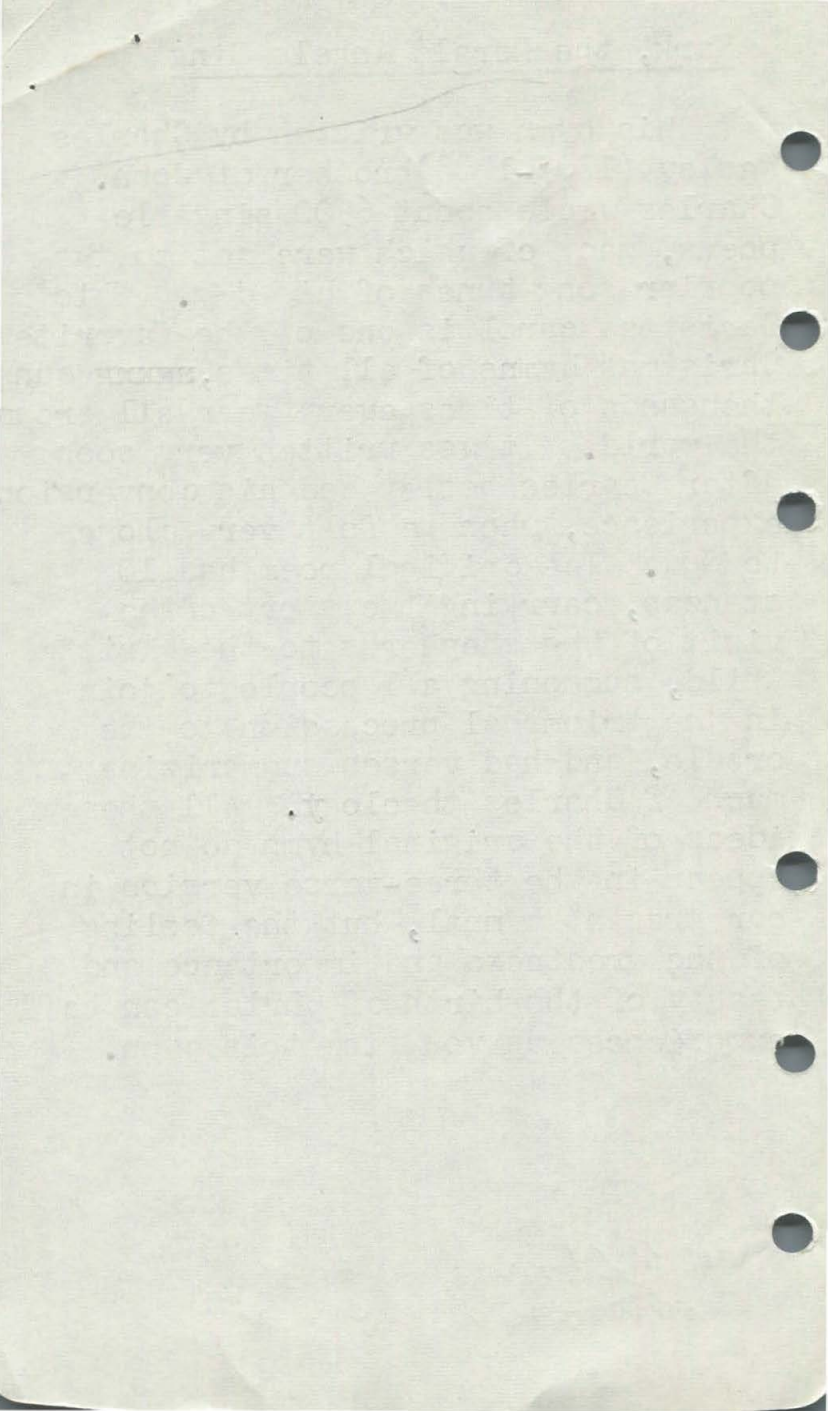


Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

This hymn was written by Charles Wesley (1707-1788) brother of John. Charles wrote about 6500 singable poems, many of which were set to the popular song tunes of his day. This Christmas carol is one of the favorite Christmas hymns of all times, ~~being~~ sung thousands of times every year all around the world. It was written very soon after Charles Wesley had his conversion experience, when he felt very close to God. The original poem had 10 stanzas, carrying the story of the visit of the shepherds to the Christ Child, summoning all people to join in the triumphal procession to the cradle, and had verses summarizing much of Charles theology. All these ideas of the original hymn do not appear in the three-verse version in our present hymnal, but the feeling of the greatness and importance and beauty of the birth of Christ can be experienced as you sing this hymn.

used Christmas Eve, 1964,
Montrose, Colo.

