



# The Blue Banner

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## Christmas Examined

### From the Editor

This issue of *The Blue Banner* contains several articles on Christmas, all but one of which have been circulating around for various amounts of time. The article reprinted here by Samuel Miller has never appeared in print since 1825. I've given credit and cited sources where they were given.

Some may perceive that this issue is devoted to 'Christmas bashing.' Nevertheless, I think the authors herein give good cause why many facets, if not the whole institution should be banished from Christian faith and practice. Of these articles, Dr. Williamson's is the one I like the best. It first appeared in 1962. A.W. Pink's piece speaks from a generation previous to that, while Dr. Miller cries out from an even older and purer time. If the reader would like a more thorough treatment of this subject than what is presented here, I cannot recommend highly enough, *Christmas, A Biblical Critique*. The first part of this booklet is written by Michael Schneider, Pastor of the Trinity Presbyterian Church, Valparaiso, Florida. His *Is Christmas Christian?* is written in a pastoral and practical manner and examines the inception, the institutions, and the implications of observing Christmas. The second part, *Christmas: An Historical Survey Regarding Its Origins and Opposition to It*, is written by Kevin Reed. This piece documents the consistent reformed witness against Christmas. John Calvin, John Knox, Thomas Cartwright, David Calderwood, William Ames, William Bradford, Samuel Miller, Charles Spurgeon, and James Bannerman, are cited, giving a representative witness. Write to Presbyterian Heritage Publications, P O Box 180922, Dallas, TX 75218 for single and quantity pricing on this title. It would make a startling stocking stuffer, to say the least.

### Forthcoming Issues of *The Blue Banner*.

The reader may have noted a larger number of typographical errors than usual in our last issue. I apologize for this, the wrong file went to press. As we try to be more timely in getting *The Blue Banner* out, we also will try to be more careful as to the proofing of the text. I have changed the format of the newsletter somewhat, as it is now being typeset directly from Microsoft Word for Windows. This allows an exact representation of the newsletter to be available on our Computer BBS (Bulletin Board System). As each issue is mailed we will also leave two files available on the board, one an unformatted

TXT file, the other a Word for Windows DOC file, which will look exactly like the printed form.

The December issue will be devoted to Pastor Bacon's review of Benjamin Shaw's, *Studies in Church Music*. The January issue will contain a number of articles from 1849, which appeared in the *Watchman and Observer*, a Presbyterian newspaper in Richmond, Virginia. Robert L. Dabney was one of those who wrote in to the paper on the propriety of using *Organs* in the public worship of God.

### An Appeal to God's People

Dear child of God, we read in the Scriptures "Come now and let us reason together." This is what we would like to do now to the glory of God. That popular and worldly season of the year called Christmas will soon be upon us again. Multiplied millions will be spent on a boundless shopping spree. Under the pretense of religion saint and sinner alike will join hands in the celebration of that which is not only foreign to scripture but that which will lay waste to the soul and that which draws the name of our Lord into the filth of the world. This is a very serious thing!

What part will you take in it? Will you completely sever yourself from this unholy thing or will you be found with the "mixed multitude" observing this pagan holiday with the enemies of Christ? These are very pertinent questions for there is not one scripture in the entire Bible that tells us when Christ was born, neither is there scripture that allows anyone to celebrate His birthday. God's word says, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" (Gal. 4:11).

History shows that this is a pagan celebration handed down from one generation to another until the whole world has become a slave to it. As a

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## Christmas - Pagan? Roman Catholic? Protestant?

child of God how can you or I become a partner with the world in such a season of levity and mockery to all that which is holy and eternal? Christmas is a time of feasting, drinking and frivolity for the world, done under false religious sentiment for the natural man. Sending out Christmas cards with scripture verses on them is compromising that which is holy with that which is unholy. Can Christ have fellowship with Belial? "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11) is God's command to His people.

Little do we realize that we are a living lie to our children when we observe in any way this religious worldly holiday and when we so much as mention the myth of Santa Claus to them. What about the tree? Does not the carnal heart glow with pride as it looks at the work of the hands? Isaiah said, "shall I fall down to that which comes of a tree?" God says, "Learn not the way of the heathen — For the customs of the people are vain, for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the ax. They deck it with silver and with gold, they fasten it with nail and with hammers, that it move not" (Jer. 10:1-5).

What are we going to say to these things? Why do we have anything to do with that which God hates? Are we afraid of the ridicule of the world? Has not the Lord of glory condemned all that is of the world and commanded us not to be conformed to it? Can we be a testimony for Christ and be worldly at the same time? Are we not taking part in the "pleasures of sin for a season" when we become part of the world's celebrations? Does not the humiliation and suffering that our Lord endured for us mean anything to us? Oh that every one of God's people would hear that voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins" (Rev. 18:4) and again, "Touch not the unclean thing."

God warns His people to be a separate people, a different people, a representative of Himself and of all that is pure and holy and good. We are never to unite with the world in a worldly round of fleshly gratification in the observance of days and seasons whether they be religious or political, for again God says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). There is not a day or season upon this earth that is so highly esteemed by man as Christmas. God says, "That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God" (Luke 16:15). Shouldn't this settle the matter forever? Let us not dishonor our Lord any longer by making Him a part of this idolatrous celebration. May we cry to Him for deliverance. Let the world say what it pleases and think what it pleases and let this be our motto, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

We entreat you again to turn from the world and its holy days, touch not the unclean thing, associate not the birth of Christ with the fables of paganism and apostate Christendom. Hear His voice "Be ye separate, O My people." Consider well, as before God to whom you must surely give an account. May God give us strength and purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord alone.

"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." (Isaiah 52:11)

Christmas has become so much a part of the church calendar and is so socially acceptable that it might seem pointless to ask any question which would perhaps tend to disturb the 'goodwill and merriment of the season'. The festival has been accepted across the board in the religious world by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike, even among evangelicals and fundamentalists. You might conclude that it is a settled issue. However, expressions like 'THE FIRST CHRISTMAS' and 'THE CHRIST WHO CAME AT CHRISTMAS WILL COME AGAIN' are so interesting that they warrant some consideration. Did Christ come at Christmas? When was the FIRST CHRISTMAS?

