Christmas Memories
by Robert Healy Pitt

The Christmas season passes in the case of this writer through three quite distinct seasons. First, the Christmases of childhood. They occurred in the country. They date in the middle 1860s, during a part of which Virginia was engulfed in the Great War. Notwithstanding all the horrors of war, Christmas was joyous for the little ones.

To be sure, its joys were simple. The traditional stocking was hung on Christmas Eve. And the eager boy or girl was glad to find in it: a big red apple, an orange, a bunch of raisins, a little striped peppermint candy, and a handful of chestnuts.

A later stage of Christmas came when the boy had grown and had his own children. Then the season brought a new pleasure in seeing little faces glow and hearing little voices cry out with delight. It is good to have one season in the year when we are thinking more of the comfort and happiness of others than our own.

Now the third stage. The children are all grown and married. They come back for a brief season, and their coming is itself a Christmas joy. They bring with them the third generation and
everybody knows that the chief folk in that large family circle will be the little folk. And so the grandchildren take charge. Now they must have more costly, elaborate novelties. Yet the joy of childish hearts will be just as merry and contagious as ever.

What a blessed Savior He was who brought into a world of gloom and darkness so much light and gladness. Nowhere, except where the spirit of the Lord Jesus reigns, is there a season of the year when the majority of our people are thinking of how to give pleasure to others rather than themselves. Let’s take the spirit of Christmas into all the rest of the year.

(Note: Robert Healy Pitt [1853-1937] was editor of the Religious Herald from 1906 until his death. The Christmases of his childhood were spent in Middlesex County, VA, where his family was in Harmony Grove Baptist Church. In adulthood, he resided in Richmond.)

The Christmas story by R.H. Pitt comes from a booklet entitled Christmas among the Baptists of Virginia published by the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. It includes other stories, poems and items related to the season which came from Baptist publications including the Religious Herald. Copies can be ordered while they last for $5 from VBHS, Box 34, University of Richmond, VA 23173. The Virginia Baptist Historical Society is a ministry partner of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

For more information about BGAV, contact:
Marilee White
Executive Director Assistant
Baptist General Association of Virginia
800.255.2428, ext. 1201
marilee.white@bgav.org

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