

Christmas—and What it Should Mean to Us

Christmas is a great National holiday, observed throughout the world. It is a day set aside by every nation and by all people, except the Jews, as a day of good will and worship, in remembrance of our Savior. It is supposed to be the birth of Christ, but it is not known for sure whether it is the real date of his birth or not. It is wonderful to think what a spirit of good will and brotherhood Christmas brings to us all. What a great blessing it would be if we could only have the Christmas spirit extended through all the year.

Christmas is hailed with delight and joy by young and old alike. We all generally expect to have a good time. I wonder how many of us know what the real spirit of Christmas is. It is a spirit and a feeling that cannot be described in words.

So many people regard Christmas as a time of drinking, eating, and carousing. Is this the right way to remember the birth of Christ? We should not be selfish about our own pleasures. There is a peace of mind gotten from doing good and helping other people that cannot be surpassed. Helping others is the greatest remedy ever known for the mind.

Some people think it is a time to exchange presents. They think the one who gives the present of greatest value is the truest friend. Christmas really is a time to give presents if you want to and truly give to make other people happier. There can exist as much true friendship in a one-cent postcard as there can in a present of high value. If you can't hold friends with your own personality, don't buy them! A person who clings to you because you have money or a high social position is no friend, and will desert you when you need him most.

It is right and proper that we should eat, but we should never eat and drink to excess. We must remember those who are poor and needy. Scatter happiness and good will wherever you go.

The ideal Christmas is when nations shall forget wrongs, individuals forget grievances, and the old and beautiful prophecy comes true, "Peace on earth, good will toward Men."

—CONSTANCE MCGEHEE

RIDDLE—Why is a Ford like a school-room?

Because it has a crank in front, and lots of little nuts behind.

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve is the greatest night in the year. It is a night of mystery. When everyone is in bed except the policemen, along comes an old gentleman in a sleigh and a flock of reindeer riding over the housetops. He stops at a certain house where good little boys and girls reside and, hitching his steeds to the lightning rod, descends the chimney and proceeds to fill the stockings hanging in front of the fireplace.

The policemen never do see the old housebreaker, and he never gets his nice red suit the least bit sooty. Another mystery!—He can always go down a chimney, whether large or small. This gentleman is St. Nicholas, better known as Santa Claus, Father Christmas, Bon Homme Noel, and Knight Clobes. He is also a ghost, or supposed to be one. Years ago a man named Nicholas went about slipping money in windows, under doors, and through the keyholes in the homes of the poor people, and he never let anyone know how it happened. Today Santa Claus is a ghost of this person in almost every country in the world. In France he is called Bon Homme Noel, and is accompanied by another ghost, a thin, weasel-faced fellow, with a long gray beard, threatening dark eyes, and a perpetual frown. He carries a wicker basket on his back, and slips a switch into all the stockings of bad children. In Holland, Father Christmas is impersonated by some member of the family, and appears before them on Christmas Eve and distributes presents.

Christmas in many cases is taken in the wrong spirit. It is not a time to give and receive presents, to feast and banquet, but is the birthday of Jesus Christ; and any presents that are given should be as a token of good faith and "good will toward men."

—J. M. COFFMAN

The Plum-Pudding

Jemima, you may stone the plums,
And Johnny, grate some fine bread crumbs;
Susan, with care, the eggs shall beat;
So all shall help to make the treat.
Mother will cut the citron nice,
And weigh the flour and the spice;
Sugar and suet don't forget,
Nor some new milk to make all wet.
Then in a large, clean kitchen bowl,
With greatest care we'll mix the whole;
And each good child shall have a wish,
As she helps stir the Christmas dish.

Christmas

Christmas is a Christian event. Jews do not believe in Christ, and so do not celebrate it. It is observed as the birthday of Christ. No quarrels or other disorder should mar it, for Christ was born to bring "peace on earth and good will to men."

Nevertheless the rulers of England stopped its celebration once, and there were many riots. Christmas is the time for the exchanging of gifts. You give presents to your friends and relatives—sometimes just because it is Christmas; but a gift is not a gift without love behind it. Most people do not realize this, and so Christmas is to them a hectic struggle to give others gifts as costly as they receive.

In olden times the priests placed boxes outside of the churches to put money and other things in. The next day these things were distributed to the poor.

Christmas is confused with St. Nicholas Day, and from this confusion comes the habit of giving presents. St. Nicholas Day was the sixth of December, on which day St. Nicholas was in the habit of giving gifts.

Santa Claus is a form of Santa Claas, (Dutch for St. Nicholas). This myth was introduced into England and America from the old Dutch settlers of New York. In some countries, children place their shoes by the hearth, believing that if they have been good the Christ-child will fill them. This is their version of the Christmas myth.

When Christmas was first celebrated, it was purely a religious ceremony. When the Britons and other barbarians were converted to Christianity, they sullied it. It then became a season of feasting and riotous mirth—quite different from its original purpose.

There are many fables connected with Christmas, and one of the most common of these is the belief that at midnight of Christmas Eve dumb beasts are given the power to speak. Another is that at the same hour the handles of iron pots or kettles will not heat. The origin of these fables is not known, but many of the peasants in the old countries believe them.

The use of decorations like holly and mistletoe are survivals of the ancient Druids. They worshiped mistletoe, which, though beautiful, it is a pagan custom to give mistletoe and its companion, holly, prominence in the home on Christmas.

—MARY W. WITTHROW