Some of the 'Christmas time' activities make it easy for us to understand why the irreligious world observes Christmas. It is a time of great materialism, a time for parties with plenty (too much) of eating and drinking. It is a time for much merriment, so we hear it said 'MERRY CHRISTMAS'. You are entitled to ask 'Where is Christ in all of this?'. The unbelieving world does not know Him, so what is happening at Christmas time? Has there been a change of heart? Much of what makes up the Merry Christmas of society has no place in the teaching and example of Jesus Christ.

Every serious student of the Bible knows that the discipleship to which Christ calls his followers cannot accommodate the lifestyle of the unbelieving world. It is obvious that for the unbelieving world Christmas is a social celebration to which has been attached the name of Christ. Jesus Christ is not in it.

What about 'religious people'? The name CHRISTMAS seems to indicate that it might have some connection with Christianity. What is distinctive about Christianity? It is this, that Christian beliefs and practices are based on the Bible. Christians find in the Scriptures the convictions to which they hold. From it they believe in the divine Person of Jesus Christ, the Person of the Holy Spirit, man's need of regeneration, justification by faith alone, and the certainty of the great Judgement Day. From the Bible, according to Christ's appointment, Christians remember His death in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What about CHRISTMAS?

The Bible clearly gives an account of Christ's birth in the Gospels. You cannot be a Christian unless you believe in the supernatural conception and virgin birth of the Saviour. The Incarnation is a great mystery, but a matter of divine revelation and consequently of faith. Does 'THE FIRST CHRISTMAS' refer to the birth of Christ as recorded in the Gospels? If you look at the word 'CHRISTMAS', you will see that it cannot. The obvious derivation of the word is CHRIST and MASS. The word 'mass' refers to the Roman Catholic sacrament in which the sacrifice of Christ is supposedly offered again to God. Whatever your theological convictions with regard to the 'mass', you will appreciate that it is supposed to have its authority from the Last Supper, at which Jesus took the bread and the wine. That was before He died, NOT when He was born. How absurd to associate with his birth the sacrament which he identified with His death. To say the least, we might say 'The timing is

wrong'. The name is most inappropriate, and it ought to be distasteful to all Protestants who understand anything of what the 'mass' is claimed to be. The name betrays the origin of CHRISTMAS. MASS is obviously Roman Catholic, and history shows that Christmas has come through the Church of Rome taking over a festival of paganism. The Toronto Star, a secular newspaper, on 24th December 1977, explained the development of Christmas in this way:

“Take, for example, the date itself. Nothing in the Bible indicates Christ was born December 25th. In pagan Rome, that day was given over to the worship of the sun-god. But when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the church appropriated many of the pagan festivals, and the one that honoured the sun was dedicated to Christ instead.”

The Biblical accounts show that the birth of Christ could not have been at that time of year - with shepherds outside at night, and a national tax collection which involved much travel being taken. Extra-biblical evidence shows that Christmas does not have its origin in the Bible at all. The Bible is silent on the date, and there is no indication that the birth of Christ was celebrated in the apostolic church. It was the Church of Rome that adopted the pagan service into her ritual. Listen what Williston Walker says in his “History of the Christian Church”:

“About the same time, the early fourth century, there developed in the west a distinctive nativity festival on December 25th. The date was partly determined by the idea that the birth of the world occurred on the vernal equinox (March 25th), and correspondingly its new birth in the Saviour would have been at the same moment. This was understood as the conception of the Virgin, and hence the natural birth would be nine months later, December 25th. But perhaps even more, the date was influenced by the fact that December 25th was a great pagan festival, that of Sol Invictus, which celebrated the victory of light over darkness and the lengthening of the sun's rays at the winter solstice. The assimilation of Christ to the Sun god as Sun of Righteousness, was widespread in the fourth century and was furthered by Constantine's legislation. In any case, these two celebrations of Epiphany and Christmas rose independently of each other in the fourth century.”

To refer, therefore to the birth of Christ as THE FIRST CHRISTMAS is wrong, and although it may appeal to people who place more value on sentiment than on fact, it is misleading.

Equally so is it false to assert that THE CHRIST WHO CAME AT CHRISTMAS WILL COME AGAIN, because the evidence is that He did not come at Christmas. Why not tell the truth? The Gospels give account of His birth, but after that there is no account of celebrating the birth of the Saviour. Christmas was started in the early 4th century by the Church of Rome. It is easy to understand that Roman Catholics would wish to observe Christmas - the name of their sacrament is in it, and they do not look for a Biblical warrant for their religion. However, it is extremely difficult to understand why Protestants, whose religion is based on 'Scripture only' - *Sola Scriptura* - should follow the Roman Catholic Church into Christmas. ARE PROTESTANTS LOSING THEIR PROTEST? When Jesus sent out the preachers of the Gospel with the Great Commission in Matthew 28, He instructed them to teach people to observe 'whatsoever I have commanded you'. Where did Christ command us to remember His birthday? Nowhere! He gave us a

sacrament in the Lord's Supper, commanding us to remember His death.

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It has been argued that this celebration gives opportunity to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Preach the Gospel whenever possible, but why present it under the guise of a pagan festival taken over by the Church of Rome and with such an obviously Roman Catholic label on it? C. H. Spurgeon, highly respected and often referred to as a great preacher of the Gospel, made these comments on Psalm 81: 4 (Treasury of David):

“When it can be proved that the observance of Christmas, Whitsuntide and other popish festivals were ever instituted by a divine statute, we also will attend to them, but not until then. It is as much our duty to reject the traditions of men as to observe the ordinances of the Lord.”

The Church of Rome is quickly gaining ground, and in many quarters the Pope is quoted as the spokesman for Christianity. The work of Protestant Reformers is being eroded as Protestants adopt the festivals of the Church of Rome. CHRIST-MASS speaks its own message as to its origin, and it is time for Protestants to disassociate themselves from this Roman Catholic tradition. Consider these things seriously. What has the exchanging of gifts at Christmas time to do with the birthday of Christ? If it was His birthday would He not be the one to whom the gifts would be given? What have the Christmas tree, the nativity play, a Christmas church concert, and other Christmas trimmings to do with the birthday of the Saviour? These are not part of Biblical Christianity. May God give you discernment that they will not be part of yours.

“Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain.” (Jeremiah 10)

By Rev. Malcolm MacInnes

## Holy Days of Men and Holy Days of God

In the Gospel according to Luke, we read these words: “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” These are the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And please note their force: that which is placed by men in the highest category is placed by God in the lowest category possible.

