

May your New Year be filled with physical, mental, material, and spiritual blessings.

Why True Churches Did Not Celebrate Christmas

By HOLLACE H. COMBS
Ardmore, Texas

Christmas is of heathen origin; therefore did not originate under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, 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, the birth of Christ was not celebrated until the fourth century, when the Catholic Church. The following few brief excerpts from standard encyclopedias will suffice to prove the origin of Christmas.

CHRISTMAS
"Beffana. A corruption of the word 'epiphania' (Epiphany) is the name of an old female character in Italian folk-lore who was busy engaged in house cleaning when three wise men of the East passed by on the way to offer their treasures to the infant Jesus. 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 le 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 a procession through the streets is probably a relic of one of the 'mysteries' of the middle ages."—New Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica. Edition of 1899, vol. XI, page 404.

"Saturn, an ancient Italian god. . . ."

"Saturnalis, this is the great 'Festival of Saturn' celebrated on the nineteenth, but after Caesar's reform of the calendar, the seventeenth of December.

"Augustus decreed that the seventeenth and eighteenth should be sacred to Saturn, and the nineteenth and twentieth to Opalia, 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. Volume IX, page 5236.

"Epiphany, a festival held on

the sixth 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. Volume 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 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, volume 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, volume II, page 987.

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BIBLICAL PREMILLENNIAL CALVINISTIC BAPTISTIC

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"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."—Isaiah 8:20

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Don't Be Hoodwinked By Catholic Propaganda

From all over America, our friends write concerning the advertisements which the K. of C. are carrying in the daily papers. There is veritably a flood of these advertisements reaching unsuspecting American homes.

Naturally, it has its effect upon the uninstructed and scripturally untaught. Though this move on the part of Catholicism is only about one year old, even as early as June 13, 1948, the Catholic Register said:

ROCHESTER, N. Y.—More than 4,500 persons are now taking instructions in Catholic doctrine as the result of the current Knights of Columbus advertising program in secular publications, it was disclosed at the annual meeting of New York state councils.

Among the five basic rules laid down by the U. S. Supreme Court to protect the unwary and trusting public from advertising

that confuses and misleads, are the following:

"Advertising must not obscure or conceal material facts; must not create a misleading impression even though every statement, separately considered, is literally truthful; must be free of fraudulent traps and stratagems which induce action which would not result from a forthright disclosure of the true nature of an offer."

Every informed Baptist knows

Mused Uncle Mose

Doc Jim'son say he allus laks de fust paht of de sarmon bettah dan de las' paht. Humph! He ain' nevah hyead de las' paht ob one yit.

that these "ads" are delusive and that they definitely violate the principles laid down by the U. S. Supreme Court.

It is a part of the work of an harlot to deceive. Listen:

With her much fair speech she caused him to yield; with the flattering of her lips, she forced him."—Prov. 7:21.

The Bible refers to Catholicism as an "old whore." Study Rev. 17. Running true to form, as an whore, she is deceiving the American public.

Our admonition: Don't be guilty of adultery with her! Don't be hoodwinked by this "old whore!"

Rome's destruction is sure to come. Read Rev. 17:16. May God speed the day of her vengeance! May the born again within her "come out."

The First Baptist Pulpit

"WHAT IS A SAINT?"

"To all the saints in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:1).

"To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus; called to be saints." (1 Cor. 1:2).

"Beloved of God, called to be saints." (Rom. 1:7).

This is one of the most important questions in all the world, and yet one of the least understood. It probably has more twisted and distorted ideas about it than any other truth of God's Word. And yet, the surpassingly important matter of our relation-

ship to God is centered here.

In one revival in which I was preaching there was a minister who, when he prayed, often said, "Lord, we don't claim to be saints; but we hope to be some day." I could not stand such an idea. Therefore I informed the people that I not only claimed to be a saint, but was one, having been made so by the perfect righteousness of Christ applied to me by faith in Him.

However the idea expressed in the prayer of that man is the one commonly held by the average person as to what a

saint is. He thinks that sainthood is to be attained through the efforts of our own selves. Perish such a thought! That lowers the efficacy of Christ's blood and plusses it by something else.

The literal rendering of the Greek in our last two texts is not, "called to be saints," but "called saints" (klatots hagiois). In other words, Paul is calling these people "called saints," that is, "called" modifies "saints." Literally that is the kind of saints we are: called saints.

