

---

# «CHRISTMAS»

– Does it honour Christ?

---

- Booklet III -

*Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Colossians 3.17

---

## ***Content:***

"CHRISTMAS" – DOES IT HONOUR CHRIST?.....	3
IS KEEPING "CHRISTMAS" THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD?.....	6
"KEEPING" OR "ADDING." .....	9
"CHRISTMAS", AN ANNIVERSARY:— BUT OF WHAT? .....	11
THE PERIL OF THE "AND." .....	13

---

*Further free copies of this booklet will, the Lord enabling, be gladly sent to any who desire to pass it on to other believers, if they will write stating how many they can use.*

## «Christmas» – Does it honour Christ?

Have you been keeping “Christmas” this year? Have you ever stopped to think why you celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus on December 25<sup>th</sup>? The question no doubt puzzles you, and you wonder who would ask such a thing. Perhaps you think here is someone who does not know the Gospel story; someone who never reads the Bible. I hasten to assure you that I am a fellow-christian, and one who has been brought up to love the Scriptures from early childhood. As I read that Book of books I find no reference in the teaching of the Lord or His apostles to keeping any “Christian festivals”. In fact I find words addressed to the Galatians which show that “keeping days” is but a relic of the times under the Old Covenant which God gave to Israel, and is not for us in this present age of grace (Gal.4.10). I am reminded, however, of the words “One man esteemeth one day above another” (Rom.14.5,6), so privately we can observe what days we like, but **the Lord** has given us no days to keep, no feasts, nor fasts, nor festivals, except His own direct words concerning “the Lord's Supper”, when at His express wish we commemorate **His death**.

Why did you keep December 25<sup>th</sup>? It is NOT the day of His birth. Scripture gives us no idea as to when He was born, neither has history any help on this point. We do not know the date when this great event took place. But we **do** know that “the Word was made flesh”. We do know that the Son of God was born of Mary. And who among those who love Him, and trust in his precious blood, which was shed for us, does not rejoice in the wonder of the incarnation?

We **do** know from Scripture that the Babe was NOT found in the manger on December 25<sup>th</sup>, by the shepherds, for they, you will remember, were “in the fields, keeping watch over their sheep”, as in Palestine, shepherds are not found in the fields with their sheep in the cold of the winter.

If you take time to look into this matter you will soon see that after the death of the apostles and the “broadening” of the church, when Rome ceased to persecute the Christians and became nominally Christian, they adapted the feast of the Nativity of the Sun (December 25<sup>th</sup>) from its idolatrous aspect and used it to celebrate the unknown date of the birth of the Saviour. So we see that the festival which has become so sacred to nearly the whole of “Christendom” (though all do not observe the same date), is not of Christian origin at all, it is heathen. “ChristMAS” indicates its connection with Rome.

So much for the date, which you will see shows how out of place all the traditional setting of “Christmas” is. The time of the year is wrong; the snow, the holly, the fir trees, the yule logs, the sledge, the reindeer and their bells, all so attractive and “Christmassy”, but nothing to do with the birth of our loving Saviour.

Would you not agree that most of the things connected with this festival, not merely the date, stem from heathen sources? “Santa Claus” coming from the north in his sleigh, is a reminder that that idea and various others so prominent at this time of year, are but parts of old Norse mythology, mixed with Roman tradition; even as the mistletoe is borrowed from the ancient Druids.

What a pity that earnest Christians, who sincerely love the Lord and seek to please Him, should be mixed up with the world in this hotch-potch of heathenism, Romanism and tradition. They would be so firm against Roman Catholicism, and any other practices which are heathen in origin, but as to “Christmas” they are happy to fall in with the traditional observances. They are willing to sing carols, which are in many cases quite untrue. They would not dream of telling a lie. But at “Christmas” they sing verse after verse containing statements which are quite untrue, to say nothing of others which are Roman Catholic medieval nonsense, and also teach them to their children.

Surely none of this glorifies God, nor exalts our holy Lord. Rejoice in the wonder of the Babe lying in the manger, born of a virgin, announced by the heavenly host. Rejoice in a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord, Who came in lowliness, and tabernacled among men, and then died for our sins according to the Scriptures, AT ALL TIMES, - but let us leave December 25<sup>th</sup> to Romanism, to commercialism, and the world. Let us be those who heed His words, and celebrate **His death**, week by week, and be sure that if He had intended His earthly birth to be commemorated He would have said so, and told us when.

Open your Bible, and read the narrative of His birth and maybe you will be surprised to find that much of what you thought was there, is not there at all. No mention of the donkey and the cow standing by, no mention of "three kings", but of wise men who did **not** come to a stable, but to "the house".

You will not find it easy to witness against this God-dishonouring festival. You have found it unpopular to give up other things to please your Lord. Even other believers who it seems do not value the words of Scripture as they should, will think you a little strange (to say the least). But our aim is to please the Lord, and not men, and we can be sure He will honour those who seek to walk in ways which find no pleasure in that which is not true; that which does not proceed from the Holy Spirit; that which has no place in Scripture, or in the teaching of the Lord or His apostles, and which was never observed by the early church.

May the Lord Himself give you grace to decide before this season comes round again, that "Christmas" and most of its associations are nothing to do with Christ, and its observance does not honour that precious Saviour, Who came to earth to redeem us from this evil age, and Who was first seen by those privileged shepherds, as a "Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger".

