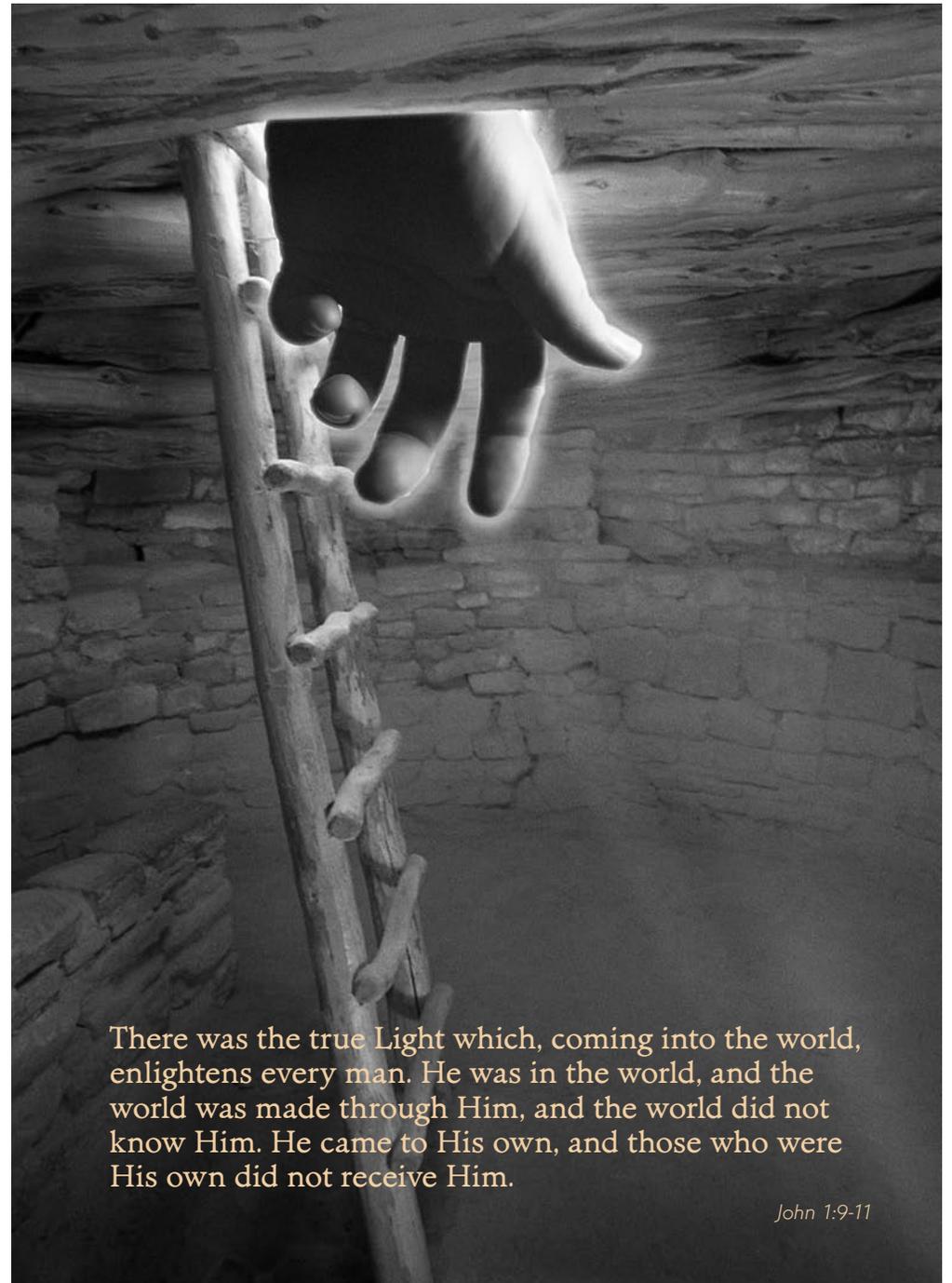


Therefore justice is far from us,
And righteousness does not overtake us;
We hope for light, but behold, darkness,
For brightness, but we walk in gloom.
We grope along the wall like blind men,
We grope like those who have no eyes;
We stumble at midday as in the twilight,
Among those who are vigorous we are
like dead men.

Isaiah 59:9-10

Light



There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

John 1:9-11

LIGHT IS BOTH A BLESSING AND A BANE—a comfort and an accuser.

When we pass unwillingly through the shadows, when the dark cavern of our despair seems an endless journey of pain and unrequited longing, what we long for is light—a brighter exit from our stumbling gloom. Consigned to the shadows, we seek a glimmer of relieving white to pierce through the thick, oppressive walls of our darkness.

But while light relieves, it also reveals.

“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

John 3:19-20

Those who hate the darkness long for light, but those who take comfort in the dark hate the light. There is ugliness best kept in the shadows, and those who embrace ugliness often practice it there.

Just as our eyesight eventually adjusts to the dark surroundings in which we find ourselves, so man has gradually become accustomed to the darkness in which he lives. Step from the brilliance of noonday sun into a small darkened room, and the new enclosure seems utterly black. But remain a few moments and, as the eyes adjust, the details of the room emerge. Soon the black has been replaced by a dim light previously unnoticed.

Step from the illuminated interior of a house into the exterior black of night. At first glance there are few stars salting the night sky. But remain a while, standing in the darkness while the eyes adjust to the dim surroundings, and soon the arch overhead is populated by myriad bright lights.

Man has lived so long in the tepid gloom of his habitation that he imagines it to be normal. He imagines the dim, gray light to which he is accustomed to be the pinnacle of brilliance, the best it

can be. And so he is satisfied. He is as satisfied as the blind fish swimming so deep that light does not penetrate the gloom, so eyes are unnecessary. So man has become blinded by his own mediocrity.

But God calls that mediocrity, darkness; God calls our comfortable gray, black.

The darkness of man's surroundings represents the full brilliance of his own paltry light. Jesus came as a blinding white light to a people more accustomed to the dim glow of their own faint illumination. His arrival hurt their eyes. And when man is suddenly confronted with painful brilliance, he covers his eyes and turns away.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:4-5 ESV

Jesus came to replace the false brilliance of man's mediocrity with the true brilliance of His saving light. He came to show the people of His own creation that they needn't settle for the dim tawdriness of their self-imposed destiny, but could, instead, rise into the light of His salvation.

From the moment He entered this fallen world the holy light of heaven shone from Jesus. And with Him He brought a brighter path—a way *out* of the darkness.

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

John 8:12

Jesus came to be a shining light to those trapped in darkness.