The story is told of a clergyman who fell asleep in his study on Christmas morning, dreaming of a world into which Jesus had never come.

In his dream he found himself looking through his home. There were no little stockings in the chimney corner, no Christmas bells or wreaths of holly, and no Christ to comfort, gladden and save. He walked out on the public street, but there was no church with the spire pointing to heaven. He came back and sat down in his library, but every book about the Saviour had disappeared.

The doorbell rang, and a child asked him to visit his dying mother. He hastened with the weeping child, sat down at the mother’s bedside and said, “I have something here that will comfort you.” He opened his Bible to look for a familiar promise to comfort her, but his Bible ended with Malachi. There were no Gospels, no promises of hope and salvation. He could only bow his head and weep with the mother and her family in utter despair.

Two days afterward he stood beside the mother’s coffin, conducting the funeral service. There was no message of consolation, no open heaven, only “dust to dust, and ashes to ashes” and one long, eternal farewell. He realized at length that Jesus had not
come, and he burst into tears and bitter weeping in his sorrowful dream.

He awakened with a start, and a great shout of joy and praise burst from his lips as he heard his choir singing in the church close by:

"O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
"O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem! . . .
"O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord."

What a bleak world this would be if Christ had not come!—By Morris Chalfant, *Signs of the Times*, December 1983.

Quote: “Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels’ song. Humanity is still as much the object of heaven’s solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near. Angels from the courts above will attend the steps of those who come and go at God’s command.”—By E. G. White, *These Times*, December 1968.

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Howard Kershner tells of how nine years of his boyhood were spent in a great forest in the Ozark hills in southern Missouri. The nearest neighbor was one mile distant from his mountain cabin. One day he was sent for an errand that took him outside of his knowledge of the surrounding terrain. On the way back he took a shortcut through the hills where there was no path or trail. As the sun was setting, heavy clouds rolled up from the south blotting out most of the light that filtered down through the tall trees covered with heavy foliage. Darkness came quite suddenly.

Being unfamiliar with the hills and valleys in this section, Kershner lost his sense of direction and became frightened to discover that he did not know the way home. Knowing that it was useless to continue walking, for he might be going in the wrong direction, he decided not to panic; then he sat down to consider carefully what he should do.

Presently the clouds in the west broke away, revealing the luminous and beautiful evening star. What a wonderful sight to that boy! He immediately recovered his sense of direction, for he knew that the star was almost due west. The rift in the clouds and the star gave him enough light to avoid the boulders and heavy underbrush. Proceeding then in
the right direction, he soon came upon a familiar path and knew that he was less than two miles from home. When he finally arrived a half hour later, home never looked so good!

As the evening star was instrumental in leading Kershner home, so too the Star of Christmas led the Wise Men to the Saviour. There were probably others who saw the same Christmas star and paused for a moment to casually remark on its brightness; however, they did not follow the star to the Saviour because they were content to be mere spectators. John Calvin used to say, “The heavenly Father chose to appoint the Star and the Magi as our guides, to lead directly to His Son.”

To this day when Kershner thinks of the lines of the old song, “Hold thy lighted lamp on high, Be a star in someone’s sky,” he remembers his boyhood experience. The star in his sky that evening saved him from the terror of a long night lost in the woods. The song has had a deeper meaning to him ever since.

There is much darkness, doubt, confusion, and suffering in this world. Many people have lost their sense of direction and purpose in life. To these lost souls, the Christian can be a star pointing them to the Saviour.—By George Bogan, *These Times*, December 1970.

Quote: “The out-and-out Christian is a joyful Christian. The half-and-half Christian is the kind of Christian that a great many of us are—little acquainted with the Lord. Why should we live halfway up the hill and swathed in the mists, when we might have an unclouded sky and a radiant sun over our heads if we would climb higher and walk in the light of His face?”—By Alexander Maclaren, *Signs of the Times*, October 8, 1929.

NEW from Pacific Press—*Is Jesus Enough?* By Dan Jackson. In this age of self-gratification, how many cars, houses, bank accounts, motor homes, or swimming pools will it take to satisfy the hungry soul? In his down-home style, Pastor Dan Jackson shares that as we behold the cross of Christ we will be ravished by His matchless charms. You will rejoice as you discover that, whether you have $2,700 or $27,000,000,000, Jesus is enough!

