



The Shining Light[®]

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Inside



Fast Facts
Page 5



Inside the Fence
Page 7



God Sees
Page 8



HALLOWEEN





HALLOWEEN

By Sis. Christine Thilmony

Halloween! A festive holiday that millions of children and even adults look forward to celebrating each year. A time of merriment, costumes, candy, and treats. A celebration that even modern churches have adopted. But where does Halloween, the third most popular holiday in America, come from? Is it truly an innocent time of fun and festivity? Let's look back into the history of Halloween to decide whether this is something any Christian should be involved in.

Ancient Times:

In order to understand the origins of Halloween, we need to travel back over 2,000 years to the area that is now known as Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. The Celtic people and pagan priests called Druids who lived there celebrated the ancient religious festival of Samhain (pronounced SAH-win). Samhain, which literally means "summer's end," marked the end of summer and harvest and the beginning of the cold, dark winter. It began on October 31st, the last day of their calendar year and ended November 1st, the first

day of the new year. It was a time associated with fear and human death.

The Celts believed that during the time of Samhain, the spirits of dead people returned to earth and people could interact with the spirit world. The Druid priests made predictions about the future in preparation for the cold, dark times ahead. People set places at the table for dead relatives to return during the Samhain meal, and food was set out to pacify the wandering spirits. At the start of Samhain, all fires were put out and the Druids would light a new sacred fire for protection and cleansing. They sacrificed crops and animals to appease the gods and ensure they would survive the coming winter. The animals sacrificed or "bone-fire" gives us our modern word "bonfire." People lit torches from this bonfire and restarted their own hearth fires back home.

During Samhain, people wore costumes such as animal heads and skins to ward off and protect themselves from the spirit world. Some trace the jack-o-lantern back to the Druids' practice of decorating their houses and temples with bloody,

But how did this Celtic pagan ritual from a land far away become one of the most popular holidays in our “Christian” nation? The answer lies in the Catholic church.

During the Middle Ages, as Catholicism spread into Ireland and other Celtic areas, Catholic popes saw the importance that people placed on their pagan rituals and began to “Christianize” them. It was easier to “convert” the Celts by adapting their pagan celebrations and even adding them to the Catholic calendar as “Christian” holidays. In 609, Pope Boniface IV transformed the pagan pantheon in Rome into a Christian temple to remember “all saints.” He instituted May 13th as “All Saints’ Day,” also called “All Hallows Day” to celebrate the dead saints and martyrs.

19th Century:

A glowing jack-o'-lantern with a carved face, surrounded by five lit tealight candles on a dark surface. The jack-o'-lantern has triangular eyes and a jagged, toothy mouth. The candles are small and round, with bright yellow flames. The entire scene is set against a dark background, creating a warm and spooky atmosphere.

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1900s October 31st was a time of vandalism, assaults, and violence. Eventually, communities came together with programs and events to tame the violence and make the holiday a “safer” event for families. The practice of trick-or-treating was revived following the Celtic tradition of leaving out food to pacify the spirits at Samhain.

In summary, all histories of Halloween can be traced back to the Celtic festival of Samhain. Whether they know it or not, people are following pagan customs as they celebrate modern-day Halloween. Costumes, pranks, and even trick-or-treating all have roots in paganism.

In addition, Samhain is still celebrated today by wiccans, or modern pagans, as an important holiday. Masks and costumes carry a long history in the occult, Allowing children to wear Halloween costumes of witches and devils and ghosts can only numb and desensitize them to the evils of paganism which is alive and growing today.

In light of the history and connection to paganism, Halloween is definitely not a holiday that should be celebrated by any Christian! “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:4.

Amen! 📖



“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Ephesians 5:11





HALLOWEEN

Fast Facts

- **Did you know adults celebrate Halloween?** Adult participation is growing. In 2021, roughly 55% of households without children planned to celebrate Halloween. Adult costume sales were predicted to be around \$1.5 billion.
- **Did you know they bobbed for apples at Samhain?** It was believed that the young people could find out who they were going to marry by joining in a game of bobbing for apples.
- **Did you know where "Trick or Treat" comes from?** During Samhain, food and wine were left out for the wandering spirits. As a replacement, the Catholics introduced the practice of distributing "soul cakes" to the poor and needy. The children would go out in their neighborhoods, and it was referred to as "going-a-souling." Treats were given out to them as they went from home to home.
- **Did you know people used to carve turnips?** Initially, the Irish and Scottish carved turnips as a way to remember deceased souls. When they immigrated to the U.S., they realized that pumpkins were much easier to carve.
- **Did you know Halloween is the second largest commercial holiday?** It ranks second only to Christmas. Consumers spent approximately 9 billion dollars on Halloween in 2019 for this one-day occasion!
- **Did you know Halloween can be a dangerous time for children?** On average, twice as many child pedestrians are killed while walking on Halloween compared to other days of the year.

