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## Christmas Custom

### BIRTHDAY

Nobody knows what is the exact date on which Christ was born, or what people first celebrated the festival on that date. After the triumph of Christianity the prejudice of the early Christians against the celebration of birthdays as heathenish died out. Some time between 337 and 352 A. D., Pope Julius directed Saint Cyril to ascertain the correct date. He reported that the Western churches observed it on December 25, although other churches kept the day in January, April, May, March and September. Pope Julius was satisfied with Saint Cyril's report that he set December 25 as Christmas Day, and our observance of that date has come down to us from that decision. Dr. Alfred Edersheim says "There is no adequate reason for questioning the historical accuracy of this date. The objections generally made rest on grounds which seem to me historically untenable."

### CHRISTMAS CARDS

Christmas cards were first printed in London more than ninety years ago, but did not become popular until seventy-four years ago. The first Christmas card was only a visiting card on which was written the greeting, "A Merry Christmas," or "A Happy New Year." Snow scenes, holly branches and robins appeared later on embossed cards, probably picturing Christmas scenery, as the robin is known in England as the Christmas bird, and also as "The Savior's bird" because of the legend of its red breast. The bird is still seen on Christmas cards, but not so often as formerly.

### WHY DO WE PRESENT GIFTS?

It was the custom among the Romans to make gifts to each other at their winter festival, and this custom also may have descended to us from antiquity. But Christians like to feel that it is because the Wise Men brought gifts to the infant Jesus, and because of the gift of God to the world. Gifts to the poor seem, from the earliest Bible times, to have been an expression of a thankful heart. We bring Him gifts when we give to those who are in need.

### LEAVE IT ALL IN JESUS' HAND

Do you wonder why the blessing That you prayed for is delayed, While others seem to get theirs Before request is made? It's not for us to understand, But leave it all in Jesus' Hand. Do you wonder why your loved one Was taken home to stay, While other folks were left here Who are only in the way? It's not for us to understand, But leave it all in Jesus' Hand. Do you wonder why you suffer pain While others are so healthy, Or why you have to skimp and save, While other folks are wealthy? It's not for us to understand, But leave it all in Jesus' Hand.—Laura T. Halsey.

### OUR CHRIST

I know not how that Bethlehem's Babe Could in the Godhead be; I only know the Manger Child Has brought God's life to me! I know not how that Calvary's cross A world from sin could free; I only know it's matchless love Has brought God's love to me! I know not how that Joseph's tomb Could solve death's mystery; I only know a living Christ, Our immortality! H. W. Farrington.

### BURNING CHRISTMAS CANDLES

Burning candles at Christmas-tide is a custom derived from the Roman Saturnalia. Not only were candles used for the purpose of illumination during that festival, but they were also exchanged as gifts in token of cheerfulness and good will. It is probable that the employment of candles was derived from the Jewish Feast of the Dedication, which was held about the same time of the year as the Saturnalia and the Yule. The burning of candles was one of the incidents of that feast, and it is not unlikely that at the time of the birth of Jesus thousands of candles were brightly burning throughout Palestine—a fitting, though unintentional, proclamation of the Light that had come into the world.

### SANTA CLAUS AND CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS

Saint Nicholas seems to have been the original of our Santa Claus. He was the Bishop of Myra about the year 300 A.D., and was very popular because of his good deeds and kindness, especially to children, whose patron saint he is supposed to be. An old legend says that he wished to bestow a gift surreptitiously upon an old nobleman, who, although poor, did not want anyone to know of his poverty. When the good bishop reached the house he saw the old gentleman asleep by the fire, so he climbed to the top of the chimney and dropped his gift therein, thinking it would fall on the hearth. But it so happened that the money fell into one of the old gentleman's stockings, which his daughter had hung up to dry, where it was found and used as a dowry for his eldest daughter.

### CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Singing Christmas carols is a custom so old that even the origin of the word is in doubt. The first carols were modelled on the songs written to accompany the choric dance and caroling—a combination of dancing and singing—which found its way from the pagan rituals into the Christian Church. In the year 589 A. D. the Council of Toledo forbade dancing in the church on certain days, and in the following year all secular dances in the church were forbidden. However, the custom did not die out until about the year 1209.

### THINGS KNOWN

This old world says He is not, There never was a man Who could loose the tongue from dumbness Or still the palsied hand. They say that transformation Is wrought by will alone. There is no dark damnation, No bliss before His throne. But one dear day I met Him Upon a storm-tossed sea. He stilled the waves of anguish And gave His peace to me. Then He became my yokemate. My every toil to share, My shepherd and my keeper, My heart's love, pure and fair. Ho, world, say what you mind to Of Him who dwells with me; But think not to persuade me; What though I cannot see His face nor hear His footsteps, Think not I am deceived, For, oh, I know Him, know Him, Know whom I have believed! —Jean Leathers Phillips.

### THE BLOOD OF JESUS

"How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."—Heb. 9:14. We do not see His blood, but we can think of the life or power of His blood. "Dead works"—works of the spiritually dead.



