

HALLOWEEN

Where Did It Come From?

by Herman L. Hoeh

Part XI

HALLOWEEN—the strangest holiday of the entire year!

Every autumn, on the eve of November 1, children dressed as goblins, or as witches with broomsticks, knock on doors, announce “trick or treat,” soap windows of schools and stores, tear down mailboxes, and give the police a great many headaches with their juvenile vandalism. It is a time when young people “let off steam.”

To perpetuate this spirit of Halloween with its frolicking fun, stores are filled with black and orange masks, with pumpkins and other gaudy decorations to attract the eye. Even some older people enjoy their games and frivolity.

In this “enlightened” age, with ignorance and superstition supposedly banished, we find the nation still celebrating one of its most ridiculous holidays, with its goblins, the fear of black cats, and children masked as demons and witches. In schools, the children march in weird processions during the day, in anticipation of a hectic night of fun and foolishness.

Is this the way in which children should be brought up? WHY is this holiday celebrated anyway? Where did the custom of “trick or treat” originate?

It is time that people who think themselves *intelligent* begin to look into the origin of this spirit of frivolity and understand how it entered a supposedly Christian society. Certainly such a custom never came from the Bible!

Real Origin of Halloween

Do you know that Halloween was introduced into the professing Christian world centuries *after* the death of the apostles, yet it was celebrated by the pagans *centuries before* the New Testament Church was founded!

How did Halloween come to America? Here is the intriguing answer from history: “The American celebration rests upon Scottish and Irish folk customs WHICH CAN BE TRACED IN DIRECT LINE FROM PRE-CHRISTIAN TIMES” — from paganism! “Although Halloween has become a night of rollicking fun, superstitious spells, and eerie games which people take only half seriously, its beginnings were quite otherwise. The earliest Halloween celebrations were held”—not by the inspired early

church, but—“by the Druids in honor of Samhain, Lord of the Dead, whose festival fell on November 1.” (From *Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, by Ralph Linton, p. 4.)

Far from being Christian, this festival is an old pagan holiday, masquerading as though it were one of the customs of the church. And yet professing Christians allow their children to get into the spirit of this pagan custom!

The *Encyclopedia Americana* states about Halloween that it “is clearly a relic of pagan times.”

Now notice what the authoritative *Encyclopædia Britannica* says about Halloween: “It long antedates Christianity. The two chief characteristics of ancient Halloween were the lighting of bonfires and the belief that this is the one night in the year during which ghosts and witches are most likely to wander about. History shows that the main celebrations of Halloween were purely Druidical”—from the pagan Druids of Northwest Europe—“and this is further proved by the fact that in parts of Ireland October 31 is still known as *Oidhche Shambna*, ‘Vigil of Saman.’” Saman or Samhain was the pagan lord of the dead among the Druids.

So Halloween was celebrated among the pagans long before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This pagan holiday, however, was not celebrated alone among the Druids. It was also a *Roman* festival! The *Britannica* continues: “On the Druidic ceremonies were grafted some of the characteristics of the *Roman festival* in honour of Pomona held about November 1, in which nuts and apples, representing the winter store of fruits, played an important part.”

Notice the widespread pagan custom to celebrate this season of the year.

WHY Halloween Was Celebrated

Now comes the shocking *truth* from history as to why this holiday was celebrated! Here are the plain facts as written in *The Book of Halloween*, on page 10, by Ruth Kelley: The pagan Druid priests “taught the *immortality of the soul*, that it passed from one body to another at death . . . They believed that on the last night of the old year (October 31) the lord of death gathered together the souls of all those who had died in the passing year and had been condemned to live in the bodies

of animals, to decree what forms they should inhabit for the next twelve months. He could be coaxed to give *lighter sentence by gifts and prayers.*”

“On the New Year, their sins being expiated, they were released to go to *the Druid Heaven.*” (From *Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, p. 5.)

Halloween was celebrated to preserve in the minds of the people the false doctrine of the *immortality of the soul*—that the dead are not really dead. Almost all heathen nations had days in honor of the dead—days originally instituted to commemorate the death of Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-10) whom Semiramis, his wife, said was still alive.

