

THE SEMINARIAN

Theological Seminary
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Christmas Issue

A HAPPY BIRTHDAY

I am wholly sincere in wishing you all a very Happy Birthday. That may seem strange, but is it? Granted that we all celebrate individually the days of our birth anytime from January until the Year's end. Nevertheless, we celebrate one common birthday -- December 25, the date of the birth of the Christ child in a Bethlehem manger more than nineteen hundred years ago.

Everyday is someone's birthday, but Christmas Day stands significantly alone in its importance to all the world. We visualize in our minds the figure of the Christ child, the very son of God, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. How electrifying that now was and how electrifying it is today in a world that, after many centuries, still has much to learn from Jesus of Nazareth.

To many, Christmas has come to mean something else. Its real significance has been occluded by purely secondary features. Christmas was once cynically described as "a widely observed holiday on which neither the past nor the future is of so much interest as the present." The man does not really know Christmas who associates it primarily with the giving and receiving of gifts, with Christmas greeting cards, or with the vision of King Turkey, roasted to a golden brown and ready to molt in the mouth. Those things are all very fine; I hope all of us may enjoy them. But they are secondary, non-essential.

Once more I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy Birthday in commemorating the gift of the infant Saviour to mankind. That is the real Christmas. That is the Spirit of Christmas which offers the one and everlasting hope of the world, now and forever, that there may be "peace on earth, good will to men."

Bob Haas

A SEMI-CLASSIC (NOT OURS)

We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of "The

Sun":

"Dear Editor:

I am 8 years old.

Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.

Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN, it's so.'

Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon
115 West Ninety-fifth St"

Virginia, your little friends are wrong! They have been affected by the scepticism of a sceptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Clause. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas, how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Clause! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Clause! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys in Christmas Eve to catch Santa Clause, but even if they did not see Santa, that is no sign that there is no Santa Clause. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart a baby's rattle

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FOOM! CHRISTMAS HITS THE SEMINARY

'Twas the night of December 11 and not an creature was stirring except the entire contingent of the Lancaster Seminary. Yes, the night of December 11 was a joyful occasion for all concerned. It was the night of the annual Christmas banquet and party for all of the Seminary students, their wives, the faculty members and their families as well as numerous professors and all suchlike who were on hand.

The evening got off to a good beginning with one of "Papa" Groff's fine turkey dinners eaten in the best of Christmas atmospheres, thanks to "Buddy" Brininger and his interior decorating ability.

As the last bite was descending and everyone was feeling pleasantly full (or better), Eldon Spangler, the M. C. for the evening, rose to his feet and introduced the renowned choirmaster, "Dr." Harvey Schlichter who led the assemblage in some of the traditional carols. Dr. Frank McConnell served as the organ(?) At this point the program went back to "Song" (whoth the specialty it turned out with thpittin') and this worthy introduced the president of our institution. Dr. Meek wished everyone a most happy and satisfying Christmas. He characterized the meal perfectly when he said, "This is the real thing. Not a sample but the real thing."

The next spot on the program was given to more carols, some by the company at large, and three others by an unrehearsed quartette, die guten H e r r e n Feather, Paulds, Schmid, and Wentz. With the Passing of these four troubadours came the venerable "Doctor" Earl Marks, A. B. Lebanon Valley; Ph.D., Linden Hall. He delivered a lecture on a topic near and dear to all our hearts, "All About Women". The good doctor was probably the "high man" on the program.

The M.C. was approaching the climax of the program as he called for "volunteers" to participate in a drama entitled "The Class of 1948 1/2". Those who kindly volunteered to help out, Willy Kosman, Butch Stonesifer, Pipes McConnell, Al Meek, Donnie Englert, Slim Dunn, Ozzie Frantz, Tubby Sayres, and Curly Harner, did a fine job and are indeed qualified to be classed with the leading theatrical groups in the country. (We understand however, that as a result of this little escapade, the author, Mr. Spangler, may be giving his mailing address as Union Theological Seminary after the Christmas holidays.) The production seemed to have the character of a farce, when, after the variation of several

al other "characters", Santa Claus was conjured up to present the belabored class of 1948 1/2 with their diplomas. (Oh, er, excuse me, I mean Santa Claus discovered that he also had gifts in his bag for everyone, and so the rest of the program was spent giving out these gifts. All the gifts were very appropriate and useful, all that is, except Frank Parazzini's. Frank claims that he got "Little Too" Sayres' gift by mistake. They gave Frank a girdle.

