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PAPERS (3014)**

BOX 25

FOLDER 23

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 25, 1988

- INTRO -

IT'S CHRISTMAS MORNING. / HOW GOOD THAT YOU COULD
FIND THE TIME / AND FEEL THE COMMITMENT / TO JOIN US
HERE IN AVERY FISHER HALL. / YOU HAVE BROUGHT SOME-
THING SPECIAL / WHICH ADDS TO THE CONSCIOUSNESS TO
WHICH ~~YOU~~ ^{WE ALL} GIVE / AND FROM WHICH YOU WILL SURELY RE-
CEIVE. / YOU HAVE PROBABLY HAD YOUR FESTIVITY OF
CHRISTMAS MORNING, / THE OPENING OF GIFTS, / AND THE
EXCHANGES OF LOVE TO THOSE IN YOUR HOME, / AND
PERHAPS BY PHONE / TO THOSE ACROSS THE CITY OR
ACROSS THE COUNTRY. / AND PERHAPS YOU NOW FEEL THAT
WARM AND MELLOW SENSE / OF BEING LOVED AND BLESSED.

AND NOW... IN THE AFTERGLOW OF CHRISTMAS MORNING,
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO PONDER THE MEANING / AND EXPERI-
ENCE THE SPIRITUAL DEPTH OF THE CHRISTMAS MAGIC:

AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE NON-CHRISTIAN BY
BACKGROUND - LET THE CHRISTMAS STORY BE AS A METAPHOR
FOR THE DEEP DEPTH WITHIN YOU. AND LET OUR EVERY CHRISTMAS
BE AS A HAPPY HANUKKAH. OR EVEN SIMPLY A SEASON
GATHERING. DON'T LET HISTORY OR RITUALS OR SYMBOLISM
STAND IN YOUR WAY.

'HOME FOR CHRISTMAS' 12/25/88

DOESN'T THAT HAVE A WARM RING?

'HOME FOR CHRISTMAS' -- A NOSTALGIC LONGING^{ING} TO RETURN TO THE PLACE WHERE WE HAVE ROOTS, / TO SHARE RENEWED FELLOWSHIP WITH FAMILY, / TO SIT AROUND THE WARM AND FRIENDLY TABLE, / TO GATHER AROUND THE HEARTH OF A FIREPLACE CRACKLING WITH SPARK AND SPIRIT. / ~~BUT~~ OF COURSE, / FOR MANY OF US, / THERE IS NO GOING BACK / EXCEPT IN MEMORIES OF OTHER DAYS, / OF OTHER CHRISTMAS TIMES.

'HOME FOR CHRISTMAS' -- TO MANY PERSONS THIS MAY MEAN / GATHERING WITH THOSE WITH WHOM WE SHARE COMMON IDEALS AND VALUES / ...SUCH AS THIS SUNDAY MEETING IN AVERY FISHER HALL. / SO MANY PERSONS TELL US THAT THEY HAVE A FEELING OF COMING HOME / EACH TIME THEY JOIN IN THIS SUNDAY EXPERIENCE OF CREATIVE WORSHIP. / WE ARE GLAD ABOUT THAT...AND WE JOYFULLY WELCOME YOU HOME ON THIS GLORIOUS CHRISTMAS MORNING.

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS - / IN OUR STUDY OF TRUTH / WE COME
TO KNOW AND TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH / ~~THAT~~ IDEA THAT
THERE IS A DEPTH WITHIN US,) A PLACE OF TRANSCEN-
DENCE. (JESUS CALLED IT 'THE INNER ~~CH~~CHAMBER', / AND
AT ANY TIME WE CAN PAUSE AND BE STILL AND ENTER
IN, / AND AS JESUS SAID, 'PRAY TO THE FATHER IN
SECRET' / IT IS COMING HOME TO OUR INWARD CENTER.
'...AND THE FATHER WHO SEETH IN SECRET WILL REWARD
YOU OPENLY.' / WE REALIZE THAT THERE IS A DEPTH
WITH ^{IN} ALL THINGS AND EXPERIENCES, / ...KNOWING THIS
TODAY IS TO GET A SENSE OF THE REAL CHRISTMAS OF
THE HEART. / IT IS HAVING A QUIET TIME OF MEDITATION
/ ON THE CHRIST OF OUR OWN INNER BEING, / AND TO RE-
EXPERIENCE A BIRTH OF THE SON-OF-GOD SELF WITHIN.

