

LOVE'S GIFT

By the Associate Editor

"God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son." "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

For many hundreds of years past the Christmas season has been marked by the giving, and receiving of gifts. It has been and still is the custom of people in all walks of life, and of all ages from childhood to old age to bestow gifts upon each other. This, we think, is a very beautiful custom, especially when it is done in memory of our heavenly Father's gift of His Son to a needy world as we believe was the origin of this good practice; and we believe that many good Christian people still keep this great event in mind when they are making their presents at this season of the year. But, this good habit of Christian giving, like many other good habits in our lives, may degenerate into a mere form of service, and be carried on in a perfunctory sort of way long after the spirit which ought to characterize our giving has departed.

Let us notice briefly some things which characterized, or accompanied the Father's Gift, and which should, we believe, accompany ours. First, His was a gift of love. "God so loved that He gave." Is that our motive in bestowing gifts at Christmas time? Or do we give sometimes just because we feel that we owe someone a debt because they gave us something last year, and we expect that they will give us another gift this year? Well, we would rather not receive a gift if it is not prompted by a spirit of Christian love.

Second, our Father's gift was not for vain show, or it would have appeared in a very different form and place. Notice His Gift was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, in a stable. The wrappings were very plain, and inexpensive, but the gift was very costly, the most precious gift that ever was presented to mankind.

Sometimes when we send gifts we go to considerable expense and work to wrap them so they will look very nice and attractive. One man said he thought that sometimes the wrappings cost more than the gift, and my friends, is that not a common weakness of the human family, to try to make themselves, and things look better than they really are! Our Lord called the Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites because they made their outward lives correspond with the law of Moses while their hearts were still uncleansed and unholy. He said a grave appears beautiful in the eyes of men but it is full of rotteness and uncleanness.

Not long ago we called upon an old couple. They told us that the man was past 82 years of age and was ill. His wife had very beautiful brown hair, nicely waved, which we knew was artificial for we had seen her a short time before and her hair was gray. Well, I suppose wearing artificial hair did not hurt the old lady, but it was a manifestation of what was in her poor old heart, viz., carnal pride, a desire for vain show. We saw a young woman a few days ago, since winter weather set in, wearing a beautiful fur coat, while her legs were bare from her knees down. We wondered why the girl wore the fur coat if she found it too warm to wear stockings, and if this writer is any judge of beauty, we think that a lot of women and girls could greatly improve their appearance in public if they would always put on

stockings, and wear their skirts at least six inches longer, and if lengthened skirts would not improve their appearance, women professing godliness and holiness should do so for modesty and decency's sake, and not follow an immodest fad of the world. You ask, what has immodest dressing got to do with Christmas giving? You say, you are getting away from your subject. No! I am saying God's gift was not for vain show, and this spirit which makes a vain show in society is not of God, for he says: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Again, God's gift was a much needed one. We have heard people say: I suppose I will have to give Mrs. — something for Xmas, but I don't know what to give her, for she has so much of everything already, she does not need a thing, I am sure. Well, don't give her anything, love gives where it is needed: We are told by good authority that thousands of people overseas in the war torn, devastated countries are dying daily from starvation, cold and disease, not to mention the millions of people who have never heard the gospel because of the lack of money to send missionaries to them. Shall Christian people spend their money for unnecessary things, while multitudes of souls for whom Christ died are perishing, soul and body? Jesus was a gift in time of great need, for our world needed a Saviour much more than anything else. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins."

And finally, His was a sacrificial gift. We may have to sacrifice some this Christmas season if we discharge our duty toward God, in ministering to the suffering masses of human beings overseas, while we live comfortably in a land of peace and plenty. What an opportunity Christian America has to show a Christian spirit toward those unfortunate millions who know so little about our Christ, His gospel and Christian love. I would note also that our Father's gift was accompanied by great joy. Heavenly choirs sang, "Peace on earth, good will toward men," while the Father presented the gift, and methinks that if our giving is characterized by that same spirit of love, purity, humility and sacrifice, we will not only bring great joy to the needy, but we also will be greatly blessed in our giving. "For it is more blessed to give than to receive."

LORD, I WILL LOVE THEE STILL

Leland Wilcox

I'll love Thee, Lord, when paths are bright,  
Since Thou didst bear the cross for me,  
For Thou didst suffer Death and Shame,  
For me upon the cruel tree.

And tho' my cross oft seemeth great,  
As I ascend to Calvary's Hill,  
When I lay prostrate at Thy feet,  
O Lord, then I will love Thee still.

I'll love Thee Lord when friends are dear,  
As Christian friends we often meet,  
While in communion with them, Lord,  
Their fellowship to me is sweet.

But if my friends Thy ways forsake,  
And they would do my spirit ill,  
Still I will follow by Thy side,  
O Lord, then I will love Thee still!

I'll love Thee Lord when in the home,  
The family circle is complete,  
As gathered round the table there,  
We at the family altar meet.

But when at last dark shadows fall,  
I'll bow before Thy sovereign will,  
Tho' loved ones dear are called away,  
O Lord, then I will love Thee still.

I'll love Thee Lord, in strength of youth,  
For Thou didst make my spirit whole,  
I'll praise Thee for Thy wondrous grace,  
Thou dost implant within my soul.

And, when my work on earth is done,  
(Tho' death cannot my spirit chill),  
When Thou wilt guide me safely Home,  
O Lord, then I will love Thee still.

Chorus—

My Saviour, I will love Thee still,  
I'll bow before Thy sovereign will,  
And tho' my cross be light or great,  
My Saviour, I will love thee still.

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A LIFE GIVER

Jesus Christ is not a lawgiver, but a life-saver; and one is not a Christian because he obeys the laws of God, but he obeys the laws of God because he is a Christian.—Lyman Abbott.