And what are these things that men highly esteem but which God utterly abhors? They are the things of religion. That is what Jesus was talking about. To the Pharisees He said, “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” It was precisely those things

that they did in the sphere of religion, those things which they highly esteemed and which made them appear “just” before men, which rendered them abominable unto God.

When Jesus went on to add this comment, his meaning became even more clear: “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” Their trouble was that they did not heed the law of God. As he said, “Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men . . . ye reject the commandment of God, that ye hold the tradition of men . . . ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition.” Is it any wonder that the verdict was this: “They worship me in vain (that is, for nothing) teaching for doctrines the commandments of men?”

### I. Other Men's Traditions

It is easy for us to see the error of the Pharisees. They added to the Word of God many humanly devised traditions. Gradually, as time passed, these traditions gained so high an esteem among them that they took a place along side the commandments of God. And by Jesus' time, these traditions had become more important to them (in practice if not in theory) than the commandments of God. Thus the Word of God was made of none effect by their traditions. Yes; and the special point to be observed is that those very traditions - time honored and sacred in the eyes of the Pharisees - were abomination in the eyes of God. Jesus said that they worshiped God in vain. That is, they might just as well have had no religious worship at all as to have had what they did. It was completely worthless.

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When we recall the many instances in Biblical history when this same evil occurred, we shall better understand Jesus' severity. Does not the Bible tell us that it was so even from the beginning? “Unto Cain and unto his offering He had no respect.” (Genesis 4: 5) The worship that Cain devised for himself was abomination to God, however highly esteemed by him. And we remember the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, who took fire and incense and offered that 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.” (Leviticus 10: 1, 2) That which they highly esteemed was quite obviously “abomination in the sight of God.”

To pass over many other instances, we may recall the question asked of Zechariah the prophet by those of the remnant which had come back from the Captivity. They inquired concerning a certain tradition that had “grown up” during the days of the captivity, and asked whether or not they should continue it. The Prophet said: “When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?” (Zechariah 7: 7, 5) Then he informed them that since they had developed that tradition without a specific command of God, it was no more acceptable to God as an act of religious worship than was their eating and

drinking. “Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried?” concluded the Prophet.

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It would be difficult to think of a lesson more clearly taught in Scripture than this one: “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” And we must not think that this is merely an “old testament” doctrine. No principle of God's Word is taught in only one Testament. And this principle is no exception. The sinful tendency of man which we have seen in Old Testament history is evident in the New Testament also. Within the days of the Apostles, and in the Apostolic Church, we see this same tendency in sinful men, and we also find the same principle of divine revelation.

The Church of Galatia is a case in point. It is clear from the contents of Paul's epistle to the Galatians that that Church which had made such a promising start had soon gone off on the wrong track. Paul said that he marveled that they were so soon removed from the grace of Christ. And at least part of their trouble was this evil tendency under consideration. For the Galatians had decided that the pure religion delivered to them by the Apostles was not sufficient. They wanted something better (although there is nothing better). So they began adding to it certain holy days and seasons of their own devising.

We do not know just what those special days and seasons were, but we certainly do know what God's inspired Apostle had to say about them, for we find his words in Galatians 4: 9-11: “...after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

Observe, how serious a matter this was in the Apostle's eyes. What is it to be “in bondage” again, if it is not to be enslaved to false religion? How could he say that he was “afraid of them, lest he had bestowed his labour in vain,” except that such a religion as they were falling into was null and void before God? It is clearly another case of men highly esteeming the very thing that is abomination in the sight of God, and all because they were observing certain days and seasons without being told to do so by almighty God. Their sin was exactly the same as that of Cain, Nadab and Abihu, the captives from Babylon and the Pharisees who made the Word of God of none effect by their own traditions.

### II. Our Traditions

It is one thing to condemn other men's sins, but it is another to mend our own. The Galatians would probably have had no difficulty condemning the wicked Pharisees, but it is not so certain that they were willing to hear themselves condemned. Paul said to them: “am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Galatians 4: 16). The author of this article

would ask the same question. Suppose I do say some things that “hurt” a bit. Suppose I do speak out against something sacred to you. Do I then become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

*The truth is that Christmas is an abomination to God.*

The truth is that Christmas (and Good Friday, and Easter, and Father's Day, and Mother's Day, and Children's Day, and any other “special holy day” except the weekly Sabbath) is an abomination to God. Now please note with care: we do not say that everything associated with these days is abominable. What we do say is that every special holy day (or season) is abominable to God.

#### **A Pagan Source**

This is true, in the first place, because of the source of such. Let us consider Christmas as an example. It is admitted by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike that Christmas is not revealed in the Word of God. The Bible does not give us the date of Christ's birth. It does not even tell us the precise month or even the season. It is also generally admitted that there was no trace of Christmas observance in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic Church.

It was not until the third century that the celebration of Christmas began to appear in Christian circles, and even then there was no uniformity. Various dates were set for the “holy day” including January, March, April and May. To this day the Greek Orthodox Church observes January 6th rather than December 25th. When, under the growing authority of the Roman Bishop, December 25th was adopted in the west, it was largely an attempt to engage in competition with a pagan celebration called Saturnalia. It was a time of celebration, merrymaking and the giving of gifts. It was a pagan celebration in honor of the sun. They believed that the sun was a god, and that at this point it began to conquer over the darkness of winter. Gradually the Christian “holy day” and the pagan “holiday” coalesced into one. And the “tradition of Christmas” was firmly entrenched. On all this there is rather general agreement.

But there was a day in which Protestants and Roman Catholics disagreed strongly, not concerning what the source of Christmas (and other such holy days) was, but whether or not that source was valid. Then, as now, the Roman Catholic Church fully defended such man-made traditions, because, to quote its own words, “The Catholic Church has received from Jesus Christ the power to make laws for its members” (Baltimore Catechism). Among those laws we find the official designation of such “holy days” as Christmas and Easter, and such days are held by Roman Catholic dogma to be exactly the same as holy days designated by God himself.