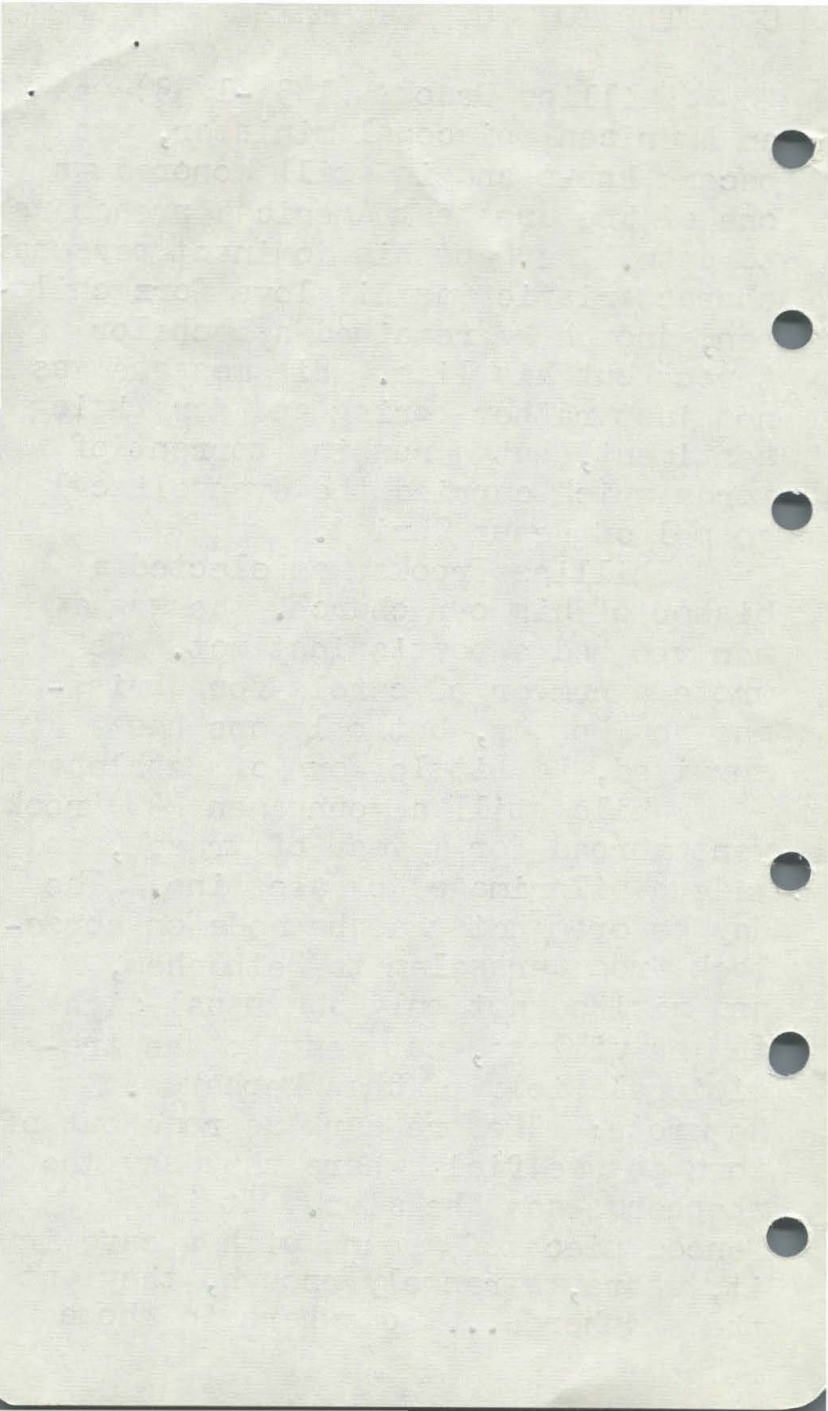


O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) was an American Episcopal minister, who became known and is still honored as one of the greatest American preachers to date. Perhaps his dominant personal characteristic was his love for children, though he remained a bachelor throughout his life. His message was not just rather boring and moralizing sentiment, but a rushing torrent of words which carried the evangeliscal gospel of Jesus Christ.

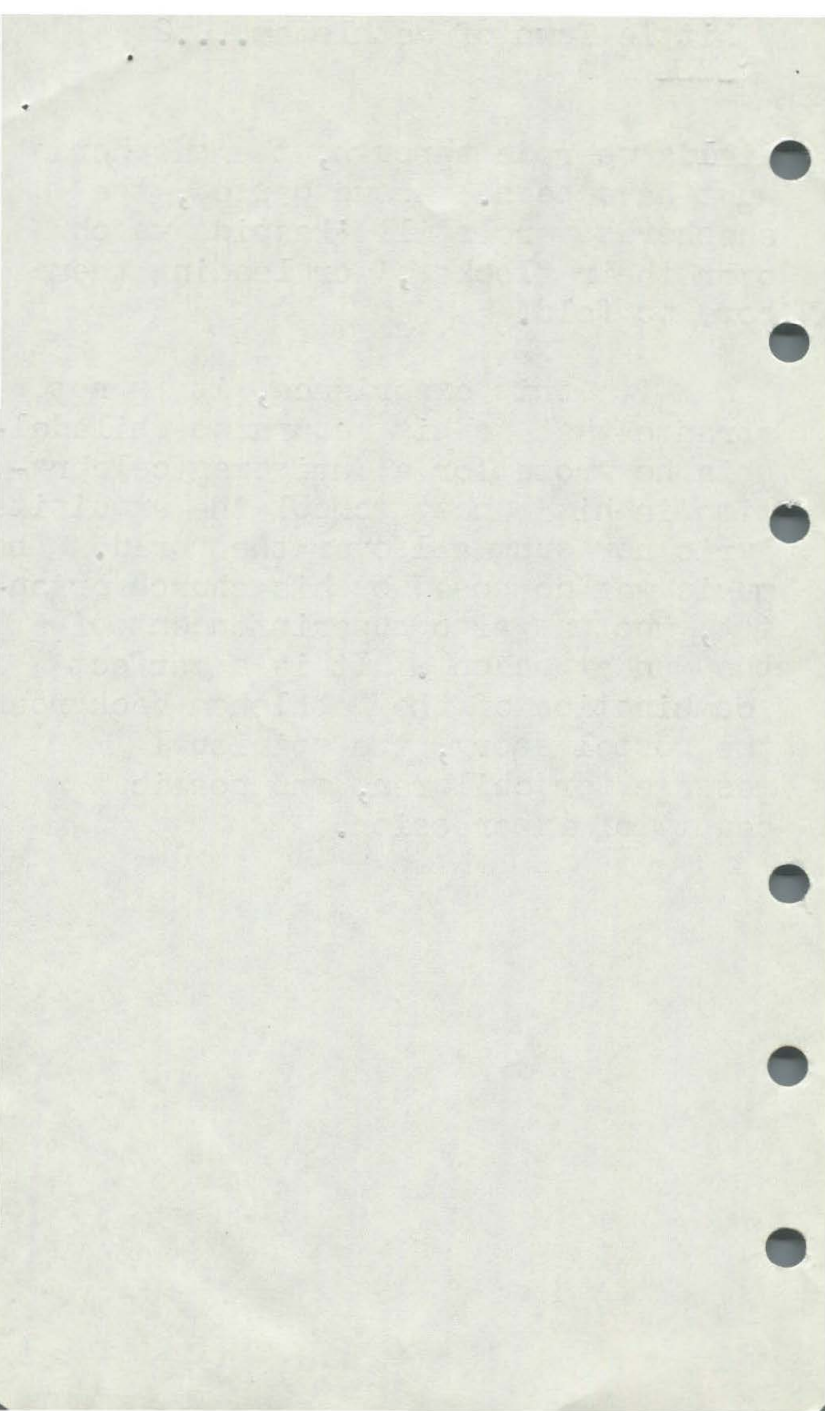
Phillips Brooks was elected a bishop of his own church. He was a man who had a poet's instinct. He wrote a number of carols for Christmas and Easter, but only one has survived, "O Little Town of Bethlehem".

