE AVERAGE
PERSON ONLY TOUCHES IT AT THE SURFACE, / ON THIS
SURFACE LEVEL IT IS THE DATE, / DECEMBER 25TH, / THE
DAY OFF WORK, / ^{CONVIVIAL} FAMILY GATHERINGS, / TREE TRIMMING, /
THE SINGING OF CAROLS, / THE EXCHANGING OF GIFTS.

^{BUT} THINGS THAT CAN ONLY REALLY BE UNDERSTOOD ON A
DEEPER LEVEL./ BUT EVEN OF ITSELF THE OUTER FESTI-
VITY IS A LOVELY THING/IF WE CAN GET INTO THE
CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.X/ THE LOVELY LIGHTED TREES ON
PARK AVENUE,/OR THE/DECORATED HOMES IN THE SUBURBS/
~~CATCH~~ THE EXCITEMENT OF THE THROGS OF SHOPPERS
./AND THE BACKGROUND/OF BELL-RINGING SALVATION
ARMY LASSIES,/AND THE SA~~N~~TAS CLAUSES WITH THE
SUIT AND MANNER THAT DOESN'T QUITE FIT,/AND
THE FRAGRANCE OF CHESTNUTS BEING WARMED ON A
CRUDE ~~STOVE~~/AND HANDLED BY ^{NOT-TIP} ~~GRIMY~~ HANDS./ALL
THIS IS CHRISTMAS!

BUT OF COURSE THERE IS MUCH MORE!/ HOW EASILY WE
CAN PACK THE ARTIFICIAL TREES/AND GARLANDS/AND
SILVER BELLS/BACK INTO THE ATTIC FOR ANOTHER YEAR./
HOW QUICKLY THE STORES CAN CHANGE THEIR DISPLAYS
/TO JANUARY WHITE SALES./ HOW SOON THE STREET
^{DOES HIS BEARD AND RED COAT AND}
SANTA RETURNS TO HIS PLACE/AT THE UNEMPLOYMENT

COMPENSATION OFFICE. / YES, THERE IS SOMETHING MORE
▶ IT IS THE NATIVITY STORY ITSELF. / THE BIRTH OF
JESUS IN A MANGER THOSE LONG YEARS AGO. / THIS IS
AN ASPECT OF CHRISTMAS / THAT SEEMS TO GET LOST IN
THE SHUFFLE. / ^{A CLASSIC CARTOON} TWO WOMEN ~~W~~ WERE PEERING THROUGH
CHRISTMAS CROWDS INTO ~~THE~~ STORE WINDOWS / ~~WHEN THEY~~
~~CAME TO~~ ^{BEFORE} A LOVELY CRECHE. / ONE OF ~~THEM~~ ^{IS SAYING} ~~REMARKED~~ /
'NOW LOOK AT THAT, / WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT? / THE
CHURCH IS EVEN TRYING TO TAKE OVER CHRISTMAS!'

▶ THIS IS THE SECOND DIMENSION OF CHRISTMAS. IT
IS NORMALLY GLOSSED OVER, / FOR THE PLASTIC CRECHE
IS AN INDICATION OF HOW THE 'LITTLE TOWN OF
BETHLEHEM' / ON THAT NIGHT OF NIGHTS / HAS BEEN SENTA-
MENTALIZED AND THUS MADE UNREAL. / .. LIKE A MOVIE
THAT WE WATCH FOR AN HOUR. / .. HAVE A GOOD CRY OVER...
AND THEN GO OUT INTO LIVES OF DRABNESS AND ROUTINE
NESS. / .. NOT THE LEAST BIT CHANGED BY THE EXPERIENCE

FIRST OF ALL, THE CHRISTMAS STORY/CANNOT BE APPROACHED AS HISTORY./IT IS NOW BELIEVED THAT THE TWO GOSPELS/THAT TELL OF THE LEGENDS OF CHRISTMAS./MATTHEW TELLING OF THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST../ AND LUKE TELLING OF SHEPHERDS OF THE FIELD /- WERE WRITTEN A GOOD FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE TIME OF THE BIRTH./^{FROM WHICH MATTHEW AND LUKE BORROWED.} THE GOSPEL OF MARK, WHICH WAS WRITTEN SOON AFTER THE LIFE-TIME OF JESUS./ SURPRISINGLY MAKES NO MENTION OF THESE LEGENDS AT ALL../GIVING NOTHING AT ALL ABOUT JESUS' BIRTH?

