

Which Day is Christmas?

Theologians have always been a preoccupied over the celebration of Christ's birthday. New Testament nowhere says when it was.

The contemporary Roman record was not very much concerned about recording births. Herod made no records which have survived.

For a time, it didn't matter much. For at least 300 years after Christ's death, no one attempted to make Christ's birthday an occasion of religious celebration or even to mark it by special ceremonies.

In part the reason for the reluctance was theological. The significant event in Christ's life was His crucifixion and to follow St. Matthew or even St. Luke in glorifying his birth seemed out of place.

Moreover, early Christianity was in constant peril of being wiped out and its devotees saw occasion for the sort of celebration which later, was to become associated with Christmas.

Seems Odd Today
Naturally, however, there was speculation on the date of Christ's birth.

A book written in 243 and ascribed to Hippolytus, then regarded a scholar of outstanding reputation, purported to lay down the date according to exact scientific principles. Other writings ascribed to Julius Africanus, another divine, followed his line.

The general tenor of the argument seems odd to us today. It was taken with the utmost seriousness at the time and for long afterwards.

Hippolytus first calculated that when the Book of Genesis had God created the world in six days, resting on the seventh, it meant that God created a world in 6,000 years — a 100 years being reckoned as a day to God.

He then established that the beginning of creation would have been at the spring equinox, when all things sprang to life. This, reckoned Hippolytus would, in the relevant year, have been the 28th of March.

Now, the coming of Christ would have marked the end of a similar period — it being the fulfilment of God's plan. Therefore, Christ would have been born on March 28 in a year which fitted the theory (about 3 BC).

Literalists then took over the argument. The day, they reckoned, could not actually have referred to the physical birth of Christ but to Christ's conception by the Holy Ghost.

By a complex calculation of astronomy and theology, they reasoned that this must have taken place on December 25th.

Other divines disputed the conclusion. They did not, however, question the basic principles. They asserted, merely, that the day of the beginning of creation would have been April 6 rather than March 25 and that would have brought Christ's birth forward to January 6th.

This they reckoned in terms of the traditional dates of Christ's resurrection after his crucifixion, had taken place, according to the Divine plan, the same date as the date of the beginning of creation.

There were, therefore, two schools of thought: One which believed that Christmas Day must be December 25 and one which believed that it must be January 6th.

Adoptionists
There the matter might have

rested with neither side achieving satisfaction, but for a quite extraneous fact.

The Church had begun to celebrate January 6th as the date of Christ's baptism. Most people held that Christ's baptism was synonymous with his birth, but those who held that this birth had taken place on December 25 did not seriously object to January 6 as a date for the baptism.

Then theologians began one of those delightful wrangles which, to them, involve questions of salvation and damnation but which, to the layman and even the ordinary clergyman are virtually incomprehensible.

Some of them thought that Christ was not born the son of God but became the son of God upon being baptised. These were called Adoptionists. The rest — and the prevailing majority — believed that Christ was born the son of God.

The difference, in essence, was one between theologians who believed divinity to be a spiritual matter requiring some progress on the part of any human being and between theologians who took Christ's divinity literally as applying to Christ the man and not simply to Christ in his spiritual perfection.

Heresy
The fact that His Baptism was celebrated while His birth was not was therefore repugnant to the ruling majority who had branded adoptionism a heresy.

Mainly for that reason Pope Liberius proclaimed Christmas an official feast and declared it to be December 25th. The suggestion appears to have been regarded as sound by Eastern Orthodox leaders and it soon was adopted there, too.

It does not, however, seem to have caught on immediately among the general public.

In 389 the Emperor Valentinian published a list of public holidays. Among religious holidays only Sundays and Easter appear.

In part, this refutes the theory that Christmas was timed for December 25th in order to compete with the old pagan holidays which had always marked the winter solstice.

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BALLINAFAD

Old Time Concert Fills Capacity Ballinafad Hall

The last Centennial project of the Community Centre was held on Friday night, December 15th, under the direction of school teachers, Mrs. R. Shortall, Mrs. J. McEnery, Mrs. E. Snow and Mrs. W. Smith. They did a splendid job of planning and selecting numbers, so that practically all the children in the community, would be participating. The program consisted of recitations, songs, plays, tableaux, etc., too numerous to mention individually. The hall

was filled to capacity, with the audience enjoying every moment. The evening ended with Santa Claus giving a candy treat to all the children present.

In Eleven Months, Town's Hospital had 1905 Patients

With just the month of December to be added, the total number of patients admitted to Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital during the first 11 months of 1967 stood at 1,905 according to figures released this week. The total includes 232 newborn.

Also increased are number of emergency visits, number of X-rays, units of work in the laboratory, and occupancy in the medical - surgical wards.

Admissions	
Adults and children	166
Newborn	26
Emergency visits	190
Maj. Operations	20
Min. Operations	65
Lab units of work	7,390
X-ray exams	587
Daily Average Patient Load	
Adults, children	52.9
Newborn	3.3
Percentage of beds Occupied	

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dership of the organist, Mrs. E. McEnery, sang so nicely several Christmas numbers, which included a solo by Nancy Shortill, who also took part in a duet with Debbie French.

After the service a pot luck lunch and social hour was enjoyed by the congregation in the basement. Later carols were sung, then the Christmas tree gifts were given out to the Sunday School children when Santa Claus paid his annual visit.

Mrs. S. Snow is in Guelph General Hospital a speedy recovery is wished for him.

Merry Christmas to the staff at the Herald Office and to all your readers.
— Margaret Jamieson

A Christmas Prayer

Let us rejoice now, for the Prince of Peace is born again, bringing us a renewal of faith and hope.

FROM ALL OF US AT

Garner's
MAIN ST. GEORGETOWN

Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas

MAY Christmas Day be an especially merry and bright one, bringing you full measure of joy, peace and contentment.

ROBERTSON ELECTRIC
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR — 877-2924 — Georgetown
52 Norton Crescent — 877-2924

JOYOUS WISHES

may you and your loved ones have a merry Christmas, and enjoy all the traditional festivities and delights of this glad time.

BILL GARBUTT
PLUMBING AND HEATING

May holiday happiness shine brightly in your heart.

Our best wishes for a Christmas glowing with cheer.

Greetings

DICK HAWES AND NORTON NELSON
BUILDING CONTRACTORS
877-3372 877-3392

And to all, thanks for your wonderful patronage

ARNO'S TEXACO
SPECIALIST IN VOLKSWAGEN REPAIRS
87 Main Street North 877-4571

What better time than Christmas to thank you for your patronage and wish you the best of everything!

ROBERT McDONALD
PLUMBING AND HEATING
21 Mountainview 877-2641

May the Joy of the Holiday Glow Brightly for You and Your Family

A big 'Thank You' from all of us here!

SCOTCH BAKERY
Mill Street Georgetown

We're ringing in best wishes for happy holidays for all our good friends and patrons

BARBER'S
JEWELLERY AND GIFTS
PAUL AND RUTH BARBER AND STAFF

Merry Christmas

TO EACH AND EVERY ONE

Whether your dreams be big or little, may they all come true!

JACKSON'S Ladies and Children's Wear
28 MAIN STREET NORTH

JOY

this Christmas

BEST WISHES TO ALL!

DAVE WILLIAMS
ELECTRIC AND HEATING LTD.
19 Elgin Street 877-3322

May holiday happiness shine brightly in your heart.

Our best wishes for a Christmas glowing with cheer.

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