While still a young man (30) Brooks went abroad for a year of travel, and made a pilgrimage to Palestine. The day before Christmas he rode on horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, and visited not only the usual sights in the village, but went to the traditional Field of the Shepherds. He wrote: "Before dark we rode out of town to the field where they say the shepherds saw the star. It is a fenced piece of ground with a cave in it, where, strangely enough, they put the shepherds... Somewhere in those



fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been. As we passed, the shepherds were still 'keeping watch over their flockes,' or leading them home to fold.

With this experience, it is not strange that on his return to Philadelphia he wrote for a Christmas celebration in his Sunday school the exquisite lyric now sung all over the world. The music was composed by his church organist, who was also superintendent of the Sunday School. It is a perfect combination of the Bethlehem background the gospel story, the spiritual message for children, and poetic beauty of expression.

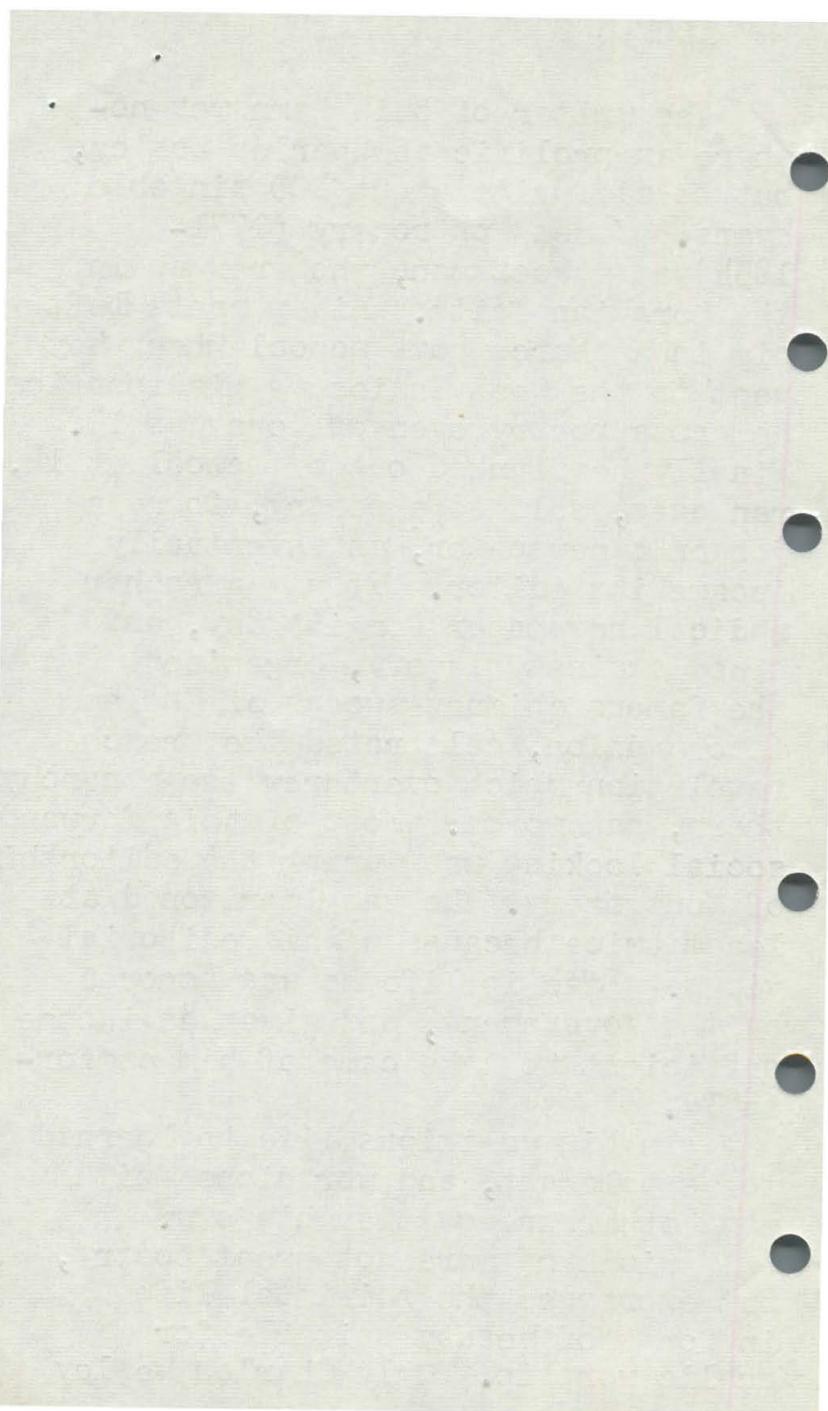


ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

The writer of this hymn was nowhere as prolific as Charles Wesley, but he did write about 400 singable hymns. James Montgomery (1771-1854) was a Scotsman, who grew up in the Moravian faith. His parents left him in a church boys school when they went to the West Indies as missionaries. He wrote poetry even as young as 10. Finally he flunked out of school at 14, ran away, sold some poetry, found a job on a newspaper, and eventually became its editor. It was a rather radical newspaper for its day, and stood against slavery, organized the famous chimney sweeps of England into a union, celebrated the French revolution which overthrew the monarchy there, and so on. Most of this forward social looking was during the editorship of Montgomery. He was imprisoned at least twice because of his editorial views. Late in life he was honored by the government, and given an income sufficient to take care of him comfortably.