Keep Your Soul Awake!

Sis. Eliane Fast

“Wherefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make them fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly.

Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.” Ezekiel 13:20, 22

The Bible says that God is against false prophets who use pillows to hunt souls. Do you know how pillows are used to hunt souls? I think a few of you may be hunters and know that obviously you do not use pillows for hunting animals. But when it comes to our souls, the enemy knows that the best way to hunt souls is to use cozy pillows instead of guns. We know that sin is dangerous and it is not likely that we will be very tempted by it because we know how much sin will hurt us.

The preachers in the church of God are faithful to our souls and tell us exactly what will happen to us if we choose to live in sin. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). But what if our preachers would not warn us about this? Sin is very deceptive and never tells us that it will hurt us, but instead shows us how much fun we can have or how free we can be. If a preacher told us that it was okay to sin and that we will not die after all, we would soon find out that is a lie!

Sin is never fun for very long and separates us from God as Isaiah 59:2 says. The soul that has left its loving Creator soon starts feeling very troubled. Unfortunately, there are preachers in false religion that tell their congregations that this is normal and that they cannot be lifted out of such a condition. Those distressing and cruel lies, which the Bible calls pillows, make the wicked comfortable in their sins and many of them think that their soul will not die but still go to heaven one day. The preachers that declare these lies are false prophets and the pillows that they use actually make souls fall asleep on their way to destruction in hell. When the people say they don't want to live in sin anymore, the false prophets say “peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14), and continue to give them even more pillows for their sins.

Thank God for faithful and true ministers that tell us what we really need to do to gain eternal life! There are no pillows in Jerusalem wherewith to hunt souls and we are safe inside the city of God where thunderings, lightnings, trumpets, and fire are sure to keep our souls wide awake and ready for the last day when the Lord will return to punish the wicked and reward the righteous. 📖

Only Just Inside the Fence

“Oh!” cried the little children. “Oh, such beautiful flowers! And only just inside the fence!”


Stealthy glances were cast at the window, the gate pressed softly, the beautiful flowers snatched with trembling hand, and the little children fled away with beating hearts. Were they now happier, because their guilty feet had wandered into a forbidden path? Only a little, very little way had they gone, and, lo! They had fallen into sin.

The freshness, the fragrance, and the beauty of the flowers were not sufficient to still the remorseful whisper of conscience. It was only inside the fence they had been, yet an ugly mark had sin set upon their fair brows!

Forbidden pleasure smiles and beckons to us only just inside the fence. Our longing glances linger there; our feet stray thitherward; it is a little way, no one sees us, and we put forth our hands to pluck the flowers whose fatal beauty is a snare to the soul.

Only just inside the fence! But that fence is set between us and sin. On one side of it, we may walk safely in the “King’s highway;” the other side leads us to temptation, to folly, to crime. Once when we have set our feet in the forbidden paths, we go again more boldly, till the time comes when that fence set for our safety is broken down and destroyed by our reckless indulgence in evil desires. There is no longer a barrier between us and sin. We do not pause or look around stealthily, or tremble as we grasp the coveted pleasure. Our looks are grown insolent and defiant; the guilty blood mantles not on our cheeks at the detected fraud, the selfish indulgence, the debasing irreverence. The fence is broken down, and we wander, unrestrained, farther and farther in those inviting paths, whose fatal termination is the snare, the pitfall, the abyss of darkness and eternal despair.

“Such beautiful flowers!” Turn from them, touch them not. They are forbidden.

“Only just inside the fence!” Within that fence is sin; without it is safety. 
Selected



God Sees Everything

I'm not too young for God to see,
He knows my name and nature too,
And all day long He looks at me,
And sees my actions through and through.

He listens to the words I say,
And knows the thoughts I have within,
And whether I'm at work or play,
He's sure to see it if I sin.

O! How could children tell a lie,
Or cheat in play, or steal, or fight,
If they remembered God was by,
And had them always in His sight!

If some good minister is near,
It makes us careful what we do;
And how much more we ought to fear
The Lord, Who sees us through and through.

Then when I want to do amiss,
However pleasant it may be,
I'll always try to think of this,—
I'm not too young for God to see!

Selected