NOW LET US LISTEN TO THE TIMELESS WORDS OF SCRIP-
TURE / THAT SET THE STAGE FOR THE FIRST CHRISTMAS /
THOSE LONG YEARS AGO...

LUKE 2: 8-14 READING FROM THE KING JAMES VERSION

~~I AM PARTICULARLY AVOIDING THE TRENDY MODERN VERSIONS THAT SACRIFICE THE WARMTH AND RICHNESS OF LANGUAGE IN TRYING TO ACHIEVE AN ACCURACY OF TRANSLATION. IN RESPECT TO THE CHRISTMAS STORY, THEY 'THROW OUT THE BABY WITH THE WASH.'~~

'AND THERE WERE IN THE SAME COUNTRY SHEPHERDS ABIDING IN THE FIELD, KEEPING WATCH OVER THEIR FLOCK BY NIGHT. AND, LO, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAME UPON THEM, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHONE ROUND ABOUT THEM; AND THEY WERE SORE AFRAID. AND THE ANGEL SAID ~~XXXXXX~~ UNTO THEM, FEAR NOT: FOR BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD. AND THIS SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO YOU; YE SHALL FIND THE BABE WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER. AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS WITH THE ANGEL A MULTITUDE OF THE HEAVENLY HOST PRAISING GOD, AND SAYING, GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.'

AND SO THE SHEPHERDS IN THE FIELD CAME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS!

AND THE ~~BRIEF~~ ACCOUNT IN MATTHEW 2: 1,2, 9-11
NOW WHEN JESUS WAS BORN IN BETHLEHAM...WISE-MEN CAME FROM THE EAST, SAYING, WHERE IS HE THAT IS BORN KING OF THE JEWS, FOR WE SAW HIS STAR IN THE EAST, AND ARE COME TO WORSHIP HIM...AND THE

STAR...WENT BEFORE THEM, TILL IT CAME AND STOOD OVER WHERE THE YOUNG CHILD WAS. AND WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR, THEY REJOICED WITH EXCEEDING GREAT JOY. AND THEY CAME INTO THE HOUSE AND SAW THE YOUNG CHILD WITH MARY HIS MOTHER; AND THEY FELL DOWN AND WORSHIPPED HIM; AND OPENING THEIR TREASURES THEY OFFERED UNTO HIM GIFTS, GOLD AND FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.

SO THE WISE MEN CAME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS!

JESUS PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON/ IS AN INTERESTING STORY OF PERSONAL GROWTH./ THE PRODIGAL GOING OUT INTO THE 'FAR COUNTRY'/ REPRESENTS ALL OF US IN THE STAGES OF LIFE/ WHERE WE LIVE AT THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF BEING,/ WITH OUR INTERESTS AND ASPIRATIONS/ CENTERED IN THINGS AND ACHIEVEMENTS "OUT THERE."/ BUT WE CANNOT LIVE BY MATERIAL AND SENSUAL THINGS ALONE,/ AND WE COME TO KNOW WANT,/ WHICH MEANS WE BECOME AWARE/ THAT THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN THIS./ THE STORY ^{IMPLIES THAT} ~~SAYS, 'HE CAME TO KNOW WANT'~~ ^{THE PRODIGAL} ADMITTED TO HIMSELF THAT OF HIMSELF HE COULDN'T FIND FULFILLMENT./ HE RESOLVED TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIS LIFE../ HE 'CAME TO HIMSELF'. IN OTHER WORDS HE CAME HOME. THIS DIDN'T MEAN GOING ANYWHERE

~~THIS DOESN'T MEAN~~ GEOGRAPHICAL ~~TRAVEL~~^{LY}. 'I WILL
ARISE AND GO UNTO THE FATHER', HE SAID. BUT THE
FATHER IS THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITHIN. HE WOKE UP.

