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Mary, exhausted by the birth and the day's travel, handed the equally tired newborn back to Joseph so that she could rest. He took Him and laid Him down in a manger which he had padded with straw—on Mary's insistence. And as everyone else left, the excitement died down and the night fell silent.

Joseph sat down to look at the child and his beloved wife, and to think about all that had happened. It all seemed so normal, except that the child was not his; the angel's appearance seemed so long ago, like a dream. Suddenly the silence was broken by a knock. Outside stood a band of shepherds. They wanted to see the child and caused no end of an excited commotion, waking up both Mary and the child. What they told—about angels and heavenly singing—sounded fantastic; like the tales of drunken men. Yet they were sober. And they had known where to go to find the baby. Afterwards Joseph was even more puzzled and wrestled with the mystery of it all. But it was not Joseph's mystery to solve, but the child's to reveal. Most people would not believe Him, until He had hung on a cross. The weight of the world's sins pressed down on Him, but did not crush Him. And on the third day the angels, and Mary, rejoiced again.

Before Abraham was, He is.

Have a blessed Christmas, and may the miracle of Immanuel be with you today!

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