LUKE TELLS THE STORY OF PASTORAL SIMPLICITY/ A STORY OF MEN OF FAITH AND VISION/- SHEPHERDS KEEPING WATCH BY NIGHT OVER THEIR FLOCK,/ AND OF AN ANGEL STANDING BY FILLING THEM WITH FEAR./ AND OF ANGEL VOICES TELLING THEM OF THE BIRTH OF THE SAVIOR IN A MANGER./ AND OF THEIR DETERMINATION TO GO AND SEE AND WORSHIP.

▶THE MATTHEW STORY IS COLORED WITH GRANDEUR AND
REGAL SPLENDOR, / A STORY OF AND PERHAPS FOR PEOPLE
OF WISDOM, / OF INTELLECT. / IT TELLS OF THREE WISE
MEN, / SOMETIMES CALLED THREE KINGS, / WHO CAME FROM
THE EAST TO JERUSALEM, / FOL~~L~~OWING A STAR, / WHICH
WAS MORE LIKELY AN ASTROLOGICAL SIGN, / THAT~~T~~ LED
THEM ALSO TO THE MANGER / WHERE THEY PRESENTED THE
NEW-BORN KING / WITH GIFTS OF GOLD AND FRANK-INCENSE
AND MYRRH. LOVELY TRADITIONS!

IT IS HARD TO MISS THE SYMBOLISM / THAT INDICATES
A MOVEMENT IN CONSCIOUSNESS. / DEALING WITH THE
BIRTH-OF-THE-CHRIST IDEA / IN HUMAN ^{AWARENESS.} ~~CONSCIOUSNESS~~ /
...THE WISE MEN INDICATING THE AWARENESS COMING
THROUGH THE INTELLECT. / .AND THE SHEPHERDS IN THE
FIELD / INDICATING THE PERCEPTION COMING TROUGH
INTUITION AND FEELING.

▶EVEN THE STORY OF MARY AND JOSEPH RIDING INTO
BETHLEHEM ON A DONKEY. / . 'AND THERE WAS NO ROOM IN

THE INN', / SO SHE GAVE BIRTH TO HER FIRST-BORN SON,
~~AND~~ / AND LAD HIM IN A MANGER, / . IS A HIGHLY ROMAN-
TICIZED LEGEND WITH A BEAUTIFUL PERSONALLY SYMBO-
LIC MEANING, / DEALING WITH THE AWAKENING IN US OF
OUR DIVINE DIMENSION.

OUT OF THE VERY HUMAN TENDENCY TOWARD 'SCAPE-GOAT-
ISM', / MANY SERMONS HAVE BEEN PREACHED ABOUT THE
EVIL INN-KEEPER, / THE CLASSIC SYMBOL OF THE CRUEL
AND HARD-HEARTED, MATERIALISTIC MERCHANT, / WHO
COULDN'T FIND ROOM FOR THE 'BIRTH OF A KING.' /
ACTUALLY THAT SUPPOSED INN WAS NOT A HOWARD
JOHNSON MOTEL ~~AND~~ CONTAINING A PUB FILLED WITH
LOUD AND BOISTEROUS REVELERS. / IT WAS LITTLE MORE
THAN A ~~PROTECTIVE~~ ENCLAVE, / WHERE TRAVELERS COULD
FIND REFUGE / FROM THE PERILS OF WILD ANIMALS AND
THIEVES. / IT WAS ^{MUCH LIKE A} ~~LITTLE MORE THAN THE~~ WESTERN
CARAVAN CIRCLING THE WAGONS. / WHERE THE PEOPLE
SAT AROUND THE FIRE. / AND SLEPT ON THE GROUND. / .
STILL VERY MUCH EXPOSED TO THE ELEMENTS

ACTUALLY, TRADITION TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING, / JOSEPH AND MARY FOUND REFUGE IN A CAVE OF THE NEARBY HILLS, / WHERE THEY WERE QUITE WARM ^{SO IMPORTANT FOR THE BIRTH} AND COMFORTABLE, / QUITE POSSIBLY LED THERE BY THE VERY INNKEEPER / WHO HAS BEEN FOR SO LONG PILLORIED AS A 'SCROOGE' OF BETHLEHEM.

