

WHY TRUE CHURCHES SHOULD NOT CELEBRATE

CHRISTMAS!

BY HOLLACE H. COMBS

. Christmas is of heathen origin; therefore did not originate under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, of whom God said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come," John 16:13. According to history, Christ's birthday was not celebrated until the **fourth century after Christ**, and then by the Roman Catholic Church. The following few brief excerpts from standard encyclopedias will suffice to prove the origin of Christmas.

CHRISTMAS

"Befanna. A corruption of the word "epiphania" (Epiphany) is the name of an old female character in Italian folk-lore who was so busily engaged in house cleaning where three wise men of the East passed by on the way to offer their treasures to the infant Saviour, that she excused herself for not going out to see them, thinking that she would have an opportunity of doing so when they returned. Not knowing that they went home by another road, she has been ever since watching for them. She, like the Dutch Santa Claus, is supposed to take a great interest in children, who in Italy, are put in bed early on the "twelfth night," a stocking of each being hung up before the fire. Soon the cry "Ecco la Beffana" is raised when the children jump up and seize their stockings, each of which contains a present bearing value in proportion to the conduct of the child during the year. One whose behavior has been particularly bad finds his stocking filled with ashes, in token of Beffana's displeasure.

"The custom of carrying an effigy called the Beffana's on "Twelfth Night," in procession through the streets is probably a relic of one of the "mysteries of the middle ages"—New Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica Edition 1899, vol. XI, page 404.

"Saturn, an ancient Italian god..."

"Saturnalia, this is the great "Festival of Saturn" celebrated on the 19th, but after Caesar's reform of the calendar, on the 17th of December.

"Augustus decreed that the 17th and 18th should be sacred to Saturn, and the 19th and 20th to Opheha, the festival of Ops.

"Caligula added a fifth day, "The Day of Youth," December 25. Lasted seven days. The time was one of general joy and mirth. The woolen fetters were taken from the feet of the Image of Saturn and each man offered a pig. During the festival schools were closed...

"Gambling with dice, at other times illegal, was now practiced. All classes exchanged gifts, the commonest being tapers and clay dolls. These dolls were especially given to children. Varro thought that these dolls represented original sacrifices of human beings (children to the 'Infernal God'.)—New Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica, 1900, vol IX, page 5236.

"Epiphany, a festival held on the 6th of January by the Roman Catholic Eastern, and Anglican churches in commemoration of the manifestation of Christ. Three different events are included in this celebration. As early as the third century, at least, it was observed as The Commemoration of the Baptism of Christ...Later in the East it was taken to commemorate the manifestation of divine power in Christ's first miracle at Cana in Galilee...In the fourth century the birth of Christ was also connected with it by some writers...Many special observances are to have been connected with the day, which, under the name of Twelfth Day, Twelfth Night, was a time of special **merrymaking** in England and closed the Christmas festivities."—The New International Encyclopedia..second edition, vol. 3, page 27.

"Christmas. It was, according to many authorities, **not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian Church,**" as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the **death** of remarkable persons rather than their **birth**.

"A feast was established in memory of the birth of the Saviour in the fourth century. In the fifth century the Western Church (Roman Catholic) **ordered** it to be celebrated forever on the day of the Old Roman Feast of the **birth of Sol**.

"The Holly, the Mistletoe, the Yule Log and the **Wassel Bowl** are of pre-Christian times.

"The **Christmas Tree** has been **traced back to the Romans.** It went from Germany to Great Britain."—The Encyclopedia Americana, 1942 edition. vol. 6, page 623.

"Christmas. Christmas properly begins with the evening of December 24...and continues until Epiphany, January 6, the whole period called Christmas-tide. In the **Roman, Greek, Episcopal, and Lutheran** churches, Christmas is observed as a religious festival with special services. Its celebration was formerly **forbidden** by the **Puritans.**"—The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia, 1903, vol. II, page 987.

"Christmas Day. There is, however, a difficulty in accepting this (December 25th) as the date of the Nativity, December being the height of the rainy season in Judea, when neither flocks nor shepherds could have been at night in the fields of Bethlehem.

"By the fifth century, however, whether from influence or some tradition, or from the desire to supplant heathen festivals of that period of the year, such as Saturnalia, the 25th of December had been generally agreed upon"—Encyclo-pedia Britannica, 9th edition, vol. 5, page 611.

