



rich brown ' apa-f 24 : Brownzine #111 : Piebald Plonker Press

A CHRISTMAS STORY:

I have begun to believe in Spring again...

...and I think it's because I believe in Christmas. It is a holliday that has a special meaning to me, as it has ever since I became, lo, these many years ago, an Atheist and a Cynic. That was seven years ago. I was fifteen.

Time has mellowed me a bit since then -- I'm now only an Agnostic and a Pessimist -- and I suppose there's always hope (even viewed pessimistically) that I'll continue down the same road. I wouldn't want to be a Christian again, or an absolute optimist, but I do think my outlook can change and that this change can be for the better.

Christmas is a holliday I enjoy; a holliday that helps-along this mellowing progression I have noticed in myself. There is the over-lying quality of the holliday itself; it comes in the midst of winter, muffed up about the neck in nifty red and green woollens; at a time when people would normally tend to be at their chilly worst, they're smiling, friendlier and happier than usual. Christmas is a cold holliday, but it gives many people the chance to demonstrate their inner warmth -- or, perhaps, it just lets us see the warmth that was there to begin with, by the contrast.

Then, too, there's the legend that goes along with it -- an impressive legend that has survived almost two thousand years. Never mind that I don't believe the religious stuff that goes along with it. Never mind that most of the followers and believers of the legend are to my mind mostly wrong and to some degree bad. Never mind, too, that my interpretation of the legend is differant from most.

Almost two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ was born in-to a land oppressed. Grown men prayed in the streets to the God of their father's for the savior they and their prophets thought he had promised him. Christ grew up in that land, and he did what he thought he had to; the outcome was a mixed blessing and a mixed curse. But for a time, oppression was put aside.

We celebrate, in Christmas, a voice of hope; a voice that says, "Maybe, somehow,"; a voice that tells us that Spring will come again. Chistmas is where we pause to take a breath before we plunge over the yearmark into the future, dragging hopes and some fears, where we are unfamiliar with the law.