SO YOU SEE, / WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT JESUS' BIRTH ./. BUT WHEN WE UNDERSTAND HIS MISSION, / IT IS REALLY NOT ALL THAT IMPORTANT. / IF WE PROBE INTO THE THIRD DIMENSION OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY, WE FIND THAT JESUS' BIRTH / HAD IMPLICATIONS FAR BEYOND THE DRAMATIC BEGINNING OF A RELIGION. THE UNIVERSE IS TOO GRAND AND INTELLIGENT / TO BE ENCOMPASSED BY ONE SECTARIAN CONCEPT, / OR LIMITED TO ONE 'BIRTHDAY OF A KING.'

JESUS DID NOT INTEND TO ESTABLISH A NEW RELIGION, / ~~HE~~ HE CERTAINLY HAD NO INTENTION OF BECOMING THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP / - THE KIND THAT IS USUALLY

INVOLVED IN CHRISTMAS RITUAL. / HE DID NOT COME TO PROCLAIM HIMSELF, BUT YOU AND ME...NOT TO TELL US OF HIS DIVINITY, / MAKING HIM THE GREAT EXCEPTION... / BUT TO TELL US OF OUR DIVINITY, / AND TO SHOW IN HIS OVERCOMING / THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF THE 'I AM' / REACHING ITS FULL PERSONAL EXPRESSION IN MAN.

SO YOU SEE, THE GREAT EVENT IN THE LIFE OF JESUS WAS NOT HIS BIRTH. / OR EVEN LATER THE MANNER OF HIS DEATH. / IT WAS THE AWAKENING THAT TOOK PLACE WITHIN HIM DURING THE YEARS OF HIS GROWTH. / THE DISCOVERY OF THE DIVINE DIMENSION IN HIMSELF. / AND IN YOU AND ME.

SO, YOU SEE, IT IS THE THIRD DIMENSION OF CHRISTMAS / THAT CONTAINS THE VITAL LESSON FOR US TODAY. / AND IF WE MISS THIS LESSON, / THE REST IS JUST AN ANNUAL CHARADE WE PLAY. / AS THE MEDIEVAL MYSTIC POET SANG, / 'THOUGH CHRIST A THOUSAND TIMES IN BETHLEHAM BE BORN, / IF HE'S NOT BORN IN THEE, THY ^{ANGELUS SILENTUS} SOUL IS ALL FORLOST

IT IS OFTEN SAID, 'CHRISTMAS IS FOR CHILDREN.'

BUT THIS IS NORMALLY AN EXCUSE FOR AN UNWILLINGNESS
/ TO LET THE ~~XXX~~ LIGHT OF THE CHRISTMAS STAR SHINE
ON EACH ONE OF US / WITH ITS REVEALING, / HEALING
MESSAGE. / IT IS TRUE THAT CHILDREN ARE NORMALLY
THE FOCUS OF MOST OF OUR PLANS AND PREPARATIONS /
BUT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE. / THE CHRISTMAS CON-
SCIOUSNESS / IS THE RESURGENT YEARNING FOR GROWTH,
~~FOR CHANGE~~ FOR CHANGE. / IT IS A TIME OF CELEBRA-
TION / OF THE 'I AM' SELF AT THE HEART OF YOU. /

IN A WAY IT IS FOR CHILDREN, FOR IT DEALS WITH
YOUR OWN CHILD OF POTENTIAL GROWTH
THE CHRIST CHILD WITHIN. / WHEN WE WORSHIP A ~~CHILD~~
CHILD AS WE DO AT CHRISTMAS / WE WORSHIP THE
FUTURE, / WE CELEBRATE NEW DREAMS, / NEW HOPES,
AND NEW HORIZONS. /