HEATHEN CUSTOM

2. We have shown you what encyclopedias say about Christmas and its origin, now let us look into the Scriptures. We believe, according to history, that Christmas is a heathen custom and God said to His people, "Learn not the way of the heathen...for the customs of the people are vain..." Jer. 10:2-4. This meant that God's people were not to let vain customs of heathen people become a part of them and their worship. Christmas celebrations are definitely of vain heathen customs.

THE NAME

3. The name "Christmas" is an abomination to the Lord. "Christmas" is a combination of two words, "Christ" and "Mass." Christ is

the Divine title of our Lord. "Mass" is from the Roman Catholic mass. We believe that church to be a harlot church and the 'mother of harlots.' Nothing will stir a man to anger more quickly than for someone to connect his mother's name with a harlot. What about blending the title of our blessed Lord with a harlot church (not His bride)—'Christmas?'"

HEATHEN RELICS

4. The Christmas tree, Mistletoe, Yule log, Wassel bowl, Holly wreath, Santa Claus, etc., are of heathen origin, therefore they are not of the Spirit of God and should not become a part of worship.

SCRIPTURE SILENT

5. Christmas is not stated nor implied in the Scriptures yet Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," II Tim. 3:16, 17.

CORRUPTING WORSHIP

6. **The example of Nadab and Abihu** in regard to religious matters teaches the seriousness of corrupting the worship of the true and living God, "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and **offered strange fire** before the Lord, **which He commanded them not**. And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they **died** before the Lord," Lev. 10:1, 2. It is a serious matter to tamper with God's ordained plan or order of worship. These men went beyond God's commandment.

ERROR OF GOOD INTENTIONS

7. **The example of David and Uzzah** was one of substituting God's plan. God had told David how the Ark should be transported. David found a **more beautiful** way. David let the people choose the Philistines' beautiful and sensible method of moving the Ark rather than God's method, I Chron. 15:1-14. Verse 4 reads, "...for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people." But we read again, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," Prov. 14:12. God had told the Levites to walk and bear the Ark, and others not to touch it. It seemed right to David and the people to build a nice new cart to move the Ark. "And when they came unto the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen had stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God," I Chron. 13:9, 10.

No doubt but that Uzza's intentions were good. He only tried to save the cart from overturning and to preserve the Ark, but God had said, "To obey is better than to sacrifice,"

Dr. Scofield says, "The story of David's new cart and its results is a striking illustration of the spiritual truth that blessings do not follow the best intentions in the service of God except as that service is rendered in God's way."

Three months after David's blunder, he had the Ark moved God's way, I Chron. 15:1-3. Verse 13 reads, "For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order."

ERROR OF THE HEART

8. The example of Ananias and Sapphira in regard to religious matters is another lesson to those who would dare to pollute the house of God. God had not commanded the church members to sell all of their property and donate it to the church, but since they had promised to, they should not have lied.

ERROR OF IGNORANCE

9. Ignorance will not excuse one in religious errors. Read I Sam. 6:1-19. Because the people of Bethshemesh merely looked (ignorantly) into the Ark when the oxen and cart has stalled, God killed 50,070 of them.

So God has expressed His disapproval, and inflicted the death penalty, where worship is corrupted by (1) going beyond His command. (2) by substituting His plan. (3) by willful disobedience and (4) by ignorantly violating His commands.

NATURAL MAN

10. Most Christmas activities, decorations, feasts, gifts, etc., appeal to the natural man who "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. 2:14. Any activity which can be enjoyed equally by both the unregenerated and regenerated definitely feeds the natural man, for the Adamic nature is the only nature they have in common. The unregenerate cannot enjoy the things of the Spirit. The natural man does not worship God. Rom. 8:5-8, yet the worldly minded do heartily enjoy Christmas.

CARNAL CELEBRATIONS

11. The churches should not follow the world, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world," I John 2:15,16.

Paul said to the Galatians, "Ye observe days, and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain," Gal. 4:10, 11. Paul was not speaking of Christmas here, for there was no Christmas at that time, but the principle

would apply to Christmas. Read I Peter 2:9.