In his religious life he learned to be tolerant, and worshipped with many other groups than his own.

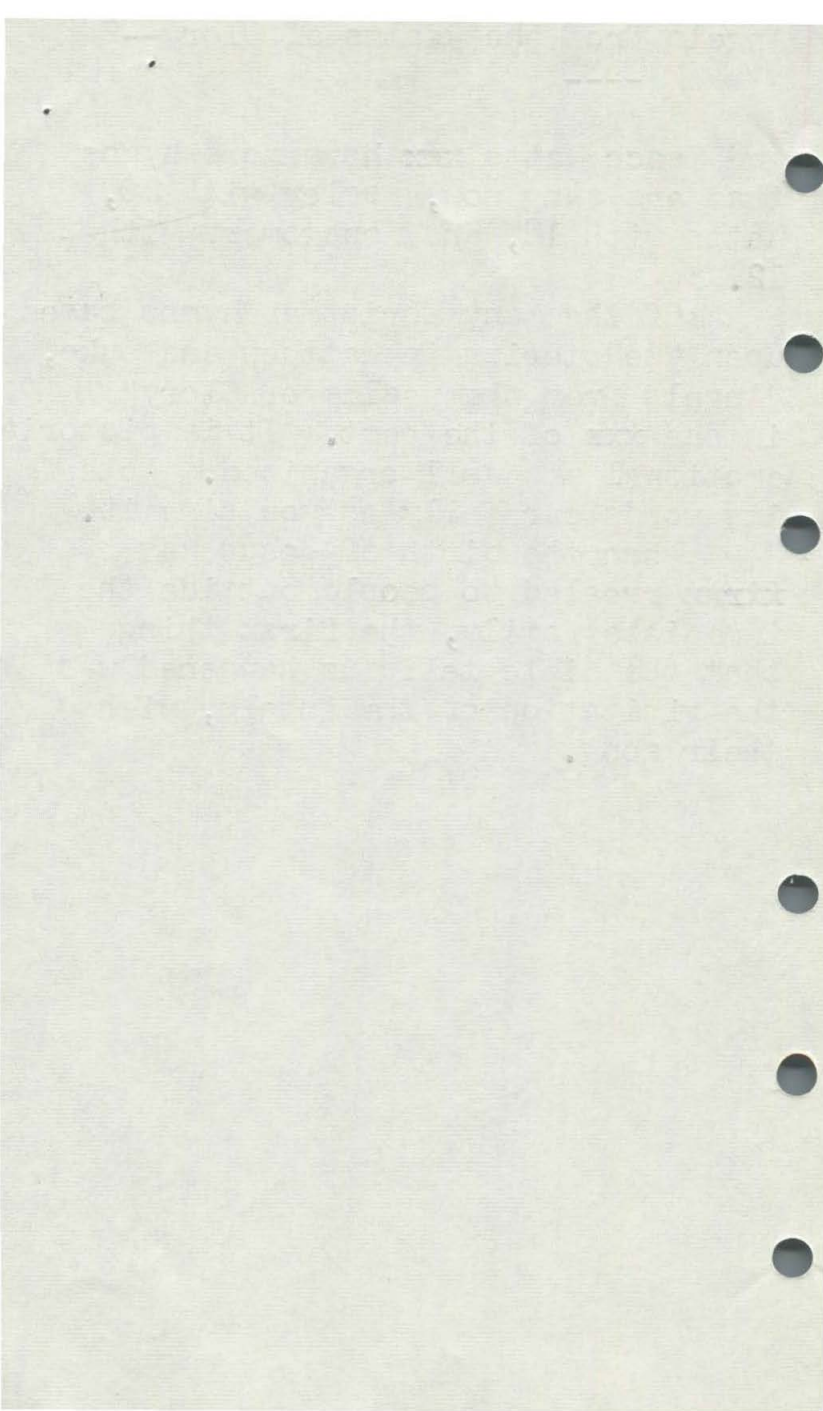
His hymns were not great poetry, but expressed the spiritual life in forms of beauty suitable for public worship. Only Charles Wesley



and Isacc Watts ~~xxx~~ have more hymns that are sung now, Wesley with 20, Watts with 18, and Montgomery with 12.

Of the many Christmas hymns based upon the stories in Matthew and Luke, "Angels from the Realms of Glory" is one ~~xxx~~ of the best. It is pictorial, emotional and well organized. Note its words carefully as you sing it.

