



CHRISTIANITY IN THE LAND OF CHRIST

Christ was a perfect man. He stands for all that is pure and holy. Naturally one would expect the land where he lived to be peaceful, but it is not. In fact, it is everything else but that. There is a strife and turmoil going on there all the time. When Christians go to the Holy Land, they must face the undeniable evidence of historic Christianity's three failures in the land of Christ—monasticism, militarism, and mummery.

Monasticism, which is the withdrawing of one's self from the world to devote himself to a holy life, has nearly disappeared. These monks and hermits tortured themselves in an almost unbelievable way because they thought by doing so their sins would be forgiven. This was not at all the religion which Christ taught.

Militarism is the form of crusades and fighting over the holy places. The crusades have disappeared, but men are fighting today over the holy places—the places where Jesus is supposed to have been. The recent riot between the Arabs and the Jews at the Wailing Wall is an example of the jealousy among the religious division for the holy places. While this was among non-Christian groups, the same thing happens among the Christians.

Mummery is playing on the people's religious credulity. A great many of the places where Jesus is supposed to have been are covered with churches or shrines maintained by the different religious divisions, all of whom quarrel with one another as to who owns them. An example of this religious credulity is the supposed miracle of the sacred fire, which takes place on the Saturday before the Greek Easter at the Church of the Sepulcher in Jerusalem. People throng to this church and try to get where the holy fire first comes down since the one upon whom it first falls is most blessed. The one first receiving the fire makes a dash through the crowd like a fullback in a football game, and the excitement and struggle reminds one of a mob.

Instead of a peaceful land, with no wars, this is Christianity in the land of Christ.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Almost every land has its Christmas carols, which were originally religious hymns, but as years passed, became more rollicking in nature. Many of them are derived from Nativity plays, given during the Middle Ages.

In America, the songs and carols of Christmas are almost entirely derived from the countries of the old world.

In England "waifs" sing under the windows on Christmas Eve, a custom countless years old. The ancient Kol-yoda songs, once sung to pagan gods, are sung about the streets in Russia.

In France where Bonhomme Noel fills the wooden shoes on the hearth, Noel songs are sung. The famous Kris-thieder are sung in Germany, when Kris Kringle hides unexpected gifts in strang places.

Italy, where the "Urn of Faye" provides gifts, and Holland, the land of Saint Nicholas, also have their Christmas songs and carols.

HIS STAR

In a hut on a desolate Christmas Night, By the faint, sad glow of a small fire's light,

The huddled group on the dreary hearth Felt the Glory of God enfold the earth, As the Christ Child—Symbol of Heavenly Love—

Smiled on the world from His Star above.

MARGARET RUE.

A FIRST GIFT
By Bill Allen

"Papers! Papers!" Jim and Mary sang through the streets. "Papers, paper, Mister? Thank you, sir." Jim and Mary were newsies, and they were twins. They had been brought up in the school of experience and hard knocks. Their mother died when the children were only five years old. They had been put under the protection of their harsh and stingy old Aunt Anna, a widow, who was very incapable as a guardian for the young children. She thought of the two children as she would of a person of her own age. She whipped the boy and girl so often that they had begun to think of the whippings as everyday occurrences.

On this special morning, December 24th, Mary and her brother were happy, happy for the first time in many a day. Each had saved enough pennies, without knowledge of their old aunt, to get the other a present of some kind for Christmas. On the previous Christmas neither had received a gift from anyone. They did not believe in Santa Claus. They knew that the old aunt would give them a sound whipping if she found that they had not been giving her all the money made from selling the papers. Nevertheless, they were set upon getting each other some sort of a gift.

Jim and Mary had both sold all of their papers except two. Working all day, they had managed to sell more papers than usual. Now only two remained. Oh, why didn't someone buy these two? They were both so thrilled that time just dragged along at an unusually slow pace.

Finally, the papers were sold, and Jim and Mary started to do their shopping. "Jim, aren't you happy? I'm so happy that I don't know what to do."

"Sure, I'm happy, but let's hurry, because Aunt Anna will be as mad as a wet hen if we are not there to help her with the supper dishes. Go ahead now, and I'll meet you here in a half hour."

They separated, but, like most other people, neither had decided what he was going to purchase. Jim passed on down the street until he came to a hardware store. In the window he spied a dollar watch. He was very much tempted to go in and get it for himself, but he remembered that he must buy a present for Mary. Next door he saw, in the window, a very beautiful but cheaply-priced doll. He went in and bought it.

Mary passed on up the street and came to the store in the window of which rested a beautiful doll. She also was tempted to purchase herself a gift, but remembered that Jim must have something for Christmas; so she went on. Next door she saw a dollar watch. She went in and bought the watch for her brother.

