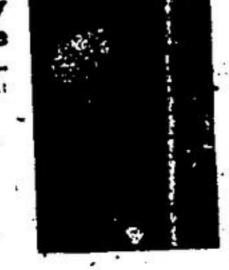
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Sunday School Lesson its own reward.

A MERCHAGE OF LOVE (Christmas Lesson)

Opr. 16; 19ph. 8:14-21

Christianity does not proclaim Senta spot," covers our sins. Claus; it proclaims the Word of God made flesh for the redemption or mankind. It proclaims no beneficient 1946 CANADA YEAR BOOK mythological white-bearded being who gives gifts to those who have been "good." It proclaims a God who freely Him. The meaning of the love revealed in Jesus Christ is very, different from the love revealed in Santa Chaus and Christmas-gift giving. The latter is a love that is carned by being "good" or "friendly." We give gifts to those who love us or are our friends, or to those from whom we seek a gift in return. In Ohrist, however, God reveals his love for the unlovely, the unloving, the sinful, the "bad." He loves those who do not love Him. The love of God in Christ, which culminated in the Crucifixion. was not a reciprocal affair, on an equal "give-and-take" basis. The love was all given, and nothing was demanded in return. It is man's nature to respond to such love; but that is except he becomes "a new creature in

Christ Jesus."

This kind of love is not an ideal discovered by man. It is not the final stage in man's search for God. It is the result of God's search for man, It is a gift of God. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." 12 Cor. 9:15). No one was looking for such a person as Jesus Christ turned out to be. No one was envisaging an ideal. which was finally achieved in Christ's death. The religious thought of the age in which Jesus lived was quite different. The Jews were looking for a Messiah; but he was thought of as a Messiah of power and glory who would establish an earthly kingdom and lead the Jewish people to pro6perity and world dominion. That God should reveal himself not in power and glory, but in a Babe born in a lowly table, in a humble peasant who had nowhere to lay his head, in the death of His Son for the sins of the world, was a conception which originated nowhere but in the mind of God. Men did not go searching among the stars to find divine love. Love was thrust down to earth, and even then men did not recognize it. John the Evangelist says "He came to His own and His own received him not". God's act of grace, designed to embrace the unworthy and the unloving, could spring only from the divine mind. Flesh and blood could not conceive it; flesh and blood were unprepared for it when it took place, and flesh and blood do not believe IT today.

For the modern world does not know this Love. The modern man loves those who love him, and if love is unreciprocated, he wants none of it. The increasing number of divorces in the marriage relationship is an illustration of this. When one member to a marriage is no longer satisfied by the emotional satisfaction he gets from his partner, his (or her) inclination is to make an end of the partnership. Our whole idea of love is based on what is received, and is only willing to give in so far as something is given in return.

The goal and standard of living today is what you can get out of life The individual stands on his rights over against other individuals, Classes in society and nations in the international sphere, are prepared to work with one another only in so far as they receive concessions equal to what they give. And they are unwilling to give until they have first received. Christian love gives first, and receives (if there be a return of gratitude) Now there is such a thing as justice

in human relationships wherein the rights of individuals and classes and nations are guaranteed. And there is such a thing as human affection. But these must not be confused with Christian love. The Christian loves not because of a natural affection for somebody else, or because of a natural desire to secure social justice; he love because he has first been loved by God. The Christian, knowing how he has been embraced in his loveldesness and unknowliness, by a divine love stres to others - without demanding and without necessarily especting re-Jesus Christ. This is the love which

alone truly sotten the hardness of his-

men society. This is the love which transfigures and creates, and brings

There may be cases where action has to be taken against individuals or na-LEGGORY: Lambe' 2:8-20; John 8:16; 1 tions IN LOVE, because their deeds are evil and dangerous and emplet. It There is one season of the year when is of the very nature of love that it seeks to deal effectively with evil. istibated incredulity, and shows how Sometimes we must demand and enthin is the veneer of rationalism it as- force social justice out of motives of i sumes the rest of the year. It is then love. During the war we told ourselves one sees how much of modern life is we were so acting against injustice, and based on superstition and mythology, that it was for the good of the German for example the moth of Banta Claus. people themselves that Hitler should in And there are also the myths of na- be smashed. And we were right! But | tionality and racial superfority (or how difficult it is to think this withinferiority as the case may be; of ev- out self-righteousness and without vinolution (as popularly understood as dictiveness! And how easy it is to try inevitable progress); and the myth to justify ourselves before the Judge 1 that money talks. The modern world, of the World with such arguments! its adult denials to the contrary, does Any love we have is not enough to justbelieve in Santa Chaus, and for the ify us, and there is nothing in us or in majority the season preceding Dec- our record at any time, to furnish ember 25th, is the season of Santa occasion for self-righteousness. We Chaus, not of the Advent of Jesus must seek the justification of our actions, not in ourselves, not even in our Christianity does not know Santa "right" motives, but in the mercy and Claus, or what he stands for; it knows righteousness of Jesus Christ who, "as I Jesus Christ and what HE stands for. a Lamb without blemish and without

The 1946 edition of the Canada Year "gives" on the basis of his unearned Book is announced by the Dominion love. - a God who gave His Son as Bureau of Statistics and will be supa sacrifice for the salvation of those | plied to the public at the price of \$2. who would receive Him and believe in a copy. By a special concession, a limited number of paper-bound copies hae been set aside for ministers of religion, students and school teachers who may obtain such copies at the price of \$1.00, Application with remittance should be made to the Do-

> of Statistics, Ottawa. Among special articles in the book are "The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan." "Canadian Agriculture during the Transition Period" and "Report of the Royal Commission

minion Statistician, Dominon Bureau

on Cooperatives." A summary of Discharge Gratuities and Rehabilitation Allowances with a synopsis of the Pension System will be of interest to veterans, as will a section on Vocational Training. Another interesting all. It is not man's nature so to love, chapter deals with the fight agains: inflation.

The book is a statistical history of; the year as well and in it one finds | relevant statistics concerning population, trade, religion, agriculture and hundreds of other things.

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