Now let us understand the meaning of the word “Halloween.” “It is the eve of Allhallows or Hallowmas or All Saints’ Day—and as such it is one of the most solemn festivals of the (Catholic) church.” (From page 3 of Linton’s *Halloween Through Twenty Centuries.*)

Halloween is the evening of Allhallows or All Saints’ Day, which falls on November 1. Since in ancient times, the days were customarily reckoned as beginning at sunset, Halloween was merely the *evening celebration* in anticipation of the great day of November 1, dedicated to the lord of the dead!

Who Was the “Lord of the Dead”?

You will remember that shortly before his crucifixion, Jesus was questioned by the Sadducees about the resurrection. In order to prove that there would be a resurrection from the dead, Jesus told them: “But as touching the *resurrection of the dead*, have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? *God is NOT the God of the dead, but of the living*” (Matt. 22:31-32).

Notice the meaning of Jesus’ answer. Since the patriarchs are DEAD, and since God is ONLY the God of the living—because the DEAD serve not the Lord (Psalms 6:5; 115:17)—then there must be a resurrection of the DEAD in order that they might live again and that God might be their God.

To make the resurrection possible, “Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9). Observe that Jesus *became* the lord or master of the dead because through his

resurrection he gained the keys of the grave and death (Rev. 1:18) and will resurrect the dead so they may live to serve him. But from whom did Jesus gain these keys? Who had prior mastery over the dead?

Paul, in the book of Hebrews, speaks of "him that had the power of death, that is the DEVIL" (Heb. 2:14). So the devil, Satan, was lord or master of the dead!

Among the heathen Druids, Samhain or Saman, the lord of the dead, was Satan! To this day people still celebrate with frolicking fun a wild night in honor of the devil! Paul says that the heathen who thought they were worshipping the true God were actually serving demons (Gal. 4:8). Youngsters today who tear up the countryside on Halloween are *not* serving God.

But if Halloween is merely the *evening* in honor of the devil, how did the day—called Allhallows or All Saints' Day—come to be celebrated in the professing Christian Church?

The Origin of All Saints' Day

The first of November, celebrated among the pagans in honor of Samhain—Satan—is today celebrated in hundreds of churches "to honor all the saints, known and unknown, and according to (pope) Urban IV, to supply any deficiencies in the faithful's celebration of saints' feasts during the year" (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*).

How did the veneration of saints, supposedly alive in heaven, come to be celebrated on a day in honor of the devil?

Prior to 300 A.D. *separate days* were set aside by gentile Catholics in honor of particular individuals who suffered martyrdom—in much the same manner as Americans commemorate such presidents as Washington and Lincoln. During the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian, so many were put to death that joint commemorations were held on particular days in local communities. Then, according to the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, "In the fourth century, neighboring dioceses began to interchange feasts, to transfer relics, to divide them, and to join in a common feast; as is shown by the invitation of St. Basil of Caesarea (397) to the bishops of the province of Pontus . . . *The Church*, feeling that every martyr should be venerated, *appointed a common day for all.*"

Notice, what once was a memorial for each martyr on different days became a general day in honor of the *dead* who were believed to be alive in heaven. "Gregory III (731-741) consecrated a chapel in the basilica of St. Peter to all the saints and fixed the anniversary *on November 1* . . . Gregory IV (827-

844) extended the celebration on 1 November *to the entire Church*. The vigil"—Halloween—"seems to have been held as early as the feast itself."

Notice that the celebration of Halloween, the eve of the day, is as old as the celebration of All Saints' Day in the Catholic Church. On page 6 of his book, Ralph Linton says of this holiday. "All Saints' Day was introduced into the church calendar because the year was not long enough to make it possible to dedicate a special day for each spirit of the Catholic Church . . . *That the day chosen was one already associated in the popular mind with a thronging of spirits of the dead was quite in line with church policy of incorporating harmless pagan folk ideas.*"

It was *not* the Bible, but the policy of the Catholic Church to choose pagan customs and call them by Christian names. Thus the pagan day in honor of the spirits of the dead became a day in honor of those who were slain for Catholic dogma. The day was preserved to teach the people the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul—that the *dead* are not really dead!