(Continued on page two)

SPURGEON'S NOTES ON PERSONAL WORK

C. H. Spurgeon in advocating personal work, said, "If you had 100 empty bottles before you and threw a pail of water over them, some would get a little in them, but most would fall on the outside. If you wish to fill the bottles, the best way is to take each bottle separately and put a vessel full of water to the bottle's mouth."—Biblical Recorder

Dear Brother Gilpin:

We all look forward to THE EXAMINER and always learn something from it, to establish us more firmly.

NELLIE M. BUGG,
Plant City, Florida.

Another Record Broken

WASHINGTON, (AP) — Americans smoked 345,000,000,000 cigarettes during the year ended June 30th — another new record. This was the equivalent of about 121 packs for every man, woman, and child.

Since most children do not smoke and also a number of adults, the figure of 121 is raised considerably, when the total number of cigarettes is divided among the smokers. What a waste of money! There may be some excuse for unbelievers' smoking, since they ought to be nervous about what is going to happen to them, if they don't get right with God, but we cannot understand why Christians resort to the use of tobacco. The nicotine and other deadly drugs in the tobacco are definitely harmful to the human body. Any honest doctor or chemist will quickly admit as much. Furthermore, we have observed that Christian tobacco smokers are less spiritual than those who do not smoke. Tobacco smoking is definitely associated with the world and sinful pleasure.

Would any tobacco using Christian be able to imagine Jesus Christ with a cigarette in His mouth? If not, then why should a Christian smoke? Remember that John says, "If ye say that ye abide in Him, ye ought to walk even as He walked." — Selected

WHAT SOME OF OUR READERS SAY TO US

Dear Brother Gilpin:
I enjoy THE BAPTIST EXAMINER very much. I think it very copy clears up some point that I had been thinking about. Enclosed is a donation for your work.

R. B. GARDNER,
Paris, Ky.

Enclosed is a contribution, which I know you can use. Your paper is a real blessing to me. I surely love to read it. It is the best paper I ever read and every time I talk to says the same.

RAY J. BUCHER,
DeSoto, Mo.

The Missing Color

With the setting up of Israel as an independent state among the nations of the world, the Jewish flag is appearing all over the world. We hope very soon to see it flying side by side at Lake Success with the flags of all other members of the UNO, as well as above every Jewish consulate in every country.

This flag consists of two horizontal blue stripes and between them a blue Mogen David on a white ground. Blue denotes the sky above, heaven, the hope and desire of all men. White stands for purity. There is one color missing. Doctors in Palestine sometimes carry an emblem on the automobile. It features a RED Mogen David and a serpent on a pole, signifying the healing of those Jews who looked to that uplifted serpent, while they journeyed in the wilderness.

Red is the color of sacrifice. It is the only sacrifice acceptable to God is the shed blood of the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (Leviticus 17:11), and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:7). The only way any of us, Jews or Gentiles, can be made white, for heaven, is by applying the blood of Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7).

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WHAT IS A SAINT?

(Continued from page one)

I. THE COMMONLY-ACCEPTED IDEA ABOUT IT:

To the average person who hears the term "saint" used, there almost invariably comes into his mind the idea of a perfect person. He thinks of one who has attained to a degree or stage of sinlessness or absolute sanctification.

But, is such a concept true, or reasonable, or even possible? According to God's own Word if it takes personal perfection to make a saint, there are none on earth. Hear His testimony to the tragic fact: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccles. 7:20). Isaiah expresses the same truth thus: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every man to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6). The New Testament bears witness accordingly. "For there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). In the same epistle we read again: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death hath passed upon all men; for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Even born-again people are not free from its taints. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us" (1 John 1:8, 10). Who can plead guiltless? Surely if a saint is a perfect person, there are no saints on the earth.

Another commonly-accepted idea about this matter of sainthood is that it is a person who has been canonized by the Roman Catholic church. In order for that to be possible, the person sainted must have exhibited unusual characteristics of piety in the deepest sense. It is necessary for him to leave a record of philanthropic deeds. Added to all this he must have been dead for a certain length of time. Then, if everything is cleared up satisfactorily, the "Church" may confer upon that august personality the honor and title of "saint."

But, when did the church get the authority to do that which only Jesus Christ can do? This is just another one of those instances in which human beings have attempted to take out of the hands of Christ a piece of work which can be performed only by Deity.

And yet, this very idea, that a good person must die before he can be considered a saint, has crept into the thinking and writings of even Baptists. Sometimes we see in the obituary of some great Christian the expression "the sainted ———." What is that but Roman Catholicism? No, God anticipated such gross

nonsense, therefore He told us in Ps. 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Notice that it is the "death of His saints," that is, it was a saint who died. The person is a saint prior to his death.