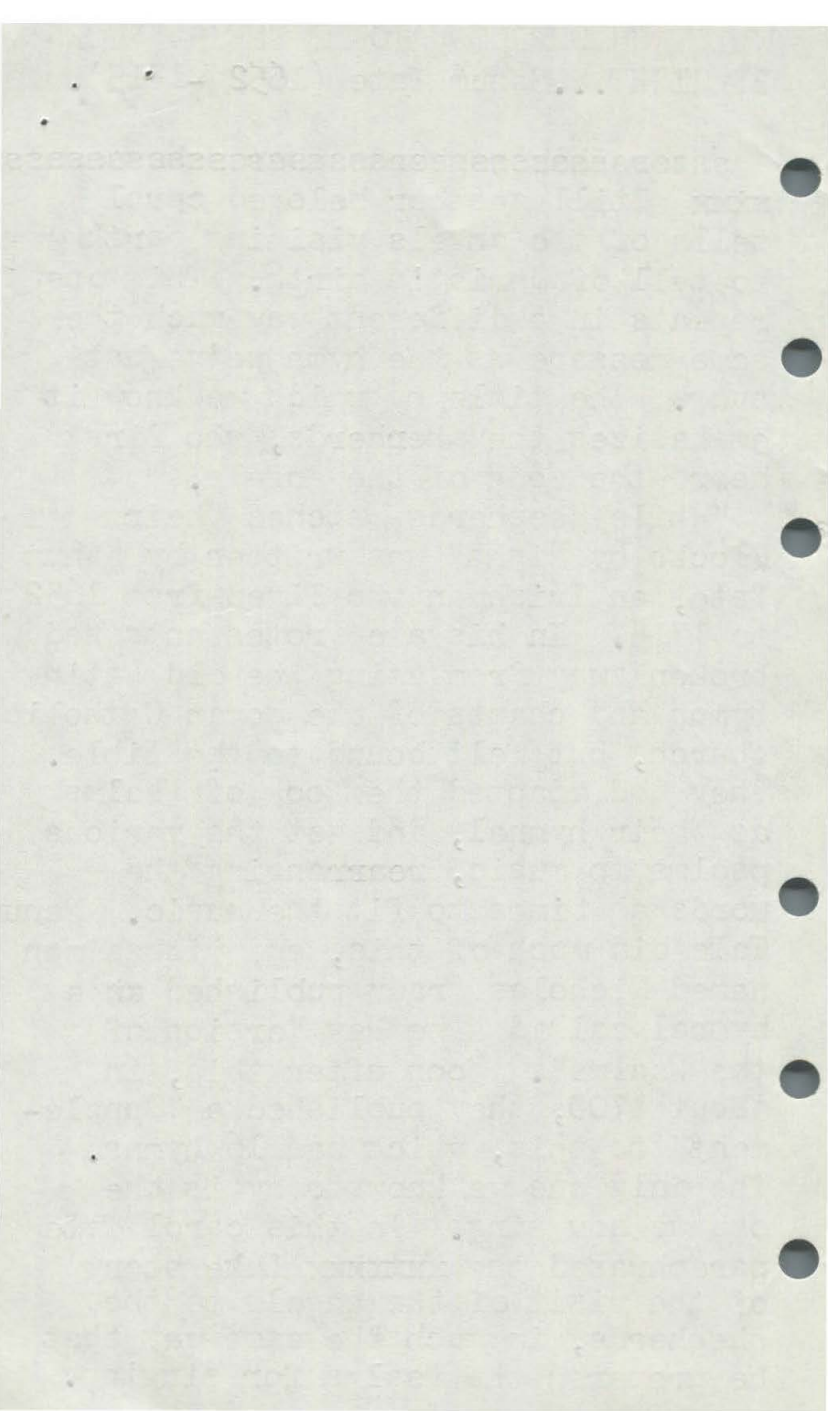
When the birth of Jesus was ~~first~~ revealed to people outside the immediate family, the first thing that the Bible tells us happened was the visitation of the Angels, with their song.



WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS
BY NIGHT... Hanum Tate (1652 -1715).

~~xxxxx~~ Still another beloved carol tells of the angels visiting earth to tell of Christ's birth. This one repeats in a different way much the same message as the hymn we've just sung. The title by which we know it emphasizes the shepherds, who first heard the song of the angels.