THIS IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SHEPHERDS AND WISE
MEN WHO CAME TO WORSHIP THE CHILD. / THEY WERE
CAPTIVATED BY AN IDEA. / ^{QUESTION} NOW CAN YOU STILL BECOME

ENTHUSED/ABOUT THE CHRIST CHILD WITHIN? THE
YOUR GREATER POTENTIALITY
GREATEST THING ABOUT LIFE IS LIVING,/AND TO LIVE
IS TO KEEP ALIVE/THE SENSE OF WONDER,/ROMANCE/
AND EXPECTANCY.

▶ A FEW YEARS AGO THE WORLD WAS EXCITEDLY LOOKING/
FOR THE RARE VISIT OF THE COMET ~~KAHOUTEK~~ ^{KAHOUTEK}. IT WAS
DRAWING IN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SHOWED IT TO BE USABLE AS LIFE GLOW
~~DESCRIBED AS~~ ^{VERY MUCH LIKE A} A GIANT EXCLAMATION POINT. IF YOU
WANT TO RECULTIVATE THE CHILD-LIKE EXCITEMENT AND
ENTHUSIASM FOR LIFE,/PUT A LARGE-SIZED EXCLAMA-
TION POINT ON YOUR MIRROR,/OVER YOUR SINK,/AND
ON YOUR DESK./ WHEN WE LOSE THIS SENSE OF 'AHA'
SOMETHING IMPORTANT GOES OUT OF US. *wow!!*

THIS WAS NOT TRUE OF THE SHEPHERDS/OR THE MĀGI
FROM THE EAST./THEY MAY HAVE BEEN OLD MEN,/BUT
THEY HAD THE WONDER AND AWE OF A CHILD./THE
SHEPHERDS ~~LET~~ 'LET US GO AND SEE THIS THING
THAT HAS COME TO PASS.'/AND THE WISE MEN WERE
STILL CHASING STARS AT SEVENTY.

JOHN RUSKIN, / 'I WOULD ^{FAR} RATHER LIVE IN A COTTAGE /
AND WONDER AT EVERYTHING, / THAN LIVE IN WARWICK
CASTLE / AND WONDER AT NOTHING.'

IT IS THE FEELING OF 'WOW'. INSTEAD OF THE
DREARY 'LOOK WHAT THE WORLD IS COMING TO' / --
YOU SAY, 'LOOK WHAT IS COMING INTO THE WORLD.'
'WOW'!

CHRISTMAS CALLS TO THE DIVINE POTENTIAL WITHIN
YOU, / THE GREAT TRUTH THAT WITHIN YOU / IS THE UNBORN
POSSIBILITY OF LIMITLESS LIVING. / AND WITHIN YOU /
IN THE MANGER OF YOUR HEART / - YOU CAN GIVE BIRTH
TO IT. / . IN A NEW LIFE OF OVERCOMING AND TRANSCEND-
ANCE. KEY TO HEALING, TO ~~PROSPERITY AND~~ SUCCESS, TO OVERCOMING.

THIS IS REALLY THE MESSAGE OF CHARLES DICKENS'
CLASSIC STORY OF CHRISTMAS, 'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'
WHICH IS OFTEN DRAMATIZED AT THIS SEASON / -- AND
THE LAST OF A LONG LINE OF SCROOGES BRING PLAYED
BY GEORGE C., SCOTT / - PERHAPS THE PENULTIMATE ^{PERFORMANCE}

THE SAD THING IS: / THE REAL MESSAGE OF THE CAROL IS
~~NORMALLY~~ MISSED, / AS WE FOCUS ON SCROOGE AS THE VILLAIN OF
CHRISTMAS. BUT YOU SEE THE CAROL IS NOT JUST THE
STORY OF BOB CRATCHIT / AND TINY TIM / BEING HARASSED
BY MEAN OLD EBENEZER SCROOGE. / IT IS A DRAMATIC
STORY OF A MARVELOUS METAMORPHOSIS / THROUGH THE
ACTIVITY OF THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

FOR YEARS I HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING A ONE-MAN CAM-
PAGN TO RESTORE DIGNITY FOR SCROOGE. HE HAS BEEN
GIVEN A 'BUM RAP' / FOR HE HAS BECOME THE CLASSIC
~~MAN~~ CARICATURE OF THE MEAN AND SELFISH PERSON,
AND WE RIDICULE HIM THROUGH HIS ~~WORDS~~, 'BAH,
HUMBUG!'