Too often, in the thinking of lost people, the idea of a saint is ridiculous. One can see the lip of a person like that curl in scorn as he speaks sarcastically of some "goody-goody" Christian, "Oh, yes, that is a saint."

But our God anticipated this reaction also. He knew that the time would come when the Devil's crowd would snarl at the idea of saints being on earth. Therefore He gives us in Psalms 16:3 the expression, "to the saints that are in the earth." Whether you believe it or not, there are "saints in the earth!"

II. WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE A SAINT:

It requires a perfect righteousness to make a saint. Nothing less can possibly satisfy God. We must remember that it is the approval of Almighty God which must be met here. He will accept nothing less than a perfect righteousness as the ground of our sanctification.

Our God is absolutely perfect and hates sin with all the hatred of perfect divinity. He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). Seeing that the God with Whom we have to do is not only sin-hating, but also righteousness-demanding, we begin to realize the absolute necessity of presenting exactly that to Him.

However we cannot furnish this perfect righteousness which God demands. More than that, the lost person cannot furnish the smallest part of it. No matter how unwelcome the idea, yet it is a fact that the unregenerate person is totally depraved. There is not one good thing in the flesh. If you are without Christ, you are altogether void of the least trace of righteousness. The heart is depraved. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). The thoughts are depraved. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Someone else has pointed out the fact that the Hebrew here signifies not only the thoughts, but even the purpose and desires.

The conscience of the unrenewed man is also depraved. "Having the conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2). How true that is in so many lives! We learn from further study in God's Book that every thing, even the very best thing that a lost person can do, is sin before God. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight" (Isa. 64:6). Job must have had the same thing in mind when he wrote: "Behold, He putteth no trust in His saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job 15:15, 16).

In the light of these tragic facts, what is the sinner who desires to be a saint to do? God demands a perfect righteousness, and the sinner cannot furnish one part of it; yea, even everything he does is sinful. It seems that the lost person is shut up to absolute hopelessness. And he is, unless that hope is in Christ.

On the Cross, Christ wrought out that perfect righteousness and fulfilled every demand of the law of Justice. We read in Gal. 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having been made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed

"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are to come"

is everyone that hangeth on a tree." Again we find, "Christ has become the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). How comforting are the words of Is. 53:4-6 just here: "Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

The simple truth of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ is expressed in 2 Cor. 5:21, "And Him Who knew no sin hath He (God) made sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." It is simply this: Our sins were taken off us and laid upon Christ. The penalty was transferred with the guilt. If our sins were laid upon Christ, so was our punishment. He took our sins; He bore our punishment. The punishment for sin which we would have had to bear was poured out upon Christ by God Himself. God is satisfied with the payment which Christ has made. Out of His death has come a perfect, spotless, faultless righteousness. It is the very righteousness of God. It is that which God demands of us in order to be saved—in order for us to be saints of God.

Therefore we are sanctified, not on our personal righteousness, because we have none, but on the perfect righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us or placed to our account through faith in Him. That is what Paul meant in Rom. 4:5, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." No wonder we sing joyously:

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow."

III. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SAINT.

What relationship does the saint have to sin? None whatever! He is dead to sin! It no longer has any rightful claim on the believer in Jesus Christ. "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). Now when the enticing allurements to sin come our way we can find comfort in the glorious fact that we have died to those things. We are said to be "holy" (Heb. 3:1), therefore sin has no rightful place in us.

Our relationship to our daily walk is not as something already accomplished. Our business is to grow more like Christ every day that we live here. One exhortation after another is given to this effect in God's Word. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). We are responsible to appropriate the grace which He has provided for us and grow continually into more practical likeness of Him.

The relationship of the saints to the future is hilariously anticipative. We look forward with exceeding great joy and anticipation. Hebrews 9:28 tells us, "And unto those that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." In Phil. 3:20, 21 we are told, "For our citizenship is in heaven,

from whence we look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change our vile body, and make it like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." The climax of our glad expectation seems to be expressed here: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." That must be a blessed relationship.

IV. HOW TO BECOME A SAINT:

Surely there can be no more important considerations for you who are lost than earnestly desiring to know how to become a saint, or how to be saved.

In Romans 3:22 we have the clearest and most comprehensive statement about this matter that we find in all of God's Word. Here it is: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." It is simply this: God's own righteousness which comes to us through faith in Jesus Christ is revealed TO all, but is UPON only those who believe. Therefore if you believe on Christ for salvation, the very righteousness of God has been placed upon you and you are just as surely accepted before Him as Jesus Christ Himself.