CHURCH VS. WORLD

12. The fact that the world joins in the celebration of Christmas proves that it is not according to the will of God. The world does not desire to obey any precept of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

England does not celebrate the Fourth of July, for it means nothing to them. If Christmas were really a celebration of the birth of Jesus, the world which rejects Christ would not have anything to do with it. The world does enjoy Christmas, therefore it is not of God.

PURPOSELY OMITTED

13. It is wrong to try to seek out what God has purposely hidden from us. The Bible was truly written by inspiration. Everything recorded in the Scriptures was purposely recorded. Everything that was omitted from the Scriptures was purposely omitted. God knew the birth day of Jesus, the central figure of the Scriptures and He omitted any record of His birth date. Therefore, God purposely omitted the record of Jesus' birth date.

JOSEPHUS OR STONE CARVERS

14. Why did not the great historian, Josephus, record His birth date? Providence prevented him. Why was not the date carved upon a stone, to be discovered later by the archaeologist? Providence of God. If man had found the date of the birth of Jesus to be the 25th of December, after God had hidden it, then God would not be an all wise God.

MERRY MAKING AND GIFTS

15. The only record in the Bible of "Merry making and sending gifts to one another" is found in Rev. 11:10. Those referred to as participating are evil people celebrating the slaying of God's two faithful witnesses. This does not mean that it is sin to give gifts. It is not. Yet God purposely breathed this record into the Holy Scriptures for our learning, to mold our thinking.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

16. God purposely recorded two and only two birthday celebrations in the Scriptures. Each of them is connected with murder. One was recorded in the Scriptures before Jesus was born. It was the feast of Pharoah's birthday celebration where the chief baker was hanged and then beheaded. The other was Herod's birthday celebration where John the Baptist was murdered. So it would be embarrassing to try to justify the celebrating of the birthday of Jesus, and the giving of gifts to one another, by Bible examples.

SONGS AND LITERATURE

17. Christmas literature and songs almost unanimously teach falsely concerning the birth of Jesus. Books, plays, pageants, and Christmas music constantly picture three wise men of the East visiting the infant Jesus on the day of His birth along with the shepherds in the stable in Bethlehem.

The Scriptures do not say how many wise men there were. There may have been three, but could have been more. According to the Scriptures, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Matt. 2:6. The shepherds went immediately to the infant Jesus and found him in a manger, Luke 2:8-16. When Jesus was born, evidently the "star" appeared to the wise men of the East announcing His birth, Matt. 2:2, but the star did not lead the wise men to Jerusalem, according to the Scriptures. If they were wise men, they knew that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, and they knew how to get to Jerusalem without the leadership of a star. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that the wise men went immediately, or soon, to seek the infant Jesus.

When Jesus was 41 days old, Joseph and Mary carried Him into the Temple in Jerusalem, Luke 2:22-38; Lev. 12:2-6. Then they immediately returned to their home in Nazareth of Galilee, Luke 2:39, not to Egypt, as most writers say. Since Joseph and Mary with Jesus fled to Egypt immediately after the wise men left, Matt. 2:13, the wise men could not possibly have visited Jesus before He was 41 days old, and at this age Jesus was taken to Nazareth. So the wise men must have visited the child in the "house" in Nazareth, Matt. 2:11.

The wise men came to Jerusalem possibly more than a year and a half after Jesus was born, inquiring for the "young child," not the infant babe. Herod naturally thought that the child was in Bethlehem, Matt. 2:16, but He was in Nazareth, Luke 2:39. No one in Jerusalem knew where the child was, so the "star" reappeared, Matt. 2:9, to the wise men as they were leaving Herod's palace, to lead them where the child Jesus was in Nazareth, Luke 2:39. God, through the wise men, supplies Joseph and Mary with gifts sufficient to care for them on their trip into Egypt, which they made immediately after the wise men presented their gifts and left, Matt. 2:13.

Matt. 2:17 indicates the age of Jesus when the wise men visited Him, for Herod "slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time when he had diligently enquired of the wise men," verse 7.

The wise men gave their gifts to Jesus; not to one another, and even this did not happen on the birthday of Jesus. So there is no connection between Christmas and the birthday of Jesus in this respect.

VAIN WORSHIP

18. Vain worship is promoted by Christmas programs, which are doctrines of men. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Matt. 15:8, 9. This statement was true when the Lord uttered it in Isaiah's time.