THE ANCIENT CHINESE COMPASS, / FROM WHICH ALL
MODERN SYSTEMS OF NAVIGATION EVOLVED, / ..ORIGINALLY
~~XXXXXX~~ HAD FIVE POINTS INSTEAD OF FOUR. / THERE
WAS WEST AND EAST AND NORTH AND SOUTH. / ..AND A
FIFTH ONE: WHERE YOU ARE. / THE PRODIGAL WOKE UP
TO WHERE HE WAS, / AND WHO HE WAS. / UNTIL WE KNOW
WHO WE ARE, / WE ARE FOREVER ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE
KINGDOM, / REDUCED TO LOOKING IN A WINDOW. / MUCH
PRAYER AND WORSHIP IS LITTLE MORE THAN WINDOW-
PEEPING. / IT IS SIGNIFICANT IN THE PARABLE, / THAT
WHEN HE TURNED TOWARD HOME, / 'THE FATHER CAME FORTH
TO MEET HIM.' / WHEN WE TURN TO GOD, / THERE IS A
SENSE IN WHICH GOD TURNS TOWARD US. / BUT WHEN WE
OPEN OURSELF TO THE FLOW, / IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE
ALLNESS / OF GOD'S SUBSTANCE AND LIFE AND LOVE / ARE
MOBILIZED AS OUR UNFOLDING RESOURCE, / ACTUALLY IT

IS ALWAYS THE FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU
THE KINGDOM'. / BUT WHEN WE REFOCUS OURSELVES ON THE
INNER CENTER, / THE 'ALWAYS' OF THE INNER PROCESS,
BECOMES THE IMMINENCES OF ITS ACTIVITY. / .. AND WE
EXPERIENCE A DYNAMIC FLOW OF ABUNDANCE, / CHARACTER-
IZED AS RINGS ON OUR FINGERS, / ROBES ON OUR SHOULDERS
/ AND THERE IS A KILL-THE-FATTED-CALF CELEBRATION
IN OUR BEHALF. / AND WE ARE IMBUED WITH POWER. / ..
THE POWER OF SELF-DISCIPLINE. / .. WE HAVE ~~THE~~ POWER
TO SAY 'NO!' ~~TO~~ TO THE IMPULSES ~~AND~~ COMPULSIONS OF
THE HUMAN SELF. / IT IS LIKE / AFTER YEARS OF ADDIC-
TION TO TELEVISION, / SUDDENLY WAKING UP TO THE
REALIZATION / THAT YOU CAN DEVELOP SKILL / IN THE
CREATIVE ART OF USING THE 'OFF' SWITCH.

WE COULD SAY THAT ~~CHRISTMAS~~ FOR MOST PERSONS / IS
A 'FAR COUNTRY EXPERIENCE'. / THAT IS A SHOCKING
THING TO SAY! / BUT JUST LOOK AT US. / WE MAY GO
THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF ^{DOING CHRISTMAS} ~~THE OUTWARD OBSERVANCE~~
~~SLAVISHLY ERECTING THE FACADE YEAR AFTER YEAR...~~

WE ^{DECORATE} ~~ERECT~~ GLORIOUS TREES, / AND PLAY AND SING THE
LOVELY CAROLS, / AND EXCHANGE CARDS AND GIFTS. / BUT
HOW OFTEN WE BECOME SO PREOCCUPIED IN DOING
CHRISTMAS / THAT WE FORGET WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT /
THE LOVELY SYMBOLS AND LEGENDS OF CHRISTMAS POINT
TO SOMETHING VERY PERSONAL, / THE AWAKENING OF THE
SON-OF-GOD SELF IN THE HEART OF US. / AS THE
ORIENTAL SAYING GOES, / ' THE TEACHER POINTS TO THE
TRUTH, THE STUDENT WORSHIPS THE POINTER. '

LET ME SAY, / I BELIEVE IN CHRISTMAS, / AND I NEVER
FIND IT DIFFICULT / ^{TO DECORATE A TREE, TO PUT UP THE CRUICH} ~~TO ERECT THE FACADE~~ YEAR AFTER
YEAR, / OR TO ENGAGE IN THE FULL BROAD RANGE OF ~~CHRIS~~
CHRISTMAS MAGIC. / BUT FOR ME, / THE REASON INVOLVE-
COMES EASY / IS THT I REMIND MYSELF / THAT THERE IS
SOMETHING SO MUCH DEEPER, / RICHER, / AND MORE TRANS
CENDENT / ^{OUTER OBSERVANCE} THAN THE ~~FACADE~~ REVEALS.