ACTUALLY, THE CHRISTMAS CAROL IS A STORY OF PERSON-
AL GROWTH, / THE MIRACLE OF CHANGE, / AND THE REALITY
OF THE DIVINE POTENTIAL / THAT IS ALWAYS PRESENT
IN EVEN THE MOST DEPRAVED OF PERSONS.

IN ~~THE~~ END, / AS YOU MAY RECALL, / SCROOGE BECAME
A SENSITIVE EMPLOYER, ^{and} / A SECOND FATHER TO TINY
TIM. / HE VOICED A STRONG COMMITMENT / -- 'I WILL
HONOR CHRISTMAS IN MY HEART, / AND TRY TO KEEP IT
ALL THE YEAR. / I WILL LIVE IN THE PAST, / THE
PRESENT, / AND THE FUTURE. / . . AND THE SPIRITS OF ALL
THREE / SHALL ~~STRIKE~~ STRIVE WITH ME. / I WILL NOT
SHUT OUT THE LESSONS THEY TEACH.'

SO INSTEAD OF BEING THE VILLAIN OF THE CHRISTMAS
STORY, / SCROOGE SHOULD BE THE HERO / -- ~~NOTHING~~
MUCH IN THE SENSE THAT PAUL / TRANSCENDED HIS PAST
AND BECAME THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURE / IN THE
CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT. / UNLESS WHAT HAPPENED TO
SCROOGE HAPPENS TO EACH ONE OF US, / WE CANNOT
RIGHTLY SAY / WE ARE ^{KEEPING} ~~CELEBRATING~~ CHRISTMAS.

▶ WE DO A LOT OF GIVING AT CHRISTMAS. / IT IS AN
IMPORTANT PART OF THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF CHRIST-
MAS. / I DON'T MEAN, THE CONFORMITY-RIDDEN /

OBLIGATION-IMPELLED, / STATUS-SEEKING, / AND GUILT-
PROMPTED ~~G~~EIVING / THAT DRAINS OUR ENERGY / AS WELL
AS OUR FUNDS. / I AM TALKING ABOUT THE GIVING OF
OURSELVES, / WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE PERFORMED BY
THE PRESENTS ~~O~~R BAUBLES. / WE ARE CALLED TO
BECOME AWARE OF / AND TO GIVE BIRTH TO / THE CHRIST
~~O~~F OUR NATURE, / SYMBOLIZED BY THE NATIVITY / - JESUS
BORN IN THE MANGER.

WE SO EASILY AND SO OFTEN DRIFT INTO A 'GETTING'
CONSCIOUSNESS, / IN OUR PURSUIT OF THE THINGS OF
THE WORLD. / ...AND LIKE THE PRODIGAL SON / WE COME
TO KNOW WANT / IN OUR FAR COUNTRY OF MATERIALI~~I~~STIC
THINKING AND LIVING.

SO, CHRISTMAS CALLS US TO WAKE UP. / COME TO OUR-
SELVES, / AND GET BACK INTO A GIVING CONSCIOUSNESS -
/ AND THIS IS SO BEAUTIFULLY SYMBOLIZED IN CHRISTMAS
GIVING, / OR IT SHOULD BE.

WHATEVER MAY BE YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE 'GREATEST
STORY EVER TOLD' /- (AS FULTON OUSLER CALLS IT.) / IT
IS THE STORY OF THE GREATEST GIFT EVER GIVEN. /

JOHN 3.16 'GOD SO LOVED ~~THE~~ THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE
HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON...AND THAT WHOSOEVER
BELIEVETH ON HIM SHALL NOT DIE / BUT SHALL HAVE
EVERLASTING LIFE.'

