

## Christmas Morn

(A Sketch)

By Clara Cox Epperson

The little town of Gainesboro lay sleeping beneath the shadows of the rugged, gray hills, just before the dawn of a Christmas day, long ago. The stillness was unbroken, and the peace was supreme. Soon the faint rays of pink and silver filtering through the ragged tree-tops that fringed the circling hills, heralded to the world the dawn of a new day—another Christmas day.

From the silent homes little figures began to steal forth and glide silently down the narrow streets. One by one they had risen from their warm beds and dressing hurriedly had stolen forth unafraid of the snow that lay inches deep in the streets, and the winds that came howling and biting around the corners.

Like soldiers planning an attack upon the enemy, stealthily these little figures crept through the streets until all had collected together in a bunch, then heads were bent together in consultation as to the plans for the raid that was to be made on certain homes.

With plans complete, onward they went, first to the fort of Uncle Ben's home. Up the long, steep steps they crept quietly, then altogether they hurled themselves against the door crying: "Christmas gift," "Christmas gift." But this rosy-faced, white-haired old man was a veritable Santa Claus, and was always ready for the children's Christmas raid. The door was thrown open and they were ushered in to get warm by the big wood fire, and have their aprons filled with oranges, candy, nuts, etc., for long aprons were the necessary accoutrements on these Christmas morning raids, to bring home the trophies gathered up.

Uncle Ben having been rifled of all his Christmas possessions, on they went to other homes that were ready with the only ammunition that would send these children away in peace—the conquering ammunition of candy, oranges, apples, nuts, etc., and the big guns that brought them all to their knees in adoration were the candy bracelets, peaches or pears bestowed by some unusually generous, thoughtful person.

Every where these children were met with a warm welcome, with the exception of one very crabbed old bachelor, who would always, when they cried: "Christmas gift," say: "Have you got it?" "Yes," they would cry triumphantly, in a chorus. "Then keep it," he would snarl, and slam the door in their faces. Poor man! He has been dead long years—a loveless life—an unmourning death, and what in the after-life, I wonder? I shudder to think! Of one thing I am certain. Unless changed in the twinkling of an eye, he cannot occupy the same heaven with dear Uncle Ben.

When the slender pink and silvery lines of light glimmering over the hilltops, had grown into broad rays of purest gold, and the Christmas day was heralded over the world in the anthem of "Peace on earth, good will to men," these little girls went each to their homes with joyous, bouyant, dancing steps, and with aprons bulging with as many good things as they could carry; and in their hearts was the glad anthem of youth—and the glorious belief in the goodness of every one, and a happiness not to be equalled by any of the gifts, even of diamonds, rubies, pearls and gold that might come to them later in life.

Out of the number one dear one has been ushered into the mysterious beauties of the Life Beyond, from a very beautiful life on earth that was a benediction to her family and the world. She is forever enshrined in dearest memory.

To the others I send greetings on this Christmas-tide.

Oh, little children—how glad you were,  
No one ever said: "How bad you are!"  
All of life was love and hope,  
And joy was your guiding star.

However long your lives may be,  
However heavy the load you bear,  
The memory of happiness long ago  
Will sweeten and make life fair.

That's Why.

"Why should they tell us there is a Santa Claus if there isn't?"  
"Mother and father want someone to lay the blame on if we don't get the presents we want!"



## Christmas

By W. L. Karnes

Pastor, Church of Christ

In some way the birth of Jesus has become to be associated with Christmas. It is not thought by historians that the Christ was born on the 25th of December. No one even knows the exact year in which Jesus came to the earth. But to think of Jesus coming to the earth as a gift from God and as a great sacrifice on his part is a beautiful thought, indeed. Christ's coming, from the standpoint of the Father, meant the gift of a son; from the standpoint of Christ his coming meant the giving of his own life.

I am glad, for one, that we have one day, at least, in each year that we can look upon as "Gift Day." It does us good to give. God taught us to give by giving himself, likewise Christ taught us to make sacrifices by sacrificing himself. We cannot be close and stinky and be like Christ. Christmas affords us an opportunity to open both our hearts and our purses and show the other fellow how much we love him.

For my part I do not think wild, promiscuous giving to be the proper way to give. Christ gave to his enemies, he gave to the poor, and be it understood that when he gave he did so not expecting a gift in return. To be sure Christ gave to and blessed his friends also. We should make an honest effort to be like our Master in giving as well as in other respects. Did you ever offer in any way to bless an enemy? To do that might lead both of you to see your faults and to get right with each other. Did you ever give to a poor person without expecting a gift in return? Try that, for I am satisfied it will not only make you feel better but you will actually be better.

The liberal soul shall be blessed not only in the world to come, but in this life. Christ says: "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom." The tendency of stinginess is toward destruction; the tendency of "open-heartedness" is toward God.

Most likely hundreds of you have already said: "What shall I give?" Be sure not to give whiskey or a pistol or anything that might be the downfall of anyone. Let us be sure, also, that we do not give something that is not useful. As a rule a gift that must be boxed up and cared for as one would care for a babe, does no good. A nice Bible would be the very best gift for your friend if he has none. But let us be sure to give, remembering to whom and what to give. Giving does not only bless the one who receives, but it blesses the giver as well. The Bible says: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Then let us give as much as we can and just as often as we possibly can, that blessings may come often and be exceedingly great. Let us not think that Christmas is the only time we can give gifts for I am sure they are acceptable at any time and God is always ready to bless the giver.

