

## CHRISTMAS—1974

An unusual, unique, and frustrating year is perhaps the best way to characterize 1974 as it rapidly approaches the end of its twelve-month tenure.

Political confusion, discontent in the government both at State and Federal levels, booming inflation, a recession of serious proportions which brought with it high levels of unemployment, and an energy crunch all seem almost too much for the people of one country to adequately handle simultaneously. Yet, we have, and most of us are surviving with only a minimum of hardship and discomfort.

Not that it has been easy, or will be for many months in the future. In the long run, though, we might find a hidden silver lining to the present gray clouds that float over us. Already, there have been some promising rays of light on the horizon.

This holiday season can have more meaning to us than many if we approach it and the New Year with optimism, hope, and trust in ourselves and our system of government that has stood so steadfastly against test after test of its basic premises. In years gone by, a word used fairly frequently was "dayspring." It means the beginning of a new day or a new era. Although used only figuratively today, we need a dayspring—something that is fresh, utterly pure, and unstained.

The terms "light" and "dayspring" were used concurrently in biblical times. Light has always been the symbol of good and of knowledge and understanding. Early Christians had a custom of saying a blessing when the household lamps were lit that went, "Praise God who sends us the light of heaven."

Observance of the Jewish Sabbath begins with the ritual lighting of candles by the woman of the house symbolizing that light was one of the first acts of creation. It ends with the father saying a prayer, his hands spread towards a lighted candle.

A light also directed those to that very special Child lying in the manger causing Zechariah, priest of the Temple, to sing, "*The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace.*"

In this magnificent holiday season upon us, let's take the opportunity to renew ourselves with our fellow man, to be thankful for the multitude of blessings that are ours alone, and to pledge ourselves to a new dedication of bringing about peace and tranquillity to all peoples.

May each of you have the most joyous of holidays and the best of new years.

R. E. Krauss