'AS THE MEDIEVAL MYSTIC POET, ANGELUS SILESIUS
SAYS, / 'THOUGH CHRIST A THOUSAND TIMES IN
BETHLEHEM BE BORN, / IF HE'S NOT BORN IN THEE, /

THY SOUL IS ALL FORLORN8-

THUS EVEN THOUGH WE GET INVOLVED IN A LAVISH
OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS./..IT IS IMPORTANT TO 'COME
HOME FOR CHRISTMAS'. *TO GET THE DEEPER MEANING
AND THE INNER FEELING
AND TO HAVE A TRANSCENDENT EXPERIENCE.*

WE READ FOR YOU THE GOSPEL ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST
CHRISTMAS/IN THE LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM LONG
YEARS AGO./ BECAUSE THIS IS ALL WE HAVE TO GO ON,
THERE ARE MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS./..SOME THAT
MUST FOREVER REMAIN UNANSWERABLE./ AS STUDENTS OF
TRUTH/WE MUST BE MATURE ENOUGH/TO DEAL WITH THE
FACT THAT THAT THE WHOLE CHRISTMAS STORY/HAS ~~EXX~~
EVOLVED OUT OF LEGENDS THAT WERE HIGHLY IDEALIZED/
THROUGH THE PASSING CENTURIES...AND THERE IS
PROBABLY LITTLE ^{IN THE BIBLE ACCOUNT} THAT IS HISTORICALLY ACCURATE./ WE
KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT JESUS' BIRTH,/OR THE CIRCUM-
STANCES SURROUNDING IT./ THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW
AND LUKE,/THE ONLY ONES THAT GIVE THE LEGENDS
OF CHRISTMAS,/BOTH DREW HEAVILY ON THE GOSPEL OF
MARK/IN RECONSTRUCTING THE STORY A WHOLE GENERATION
LATER./ AND STRANGELY MARK DOESN'T MENTION THE

NATIVITY LEGENDS AT ALL./ ALSO STRANGE IS THE FACT
/THAT MATTHEW GIVES THE LEGEND OF THE WISE MEN FROM
THE EAST/AND LUKE THE STORY OF THE SHEPHERDS IN
THE FIELD./ RECOUNTING THE SAME STORY FROM MEMORY
MANY YEARS LATER.

AND THERE IS THE LEGEND 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 LAID HIM IN A MANGER.

~~DISGUST~~
~~NO DELIGHT~~ SO MANY SERMONS HAVE BEEN PREACHE
/ABOUT THE INNKEEPER WHO HAS BECOME/ THE CLASSIC
SYMBOL OF THE CRUEL, /HARD-HEARTED,/ MATERIALISTIC
MERCHANT,/ WHO COULDN'T FIND ROOM FOR THE 'BIRTH'
OF A KING./ ACTUALLY THAT SUPPOSED 'INN' WAS NO
HOWARD JOHNSON MOTEL ^{OR A TRUCK STOP — WITH A BAR OF LOUD-LAUGHING REVEALS} TO BE FOUND ON THE HIGHWAY.

IT WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A PROTECTIVE ENCLAVE, KHAN
WHERE TRAVELERS COULD FIND REFUGE/ FROM THE PERILS
OF WILD ANIMALS AND THIEVES. ^{SLEPT ON THE GROUND} LITTLE MORE THAN
A CIRCLING OF THE WAGONS BY EARLY PIONEERS/AS

PROTECTION AGAINST THE MARAUDING INDIANS.

BUT MARY AND JOSEPH FOUND REFUGE IN A CAVE IN THE
NEARBY HILLS, ^{WARM + SECURE} / QUITE POSSIBLY LED THERE BY THE VERY
INNKEEPER WHO ~~HAS~~ FOR SO LONG BEEN PILLORIED / AS
CRUEL AND HARD-HEARTED.

IT IS REALLY NOT ALL THAT IMPORTANT WHEN JESUS
WAS BORN...EVEN WHERE. HE DID NOT COME TO PROCLAIM
HIMSELF, / BUT TO CELEBRATE THE GOD-POSSIBILITY
WITHIN EVERY PERSON. / HE WAS NOT TRYING TO TELL
US OF HIS DIVINITY, / MAKING HIM THE GREAT EXCEPTION
.. / BUT TO TELL ~~US~~ OF ~~OUR~~ DIVINITY, ~~SHOWING~~ US THAT
IN HIS ~~OVERCOMING~~ / THERE IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF THE
'I AM' / REACHING ITS FULL PERSONAL EXPRESSION IN
MAN.