But this is not the end of the amazing story. Whereas the pagans regarded November 1 as a day in honor of the dead in general, the Catholic Church at first honored *only* the martyrs as patron saints by the special days, a practice stemming from the Roman custom of honoring a patron god in each community. With the rapid influx of pagans into the fold of the church, what was the Church going to do with the heathen custom of prayers and gifts to appease the lord of the dead so that the "souls" of the unrighteous would not have to suffer punishment but could go to a heaven?

Prayers for the Dead Introduced

In order to gain more heathen converts, who were accustomed at Halloween season to give gifts and pray so the dead might become worthy of heaven, the Catholic Church introduced All Souls' Day, celebrated generally on November 2.

Here is how it happened. As the Catholic Church spread toward the North of Europe, it naturally found that "in Germany there existed . . . a time-honoured ceremony of *praying to the dead* on 1 October. This was accepted and sanctified by the Church," states the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*.

This ceremony of praying to or for the dead—a satanic deception to blind mankind from the true plan of God—was introduced into the church "by Odilo, Abbot of Cluny, France, who died in 1048 . . . The custom spread from there to the other congregations.

By the end of the thirteenth century, the celebration of All Souls' Day was practically universal," wrote Linton in his book on page 13.

Far from being Christian, the Halloween season is filled with heathen practices. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, article "All Souls' Day," states: "Certain popular beliefs connected with All Souls' Day are of *pagan origin and immemorial antiquity*. In many Catholic countries the dead are believed by the peasantry to revisit their homes on All Souls' night and partake of the food of the living."

For years it has been the custom of Belgian children to "build shrines in front of their homes with figures of the Madonna and candles, and beg for money to buy cakes. As many cakes as one eats, so many (people) should be free from Purgatory" (*Book of Halloween*, pp. 144-145).

Observe not only that the festival is of pagan origin, but also that the purpose of it is to perpetuate one of Satan's many false doctrines—that human beings already possess immortal life.

Here is the Catholics' own explanation of the feast which they derived from the ancient Halloween celebrations: "The theological basis for the feast is the doctrine that the souls which, on departing from the body, are not perfectly cleansed from venial sins, or have not fully atoned for past transgressions, are debarred from the Beatific Vision"—being in the immediate presence of God in heaven—"and that the faithful on earth can help them by prayers, almsdeeds and especially by the sacrifice of the Mass."

Prayer for the dead is acknowledged by many Protestant churches when they recite from the Creed: "I believe in the *communion of saints*"—which means that men can communicate with saints on behalf of souls in Purgatory!

Although most Protestants have not continued to observe the two Catholic feasts of the Halloween season, which originated from paganism, they continue to observe the most foolish part of the pagan ceremonies—Halloween! Protestants have continued the celebration of Halloween partly "since it was on this day, in 1517, that Martin Luther posted his epoch-making ninety-five theses on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg" which started the Protestant Reformation. "He chose Halloween night because he knew that the townsfolk . . . would be coming to the church that night" (*Halloween*, pp. 9, 10.)

Origin of "Trick or Treat"

Do you know where the common Halloween prank of children knocking
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on doors and shouting "trick or treat" originated?

Linton says: ". . . certainly it comes from pagan times." In Ireland up to the turn of the century, it was customary to have a procession "led by a man in a white robe wearing a horse-head mask. (The horse was sacred to the Sun God," says Linton, "which indicates that this custom was a survival of a Druid rite.") The procession levied a contribution from the farmers in the perverted name of what probably was an old Druid god. Unless the procession was "treated" liberally with gifts, the farmers were "tricked" with the threat of a curse that would ruin next year's crops!

This traditional custom of having processions at Halloween is further derived from another unusual practice. Wealthy churches during the Middle Ages, copying the ancient Greek and

Roman religious processions, paraded the relics of patron saints. The poorer parishes could not afford to buy relics, so they used caricatures of their patron saints. "Those who were not playing the parts of the holy ones also wanted to get into the procession, and so they dressed up as angels or devils. The All-hallows procession around the churchyard eventually became a gay and motely parade." (From page 103 of *Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*.)

The present day "trick or treat" is but a continuation of these degenerate and absurd customs which came out of paganism and have been labeled with Christian names.

Is it any wonder that children take part in tying cans to cats' tails, soaping windows, soaking front porch furniture with water hoses, or wantonly damaging private property, especially mail boxes—which is a government offense—on a day originally dedicated to Satan, the *Destroyer*?