We are eternally sanctified of a faith-righteousness. Roman 4:16 tell us, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace. What we mean by a "faith-righteousness" is a righteousness which comes to us through faith or is placed to the account of faith. Therefore a saint is nothing more or less than a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eternal sanctification, separation from our sins, does not happen to us through some stirring emotions, seeing signs, dreaming dreams; or perceiving unusual visions; neither is some peculiar "second work of grace" or "baptism of the Holy Ghost" apart from or after salvation, but it comes through simply believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. We merely turn away from sin in genuine repentance and trust Christ to give us the righteousness of God which is in Him. In that way we can stand before God as saints, having the righteousness of God upon us. Therefore I testify to you "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). — R. F. Hallford, Dothan, Ala.

I like THE BAPTIST EXAMINER. It is indeed the best reading outside the Bible.
A. D. SPEARMAN,
Red Bay, Alabama.

CHRISTIAN AND NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS COMPARED

BELIEF CONCERNING GOD

CHRISTIANITY. Jesus Christ is the revelation of God to man. "God is love."—I John 4:8. God is righteous.—I John 2:29. God is light.—I John 1:5. Omnipotent.—Matt. 19:26. Omniscient.—I John 3:20. Omnipresent.—Psa. 139:7-10.

"I see no business in life but the work of Christ."—Henry Martyn.

BRAHMANISM. Everything is God and God is everything. Nothing exists but one universal spirit who created Brahm, from whose mouth the triad of gods came. The prominent gods relegated to the care of man to the lesser gods. God is not to be worshipped, only for contemplation.

HINDUISM. The earliest worship was the deified powers of nature, sun, moon, etc. Gradually the idea of one supreme being arose. He was called Brahm, others were secondary. Today Brahm means the Brahmins and polytheism reigns.

BUDDHISM. Gautama said: "I see no one in the heaven, worlds, nor among gods or men whom it would be proper for me to honor." He left no god to worship, so his followers have worshipped him.

If some faithful missionary had been willing to have buried his life in India he might have seen Guatama saved and millions more like him delivered from the evils of Buddhism.

TAOISM. Lao-tsze taught that "Taou" was an invisible, unreachable, exhaustless abstraction, too subtle for words, and which was the mother of all things, even of God, of the stars, of the gods of war, of riches, etc., and an idol of Lao-tsze is now worshipped.

CONFUCIANISM. "Respect the gods, but let them alone," said Confucius. Heaven, spirits, natural objects, sun, moon, clouds, also spirits of departed ancestors are the present objects of worship.

ZOROASTRIANISM. The two great principles of light and darkness were believed to be ruled over by two gods. Ormuzd ruled over light and was the creator of good; Ahmiman ruled over darkness and was the creator of evil. These are the spirits of our great god.

PARSEEISM. They believe in God, the father of all. Fire is sacred and is a symbol of divinity and the greatest agent of God. There is a god of light and one of darkness, which war constantly with each other.

Never try to evade your responsibility by saying that the heathen are up to the light they have when you know you are not doing it yourself.

SHINTOISM. There is one supreme god, but because of his exalted position he does not receive human worship directly, through his minor dieties. The mikado traces his ancestry to goddess of the sun.

MOHAMMED got his idea of God from Judaism. He took the attribute of justice, and had a god of law. Jesus Christ he considered a prophet, but inferior to himself.

h are toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."--Phil. 3:13, 14.

World Day Of Prayer

righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

VII

CORRUPTING WORSHIP. 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 put incense thereon, 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 serious matter to tamper with God's ordained plan of order of worship. These men went beyond God's commandment.

VIII

ERROR OF GOOD INTENTIONS. 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. (1 Chron. 13:1-14). Verse 4 says, "... for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people." But the Scriptures say 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 into 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," 1 Chronicles 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 has said, "To obey is better than to sacrifice."

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, (1 Chron. 15:1-3). Verse 13 says, "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."

VIII

ERROR OF THE HEART. 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.

IX

ERROR OF IGNORANCE. Ignorance will not excuse one in religious errors. Read 1 Samuel 6:1-19. Because the people of Bethshemesh merely looked (ignorantly) into the ark when the oxen and cart had 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 wilful disobedience and (4) by ignorantly violating His commands.

X

NATURAL MAN. Most Christ-

mas 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 the regenerated, definitely feeds the natural man, for the Adamic nature is the only nature that they have in common. The unregenerate cannot enjoy the things of the Spirit. The natural man does not worship God (Romans 8:5-8), yet the worldly minded do heartily enjoy Christmas.