There was, we repeat, a day when Protestants disagreed. There was a day when Protestants said that “the whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for (God's) own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture - unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions

of men.” (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1, 6). And concerning this matter of holy days, they said that the people of God are to keep holy “such set times as He has appointed in His Word, expressly one whole day in seven” (Larger Catechism, Q. 116). That is, the Sabbath day alone was regarded by them as “Holy.”

Suppose you were to imagine yourself to have the notion that it would be nice to observe the 3rd of February as a special holy day in memory of Jesus' visit to the Temple at the age of twelve. What right would you have to make such a designation? What justification would others have in accepting your idea? And what if your Church said, “No, we will not listen to such nonsense! Jesus Christ alone is King and Head of the Church, and He alone has the right to designate a holy day, and He has given us to keep holy the Sabbath alone?” Of course you would say that such a Church was simply keeping itself pure. Yet the truth is that Christmas (and Easter, etc.) has no more warrant from Christ than would such a day that were chosen by yourself. The only difference is that tradition through the process of time, raises something of purely human origin to the place that it is highly esteemed of men. But it is still an abomination to God because of its source.

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#### **Distorting the Gospel**

The second reason why such holy days are an abomination to God is that it is necessary to sanction error in order to give them our esteem. We shall again cite Christmas by way of example. If there were any possibility that the date of Christ's birth were preserved through tradition, then it would be January 6th rather than December 25th which deserved the preference. The Greek Church is an older institution than is the Latin. And if tradition has any validity, that validity depends upon antiquity.

Even if we were to appeal to the false criterion of tradition we would be condemned! However, as tradition is condemned by Scripture we can neither build upon it nor be judged by it.

*Much more important is the fact that the celebration of Christmas (and other such humanly devised holy days) distorts the true gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Much more important is the fact that the celebration of Christmas (and other such humanly devised holy days) distorts the true gospel of Jesus Christ. By the special religious observance of certain days, certain aspects of the gospel are given a prominence which is not given them in the teaching of

the Word of God itself. Christmas and Easter are the two “holy days” that claim an inordinate amount of attention each year, and so the birth and resurrection of Christ receive a measure of attention which other aspects of the truth do not receive.

This emphasis is not found in the Apostolic writings. For in all the epistles of the New Testament we can discover no explicit reference to the so-called Christmas story. The resurrection of Christ does constantly receive much emphasis, but there is also much emphasis in the Apostolic writings on events which took place on other days that men have not memorialized with special days. This is a distortion of the truth of the Gospel, and a distortion of the truth is not the same as the truth itself. Thus to approve of such holy days we must approve of that which must be called error.

### **Confuses True Holy Days**

And finally, Christmas (and other such holy days) is an abomination because of the fact that it shifts the thoughts of the Christian away from that which God requires, and toward that which He does not even sanction. The Word of God says nothing about keeping this day called Christmas. But it does say that almighty God would have us keep the Sabbath holy. More than that, God commands that we use the other six days for the works that belong to man. And this itself forbids men from doing what they have done in designating holy days. It is a scandal when men come along and take the Sabbath and make it man's day (such as Father's Day, Mother's Day, Children's Day and the like.) No one has a right to take that day which already has the Lord's name upon it, and give it to the honor of another. But on the other hand, God has given six days of every week to man, and neither can any one rightly take these days from man under the pretext of making them holy days of God.

When human authority would say, “this day no longer belongs to you, for your works and recreations, but is a holy day unto God,” that is quite as abominable as to give God's Holy day unto men. Man has no more power to make one of the six days a holy day, than he does to make the Sabbath day common, or even special in some humanly devised way.

We emphasize the fact that such holy days as Christmas are an abomination to God - not because of many of the things that are so often condemned (such as gifts, and the upturn in business, and the hearty smile and friendly greeting - why should these be condemned?) but precisely because of the things that are usually praised! It is the religious trappings, the so-called sacred tradition of Christmas, that exactly which men highly esteem, that is abomination unto God. And the most tragic thing about it is that the children of the Reformation are in the forefront of those who are trying to make it a “holy day.”

The inevitable result of such a trend is today what it has always been. Whenever men highly esteem tradition, they make of none effect the Word of God. Not only the Pharisees of old, but today also men make the Word of God of none effect through their tradition. And wherever the emphasis on such holy days as Christmas, Easter, etc., has increased, there has also been a corresponding decline in the observance of the Sabbaths of God. (And conversely, where there has been a serious attempt to keep the Sabbaths of God, there has been a rejection of those holy days which are without warrant in the Scripture.) And so we say again, that such holy days are an utter abomination unto God, even though they are highly esteemed among men. And

they are an abomination because God has said, “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; Thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it.” No, not even by means of time-honored and custom-hallowed tradition. For the fact is that all religious worship, reverence, feeling and conscience which comes from any source but the infallible Word of God is just that - abomination in His sight.

Let me close with the words: “Am I become your enemy, because I have told you the truth?” And if I have not told you the truth, bear witness to the error. If I have told you the truth, then come, let us reason together. Is not the religion of God good enough for you? Are not the Sabbaths which our Lord has called His own, sufficient for your soul? Are you not willing to rest content with that which the Master has given? It is time that we Protestants, who condemn the Church of Rome for her superstitions, give up a few superstitions of our own.

G. I. Williamson

(Reprinted from “Blue Banner Faith and Life” July-September 1962.)

## **My Lord has not told me to do it?**

### **The Christian and “Christmas”**

We have nothing to say in this message to the world, nor to anyone who does not belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our appeal is to those who love Him and desire to please Him in all things. To such devoted persons we would like to point out some important facts about the holiday known in the world as “Christmas,” keeping in mind that the Word of God is the only true and sufficient guide for the child of God. (Read 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

*The fact that God has not commanded the celebration of the birth of His Son is sufficient reason for any child of God NOT to have any part in such practice.*

The fact that God has not commanded the celebration of the birth of His Son is sufficient reason for any child of God NOT to have any part in such practice. There are many other reasons that may be stated for the true believer having no part in such unfruitful works of darkness, but this is enough: “MY LORD HAS NOT TOLD ME TO DO IT!”

As for the word “Christ-mass,” we prefer not even to take it on our lips. Think of associating the title of our blessed Lord with the abominable, Romanized, heathen mass! The modification with the Greek initial (Xmas) is preferable to us, for it at least leaves the precious name of our Saviour out of the shameful affair.