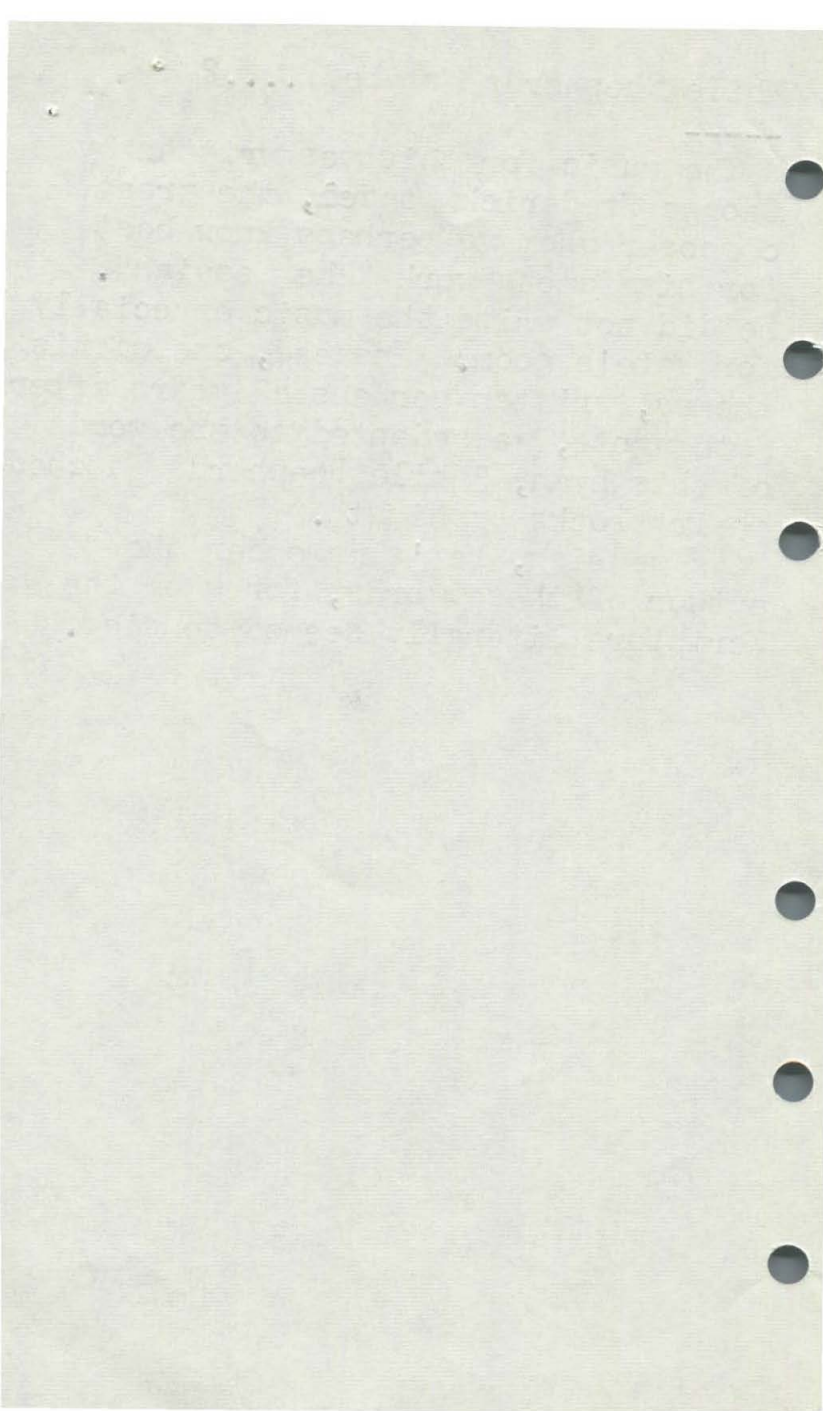
"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night" was written by Nahum Tate, an Irishman who lived from 1652 to 1715. In his age Protestants had broken away from using the old Latin hymns and chants of the Roman Catholic church, but felt bound to the Bible. They had adapted the Book of Psalms as their hymnal, and set the various psalms to music, rearranging the words at times to fit the music. Nahum Tate did much of this, and with a man named Nicholas Brady published ~~an~~ a hymnal called "The New Version of the Psalms". Soon after this, in about 1700, they published a "Supplement" to this, which had 16 hymns. The only one we know today is the one we now sing. In this carol Tate paraphrased the ~~Matthew~~ Luke story of the visit of the angels to the shepherds, in much the same way that he prepared the Psalms for singing.



While Shepherds Watched.....2

The music for this was written by George Frederick Handel, the great composer whom we perhaps know best for his famous work "The Messiah". He did not write the music especially for Tate's poem. Instead, one of his themes, written perhaps 45 years after Tate wrote, was adapted to the words of this hymn, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night".

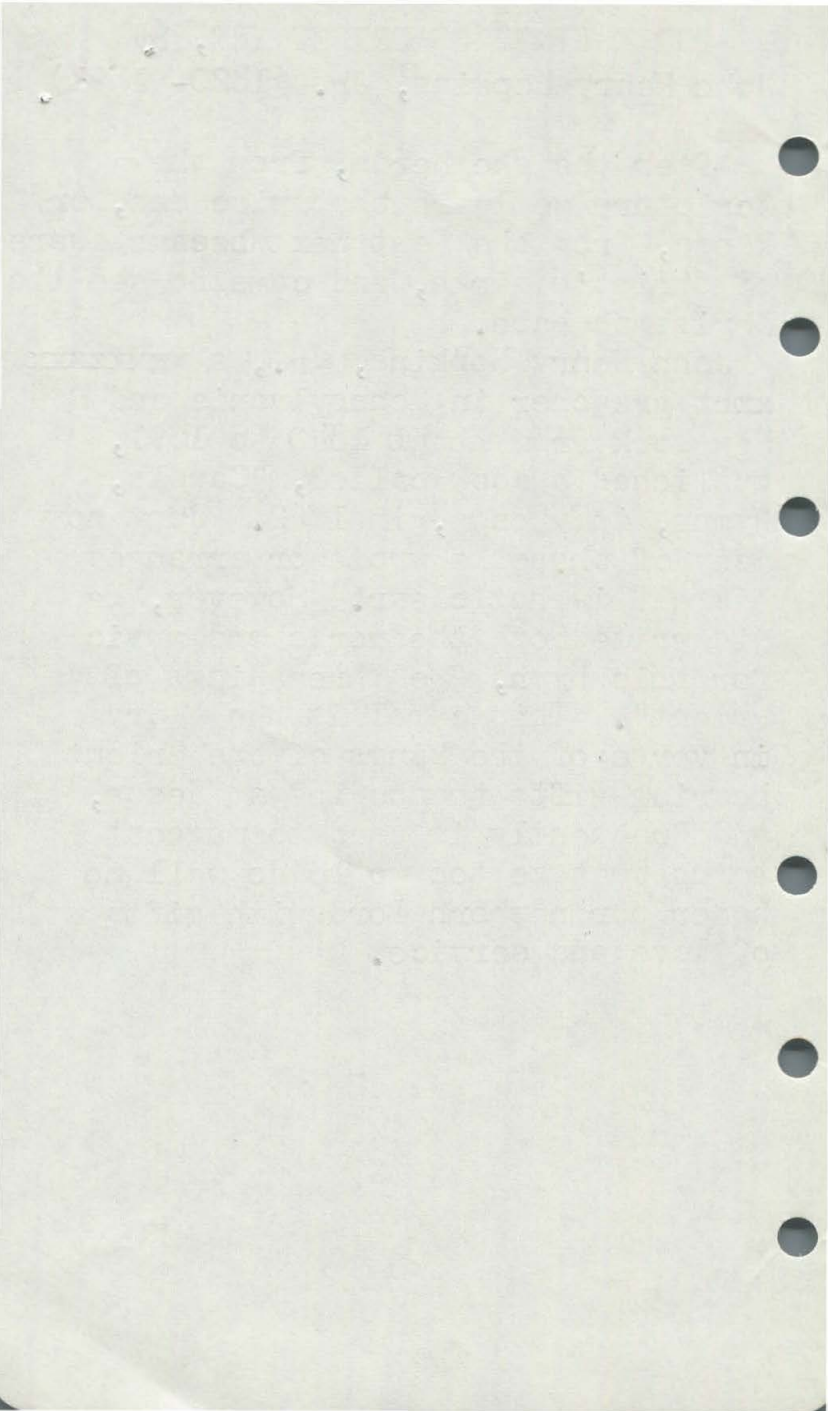
As we sing, let's remember the author of these words, for whom the Scripture literally seemed to sing.



WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE, by
John Henry Hopkins, Jr. (1820- 1891).

After the shepherds, from the Scripture we learn that wise men, or kings, from the East next became aware of Christ's birth, and came to see the Christmas babe.

John Henry Hopkins, Jr., a ~~xxxxxxx~~
~~xxxx~~ preacher in Pennsylvania and New York from about 1840 to 1891, published a book called, "Carols, Hymns, and Songs, in 1862. Just how many of these he wrote or arranged himself is not clear. However, he did write both the words and music for this hymn, "We Three Kings of Orient". This carol is the story in verse of the kings of the Orient bearing gifts to the Infant Jesus, and frequently is used to suggest to us that we too would do well to honor our newborn Lord with gifts of love and service.

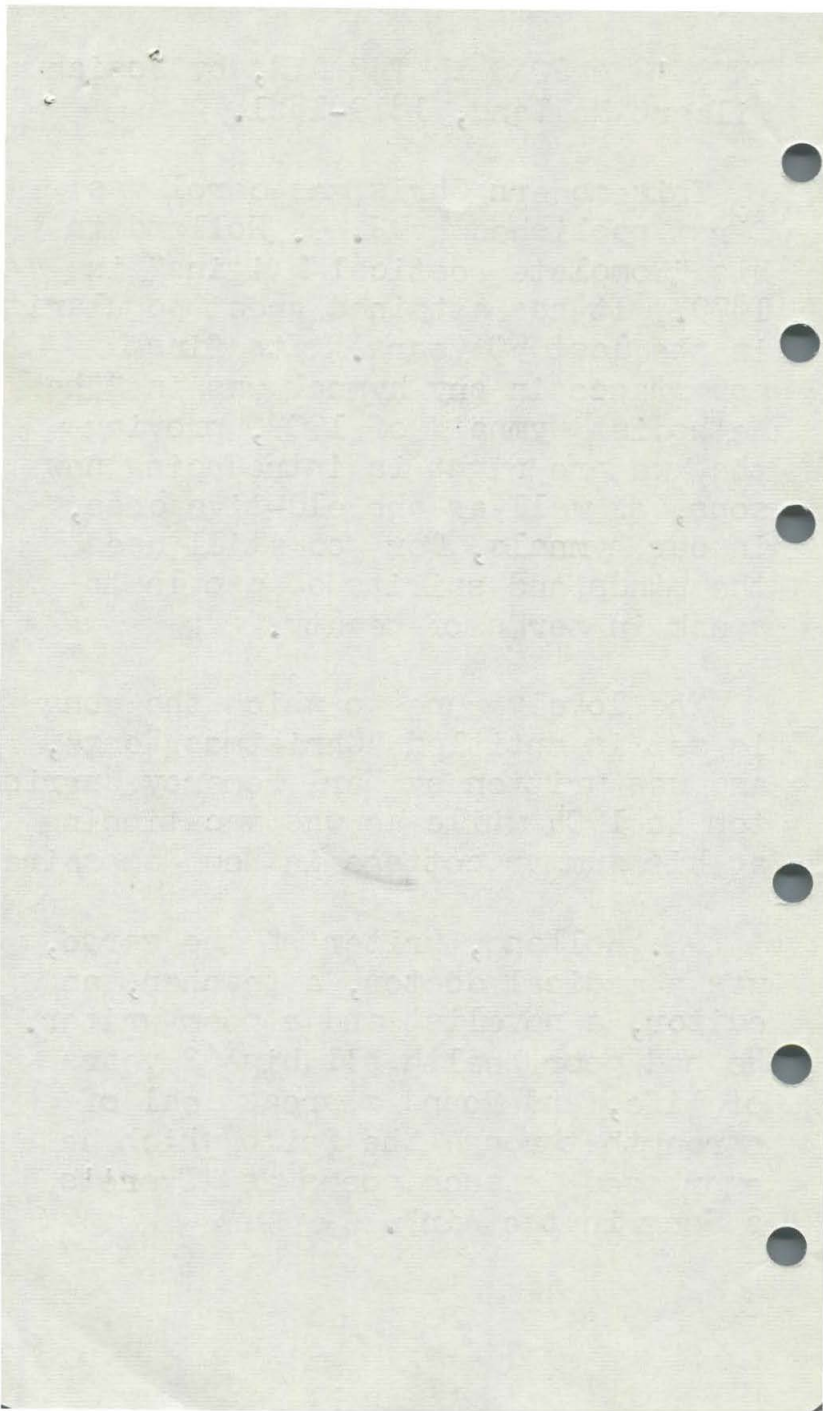


THERE'S A SONG IN THE AIR, by Josiah
Gilbert Holland, 1819-1881.

This modern Christmas carol was first published by J. G. Holland in his "Complete Poetical Wiggins" in 1879. It has attained great popularity in the last 50 years. Its first appearance in any hymnal was in "The Methodist Hymnal" of 1905, proving that we are right in introducing new songs, as well as the old-time ones, in our hymnals, for God still uses the minds and spirits of people to speak in terms of beauty.