HOW THIS HAS BEEN MISPRESERVED. / ^{AS} GOD SAYING
JESUS IS HIS ONLY SON, / AND THAT ONLY BE BELIEVE^V IN
ON HIM CAN YOU BE SAVED. /

BUT, YOU SEE, / THE GREAT GIFT IS GOD INCARNATING
HIMSELF IN AND AS MAN. / SALVATION COMES BY BELIEVING
ON THIS GOD~~SELF~~ / OR ^{DIVINE} CHRIST SELF WITHIN.

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE YOU. AND
HE GAVE HIMSELF AS A ~~KINDNESS~~ LIVING, LOVING
PRESENCE. / AND YOUR LIFE IS INTENDED TO BE A
GIVING EXPERIENCE. / LIFE IS FOR GIVING. / 'LET
YOUR LIGHT SHINE.' / BECOME A PART OF THE SOLUTION

OF SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS./ BECOME A LIGHT-BRINGER/
INSREAD OF A CREPE-HANGER.

I LOVE THE STORY OF ~~THE~~ THE MAN WHO WENT TO A
QUAKER MEETINGHOUSE,/NOT KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT
THE UNIQUE STYLE MEETING THEY HAVE./ THE CONGRE-
GATION SAT IN SILENCE FOR A LONG TIME./ THE MAN
WAS PUZZLED,/AND WHISPERED TO THE MAN ~~NE~~ NEXT TO
HIM../ 'WHEN DOES THE SERVICE BEGIN?'/ THE QUAKER
GENTLEMAN REPLIED,/XX 'WHEN THE MEETING IS OVER.'

AND IT COULD ~~BE~~ SAID THAT THE TRUE CHRISTMAS/
THE INNER DIMENSION OF CHRISTMAS,/ BEGINS WHEN THE
DAY OF CELEBRATION IS OVER./ THERE IS SLEEVES-
ROLLED-UP WORK TO BE DONE,/THE NEW CONSCIOUSNESS
TO REVEAL,/A NEW LIGHT TO SHINE./

TOO VISIONARY?/ YET A SOCIETY THAT CAN PUT MEN
ON THE MOON, AND SEND DRAMATIC PICTURES BACK
TO EARTH OF THE RINGS OF SATURN...CERTAINLY

SHOULD BE READY TO EXPLORE NEW STEPS/IN RELEASING
WHAT I CALL THE 'ADAMIC ENERGY', AND BEGIN TO
SEED THE MENTAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE PLANET WITH NEW
THOUGHTS OF TRANSCENDENT SIGNIFICANCE. ^{NEW CONSCIOUS-}
^{NESS OF PEACE.}

BE HAPPY THROUGH THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, FOR JOY IS
THE OVERFLOW OF THE CHRISTMAS PRESENCE WITHIN YOU.
BUT TOO, BE SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBI-
LITY TO BE A LIGHT UNTO THE WORLD.

DON'T FALL BACK ON THE AGE OLD COP-OUT THAT
YOU ARE ONLY ONE...WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

FERRAR ^{MENTAL}

'I AM ONLY ONE - BUT I AM ONE.

I CAN'T DO EVERYTHING, BUT I CAN DO SOMETHING.

WHAT I CAN DO, I OUGHT TO DO, AND WHAT I OUGHT
TO DO, ^{BY THE GRACE OF GOD} I WILL DO.'

G.B.S. 'GOD HAS CREATED A WORLD SO WONDERFUL,
ONLY OUR BLINDNESS AND IGNORANCE CAN KEEP
IT FROM PERFECT EXPRESSION.'

MAY EVERY 'MERRY CHRISTMAS' OR 'HAPPY HANNUKAH'

SAY 'NAMASKAR' I SALUTE THE DIVINITY IN YOU

AND MAY WE ALL SAY WITH TINY TIM 'GOD BLESS US