Some will ask: “Do not Christians the world over observe this holiday?” To which we would say: “It is more generally practiced by the world and by nominal professors than by true Christians. And whatever the world practices ought to be held in suspicion by the believer in Christ, 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.” And “we

know that we are of God, and the world lieth in wickedness.” (1 John 2:16 and 5:19)

We regretfully admit that many Christians, whose salvation we could not doubt, are too badly misled by men's traditions and too blind to the importance of taking guidance solely from God's Word, to take any godly stand against this Xmas monstrosity, But all who acknowledge the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures to direct in such matters, will most certainly have no more to do with this unholy holiday after their attention has been called to it.

As to its origin, Xmas was originally a Roman heathen celebration of the birthday of the sun god. It was taken over by the Catholics, with such changes as suited their abominable idolatry. And then the Protestant daughters followed the “Mother of Harlots” (Rev. 17:5), and modified it a little more till they think they are now honouring the Lord by its observance.

The Xmas tree, the mistletoe, the holly wreaths, candles, and the child-deceiving tradition of Santa Claus, are all of heathen origin. There is not one word in Holy Writ in favour of any of them. But listen to what the Word of God does say about it:

“Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain; for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers that it move not.” (Jer. 10:2-4)

God has not told us to observe any special days. Instead, He has warned us about getting entangled with them. To the Galatian, who had been led off by such traditions, He said: "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (Gal. 4:10) To the Christian there should be no special holy days; every day should be alike holy unto the Lord, though it is the believer's blessed privilege by divine order and precedent to meet together on the first day of the week for fellowship and remembrance of the Lord's death on the cross.

The fact that the world joins in the celebration of Xmas is a proof that it is not according to the will of God, “For the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Romans 8:7)

If they would not link the name of our blessed Lord with their heathen ceremonies, then we would hold our peace. If it were like the 4th of July celebration we would have nothing to say. We see pictures of elaborate mangers on bill boards and magazines, and the whole world glories in its shame — that the eternal Son of God came into the world and the best it would give Him was a cow barn to be born in! But for the believer, not one possible argument has any weight, since “MY LORD HAS NOT TOLD ME TO DO IT.”

God has not allowed us to know the time of the birth of His Son. It is not His birth that we are asked to remember. It is His death on the cross, His precious blood that paid for our sins, that we are told to remember. And that is what the world tries to soft pedal. “The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish.” (1 Cor. 1:18)

*God has not allowed us to know the time of the birth of His Son. It is not His birth that we are asked to remember.*

What may be said of Xmas may also be said of Easter, just another religious heathen celebration, in which religious professors have joined the rest of this Christ-rejecting world in putting our Lord to an open shame, associating eggs and bunnies and fancy hats with the solemn spectacle of the cross, the empty tomb, and His resurrection! Let every genuine believer in Christ hang his head for any part he ever had in such unholy business. Also think of a child of God stealing one of the Lord's days and calling it “Mother's Day,” or “Father's Day,” or “Children's Day”!

The most notable birthday celebrations in the Bible are Pharaoh's and Herod's, both accompanied by murder. The most outstanding merry-making and gift-sending part in the Bible is in Revelation 11:10, where God's two faithful witnesses are finally slain and people rejoice and send gifts to each other because they will not have to listen to God's message any longer! Let every true Christian take his stand openly on the Lord's side, by having nothing to do with these festivities which are the inventions of modern Babylon.

“For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” (Rev. 18:5) “Earnestly contend for the faith.” “And have not fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Jude 3, Eph. 5:11)

## **Santa Claus**

The following message was captured from the RIME mail relay Bible Study conference and we pass it on with thanks to Buggs Bugnon. May the Lord bless it to souls to see the danger of the pagan tradition of Christmas.

The following is an excerpt from a message that was delivered at Grace Community Church in Panorama City, California, by John MacArthur Jr. It was transcribed from the tape, GC 80-76, titled “A Son to Make Many Sons.” A copy of the tape can be obtained by writing, Word of Grace, P.O. Box 4000, Panorama City, CA 91412.

Every effort to ensure that an accurate transcription of the original tape was made. Please note that at times sentence structure may appear to vary from accepted English conventions. This is due primarily to the techniques involved in preaching and the obvious choices that were made in placing the correct punctuation in the article. It is our intent and prayer that the Holy Spirit will use this transcription, of the portion of the tape, to strengthen and encourage the true Church of Jesus Christ. Scriptures quoted in this message are from the New American Standard Bible. The message speaks to the issue of “Santa Claus” as it pertains to Christians and their children.

### **Santa Claus**

What a false, fake substitute the world puts forth at this time [Christmas 1990] for that true message. Do you remember these words?



*"You better watch out. You better not cry. You better not pout. I'm telling you why; Santa Claus is coming to town.*

*He's making a list and he's checking it twice; gonna find out whose naughty and nice. Santa Claus is coming to town.*

*He sees you when you're sleeping; he knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sakes.*

*You better watch out. You better not cry. You better not pout. I'm telling you why; Santa Claus is coming to town."*

Now does that threaten you? That is a very threatening poem. That is intended to scare children. Now listen, if you look at the letters of Santa, you will see that Satan is hidden in Santa. When we teach a child to sing this song, we are teaching him a false theology. We are teaching him a false set of doctrine. Let me see if I can explain it to you.

First, that song teaches that Santa is a transcendent being. He lives on a higher plane. He lives on another level. He transcends time and space. He has powers equal to whom? God! Not only that, he knows everything. He's omniscient. "He knows when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows when you're naughty. He knows when you're nice." He knows everything.

Not only that, he's everywhere. "He sees you when you're sleeping." He's not only omniscient, he's omnipresent. And he is watching to see whether you have been good or bad. And not only that, but he bestows favors. Now on what basis does Santa give his favors? What must I do to receive good things from this transcendent being, called Santa. Well it is very simple, I have to be what? Good. I can "earn" Santa's favor. If I am good, Santa will give me gifts. After all, he's making a list and he is checking it twice to make sure that we've been either naughty or nice. And on the basis on how we've been, he'll deal with us.

And if I'm not nice and good, I won't get any gifts. So I better be good for goodness sake, not to mention for my own sake or anybody else's sake. But do you want to know something about Santa? He may be transcendent, and he may be omniscient, and he may be omnipotent, and he may be omnipresent. He may be dispensing all of the good things, but you know what? You can't trust him. You say, "What do you mean by that?"