~~THUS~~, ~~THE~~ GREAT EVENT IN THE LIFE OF JESUS / WAS
NOT HIS BIRTH AT ALL, / BUT THE AWAKENING THAT TOOK
PLACE WITHIN HIM / DURING THE ~~YEARS~~ OF ~~HIS~~ GROWTH.
THE ~~DISCOVERY~~ OF THE DIVINE DIMENSION WITHIN HIM,
THIS IN ALL OF US.

LOOKING AT THE NATIVITY STORY / FROM A METAPHYSICAL
OR PERSONALLY SYMBOLIC SENSE, / WE SEE THAT IT IS
THE STORY OF THE BIRTH INTO ~~THE~~ CONSCIOUSNESS / OF
THE IDEA OF THE CHRIST OR DIVINE IDENTITY.

► THE BIBLE HAS TWO GREAT MESSAGES: / THE INVOLUTION
OF THE GOD-MAN {FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS}, / MAN
CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE-LIKENESS. / AND EVOLUTION,
THE PROGRESSIVE UNFOLDING OF THIS GOD-POTENTIAL
IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE. / AN INTERESTING STUDY IS
TO BE MADE OF THE EVOLVING PROCESS / AS REVEALED
THROUGH THE BIBLE STORIES / AND THE METAPHYSICAL
SIGNIFICANCE OF NAMES AND PLACES. / THE WHOLE
BIBLE STORY, ^{IS} REVEALED IN A NOT-SHELL IN JESUS':
PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON, / ^{WHICH DEPICTS} ~~IS~~ THE EVOLUTION OR
COMING HOME OF EVERYMAN. / AND AS MOSES AND THE
ISRAELITES FOUND, / IT IS A LONG WAY TO THE PROMISED
LAND.

► WE ARE TOLD 'IT IS NOT YET MANIFEST WHAT MAN
SHALL BE.' / ~~MAN HAS GONE THROUGH MANY STAGES...~~

THE RACE OF MAN HAS GONE THROUGH MANY STAGES, / BUT
THE NEXT STAGE IS THE STEP UPWARD INTO COSMIC
CONSCIOUSNESS. / TEILHARD CALLS IT 'THE OMEGA POINT'
^{BUT} DON'T BE IN A RUSH, / FOR THIS STAGE MAY TAKE EONS
OF TIME. / ~~BUT~~ ^{However} IT IS HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING THE
JESUS' MISSION. / JESUS DISCOVERED AND DEMONSTRATED
THE CHRIST POTENTIAL, / WHICH ACCELERATED THE EVOLU-
TIONARY PROCESS FOR ALL PERSONS. / IT WAS AN
IMPORTANT BREAKTHROUGH. / FOR IT GAVE MEANING AND
DIRECTION FOR OUR ETERNAL ONGOING. / AND IT MADE THE
CHRIST POTENTIAL / BELIEVABLE AND ACHIEVABLE.

IN A METAPHORIC SENSE / JESUS REVEALED TO ALL OF
US / THAT WE ARE ACTUALLY BUTTERFLIES IN THE
MAKING. HOWEVER BY AND LARGE HIS MESSAGE HAS
BEEN IGNORED, AND RELIGIONS HAVE INSISTED THAT
WE ARE LOWLY WORMS, THAT ONLY JESUS IS A BUTTER-
FLY.

WHEN ~~THE~~ THE ANGEL FIRST APPEARED TO THE SHEPHERDS IN
THE FIELD, THEIR FIRST REACTION WAS, 'THEY WERE

SORE AFRAID.' / IN OTHER WORDS, / IN HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS, / IT SEEMED TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. THIS IS THE TRAGEDY OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS. / WE THINK A GOOD THING IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. / BUT TROUBLE NEVER SURPRISES US. / WE MAY REGRET IT, / BUT WE DO NOT THINK IT IS TOO BAD TO BE TRUE. / ... BECAUSE WE HAVE A CATERPILLAR CONSCIOUSNESS. THE ANGEL, OUR STILL SMALL VOICE WITHIN / TELLS US OF BUTTERFLIES, BUT WE ARE SORE AFRAID.