Isaiah 29:13; true when Jesus repeated it during His ministry, and it is true in a large measure today concerning Christmas programs. Proof: People will sing in Christmas and Easter programs who cannot be depended upon at any other time, and many who do not attend church regularly, will go to swell the crowds at these programs. The largest crowds in the church for the year will be at these two programs. Be not deceived; the class of people who go to make up this supplementary crowd are not usually attracted by things of a spiritual nature. These statements are not made to reflect upon true Christians, but merely to identify the true type of program it is that will attract the carnally minded, and the Christmas programs do attract such. Remember that, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit, I Cor. 6:17, not one flesh, or carnal mind.

Paul said, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," Col. 2:8.

COMMANDMENT REJECTED

19. The commandment of God is rejected in Christmas celebrations. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "...Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye keep your own tradition," Mark 7:9. "Making the word of God of none effect through your traditions, which ye have delivered: and many such like things," Mark 7:13. "And many such like things" certainly would include the traditions of Christmas. Proof: (1) "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." Heb. 10:25 is made of "none effect" by Christmas, according to the almost universal low attendance on the Lord's day nearest Christmas day (except for the Christmas program). Some say that the low attendance is due to the business of holidays when people visit their families and friends. This is no worthy excuse, for this visiting is reciprocal between the cities, and there are churches at both ends of the line. (2) The Word of God is made of "none effect" in the point of financial support at this season. Churches as a whole will show a record of low finance nearest Christmas. Christmas is a time of low spirituality and high carnality.

INCONSISTENCY

20. Those who make the most of Christmas celebrations, pretending to honor the birthday of Jesus, usually are those who make the least of His Resurrection Memorial—the Lord's Day. The Lord's day is desecrated by secular work, open business houses, worldly amusements, and sports. The Lord did not want His birth memorialized, yet some men will not observe the Lord's day, but will close their places of business, or refrain from working on Christmas day.

TRADITIONS VS. SCRIPTURE

21. Christmas traditions are not in harmony with the Scriptures. (1) Old man "Santa Claus" (a Catholic monk) is the central character of Christmas, and has no Scriptural connection with the child Jesus. (2) The gifts of the wise men were gifts of gratitude and worship, the best of their substance, given to Jesus, not to one another.

(3) The traditional winter scene—evergreen trees and artificial snow—does not harmonize with the shepherds being in the fields with their flocks.

(4) All manner of fireworks and miniature implements of war can have no connection with the birth of the "King of Peace."

(5) Most all Christmas cards are centered around wishing one "A Merry Christmas." The word "merry" occurs more than twenty-five times in the Scriptures, and almost, if not every time it is used, it has reference to the natural man. The natural man does not rejoice in the Saviour. Wishing one a "sacred Christmas" would be more becoming than wishing one a "Merry Christmas." Is "merry making" a Christian attitude according to the Scripture?

THE MOTIVE

22. Christmas time is a time of social enjoyment and merry making, rather than that of spiritual gratitude and joy in the Saviour. Can one really and truthfully say that his actual motive for observing Christmas celebrations is that the Saviour was born in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago?

UNHOLY BARGAIN

23. The source of Christmas equipment will condemn the tradition. Up to the time of the second World War, most Christmas goods bore the stamp, "Made in Germany," "Made in Japan," or "Made in Italy." It is significant to note that the very nations from whom the United States and England have purchased most of their Christmas goods, which have been used in reveling and polluting the worship of God have been instruments of providential judgment against us. How did these congested nations of so limited supply of raw materials finance the great war? By exports of the fruits of their cheap labor. Among these exports, Christmas goods played a major role. England and the United States have literally poured billions of dollars into these nations in the past fifty years for Christmas goods. In time, a nation will reap whatsoever she sows, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil," Eccl. 8:11.

DRUNKENNESS AND GLUTTONY

24. Christmas time is a time of drunkenness and gluttony. The Holy Scriptures place gluttony in the same class with drunkenness and several times in the same verse of Scripture. Deut. 21:20, Prov. 23:20, 21; I Cor. 11:21. Many people who would never think of getting drunk will commit the sin of gluttony (which is the cousin of drunkenness in their Christmas feasts and call it God honoring. The term, "eat drink and be merry," is associated with evil in the Scriptures, Isaiah 22:12, 13; Luke 12:19. Jesus said to His disciples, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness," Luke 21:34. The overeating at Christmas feasts is definitely included in the word "surfeiting," and this verse. Gluttonous feasts are inconsistent with saints,

according to I Peter 4:1-4. Also read Prov. 23:2, 3; Num. 11:33; Psalm 78:29-31.