It says, "He's checking to see if you are naughty or nice." And you better be good for goodness sake, because if you aren't good, you know what? You won't get anything. You want to know something? That's not true. Plenty of times I haven't been good and I get something anyway. Every year I get something. And you want to know the truth of it? There are a lot of naughty people that get a lot and there are a lot of nice people that don't get anything.

Do you know what about Santa Claus? You can't trust him. He doesn't even stay true to his own word. He's blustering around and warning everybody to mind your manners and be good all the time; be nice and not naughty and good and not bad. And then you know what? When Christmas comes he caves in, and even when we have been naughty he gives us all that stuff.

And sometimes he overlooks people that are nice. He really can't be trusted. His threats are meaningless and so are his promises. But that's good because it takes the sting out of him.

And there is another good thing about Santa; you only have to worry about him once a year. He only shows up once and you know when it is; it's always on Dec 25th, so you can get your act together just a few days before. You say, "Well where is he the rest of the time?" Oh, he's in the North Pole. Could that be heaven in Satan's little scheme? "What's he doing?" Oh, he has all these elves around him. "What are they doing?" Whatever he tells them. Mostly, meaningless things like make toys. He is sort of inane isn't he? He threatens but never fulfills his threats. He promises but doesn't always fulfill his promises.

Is it any wonder that if I believe all that as a child, when I come to be an adult, I might have a hard time believing in a Transcendent God who does know everything, who is everywhere, who does have all power, who does keep his promises and his threats, and who does not save me and give me good gifts on the basis of my works but on the basis of His grace. If Santa has been my understanding of God, then I am in trouble. That's why I say, hidden in the letters of Santa is Satan.

I am glad for a God who is absolutely dependable. I can trust His promises. I can trust His threats. He is everywhere at all times and He doesn't just show up once a year. He is here all of the time. And He gives His great gift, not on the basis of our works but on the basis of His grace through faith.

## Xmas

"Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the CUSTOMS of the people are vain."(Jer. 10:1-3)

Christmas is coming! Quite so; but what is "Christmas?" Does not the very term itself denote its source — "Christ-mass." Thus it is of Romish origin, brought over from Paganism. But, says someone, Christmas is the time when we commemorate the Saviour's birth. It is? And who authorized such commemoration? Certainly God did not. The Redeemer bade His disciples "remember" Him in His death, but there is not a word in Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, which tells us to celebrate His birth. Moreover, who knows when, in what month, He was born? The Bible is silent thereon. Is it without reason that the only "birthday" commemorations mentioned in God's Word are Pharaoh's (Gen. 40:20) and Herod's (Matt. 14:6)? Is this recorded "for our learning?" If so, have we prayerfully taken it to heart?

And who is it that celebrates "Christmas?" The whole "civilized world." Millions who make no profession of faith in the blood of the Lamb, who "despise and reject Him," and millions more who while claiming to be His followers yet in works deny Him, join in merrymaking under the pretense of honoring the birth of the Lord Jesus. Putting it on its lowest ground, we would ask, *Is it fitting that His friends should unite with His enemies in a worldly round of fleshly gratification?* Does any truly born-again soul really think that He whom the world cast out is either pleased or glorified by such participation in the world's joys? Verily, the customs of the people are vain;



and it is written, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2).

*Some will argue for the "keeping of Christmas" on the ground of "giving the kiddies a good time." But why do this under cloak of honoring the Saviour's birth? Why is it necessary to drag in His holy name in connection with what takes place at that season of carnal jollification?*

Some will argue for the "keeping of Christmas" on the ground of "giving the kiddies a good time." But why do this under cloak of honoring the Saviour's birth? Why is it necessary to drag in His holy name in connection with what takes place at that season of carnal jollification? Is this taking the little ones with you out of Egypt (Ex. 10:9,10) a type of the world, or is it not plainly a mingling with the present-day Egyptians in their "pleasures of sin for a season?" (Heb. 11:25). Scripture says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6). Scripture does command God's people to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), but where does it stipulate that it is our duty to give the little ones a "good time?" Do we ever give the children "a good time" when we engage in anything upon which we cannot fittingly ask the Lord's blessing?

There are those who do abstain from some of the grosser carnalities of the "festive season," yet are they nevertheless in cruel bondage to the prevailing custom of "Christmas" namely that of exchanging "gifts." We say "exchanging" for that is what it really amounts to in many cases. A list is kept, either on paper or in memory, of those from whom gifts were received last year, and that for the purpose of returning the compliment this year. Nor is this all: great care has to be taken that the "gift" made to the friend is worth as much in dollars and cents as the one they expect to receive from him or her. Thus, with many who can ill afford it, a considerable sum has to be set aside each year with which to purchase things simply to send them out in return for others which are likely to be received. Thus a burden has been bound on them which not a few find hard to bear.

*But what are we to do? If we fail to send out "gifts" our friends will think hard of us, probably deem us stingy and miserly.*

But what are we to do? If we fail to send out "gifts" our friends will think hard of us, probably deem us stingy and miserly. The honest course is to go to the trouble of notifying them — by letter if at a distance — that from now on you do not propose to send out any more "Christmas gifts" as such. Give your reasons. State plainly that you have been brought to see that "Christmas merry-making" is entirely a thing of the world, devoid of any Scripture warrant; that it is a Romish institution,

and that now you see this, you dare no longer have any fellowship with it (Eph. 5:11); that you are the Lord's "free man" (I Cor. 7:22), and therefore you refuse to be in bondage to a costly custom imposed by the world.

What about sending out "Christmas cards" with a text of Scripture on them? That also is an abomination in the sight of God. Why? Because His Word expressly forbids all unholy mixtures; Deut. 22:10, 11 typified this. What do we mean by an "unholy mixture?" This: the linking together of the pure Word of God with the Romish "Christ-mass." By all means send cards, preferably at some other time of the year, to your ungodly friends, and [at] Christmas too, with a verse of Scripture, but not with "Christmas" on it. What would you think of a printed program of a vaudeville having Isa. 53:5 at the foot of it? Why, that it was altogether out of place, highly incongruous. But in the sight of God the circus and the theatre are far less obnoxious than the "Christmas celebration" of Romish and Protestant "churches." Why? Because the latter are done under the cover of the Holy name of Christ; the former are not.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4:18) Where there is a heart that really desires to please the Lord, He graciously grants increasing knowledge of His will. If He is pleased to use these lines in opening the eyes of some of His dear people to recognize what is growing evil, and to show them that they have been dishonoring Christ by linking the name of the Man of Sorrows (and such He was, when on earth) with a "Merry Christmas," then join with the writer in a repentant confessing of this sin to God, seeking His grace for complete deliverance from it, and praise Him for the light which He has granted you concerning it.

