Every biographer delights to discover in the childhood of his hero some event which may be a symbol and foregleam of the subsequent career. But did ever a single incident in anyone’s infancy suggest so much as is summed up in Luke’s saying about Jesus’ nativity at Bethlehem: “There was no room for them in the inn?”

That was to be the Master’s experience throughout His ministry—no room for His teachings in the minds of men or for His quality of spirit in their lives, no room in the synagogue for His reforming zeal or in the nation for His prophetic message. The crucial difficulty of His life which closed to Him the hearts He longed to change, and brought Him at last to Calvary, was the tragic evil of inhospitality.

Today we lead such overcrowded lives that the loveliest things which would enrich us all are commonly excluded. Great books are not read, great music is not heard, beauties in nature are not enjoyed; we are too busy. We miss enriching friendships and possibilities of happiness in our family life. So, too, we crowd out Christ and everything He stands for.

At the inn they crowded Christ out because they never guessed who He would be. But we have no such excuse. We know
Jesus. Have we not come from homes where His spirit made a radiance in the faces of those we loved and a fragrance in their lives? Are we not sprung from a civilization where artists like Raphael have glorified Him and musicians like Bach have written their noblest compositions in His praise? Even an agnostic historian, Lecky, said of Him. "The simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists."

As we stand in imagination at Bethlehem's inn on Christmas morning we well may say to ourselves that to be hospitable is as important an act as any we perform.

Consider how magical a change a little hospitality can make in our lives! A youth turns, as it were, the corner of a street and, running into a new idea, makes room for it, and lo! his life is utterly transformed. Peter meets Jesus by the lakeside and, though ashamed at first to welcome so great a spirit into so unworthy a life, makes room for Him at last. By that act not only Peter but all the world is altered. One of the mysteries of life is a man surprised into unsuspected greatness by a momentary hospitality, like Paul's on the Damascus road, so that afterward he says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." This can still happen, for Bethlehem is not historic merely. Still Christ comes to the inn. Only, we can change the outcome. Room for Him! Room for Him there!

One cannot understand aright the whole world's trouble unless one sees it in terms of inhospitality. What if mankind did not so habitually repeat the scene of Bethlehem! What if, when saviors come in any realm, we did not meet them with this obdurate refusal of a welcome! In the dangerous years ahead, what most of all I fear is that when new ideas come, new social outlooks to which the future of mankind belongs, because our minds are filled with old ideas, old prejudices, old mental habits, we will cry, "No room!"

A mind and spirit that can recognize and welcome the highest when it comes are among the supreme gifts of man. Next to being creatively great oneself is the capacity to recognize greatness when one sees it, and make room.

A man's best memories, when life is closing, will be his finest spiritual hospitalities and what came of them. I have seen Yosemite Falls leaping in a diaphanous tracery of spray and mist. Now, the analyst is right—that waterfall is H₂O. But something else is there, to be inwardly possessed not by analysis but by receptivity, appreciation, hospitality. With only one life here on earth to live, it is a pity to miss, because of an inhospitable mind, the spiritual values which mean most, reach highest, last longest and in the end make life memorable.
DEAR FOLKS

Edgar and I have arrived on Calcutta on our way to Vellore a great medical center where we are going to have ten days of medical refreshment, sitting in on classes and visiting village clinics.

Again we write our Christmas note when it is not much like Christmas about us, but as Mr. Stine in Philipsburg Pa. said when they were having their Christmas for Nepal in August—"This is how we should do, Have Christmas all year around."

This morning in Calcutta appeals to all of our sensations. The crows have wakened us to catch the sound of tinkling dishes as the bare foot boy comes into our room at 6 a.m. with tea. This is a truly pleasant custom which elevates one's blood sugar and brings one wide awake.

For sure enough the little girls, 150 of them here at Lee Memorial are wide awake and buzzing around with early morning get-to-school-on-time preparations. Some of them are so ready that they have time for last minute preparations as they walk up and down reading their books.

Here we are on 3rd floor of Lee Memorial. This blessed place, a Mission Boarding school for little girls has been a joy unspeakable and a security for many little orphaned Indian girls. The truly loving individual care the Griffiths give these little ladies is just heart warming.

This is the place we first came to in Apr. 1956 when we arrived in India, brand new missionaries so goggle eyed that it was Pathetic. The Atkins were here then to give this wonderful service.

How secure we feel now after four years in our land of Nepal! Truly home is where we are. This blessed place, Lee Memorial in the heart of noisy Calcutta, is home and of course Shanta Bhawan is home.

Having these few days of rest from busy Shanta Bhawan activities is really grand although I feel I would like to "Jet" it home especially to see Dad Bucke who has had a bad session with some much needed and well handled surgery in the early Part of this year.

And then of course we have a new little grandson, William Andrew Jenkins and new little grand niece Kelly Lynn Bucke we should be seeing to say nothing of the other four grand children and their families. Oh my, would it not be fun to get places as fastas we can think about them?

I am as usual writing too much—

Blessing on you all and may the "Christian spirit be your Christmas spirit extending through the whole year"

P.S.—Picture—a block Print of the first Christian Church in Nepal.

Sincerely

ELIZABETH and EDGAR.
It's a beautiful day. I went for a walk in the park. I love the sound of the birds singing. I took some pictures of the flowers and the lake. It was a perfect day for a picnic.