There is always a wave of illness and death as a postlude to Christmas feasts and activities.

Remember that fasting and prayer are associated together throughout the Bible, and are opposite to feasting and drunkenness.

FLESH GRATIFYING

25. Christmas time is a time of great reveling and the gratifying of the flesh. We are told in Rom. 13:14, "Make not provision for the flesh," yet much provision is made for the flesh in the Christmas season. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. 5:24. Peter said, "Abstain from fleshly lusts," I Peter 2:11. "Abstain from all appearance of evil," I Thes. 5:22.

CENTRAL FIGURE

26. Jesus Christ, the supposed central figure of Christmas, is forgotten in the celebrations. It is significant to note that when Jesus was twelve years of age and about His Father's business, He attended the Passover, where many thousands of Jews were gathered for the feast which spoke of Him (Jesus), while He, the true Passover Lamb, was lost amid the celebrations, and was not found for three days. Three days in the Scriptures speak of death, burial, and resurrection to a new life. Let Christmas crucify affections for heathen customs, bury them, and arise to walk after the Spirit, thus finding Jesus the "third day."

COMMERCIAL WORLD

27. Christmas is boosted by the commercial world. It is the greatest money-making season of the year. Professed Christian businessmen look forward to the Christmas season, not for the sake of Christ, but for the sake of financial gain.

Quoting from the press of November, 1948, "Americans are going on the biggest buying spree in history this Christmas season, surveys throughout the nation reveal. Storekeepers the land over are looking forward to the greatest Yuletide business they ever had."

BIRTH OR DEATH

28. We are not to remember Jesus Christ after the flesh now, except as historically, not memorially, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth, know we him no more." II Cor. 5:16. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..." Gal. 6:14. We are not to glory in His flesh, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," I Cor. 2:2 (Not born.)

ABOMINATION

29. Christmas is an abomination in the sight of the Lord, "And he (Jesus) said unto them (the Pharisees), Ye are they which justify yourselves before men. God knoweth your hearts for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God," Luke 16:15. This latter statement is true regardless of who is being addressed. Just what did Christ name is this verse as being "abomination?" "That which" means, "Anything which." Then anything which men highly esteem is abomination. Men esteem Christmas more highly than almost anything else. It is the only thing requiring a two week holiday in schools over the nation. Business houses that never close any other time of the year, close for Christmas. It is the only time of the year that some people will give a gift; the only time some people get drunk; the only time many firms will give employees a bonus. Many large stores have a "Christmas Saving Fund" for customers. Immediately after Christmas, customers begin depositing money into these saving accounts, to assure them, not of grocery or doctor bills, but to assure them of spending money for the next Christmas. Preparations are made further in advance for Christmas than for any other large event, Christmas is so highly esteemed among men that, according to the press of November 13:1948, "Last December retail sales reached a staggering total of \$12, 641, 000,000," and "they expect sales to reach about \$14,000,000,000" in 1949.

Since Christmas is so highly esteemed among men, it is definitely included in the abomination spoken of by Christ.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," James 4:17.

Don't Let This Trace Die! Pass It On!

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Originally published by BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMITTEE, 214 East Broad St...Texarkana, Ark-Tex.

We of Yahweh's Evangelical Assembly are re-publishing this tract that was originally written in 1948 by the Baptist ministry. While we do not agree with everything that is presented in this tract, as well as disagreeing with the pagan names and titles, we do agree with the reasons presented against the observance

of the Christmas season. We are interested in this tract because it does reveal that Protestantism can come to the truth concerning these things. However, once learned, we must make a stand in favor of the things learned and against the falsehoods. This is a thing which Protestantism has failed to do.

We also have published other tracts relating to the Christmas season. They are:

Just Whose Birthday is December 25?

Just Who Is Santa Claus?

We also suggest that you obtain our tracts entitled:

What Does It Mean When You Say HalleluYah?

What Is His Name?

What Is The True Name Of The Savior?

Is His Name Jehovah or Yahweh?

in order to clarify our stand against the use of the pagan names and titles.

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