Beloved fellow-Christian, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (Jas. 5:8) Do we really believe this? Believe it not because the Papacy is regaining its lost temporal power, but because God says so — "for we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7) If so, what effects does such believing have on our walk? This may be your last Christmas on earth. During it the Lord may descend from heaven with a shout to gather His own to Himself. Would you like to be summoned from a "Christmas party" to meet Him in the air? The call for the moment is, "Go ye out to meet Him" (Matt. 25:6) out from a Godless Christendom, out from the Christ —deserted "churches," out from the horrible burlesque of "religion" which now masquerades under His name.

*If every "idle word" is going to be taken note of, then most assuredly will be every wasted energy, every wasted dollar, every wasted hour!*

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10) How solemn and searching! The Lord Jesus declared that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Matt. 12:36) If every "idle word" is going to be taken note of, then most assuredly

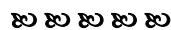
will be every wasted energy, every wasted dollar, every wasted hour! Should we still be on earth when the closing days of this year arrive, let writer and reader earnestly seek grace to live and act with the judgment-seat of Christ before us. His "well done" will be ample compensation for the sneers and taunts which we may now receive from countless souls.

Does any Christian reader imagine for a moment that when he or she shall stand before their holy Lord, that they will regret having lived "too strictly" on earth? Is there the slightest danger of His reproving any of His own because they were "too extreme" in "abstaining from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11)? We may gain the good will and good word of worldly religionists today by our compromisings on "little (?) points," but shall we receive His smile of approval on that Day? Oh to be more concerned about what He thinks, and less concerned about what perishing mortals think.

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." (Ex. 23:2) Ah, it is an easy thing to float with the tide of popular opinion; but it takes much grace, diligently sought from God, to swim against it. Yet that is what the heir of heaven is called on to do: to "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2), to deny self, take up the cross, and follow a rejected Christ. How sorely does both writer and reader need to heed that word of the Saviour, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thou crown." (Rev. 3:11) Oh that each of us may be able to truthfully say, "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy Word." (Psa. 119:101)

Our final word is to the pastors. To you the Word of the Lord is, "Be thou an example of believers in word, in deportment, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. 4:12) Is it not true that the most corrupt "churches" you know of, where almost every fundamental of the faith is denied, will have their "Christmas celebrations?" Will you imitate them? Are you consistent to protest against unscriptural methods of "raising money," and then to sanction unscriptural "Christmas services?" Seek grace to firmly but lovingly set God's Truth on this subject before your people, and announce that you can have no part in following Pagan, Romish, and Worldly customs.

A. W. Pink



*We will keep such feast as the Lord appoints,  
but not those which Rome or Canterbury  
may ordain. C. H. Spurgeon.*

N. B.—The following extract is from the late C.H. Spurgeon's exposition of Psa. 81 in the Treasury of David. "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day." (v. 3) Obedience is to direct our worship, not whim and sentiment: God's appointments gives a solemnity to rites and times which no ceremonial pomp or hierarchial ordinance could confer. The Jews not only observed the ordained month, but that part of the month which had been divinely set apart. The Lord's people in the olden time welcomed the times appointed for worship; let us feel the same exultation, and never speak of the Sabbath as though it could be other than a 'delight' and 'honorable.' Those who plead this

passage as an authority for their man-appointed feasts and fasts must be moon-struck. We will keep such feast as the Lord appoints, but not those which Rome or Canterbury may ordain.

'For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.' (v. 4) It was a precept binding upon all the tribes that a scared person should be set apart to commemorate the Lord's mercy, and truly it was but the Lord's due. He had a right and a claim to such special homage. When it can be proved that the observance of Christmas, Whitsuntide and other Popish festivals were ever instituted by a divine statute, we will also attend to them, but not till then. It is as much our duty to reject the traditions of men as to observe the ordinances of the Lord."

## Against the Observance of Christmas

[The following letter written by Dr. Samuel Miller has never before been published anywhere since it first appeared in 1825.]

Messrs. Editors:

As you have, in your paper of yesterday, availed yourself of your editorial privilege, to plead in behalf of the religious observance of *Christmas*, and undertaken, moreover, to "condemn the error" of the *Puritans* in refusing to observe this festival *themselves*, (for in no other sense, that I know of did they ever "prohibit" the observance of it),\* will you allow a subscriber to your paper, and one of the descendants of those venerable men, to say a word in their vindication? No controversy on this subject is intended; and if I know how to pen these few lines in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of any further discussion, I should be glad to do it. I assure you, sir, it makes no part of my present plan to "condemn," or even to find the least fault with, those who think it their duty to observe Christmas, and other holy days. "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind." I venerate and love many who are of that opinion, though I cannot think with them. But you, surely, will not deny me the privilege of saying a word, the only object of which is to alleviate, if not to advert, the sentence which you have passed against a body of men "of whom the world was not worthy," and whose example I wish many were as willing to follow as to praise.

The "Pilgrims," then, for *themselves* only, refused to observe Christmas, and other holy days, for the following reasons.

I. They thought that no warrant for any such observance was to be found in Scripture. They believed that every institution of this nature, pertaining to the Old Testament economy, was abolished at the coming of Christ; that no similar days were appointed in their place; that neither the Saviour nor his inspired Apostles gave the least countenance, either by precept or example, to the sanctification of any other day than the Sabbath.

II. They considered the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. They denied that the Church, or any member of it had a right to institute new rites or ceremonies. They were persuaded that the Lord Jesus Christ alone was the Supreme Head and King of the Church; and had no doubt that He, and those Apostles whom He inspired by his own Spirit, were as competent judges of what was proper, and for the edification of

the Church, as any individual or body of individuals have been since; and, of course, that for uninspired, and therefore fallible men, to undertake to add to the number of Christ's appointments, is a measure, to say the least, of very questionable propriety.