THE ANGEL SAID, 'FEAR NOT. / FOR I BRING YOU GREAT TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.' / SUDDENLY THEY SAID 'YES' TO THE ANGEL OR INNER GUIDANCE, / AND THERE BROKE OUT HEAVENLY MUSIC. / IT IS ALWAYS PRESENT WITHIN ^{EVEN THOUGH TURNED DOWN} // SO THE SHEPHERDS WENT AND FOUND THE PLACE WHERE ~~THE~~ ^N THE YOUNG CHILD LAY. / AND THEY RETURNED GLORIFYING AND PRAISING GOD / FOR ALL THEY HAD HEARD AND SEEN, / THUS WE ACCEPT THE IDEA OF OUR DIVINE IDENTITY, IN FAITH AND FEELING.

IN THE STORY OF THE WISE MEN, / WE HAVE A SYMBOL OF
OUR INTELLECT, / THE WAY OF LOGIC AND REASON. / TRA-
DITION HAS IT / THAT THEY WERE MAGI OR ASTROLOGICAL
MASTERS / WHO HAD PROPHESED THAT A GREAT NEW PROPHE-
WOULD BE BORN, / WHERE A CERTAIN STAR WOULD LEAD ^{THEM.} ~~THE~~
/ THE STAR WAS PROBABLY MORE OF AN ASTROLOGICAL
COMPUTATION / THAN A LITERAL HEAVENLY BODY.

THERE IS THAT OF US THAT ~~DOES~~ GOES TO TRUTH THROUGH
INTELLECTUAL STUDY. / THERE IS A CERTAIN LOGIC
TO THE IDEA OF HUMAN POTENTIAL, / WHICH LEADS TO THE
BETHLEHEM PLACE IN CONSCIOUSNESS, / WHERE WE COME
HOME FOR CHRISTMAS.

BUT THE SIGNIFICANT THING ABOUT THE STORY / IS THAT
THERE IS A CONVERGENCE OF THE TWO ⁶LEADS / --
SYMBOLIZING SCIENCE / AND RELIGION, / FAITH AND KNOW-
LEDGE, / FEELING AND THOUGHT, /

TO 'COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS' / IS TO GO BEYOND
THE OUTER CELEBRATION, / AND REALLY GET INVOLVED
WITHIN.

WALT WHITMAN WAS ACCUSED OF EGOTISM OR SACRELEGE
WHEN HE SANG, / IN HIS 'LEAVES OF GRASS', / 'I CELE-
BRATE MYSELF.' / ACTUALLY HE MAY HAVE BEEN CLOSER
TO ~~THE~~ REAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS / ~~THEN~~ MOST PER-
FUNCTORY CELEBRATIONS / WHICH CONSIST PRIMARILY
OF ERECTING THE FACADE / AND GOING THROUGH THE
ANNUAL ~~CHARADE~~.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATES YOU, / THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST-
AWARENESS / IN THE MANGER OF YOUR INNER BETHLEHEM, /
AN AWARENESS ^{THAT} COMES THROUGH THE LOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS
OF THE INTELLECT, / SYMBOLIZED BY THE ~~THREE~~ WISE MEN
FROM THE EAST. / . AND THROUGH THE FEELINGS OF THE
HEART, / SYMBOLIZED BY THE SHEPHERDS OF THE FIELD.
WHEN ~~CHRISTMAS~~ REALLY CELEBRATES YOU, / IT IS A
VITAL FORCE FOR GROWTH AND OVERCOMING.

ONE OF THE GREAT CLASSICS OF CHRISTMAS / IS DICKENS'
'CHRISTMAS CAROL'. / PERHAPS YOU SAW GEORGE C. SCOTT
PORTRAYAL ^{THURSDAY NIGHT} ~~LAST YEAR~~. IT WAS A MASTERFUL ^{PENULTIMATE} PERFORMANC

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AGAINST WHICH ALL FUTURE PORTRAYALS WILL HAVE TO BE JUDGED. / THE SAD THING IS THAT THE STORY HAS BEEN PERVERTED, / THE REAL MEANING LOST. / IT IS NOT JUST THE STORY OF BOB CRATCHETT / AND TINY TIM, / AND THE HARASSMENT OF MEAN OLD EBENEZER SCROOGE. / IT IS A DRAMATIC STORY OF A MARVELOUS METAMORPHOSIS / THROUGH THE ACTIVITY OF THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT. / FOR YEARS I HAVE WAGED A ONE-MAN CRUSADE / TO RESTORE DIGNITY TO SCROOGE. / HE HAS BEEN GIVEN A 'BUM RAP' / FOR HE HAS BECOME THE CLASSIC CARICATURE / OF THE MEAN AND SELFISH BUSINESS PERSON, / AND WE RIDICULE HIM THROUGH HIS WORDS, 'BAH HUMBUG!'