On their way home the two children were so overjoyed with their gifts that they could hardly control their emotions. They managed, however, to say nothing as to what the nature of the gifts was.

Arriving home they were greeted by a coarse: "Get those wraps off and come in here and help me with these dishes. Why are you so late? Been to see Santa Claus? Ha! Ha! I'll Santa Claus you, you little—"

Later on in the night the old aunt went to the trunk to get a clean tablecloth for the Christmas table, and saw a strange, neatly-wrapped bundle in the bottom. She promptly asked whose it was, and, upon finding out, she threw the doll back into the trunk with such force that it was broken to bits. Instantly Mary ran to get the present that she had bought for Jim, but was promptly stopped by her aunt.

"What have you got there?"

Ten Days

High school students in the city of Greensboro, North Carolina, are sentenced to ten days by the school board of this city—ten days of glorious vacation. That is the present they are making us, ten days free from the restrictions of school, ten mornings in which to sleep late, ten nights to dance and party in—in all a vacation in which to celebrate and enjoy our Christmas. We thank you.

Vacation is a happy time, but our schooldays, taken as a whole when we are older and can think back over and remember them, will easily be the most enjoyable days of our life. So, in all sincerity, let us enjoy these days to their utmost, but when they are over, let us come back in a better frame of mind to work and do our best through the remainder of the year.

PRESENTS OF SANTA CLAUS

Santa Claus (by latest calculations) must deliver 692,000 presents in the United States, 50,000 in Canada, 9,999,999 in the whole universe. By an exclusive interview we also find that Santa Claus must leave 99,999,999 presents in Mars, 9,999 in Venus, and 66,666 in Jupiter. Of these, twenty-two are switches for bad little boys, sixty-one are dollies with false wigs and beards and 9,999,972 are guns, toys and lollipops.

Perhaps you will be surprised to know how Santa Claus travels these days. His reindeers are lame, his auto is frozen up, and his airplane has no gas, but still the old gentleman never misses a Christmas. He now visits homes in a special patented yo-yo machine hitched way up in the northland to a steel cable. This yo-yo has special features. These are small buttons. If you press one, the yo-yo begins swinging down. Press another, and it stops right where it is. Press a third and it rolls back up again. There you see, that with this device, Santa may let himself down almost any chimney top and bring presents.

Of course, these yo-yo's will not reach to any of the planets which Santa Claus visits. He goes to Mars and Venus and Jupiter. For this travel he has a rocket machine which is shot from the canon in his skyrocket machine, and something happened to make him miss his course. He was rushing by Mars, which was only about 12 feet away, at terrible speed. He was headed for destruction, when suddenly, grabbing a lasso out of his toys, he lassoed a tree, and was safe. Ever after, he was careful to carry along harpoons, fishing poles and lassoes.

"A present f-for J-Jim."

"Hand it here!"

"Please, aunty, please don't—"

"Shut up!"

About the middle of the night Jim was awakened by Mary.

"Jim, I just wanted tell you good-by, because I'm going away. I just can't stand her any more."

Jim thought for a moment, then jumped into his clothing. "I'm going, too!"

After wandering around the city for almost all the night, the two runaways came to a church, which was strange to both of them.

"Jim," said Mary, "we're lost!"

The next morning the sexton of the church saw two snow-covered heaps, side by side, on the steps of the church. He picked up the two bundles and carried them inside. Jim and Mary had received their first and only Christmas gift in the Land of Eternal Christmas.

FORFEITED—A HOUSE PARTY
By LEILA GEORGE CRAM

Bells, wreaths, holly, mistletoe, and yuletide logs gave the holiday season a glow of the real Christmas spirit. Sally Winthrop joined the throng to enjoy the thrill of Christmas shopping and planning for the holidays. This year it was to be the best of all, for Sally had been invited to a house party. All her chums were going, too. Weeks before she had figured on her wardrobe. Her mother promised her two dresses for Christmas; these, of course, she would take to the house party.

The day of the departure came; everybody was excited. The train was scheduled to leave at 11 o'clock, noon. All the boys and girls going on the house party would leave on the same train. Sally was busy packing. She gently laid the party dresses, stockings, and shoes in the hat-box. In her mind were pictures of dances, dates, parties, skating, and a glorious holiday. Suddenly the door-bell rang. Sally didn't even hear it; she was so absorbed in her dream.

"A telegram for you, miss," said Martha, the maid, as she addressed Mrs. Winthrop.