The lovely tune to which the song is set is entitled "Christmas Song", and was written by Karl Pomeroy Harrington in 1904 while he was vacationing at his summer cottage in New Hampshire

DR. Holland, writer of the verse, was a medical doctor, a teacher, an editor, a novelist and a poem writer. He had poor health all his 62 years of life, and found a great deal of strength through the faith which he expressed in such poems as "There's a Song in the Air".

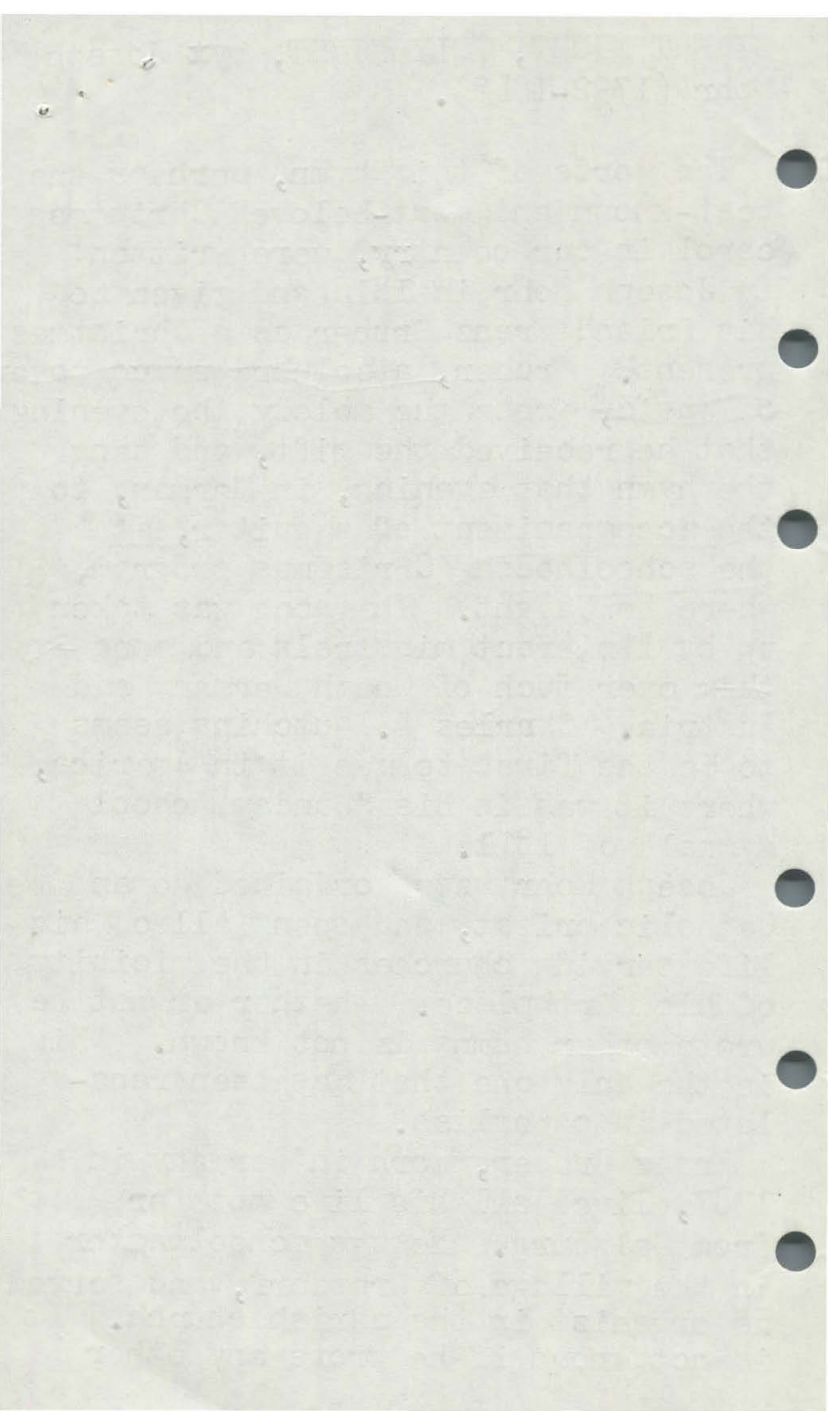


SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT, byx Joseph
Mohr (1792-1848).

The words of this hymn, perhaps the best-known and most-beloved Christmas carol in our country, were written by Joseph Mohr in 1818 and given to his friend Franz Grüber as a Christmas present. Grüber, ~~a celebrated composer of music,~~ wrote the melody the evening that he received the gift, and sang the hymn that evening, in German, to the accompaniment of a guitar, at the schoolhouse Christmas program where he taught. The song was taken up by itinerant minstrels and sung by them over much of South Germany and Austria. Charles L. Hutchins seems to be the first to use it in America, where it was in his "Sunday School Hymnal" of 1871.

Joseph Mohr was an ordained Roman Catholic priest, and spent all of his life serving churches in the vicinity of his birthplace. Whether or not he wrote other hymns is not known. This is the only one that has been translated into English.

Franz Grüber, born in Germany in 1787, lived all his life not far from Salzburg. He was schoolmaster in the village of Arnsdorf, and served as organist in the parish church. It is not known if he wrote any other



tunes or music, and, if he did, none other has been published. He died in 1867.

Isn't it grand to be remembered for one of the world's most beautiful poems and tunes? Isn't it wonderful that in the hearts of an ordinary parish minister and common school teacher God could ^{work} ~~stir such love~~ that this beautiful hymn of adoration for the Christ ~~stirs~~ love and warmth in us, and ~~will~~ continue to affect people that way ^(for centuries to come)

As ~~you~~ sing ~~this~~, may God move ~~in~~ you and me to a similar feeling of gratitude, love, ~~and~~ devotion, ^{and warmth}