### A Christmas Carol.

Twiddle-de-dum,  
Twiddle-dum-dee,  
Playing the game of Expectancy,  
Under the glare of the Christmas tree,  
Blending of craft and philanthropy,  
Marvelous game of humanity,  
Twiddle-de-dum,  
Twiddle-dum-dee.

Twiddle-de-dum,  
Twiddle-dum-dee,  
The rules are as simple—just listen and see:  
The gift you receive should be worth about three  
Of the one you bestow upon—possibly me  
Annually tampering the powers that be;  
Twiddle-de-dum,  
Twiddle-dum-dee.

—Life

## What Shall We Bring for Christmas?

By A. J. Colle

Pastor, First Presbyterian Church

"And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Matt. 2:11.

GOLD—He was the new born King and nothing more fitting with which to crown Him than the precious gold, borne by these wise men from their far away countries.

We, too, want to crown Him as King of kings and Lord of lords, and therefore should bring our richest treasure. Our gold rightly used will help to win jewels with which to bedeck his crown.

FRANKINCENSE was an acknowledgment of His divinity. Its use, as an accompaniment of the meat-offering, arose from its fragrant odor when burnt, in which respect the incense was a symbol of the divine name and its diffusion an emblem of the publishing abroad of that name. Hence, as prayer is a calling on God's name, the incense came to be an emblem of prayer.

We shall not suitably honor our King this Christmas if we neglect to fall down and worship Him. Nor will our worship have its highest value unless we publish abroad that blessed name. For "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. 1:11.

MYRRH—a bitter perfume, an ingredient in the holy ointment and used in embalming. It may be that the coming days hold for some of us sor-

row and gathering gloom. Even so, for thus only can we enter into the fellowship of His suffering and have the promise of reigning with Him in glory.

May I append my Christmas wish for one and all:

"On you may Bethlehem's holy Christmas star,  
Send down its peace to bless you from afar,  
And faith and hope your happiness renew  
As God's great love unfolds and comforts you."

### CHRISTMAS PRAYER

By Grady Hughes

At Christmas time, of Thee I'll ask  
Not pleasures, gifts nor riches rare;  
Not where withal to 'dorn myself,  
But, Lord, thy love to bear the load  
Of some poor, wretched down-cast soul—  
To reach the long-sought distant goal,  
Of heaven, Thy home, that waits us there.

I ask for humbleness of heart  
The symbol of a little child—  
A soul that's clean, pure, undefiled,  
A conscience clear, an open face,  
For courage ample to erase  
The sinful thoughts that dare debate  
That I may better do my part.

I ask Thee, Father, to sustain  
Our hero-boy who lives in pain  
And if it be thy will, oh, give  
Him strength sufficiently to live!

May dove-like peace o'er spread the land  
And chase away the deathly hand  
Of war that seeks to extinct man.  
May "Peace on earth, good will to men,"  
Ring out from every Christmas bell,  
And all the blessed tidings tell,  
Of the ancient Star of Bethlehem.

## Christmas—

A TIME OF GIVING

By R. J. Craig

Pastor, Methodist Church

Seneca said: "He that bestows benefits imitates the gods: he who takes, the usurers."

Aristoxenus said: "To bestow is more royal than to take away."

Aristotle said: "It belongs to a freeman to give rather than to receive."

These, seeing through a glass darkly, gave expression to thoughts full of helpfulness.

Jesus, the great teacher, sometime during his ministry, said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." These words were not recorded by those who wrote the life of Jesus. From heart to heart they were given until they reached the soul of Paul, A. D. 60. Parting with the elders of Ephesus, to whom he had faithfully ministered in the love of God, working with his own hands that he might help those in distress, Paul lovingly reminded them of what Jesus said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

From the rising of the sun till the setting of the same there is light; there is heat; there is life. When the sun sets the stars come out of their hiding places and smile on the children of man. Spring, summer, fall and winter with measured steps, keeping pace with the love of God, are ever going round the world to bless mankind. The birds sing till they live, rest awhile and sing again. The flowers bloom long enough to make man think of God, close their petals, to stoop, to lift others up for service, and die, giving place to others to show the beauty of their Creator. Each drop of rain, each flowing stream, each blade of grass, each mighty river, each deep blue sea, each waving field, each lovely forest, all, all cry aloud and say: "We are the gifts of God to man."

We know that our Father is pleased in giving these things.

As great as our Father is, there is one time in which His giving reached its high-water mark.

The little children who are encouraged by loving parents to hang their stockings on the night of Christmas Eve will easily understand the time to which reference is made.

The dear ones, from home, at work or at school, returning to join the family circle, feel that there is one day of giving taking rank above the other days. The husband remembers the wife, and the wife does not forget her husband. Friends think of friends, and the poor are blessed. Great corporations send greetings to those who work for them. And the young man sends presents to the one he loves. Business houses close, and mighty engines are told to rest for a little while.

What day is that, of all the days of giving, in which we are caused to think more earnestly on that wonderful passage: "It is more blessed to give than to receive?"

The blessing that comes to the loved, dependent, trusting child is that which makes us think of the angels.

The light beaming in the eyes of the poor, receiving what they need, leads us up to the Home where there is no want.

The love that shines in the face of him that is lifted from his fallen state shows his high appreciation of the act.

It is a blessing to receive. It is like God to give.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto him, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Christmas Day—the birthday of Jesus Christ—celebrates the greatest gift of God to man.

### Christmas Evening.

To make the table pretty for the evening meal, leave the shades of the candles. Use white candles in glass sticks. Wipe with a moist cloth and dip the candles in diamond dust.

Tough.

"My dear, did you make this Christmas pudding out of the cookery book?"

"Yes, love."

"Well, I thought I tasted one of the covers."