Mrs. Winthrop tore open the envelope and read: "Could Sally stay with me during holidays? Am very sick." Aunt Ann.

Sally's mother re-read the wire, for she knew it would mean no house party for Sally. Finally, after much thought and worry, she called her daughter to her.

"Sally," she said, "I have a great disappointment for you to bear. Aunt Ann has become very ill and wishes you to come and to stay with her. You know Ann would rather you would stay with her than anyone else. Oh, honey! I know you will hate to miss the house party, but—but don't you understand?"

Sally's eyes filled with tears. She mused over the question and then said, "Well, if you wish me to go—oh, mother, I just can't go after all the planning and dreaming I have done."

"Darling, I know it is a shame you can't go. But you will go if I say so, won't you?"

"Yyyceess."

"Yes, Aunt Ann, I will read to you."

"We were on page 79, Sally."

Sally had been at Aunt Ann's for a week, and life had been terribly dull. Each day she read, washed the dishes, cooked, and cared for Aunt Ann. She stayed with her mother's sister, who lived alone. Every night she had watched over the sick aunt.

While Sally was reading, her eyes were glued to the page, but her mind was far off. A picture of happy boys and girls on a tramp; now dancing, then playing cards, and skating, which was her favorite sport. Oh, why couldn't she be there with them?

"Gee, I wish I might be amid the gay throng—but here I am reading to Aunt Ann."

After finishing the uninteresting chapter, Sally was told to go to bed. As she stood at the window, watching the stars, Sally wondered why it had happened to her, why she had to miss the fun of the Yuletide season, the thrill of Christmas, and the gaiety of the house party. While Aunt Ann's niece looked at the stars, she saw a ball of fire dashing through the heavens. Swiftly it sped down toward the earth. Sally was fascinated at the sight. Then, instantly she realized that it was the mail plane that passed by every night. It was on fire. It was falling. It would crash to the ground. It meant death. In a few minutes' time the burning plane had fallen to the earth not far from the house of

THE LAST STRAW

(A Last-Minute Christmas Feature)

The last day of the school month!
The last day of school for 1929!
The last day of the week!
The last five minutes of the period!
The last day before Christmas holiday! Oh, boy, what a grand and glorious feeling!

"Say, Irene, what time is it?"
"Two-thirty. Gee, it is time for the bell."

"This sure has been a long day."
"Now, class, let me have your attention. For Monday after the holidays, we will have the following assignment. Please take all of page 64."

"I think she is terrible to give us a lesson over the holidays."

"Miss T—, what page did you say?"

"Sixty-four."

"But—but 64 is just a picture!"

"Yes, but what does the picture represent?"

"Oh, gee, it says under it, 'A Merry Christmas.' Honest, do you mean that for our assignment?"

The class immediately cried, "Then, a Merry Christmas to you and a very Happy New Year to all!"

"Gee, there goes the bell!"

"Merry Christmas, girls and boys."

"Merry Christmas, Miss T—."

"Trene, don't you just love Miss T—? And she didn't give us anything to study but a Merry Christmas."

HOLLY

It's mighty queer to me,
That holly shows popularity;
When brown's the leading color,
It seems, there's room for still another.

This is a world of eccentricity.
When such a thing can be;

If I wore white trousers,
I'd be worse than the catless mousers.

Yet red berries and green leaves,
Can be displayed as they please.

Custom and tradition are potentate,
Regardless of style and destined fate.

BOBBY WHARTON.

Aunt Ann. In that same minute Sally had run headlong out of the house and across the fields. Meadows, streams, fields, and trees passed before her as she skimmed the ground. Without thinking, Sally darted toward the blazing mass of ruins. Unconsciously she dragged a mangled body from the eradication. Then the world was black.

The next thing that Sally knew was that she was all bandaged up. Her face and hands had been burned.

"Sally, dear, are you all right? Mother is so sorry."

"Mother, what happened?"

"My brave child, you are a heroine. See the papers."

Dancing before her eyes was the story of the miraculous rescue of a pilot.

"Oh, Sally, you are wonderful! All the world is talking about you. Look, here is a letter for you. I'll read it to you:

"Dear Miss Winthrop:

"Because of your wonderful bravery, and the danger you went through in risking your life to save a mail pilot, we are proud to award you a Carnegie medal for your bravery, and a scholarship for four years at college.

"Yours truly,

"ANDREW CARNEGIE."

"Oh, mother, is it true?"

"Yes, darling."

"Oh, gee! Then I'm glad I didn't go on the house party, and could help Aunt Ann. Is she better?"

"Yes."

"Oh, oh, oh, a Carnegie medal and scholarship! I sure am lucky."