ACTUALLY THE CHRISTMAS CAROL / IS A STORY OF PERSONAL GROWTH, / THE MIRACLE OF CHANGE, / AND THE REALITY OF DIVINE POTENTIALITY THAT IS ALWAYS PRESENT / IN EVEN THE MOST DEPRAVED PERSONS. / SCROOGE FINALLY CAME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS. / HE BECAME A SENSITIVE EMPLOYER, / A SECOND FATHER TO TINY TIM. / HE VOICED A STRONG COMMITMENT: / 'I WILL

HONOR CHRISTMAS IN MY HEART ~~AND~~ AND TRY TO KEEP IT
ALL THE YEAR. / I WILL LIVE IN THE PAST, / THE PRESENT
AND THE FUTURE. / THE SPIRITS OF ALL THREE SHALL
STRIVE WITH ME. / I WILL NOT SHUT OUT THE LESSONS
THEY TEACH. / HIS EXPERIENCE WAS NOT UNLIKE THE
STORY OF JOB AND HIS STRIVING WITH THE THREE
COMFORTERS. / IN BOTH CASES THERE WAS A DRAMATIC
METAMORPHOSIS, / THE CATERPILLAR BREAKING
LOOSE / INTO THE BUTTERFLY OF A NEW LIFE.

► INSTEAD OF BEING THE VILLAIN OF CHRISTMAS, / SCROG
SHOULD BE A BRIGHT LIGHT /- MUCH IN THE SENSE THAT
PAUL TRANSCENDED HIS PAST / AS A ~~WIKK~~ PERSECUTOR OF
CHRISTIANS / AND BECAME THE GREAT LIGHT IN THE
CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT. / UNLESS WHAT HAPPENED TO
SCROOGE HAPPENS IN SOME WAY IN EACH OF US, / WE
CANNOT SAY WE ARE CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS, / AND MOST
CERTAINLY NOT LETTING CHRISTMAS CELEBRATE US.

~~HEY~~ "SCROOGE KNEW HOW TO KEEP CHRISTMAS" - DO YOU?

YOU MAY RECALL THAT DICKENS' 'CHRISTMAS CAROL'

FEATURES: / THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST, CHRISTMAS
PRESENT, AND CHRISTMAS FUTURE. ^{CHRISTMAS PAST} YOU MAY WANT TO
LOOK BACK IN YOUR MEMORY TO ~~C~~HRISTMASES OF OTHER
YEARS, / ESPECIALLY AS THEY IMPINGE ON THE PRESENT
EXPERIENCE. / YOU MAY RECALL SAD TIMES, / UNHAPPY
TIMES WHICH YOU LOOK UPON WITH REGRET OR BITTER-
NESS. / ^{OR} EVEN ~~H~~APPY TIMES, / HEART-WARMING EXPERIENCES
THAT YOU RECALL TODAY WITH NOSTALGIA, / ~~E~~VEN
LONGING. / YOU CAN'T CHANGE THESE MEMORIES, / NOR
HAVE THEM BACK TO LIVE OVER AGAIN. / BUT YOU CAN
CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THEM, / AND BRING THEM
INTO THE CONTEXT OF TODAY'S EXPERIENCE. / THEY WERE
IMPORTANT STAGES IN YOUR GROWING UP. / BUT THEY
HAVE 'COME TO PASS.' / AND THEY WILL BRING A
BLESSING TO YOUR CHRISTMAS TODAY / IF YOU KNOW, / REALLY
KNOW, / THAT 'ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR YOUR GOOD
AND CHRISTMAS PRESENT. LOOK AT YOURSELF TODAY, / THE
DEMANDS AND PRESSURES, / THE INNER CONFUSIONS AND
DOUBTS. / ADMIT TO THE FACADE OF CHRISTMAS THAT

YOU HAVE ERECTED, / THE MASK OF CHRISTMAS JOY THAT
YOU HAVE PUT ON.. / REALIZE THAT THESE ARE THE
MAKINGS FOR A HAPPENING../..BUT BE WILLING~~E~~ TO LET IT
HAPPEN../..COMMIT YOURSELF TO LETTING IT HAPPEN../..
LETTING~~E~~ THE CHRIST CHILD~~E~~ BE BORN / IN THE MANGER OF
YOUR HEART.

