



MESSAGE FROM THE VEEP



My Christmas Gifts to You

By Clarence M. Hatcherson

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IN THE TRADITION of the Magi, I offer you three gifts in the form of books that I recommend you read. These texts (two of which are several thousand years old) delve into “the human condition” and how to survive it. The first of my “gifts” is **The Prince** written by **Niccolo Machiavelli**.

Niccolo Machiavelli, was born at Florence, Italy on May 3, 1469; he is considered the father of modern political theory.

In his early years he was exposed to an extremely chaotic time period with popes leading armies, powerful city-states falling one after another to foreign powers, and governments changing within the space of just weeks. As a student, Machiavelli was educated by the humanist ideals of the Renaissance and hence **The Prince** seems to be set with these ideals.

Machiavelli’s ideas contained in **The Prince** are relatively straight forward. He did not write **The Prince** for literary acknowledgement but wrote it to prove his proficiency on government in the western world and to offer advice on how to gain power and keep it efficient. Machiavelli strongly believed in the requirement of a strong leader in order to maintain domination for the benefit of citizens and not for individual advancement.

One of the main questions discussed in the book “*is it better for a Prince to be loved or feared?*” Machiavelli’s short answer is that it would be preferable to be loved and feared; however the two simply can’t exist together.

As a result, he says that it would be best to be feared and not loved. It is better to be feared then loved because as a leader it is your responsibility to control and run the

state and Machiavelli feels that to do so you need complete obedience from your people.

Machiavelli does not believe in cruelty and he only warrants it for military use. This is because he believes that if you have a good military then you will have good laws. One of his most famous quotes helps explain this theory, “*the presence of sound military forces indicates the presence of sound laws.*”

Although the author believes it is better to be feared than loved, he recognized that a leader cannot be hated or it will lead to his downfall. Machiavelli advises that Princes should avoid being hated or despised, as the people’s allegiance is a better defense than building a fortress.

The word *Machiavellian*, which came from this book and from Machiavelli’s theories, means to be crude, cunning and deceitful and this is exactly how Machiavelli thought the new prince should act.

Carl Philipp Gottfried von Clausewitz (1780 – 1831) was a German-Prussian soldier and military theorist. He is famous for saying “*war is an expression of politics by other means*”, which takes us to my second “gift”: **The Art of War**.

Sun Tzu was an ancient Chinese military general, strategist and philosopher and is believed to be the author of **The Art of War**, an influential ancient Chinese book on military strategy.

He was born in China in the 6th century BCE. **The Art of War** presents a philosophy of war for managing conflicts and winning battles. It is accepted as a masterpiece on strategy and is frequently cited and referred to by generals and theorists since it was first

published, translated and distributed internationally.

Sun Tzu considered war as a necessary evil that must be avoided whenever possible. It notes that "*war is like fire; people who do not lay down their arms will die by their arms*". The war should be fought swiftly to avoid economic losses: "*No long war ever profited any country: 100 victories in 100 battles is simply ridiculous. Anyone who excels in defeating his enemies triumphs before his enemy's threat become real*".

After unsuccessfully practicing politics and then waging war the logical segue is peace. The final of my Christmas "gifts" is a book about peace. It is **The Gospel according to Luke**.

Luke the Evangelist was Greek, born in the Hellenistic city of Antioch and was well educated. His studies included Greek philosophy, medicine and art in his youth. He was also a professional physician. He wrote in detail much of the account of Our Lord's birth and infancy and boyhood, some of the most moving parables, such as that of

the Good Samaritan and that of the Prodigal Son, and three of the sayings of Christ on the Cross: "Father, forgive them," "Thou shalt be with me in Paradise," and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

In Luke's account of the Gospel, we find an emphasis on the human love of Christ, on His compassion for sinners and for suffering and unhappy persons, for outcasts such as the Samaritans, tax collectors, lepers, shepherds (not a respected profession), and for the poor. The role of women in Christ's ministry is more emphasized in Luke than in the other Gospel writings.

My recommendation that you read these three books is my "Gifts of the Magi" to you.

To each and every one of you I sincerely wish a very Merry Christmas.

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Greatness from Humble Beginnings

He grew up in an obscure village where he worked as a carpenter until he was 30 years old. Then he was an itinerant preacher for three years.

He never wrote a book or held an office or had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college or do any of the things one usually associates with greatness.

He was 33 when public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. His enemies put him through a mock trial, and

then he was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

While he was dying, his only property, the clothing that he wore, was gambled for by his executioners. And he was laid in a borrowed grave.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life.