*They considered the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. They denied that the Church, or any member of it had a right to institute new rites or ceremonies.*

III. They were confident that, for a long time after the death of the Apostles, no stated festival or Fast Days whatever were observed in the Church. *Justin Martyr*, who wrote a little after the middle of the *second century*, and who gives a particular account of the institutions and habits of the Christians, gives no hint of any day being kept holy, excepting the first day of the week, or the Christian Sabbath. Before the time of *Origen*, who flourished about the middle of the *third century*, the Christians, had introduced several holy-days, partly to gratify the converts from Paganism; who, on coming into the Church, wished to have some substitute for the Pagan festivals which which [sic] they had abandoned. But even at this time, the observance of Christmas was unknown. — *Origen* give[s] a list of the holy-days observed at the time in which he wrote; but says nothing about a festival for Christ's nativity; from which Lord Chancellor King, in his "inquiry into the Primitive Church within the first three hundred years after Christ," confidently infers that no such festival was observed till after the time of *Origen*. Indeed the Christians during the first three centuries, differed so widely concerning the month and day of the Saviour's birth; some placing it in April, others in May, etc. that there is an utter improbability, on this ground alone, that they commemorated the event by an ecclesiastical festival.

*When the door to uncommanded observances is once opened, by whom or when will it be effectually closed?*

IV. The Puritans attached no little importance to another consideration. Supposing, (what they could not admit) that the church possesses the power to institute observances, which Christ and his Apostles never knew: supposing that ["teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," or in other words, adopting "human inventions in the worship of God," could be justified; what *limit* they asked, could be set to this power? How far may it be carried? When the door to uncommanded observances is once opened, by whom or when will it be effectually closed? You, and a few others, Mr. Editor, might think *two* or *three* will-adjusted church festivals, besides fifty-two Sundays in the year quite sufficient. The Protestant Episcopal Church, however, in this country, has appointed about *thirty* stated festivals, besides a still larger number of Fast-days. The Church of England has a greater number, it is

believed, both of fasts and festivals. The Church of Rome, from whom the Church of England selected her list, observes a far greater number than either. In favor of every one of these days, serious, respectable men have something very plausible to say; and have actually uttered very contemptuous, and even indignant things against plain, simple-minded Protestants, who could not easily allow such a mass of superstition. Is it any wonder, then, that the Puritans, perceiving the tendency in all churches to go to extremes in multiplying such observances, whenever they began to be introduced; and knowing that there was no way to prevent this, but by shutting them out altogether: deliberately preferred the latter as the safer course? — and truly, if there be no Bible warrant for festivals; — no solid warrant for them in the practice of the Christian Church for the first 300 years, and, above all, none for *Christmas*; if the whole business of bringing institutions into the Church for which there is no Divine authority, be unlawful and of dangerous tendency; and if, whenever the practice has been admitted, it has been almost always abused, that is, carried much further than it ought to have been, I cannot help thinking that the Puritans had at least *plausible*, if not *conclusive*, reasons for taking the course which they did.

*I cannot help thinking that the Puritans had at least plausible, if not conclusive, reasons for taking the course which they did.*

I must again protest, Mr. Editor, that I have no desire to shake the faith, or alter the practice, of those who differ from the Puritans on this subject. But I could not, for my life, help doubting, whether, when you "condemned" those venerable men, as in "error" as to this point, you were really acquainted with ALL the reasons which led to their decision. I make a much more favourable estimate than is correct, both of your intelligence and candour, if you do not think the *few* of their reasons which have been stated worthy of some regard.

Your's, Biblicus.

\*The respected author of this communication here labours under an error, as will be seen by the following quotation from the Essay on "the first settlement of our Country," in the last number of the Boston Monthly Magazine. "In Massachusetts, anything which belonged to the Episcopal Church was treated as anti-christian, and carried the mark of the beast. CHRISTMAS HOLYDAYS WERE PROHIBITED BY LAW." \*\*\*\* "While a law imposing five shillings fine for observing a Christmas holiday in Massachusetts was in force, Virginia gave full scope to all the festivities usual on such occasions in the mother country. The social and convivial feelings of men, could not, with alacrity, forego all pastime, and be resigned to abject sobriety in the form of religion. Our ancestors well knew this, and set apart one day in the year, previous to Christmas as a day of public thanksgiving and praise to our heavenly Father, for the mercies and favors of the past year. But in this there should be no resemblance of an Episcopal Christmas." — *Com. Adv.*

[Samuel Miller, D.D. (1769-1850) was Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government at Princeton. The above letter appeared in the *Commercial Advertiser*, New York, NY. December 29, 1825. It is listed in the bibliography compiled by his granddaughter, Margaret Miller, published in *The Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. IX, NO. 4, October 1911 entitled, "A List of the Writings of Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D., 1769-1850, Second Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary 1813-1850." I finally located a copy of this newspaper in the holdings of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. They very kindly sent me a copy of the article. Dr. Miller follows a similar form of argumentation in his book, *Presbyterianism the truly primitive and Apostolical Constitution of the Church of Christ* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1835), pp. 73-78 (section II under 'The Worship of the Presbyterian Church,' which is chapter five). As might be expected, it is better written and more thorough. Also, since his audience is the Presbyterian Church, as opposed to the secular and pluralistic audience of the *Commerical Advertiser*, his denunciations of the practice are stronger. And, he doesn't trip over himself in denying that the Puritans had a civil law against Christmas observance, in his eagerness to defend them from the charge that they imposed this belief on others.]

## Editor's Closing Remarks

Much has been presented in this issue against the cultural and religious observance of "Christmas." Lacking warrant from God's word, it is superstition and idolatry to observe the day as a religious "holiday." Because the Bible gives no authority to the church to appoint holy days in general, and is silent regarding "Christmas" in particular, no believer can truly observe the day in "faith." No true Christian appreciates the customs the world has attached to this time of year; yet it is wrong to lament, "Let's put Christ back in Christmas." Our Lord Jesus doesn't want to be put back in this idolatrous day, he never said he wanted to be a part of it to begin with. I urge the reader not only to have little regard to "this day," but to despise it as superstition, will-worship, and worldly religion.

## The Blue Banner

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### ● Christmas Examined

A. W. Pink, G. I. Williamson, Samuel Miller