XI

CARNAL CELEBRATIONS. 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," 1 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 1 Peter 2:9.

XII

CHURCH VS. WORLD. 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

The New Year

by FRANCIS RIDLEY HAVERGAL

Another year is dawning!
Dear Master let it be,
In working or in waiting
Another year with Thee.
Another year in leaning,
Upon Thy loving breast,
Of ever-deepening trustfulness;
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace;
Another year of gladness,
In the shining of Thy face;
Another year of progress,
Another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence "the days."

Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training
For holier works above.
Another year is dawning!
Dear Master let it be
On earth, or else in heaven,
Another year for Thee.

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.

XIII

PURPOSELY OMITTED. 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 date 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'

Thoughts for the New Year

THREE THINGS

The hearth, the flag, the place of prayer.
I know three things must ever be,
To keep a nation strong and free,
One is a hearth-stone bright and dear,
With busy, happy loved ones near;
One is a ready heart and hand,
To love and serve and keep the land;
One is a worn and beaten way
To where the people go to pray.
So long as these are kept alive,
Nation and people will survive.
God keep them, always, everywhere.

birth date.

XIV

JOSEPHUS OR STONE CARVERS. 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 archeologist? Providence of God! If man has found the date of the birth of Jesus to be the twenty-fifth of December, after God has hidden it, then God would not be an all wise God.

XV

MERRY MAKING AND GIFTS. The only record in the Bible of "Merry making and sending gifts to one another" is found in Revelation 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 mould our thinking.

XVI

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS. 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 Pharaoh'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.

XVII

SONGS AND LITERATURE. 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 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" re-appeared (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, supplied 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).

Matthew 2:16 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 which 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.

XVIII

VAIN WORSHIP. 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 honoreth 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 (Isa. 29:13); true when Jesus repeated it during His ministry, and it is true in a large measure today concerning Christmas programs. (Continued on page four)

YOU CAN

If you cannot cross the ocean
And the heathen lands explore
You can find the heathen nearer you,
You can help them at your door.

If you cannot give your thousands,
You can give the widow's mite,
And the least you do for Jesus,
Will be precious in His sight.

With your prayer and with your bounty
You can do what God demands.
You can be like faithful Aaron,
Holding up the prophet's hands.

—Selected

CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page three)

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 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 tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," Col. 2:8.

XIX

COMMANDMENT REJECTED. The commandment of God is rejected in Christmas celebrations. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may 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. . . . ' Hebrews 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 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.

XX

INCONSISTENCY. Those who make 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 people who won't observe the Lord's day, will close their places of business, or refrain from working on Christmas day.

XXI

TRADITIONS VS. SCRIPTURE. 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 Savior. Wishing one a "sacred Christmas" would be more becoming than wishing one a "merry Christmas." Is "merry making" a Christian attribute according to the Scripture?

XXII

THE MOTIVE. 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?

XXIII

UNHOLY BARGAIN. 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 revelling and polluting the worship of God, have been the 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 whatso-

ever 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

XXIV

DRUNKENNESS AND GLUTTONY. 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 co-sin 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 (Isa. 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 is therefore contrary to the teaching of Jesus in this verse. Gluttonous feasts are inconsistent with saints, according to I Peter 4:1-4. Also read Prov. 23:2, 3; Numbers 11:33, 34; Psalms 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.

XXV

FLESH GRATIFYING. Christmas time is a time of great revelling and the gratifying of the flesh. We are told in Romans 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 et. 2:11. "Abstain from all appearance of evil," I Thess. 5:22.

XXVI

CENTRAL FIGURE. 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 Christians crucify affections for Heathen customs, bury them, and arise to walk after the Spirit, thus finding Jesus the "third day."

XXVII

COMMERCIAL WORLD. Christmas is boosted by the commercial world. It is the greatest money making season of the year. Professed Christian business men 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."

XXVIII

BIRTH OR DEATH. 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.)

XXIX

ABOMINATION. 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 in 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 new 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 December.

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

"A SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF BIBLE DOCTRINE"

The following is from the introduction to the book by Prof. F. D. Whitesell, M. A., Th. D., D. D., Professor Practical Theology, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago:

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"1. IT IS BIBLICAL. The author firmly believes in the complete verbal inspiration and final authority of the Scriptures. He has a thorough grasp of the sweep of Scriptural truths, backs up his statements by Bible references, and does not twist isolated passages to fit his own ideas. He interprets the Scriptures harmoniously and in such a way as to appeal to spiritually enlightened reason. This book leads to the Bible, not away from it, and enables the student to understand the Bible better.

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