THEN CHRISTMAS FUTURE. CHRISTMAS IS AN UNFINISHED
STORY. / IT IS NOT TOO LATE / TO REFLECT IN A CHRIST-
MAS DREAM../..THE KIND OF CHRISTMAS YOU~~E~~ WOULD LIKE
TO EXPERIENCE BEFORE THIS DAY IS OVER, / BEFORE
THIS DAY GETS AWAY FROM YOU WRITE A DIARY OF THE
DAY AS IF IT HAD~~E~~ HAPPENED YESTERDAY../..DEALING WITH
ALL THE FACETS OF YOUR LIFE../..FINANCES, / RELATION-
SHIPS, / HEALTH, / WORK-~~E~~ LIFE../..AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH/

THIS IS CHRISTMAS FUTURE. WRITE IT IN THE FORM
OF A PROCLAMATION FOR YOURSELF. / PUT IT IN AN
ENVELOPE AND HOLD~~E~~ IT UNTIL NEXT ^{SUNDAY} ~~WEEK~~ ON NEW
YEAR'S~~E~~ DAY. / ~~AT THAT TIME~~ TAKE SOME TIME TO READ

IT OVER PRAYERFULLY~~Y~~ AND CAREFULLY. IT CAN BE A
VITAL MEANS OF GIVING CONTINUITY/TO THE FACE OF
YOUR~~CHRISTMAS~~.~~/.~~ GIVING STRUCTURE BEHIND THE
FACADE, AND OF ~~M~~AKING YOUR DREAM A REALITY.

A MAN ATTENDED A QUAKER CHURCH FOR THE FIRST TIME/
HE SAT RESTLESSLY/AS THERE WAS A PROLONGED PERIOD
OF SILENCE./ HE TURNED ~~TO~~ THE MAN NEXT TO HIM AND
WHISPERED,/'WHEN DOES THE SERVICE BEGIN.'/ THE MAN
LEANED OVER AND WHISPERED,/'WHEN THE MEETING IS
OVER.'

WHEN WE COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS,/AND GET CENTERED
IN THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST/IN THE MANGER OF OUR
HEART..~~/.~~ THE TRUE CHRIST MASS BEGINS WHEN THE~~DAY~~
OF CELEBRATION IS OVER./THERE IS A SLEEVES-ROLLED-
UP WORK TO BE DONE,/A~~NEW~~ CONSCIOUSNESS TO REVEAL/
AND THE LIGHT OF OUR PERSONAL STAR TO SHINE.

IT TAKES EF^{ORT} FORT TO BREAK OUT OF THE VICE-LIKE
HOLD THAT OUTER CHRISTMAS HAS UPON US./ THE WHOLE

STORY HAS BEEN SENTIMENTALIZED /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 ROUTINENESS./..NOT THE LEAST BIT
CHANGED BY THE EXPERIENCE.

CHRISTMAS SHOULD NOT BE A SEASONAL BACKWARD GLANCE
AT AN EVENT OF SO LONG AGO/THAT WE CAN ONLY DEAL
WITH IT IN SYMBOLIC FORM/THROUGH ASEMBLING OUR
CHRISTMAS CRECHE,/WHICH IS A KIND OF PASTE-ON-PIET
OF THE SEASON., ^{AND} ~~WHICH~~ IS SOON PACKED AWAY WITH
ORNAMENTS AND TINSEL,/WHEN THE PERFUNCTORY PRAC-
ICE HAS HAS BEEN FULFILLED./ CHRISTMAS SHOULD
RATHER, BE/A FORWARD LOOK./ IT IS A PRPHETIC DAY/
OR/SHOULD BE./ THE~~B~~BIRTH OF THE~~C~~CHRIST,/YOUR OWN
CHRISTMAS STAR,/BELONGS TO AN ORDER OF LIFE/NOT
YET ATTAINED,/A GLIMPSE~~E~~OF A RACE OF PEOPLE YET
TO BE./ AND WE CAN DREAM!

SO...IT'S NOT TOO LATE...COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

AND AS TINY TIM SAYS, "GOD BLESS US ALL-- EVERY ONE"