# Merry Christmas to all

EVERY holiday has its significance, but none can compare with Christmas. It is the one time of the year when self-seeking gives way to selflessness, and all are united in one common attitude of good will towards our fellowmen.



## A Christmas Gift to the World

By BISHOP WILLIAM A. QUAYLE

THE silent skies have set up a song. The great blue-black vault of the night heavens is now a blaze of light and a gust of song. There is a chime of wings—wings of angels. Their silver trumpets shine like white fire. The domed skies are crowded with shining, hallowed faces, and every face clear as a star, but like a star smiling.

And then these shining, smiling faces break forth into exultant music. Singing was invented that night. It sprang full-throated from heaven's heart—the Hallelujah Chorus of the angels. The black night sky, silent for centuries past, had now become a holy, exuberant, exultant voice.

What has happened to bring the shining, winged angels down against our ground where sleeping sheep are watched by sleepless shepherds in the dark? Nobody can guess. The thing which brought them there is beyond our guesses. We cannot guess so high. Though we fly the stars, we cannot come as far as the Epiphany of that night. What happened? Ask it, Earth. Ask it, sin-weary world! Ask it, sin-bounded world. Ask it, weary, weeping women. Ask it, war-wounded men. Ask it, slave kennelled with the dogs. Ask it, child who hangs no Christmas stocking up. Ask it, dim eyes from from which all hope has died. Ask it, ye earthly multitudes for whose throats there is no song and for whose hearts there is no sky, and for whose dust there is neither angel nor spirit! ASK IT.

And the angels raptured their song, "Christ is here, this is Christmas night!"

Run shepherds, though ye be slow of foot, outrun the winds!

And now, since that night, all the year's road leads toward Christmas. We are Christmas bound. We look ahead; and there Sweet Christmas stands, when God gave his only begotten Son.

That is Christmas—the gift of God of his Son, even our Christ. Merry Christmas! This earth has Christmas, wherefore, earth, exult, lift up your voice and sing Christmas carols, not to the angels in high heaven, but to God the Father for the gift of God the Son.

We must all hang our stocking up. Christmas is here. We must all fill somebody's stockings up. Christmas is here.

Christ gave gifts unto men—Merry Christmas! We be his children, his little children, his bigger children, his big children. We must do as he did and does. Christ gave gifts unto men.

## Green Sees End Taft-Hartley Act

### ELECTION OUTCOME GAVE MANDATE FOR ACTION AFL LEADER SAYS

Wellesley Hills, Mass. — AFL President William Green declared that Congress, now that it has a real mandate from the American people, should make repeal of the Taft-Hartley law the first order of business when it convenes in January.

Mr. Green's call for action was made before the 35th annual National Business Conference sponsored by the Babson Institute. He was scheduled to debate the Taft-Hartley law issue with one of the coauthors of that measure. Representative Fred A. Hartley. Mr. Hartley did not take part in the debate because of a sore throat.

"The Taft-Hartley law must be repealed," the AFL leader said, "if our country is to remain strong and free, if we are to have real national unity and harmonious labor-management relations in our land, if we hope to preserve the free enterprise system to America and eliminate class warfare."

Hailing the recent election victory of the Democrats as a triumph over reactionary forces, Mr. Green emphasized the fact that the anti-labor law was a primary issue in the political campaign. The major parties were on opposite sides of the fence in this race, he said, unlike the 1946 congressional campaign when labor legislation was not made an issue by either Democrats or Republicans. Mr. Green asserted that is why the 1948 election constituted "a real unmistakable mandate from the American people against the Taft-Hartley Act."

Lashing out at the vicious provisions of the law which revive the evil of government by injunction, force labor to destroy itself by denying the boycott weapon, and promote individual bargaining instead of collective bargaining, Mr. Green declared these and many other objectionable features of the statute have produced ill effects for the nation. He said:

"First, it has disrupted long-standing good relations between labor and management in many industries, notably in the printing trades.

"Secondly, it has encouraged the movement of various industries from high-wage areas to low-wage unorganized sections of the country. Businessmen here in New England, who have observed the flight of textile manufacturing to the South, know whereof I speak.

"Third, the Taft-Hartley Act has increased federal government interference in labor-management relations to an extent never before known. It is ironic that the most outspoken antagonists of federal regulation of business were primarily responsible for the Taft-Hartley Act which would eventually regulate business to death. Apparently because the Taft-Hartley Act was loaded against labor, its authors stopped worrying about the vast amount of federal restriction it contains.

"Finally, and most important, the Taft-Hartley Act has aroused the bitter resentment of the working men and women of this country. They have not been misled by the propaganda picturing the Taft-Hartley Act as their 'bill of rights.' They know better. Their good common sense tells them that any law which weakens their unions is eventually going to destroy the standards which the unions won for them.

"At this point in world history, when the conflicting ideologies of American democracy and Russian communism are locked in a tense struggle and when the American free enterprise system is facing a fight for survival, it seems to me (Continued on Page 8)