



# God's Love Made Visible

How do the new and the old fit together? The question is at home in just about any facet of human existence and endeavor. Here, the question applies to embracing and celebrating Christmas. Christmas needs its loved carols and obscure carols from the past. But Christmas is new to us each year. Hope and heritage are in the manger and on the tree.

In this Christmas hymn the new shows up first, in the first stanza, and is followed by the old in the second stanza. The newness of stanza one helps those of us who have experienced many Christmases get a fresh glimpse of the wonder of it; the wonder of God coming to earth to live with us. As astounding as that is, we need the freshness of this hymn, and especially its first stanza, to remind us of the ramifications of God's gift. "God's love made visible! Incomprehensible!" Oh yeah...it is, isn't it?

But then the old and new revisit our thinking; God's love made visible in Christ (the old, old story) is made new in the realization that God's love is now to be made visible in Christ... in us. And the new birth of an old knowing cries within us. Christmas is the reminder that we are to personify good will and peace on earth. Angels are standing by to sing. Stables and mangers are awaiting the arrival of our humility. And we are surrounded by people of every sort, from shepherds to kings, waiting for God's love to be made visible; visible in Christ...in us.

What gifts shall we bring to this baby king? This is a Christmas hymn, the question is appropriate. Our hymn suggests that the best gift we can give to Jesus is our life and self as a place for him to be made visible. "Open all doors," says the hymn, "Open your hearts." Openness, there's a gift to give to Jesus. It is also the only way to receive God's Christmas gift to us.

The hymn has us sing more than once, "His love shall reign." And it shall, whenever and wherever it is made visible. At first, allowing God's love to be seen in Christ in us may be as awkward as a 5/4 hymn in a 4/4 environment. But as we open our hearts to the incomprehensible idea, we get better at it. The baby will grow, and will reign.

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