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A girl reading one of her schoolbooks one evening suddenly exclaimed: “Oh, I can’t stand this stuff! How can a person read a textbook as dry as this?” She put the book back
on the shelf, intending the next day to drop her class and take something else instead.

The next evening the girl’s mother wondered why her daughter was up so late. Quietly she entered the room.

“Don’t you think it is about time for bed?” she said.

“No, mom, I am reading the most interesting book I have found, and I can’t go to bed yet.” What do you suppose she held? The same book that one evening earlier she had put on her bookshelf in disgust!

What caused the change?

That day she had had the rare privilege of becoming acquainted with the author of the book. She had come to like him, and that changed everything. Likewise as one becomes better acquainted with Jesus, the Bible becomes more interesting than it has ever been before.—By Kenneth Strand, Signs of the Times, February 2, 1954.

Quote: “But for Jesus’ birth it were better that we had never been born.”—By Charles G. Bellah, Signs of the Times, August 20, 1929.

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“Funny things occurred down at our house Christmas,” said the brakeman. “I’m away almost every night in the year, but Christmas night I got a day off and stayed home with my wife and babies. Next door to us lives one of the stingiest old codgers that ever was. Wheeler is his name, and everybody calls him Stingy Wheeler. He is an old chap who has no children and no friends, and who is said to be worth a good deal of money. I’ve had a good deal of sickness in my house this winter, and times have been right hard with us. It was mighty little Christmas we had, I can tell you.”

“Well, there’s one thing we can say, Henry,’ said my wife to me, ‘and that is that our house is not hard to warm. It beats all the way coal does last us here. That half ton you got a month ago isn’t nearly all gone yet.’
“‘That’s the way coal lasts when there’s nobody to steal it, as we had where we lived last,’ I replied. ‘Now there’s only one man in this neighborhood I’d suspect of stealing coal, and that’s Stingy Wheeler. I wouldn’t trust that old codger very far.’

‘Neither would I,’ said my wife.

“That night, after we had got in bed, my wife woke me, saying she was sure she heard someone in the coal house.

‘I believe it’s old Wheeler,’ I said.

‘So do I,’ my wife replied; ‘but be careful, Henry, and don’t get into any trouble with the old fellow,’ she added, as I hastily dressed myself.

“Softly I tiptoed out to the coal house, and sure enough there was a man there, hard at work with a shovel. It was stingy Wheeler, and he was throwing coal from his bin into mine.”—From Chicago Herald, Signs of the Times, January 23, 1893.

Quote: “Words of cheer and encouragement spoken when the soul is sick and the pulse of courage is low, these are regarded by the Saviour as if spoken to Himself. As hearts are cheered, the heavenly angels look on in pleased recognition.”—Unknown, Signs of the Times, January 22, 1929.

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Years ago, in a royal palace, a princess listened as her father’s personal physician forbade her to go to the bedside of her daughter, dying of diphtheria. But she could not bear the thought of her precious darling lying there alone, feverish and delirious. An irresistible urge came over her to go into the sickroom.

She looked down the long corridor. All was quiet. Quickly she slipped into her tiny daughter’s room and bent tenderly over the little form. As the child became aware of her mother’s presence she whispered, “Mother, you have come. Kiss me. I thought that you didn’t love me anymore. Kiss me, mother.” As the mother gazed into those appealing eyes she quickly kissed her little daughter and held her fast in her arms. That night the child died. A few days later the mother died, too, paying the price of love.

Likewise Jesus’ love for you cost Him His life. Won’t you, this day, give your life to Him?—By Richard A. Rentfro, Signs of the Times, October 27, 1953.
Quote: “‘He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.’ He pressed upon them the gifts of His love, but they rejected them. Yet He never failed in His loving, never grew impatient, never wearied in His offers of blessing, never withdrew His gracious gifts. He stood with His hands outstretched toward His own until they nailed those hands back on the cross; and even then He let drop out of them, from their very wounds, the gifts of redemption for the world.”—By J. R. Miller, Signs of the Times, October 27, 1953.

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Compiled by Dale Galusha. Please pass this newsletter on to others.