

# BAPTIST FEATURES

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## GOD'S WONDROUS WORLD By Thelma Carter (with illustration #5)

If you examine a quart of ocean water with a microscope, you will find clusters of tiny plant life. You cannot see these plants with the naked eye, but they are there, reproducing thousands of others in the brown scum below the ocean surface.

Sailors, fishermen, naturalists, and all navigators of ships, submarines, or any ocean-going vessels recognize the presence of these tiny plants, called di-a-toms, when the scum forms on the water and the sea water is unusually smooth to the touch.

Deep-sea naturalists call this tiny ocean plant life "living vegetable soup," "marine vegetation" and "fish food." It is abundantly rich in nutrients upon which very small sea animals, crabs, lobsters, shrimp and other fish feed.

Upon examination, ocean water is salty and smelly, but it is the life-giving substance of all ocean life. Sea animals cannot exist without this "living vegetable soup!"

If, one day, you have opportunity to examine ocean water with a microscope, or talk with sea-faring men who live a great part of their lives upon the ocean, you'll agree with the Psalmist who wrote: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

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(Is there something about God's Wondrous World you would like to see described in this column? If so please send your suggestions to Baptist Press Syndicate, 127 N. Ninth Ave., Nashville 3, Tenn.)

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## THE GROUNDHOG'S WONDERFUL SLEEP By Christine H. Agee

David was drinking the last swallow of milk in his little white cup when Daddy said, "Well, I wonder if the groundhog 'll see his shadow today." Daddy smiled and looked at Mother.

"Looks as if he'll have a good chance," she answered, smiling back.

"Groundhog? Shadow? What are you talking about anyway?" David asked, getting up and climbing on his daddy's lap.

"Just an old saying. But it's part of a wonderful story about how God helps the animals live through the cold winter."

"Please tell me about it," begged David.

"Do you remember how we used to see that furry groundhog sometimes last summer?"

"Yes, over in the fields. He was always busy eating clover."

"That's right," Daddy said. "Clover is one of his very favorite meals. And then one day you didn't see him."

"Yes. He just didn't come back anymore."

"Well," Daddy went on, "all summer long the little groundhog was eating and eating, and growing fatter and fatter. When he wasn't eating, he was sleeping in his little house, or burrow, under the ground."

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"But at the first sign of winter, long before the first snow, he crawled way, way back into his burrow and fell fast asleep. He's been sleeping now for many months."

"Will he wake up again, Daddy?" David asked.

"Oh yes. But during this long sleep -- which is called hibernation -- he hardly seems alive at all."

"How will he know when to come out?"

"When the weather gets warm enough, one day he'll stick his little nose out of his burrow, and his long sleep will be over."

"Don't forget groundhog day, Daddy," Mother reminded.

"That's an old story, David, that on the second day of February, the groundhog gets up and goes out to see about the weather. If the sun's shining so he can see his shadow, he goes back to sleep, because there'll be more winter for about six more weeks. But if it's cloudy, so he doesn't see his shadow, he stays up, because he knows winter is over."

"Is that story true, Daddy?"

"No, it's just a pleasant little tale. In many places, where winter is short, the groundhog's already awake from his long sleep by February. But, regardless of the weather on groundhog day, he doesn't go back to sleep again."

"I wouldn't like to sleep all winter," David said quietly.

"No, but it takes care of many problems for the groundhog. When food is scarce, and the weather is cold, he is fast asleep in his snug little burrow. That is one of the wonderful ways God helps the animals stay alive in the winter."

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