Certainly a good time was had by all. And now to get serious for a moment, we wish to speak for, and join the entire Seminary family in thanking everyone responsible for a bang-up dinner and party. Orchids go to the kitchen staff and the waiters for making the dinner one of the best ever. Also to Ernie Hawk and his committee for planning a program that kept us well entertained all evening. And to the faculty especially goes a bouquet for being the best sports in the world and for taking all the ribbing that came their way in the true spirit of the season. Hero's to the whole crew, faculty, students, staff, families, and friends for making the 1948 Christmas party one to be remembered. So Merry Christmas to all and to all a Good Night. (P.S. Happy New Year.)

-- Dick Glatfelter

"AS I SEE IT..." by Dave Mark

'Twas the week before Christmas, and all thru this land the shoppers were buying to beat the band. My achin' dawgs, this purchasin' spree is rough. My feet are sore, and my bank just sent a man with a court order after me.

I made the mistake of parkin' my tank behind The Village when I ventured down Queen Street the other evening. The doctors promise me I'll be out of my casts by Easter. But I have managed to get around enough in my two-cylinder wheel chair to latch on to a few classic pre-holiday remarks.

"Honey, we can't give cousin Mortimer this toy for Xmas. The shoppers' guide lists it for creep-ers, and he's nearly 4." - "Aw, that's O.K....It'll be just fine for his old man and his cronies."..."Did you know, old pal, that Sandy Claws is the only guy left in this world who can be seen with a bag and not get talked about?"..."I've found a perfect gift for you, wifie: a lovely little recipe book on '69 new ways
.....to use

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and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the sublime beauty and glory beyond. It is all real! Ah, Virginia, in all the world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God, he lives forever! A thousand years from now Virginia, say, for thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the hearts of childhood.

New York Sun, Sept. 21, 1897

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left-over turkey!... "And, Peggy, you've got to tell your folks that your visitin' us from Christmas till Thanksgiving just ain't the same as your visitin' them from Thanksgiving till Christmas. Honest it ain't!" "Where the heck is that ugly Xmas card I had picked out for your brother, huh?"... "We can't give those purple guest towels to her, darling; she gave them to Merv in '46, and Merv gave them to us last year."... "Get out the box of cards, Bob. Here comes the postman with at least a dozen little bits of joy from people we completely forgot about."... "Why it's a beautiful gift! Simply gorgeous! I've always wanted one, and I knew just where to put it. By the way, what is it, a pen-wiper or a detachable shirt tail?"... "If your boss gives you any more of those cheap ceogars for Xmas, you'll do your smoking out on the back porch."... "But I ask you madame, where else today could you possibly purchase a more beautiful pair of argyle socks for this giveaway price of \$13.98?"... "I hope your dad doesn't see that pink, red, and purple tie over there, or I'll be sure to find it under the tree."... "But Santy, when I saw you at the store next door you didn't have such a beeg red nose."... "Well chum, I figure if I cut seventeen hours of classes I might get home a little early. So you next year."

E. S. P.

In a window-filled cell in the monastery of St. Richard sat four aged saints. This august council had been called to delve deeply into 48 ancient papyri whose contents were as yet unknown. The documents were thought to contain the works of the famous Pimochlean Mystics, the cult which was so widespread at the present time. The four authorities who had gathered to study the secrets were St. Mark, St. George, St. Raymond, and St. Richard. It was known that the mysterious writing on the documents dealt with four subjects: works, weapons, wealth, and love. They were given out at random by St. Raymond, the leader of the group, who gave twelve to each saint, each sage being equally well versed in all of the topics. For untold minutes the four scholars studied the papyri that had been given them; then St. Mark, sitting to the left of St. Raymond, as if prompted by something he was reading on the documents before him, smashed his hand down on the table around which they all sat. The other two, St. George and St. Richard strangely enough did likewise. Now St. Raymond was heard to utter a few words of blessing under his breath. He then looked at the ceiling of the room, closed his eyes, and wrinkled his brow. He was evidently obtaining a revelation of the mystery which lay hidden in the papyri before his eyes. St. George, meanwhile was going through the same contortions and was uttering some words which sounded like, "O, brother, strike me!" He did not seem to mean a bodily blow however, for he sooner had the words fallen from his lips than St. Raymond opened his eyes, and laid upon the table one of the papyri on which were heavy black symmetrical marks with the Arabic numeral "9" in the diagonal corners. The mystery was solved. St. George wept for joy. No longer would these portentous events be left to chance. Now the age old mystics' secret was known. Now the book was laid open; the pages were translated! Now anyone could learn to hit his partner's hand when stuck for a twenty bid!