S. C. Bown

*"STRANGE FIRE BEFORE THE LORD, WHICH HE  
COMMANDED THEM NOT." LEV.10.1*

*"THE MONTH WHICH HE HAD DEVISED OF HIS OWN  
HEART." 1 KINGS 12.33.*

---

**IS KEEPING**

**"CHRISTMAS"**

**THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD?**

---

*"IF ANY MAN WILL TO DO HIS WILL, HE SHALL KNOW  
OF THE DOCTRINE." JOHN 7. 17*

IF we are children of God we want to PLEASE HIM, and, therefore, to HAPPILY do His will. Hence we read the Scriptures not only as a duty but as a privilege, that the Holy Spirit may give us thereby a lamp to OUR feet (Ps.119.105). We would not take from His words at all, nor add to them. Having been SAVED from eternal judgment, and made "a new creation in Christ Jesus" (2 Cor.5.17 we would henceforth seek FIRST the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt.6.33), and if we are thought "strange", what does it really matter ? But we long to adorn the doctrine of God by our MANNER, and remember that a proud, or self-assertive, or off-hand character CANNOT please Him.

These simple principles of the Christian life must appear so "natural" to those who are born again, but yet it is easy to fail to translate them into action amid the strain of circumstances. Do we not all become affected by what OTHERS have said, and by "the customs of the people," and by "the fear of man?" But is not the Lord stronger? His sheep hear His voice (John 10. 27).

Many dear children of God keep "Christmas," and IF it is in the Scripture, either DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, then we too

would readily keep it. But if it is not there, we do not want to receive anything with regard to Christ from the world or tradition. Let us approach the subject with this attitude prayerfully and humbly, and without any thought of “looking down” upon those who differ. ANY ABSENCE OF LOVE IS RUINOUS. Love to Him is never proud.

Can we find in ANY ONE of the gospel records the Birthday of Christ? The time of His Death is marked out IN TYPE AND FULFILMENT alike, but not His birth. This is remarkable. “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God” (Deut.29.29). HE HAS A PURPOSE in hiding. One thing we DO know, that He was born when shepherds were keeping watch in the fields. Normally this would NOT be winter, and MORE THAN ONCE we are told in Scripture that the equivalent of our December was winter. Surely God has a reason for emphasizing it was winter then. He means us to COMPARE Scripture with Scripture. Further, there is no Scripture record of the early Christians keeping Christ's birthday. The TWO recorded “birthdays” of Scripture — Pharaoh's and Herod's — are not spiritual.

The stress on the first day of the week is marked. God has set aside Israel's 7<sup>th</sup> day and Israel's yearly feasts, but does not suggest a new yearly observance. Should we add to His words (Prov.30.6), or do that which He has commanded us not (Lev.10.1), even if it is not, at first sight, “forbidden?” The early Christians remembered Christ and LOVED HIM MUCH, yet they are not said to have kept this day. And must we not go a step further, and say that unauthorized days are forbidden in Gal.4.10,11? If this be so, shall we risk His displeasure? Surely we want to be careful, and TRUTHFUL, for, if we do not know the day, to arrange one ourselves is to act as the artist who dares paint the Lord of Glory and to devise something out of our own heart (1 Kings 12.33). Is this right? Is it QUITE TRUTHFUL? It is also important to be QUITE TRUTHFUL in the worship of God! Again: — Is Christmas an anniversary of anything? How did it first come to be kept? It is AN ANNI-

VERSARY of a heathen festival, (even an encyclopedia will show this), and secondly, it was brought in when those who loved the Lord were becoming colder and more “mixed” with the world. Have we not there two records AGAINST keeping the day? And can we feel the present mode of observance glorifies God? What shall we say of the excitement, and reunions of SAVED WITH UNSAVED in time-wasting games and frivolity, (just as in the heathen festival “Christmas” has replaced), and the other accompaniments? Are THESE the appointed atmosphere for a child of God? Do they show redemption's fruit? Are they building up the young believer? Are they to the glory of God? Are they in the Holy Spirit? What then? Is it not His will to make a clear separation in His enabling, and to GIVE UP the arrangements, to GIVE UP sending any cards, and to GIVE UP all Christmas presents — humbly, but FIRMLY? Half-and-half obedience to His will disappoints ourselves and hinders witness. A definite, prompt step honours Him. Shall we trust Him for this, or not?

Percy W. Heward

### **The Faith of Hezekiah.**

*“He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel.”*

Human misunderstanding of the *removal* of “traditions”: —

*“But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God: is not That He, Whose high places and Whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?” 2 Kings 18.22.*

These thoughts are deeply suggestive as to “Christmas.”

---

*Order Forms and further literature on the non-observance of “Christmas” by Christians, because of the love to Christ, gladly sent (e.g. “The High Places Were Not Taken Away”), for personal prayerful perusal, and for passing on to others unto His glory.*



# **“Keeping” or “Adding.”**

## **A LOVING APPEAL TO CHILDREN OF GOD**

IT is not for us to make arrangements for the world, but we do desire, in the family of God, to be guided by our Father's revealed will. He knows exactly what we need, and the Scriptures are sufficient and profitable for all things, to furnish unto ALL GOOD WORKS (2Tim.3.16,17). When urging the contrast between “keeping” and “adding,” one thinks of John 14.21 and of Revelation 22.18, but I do not want to suggest that any unwitting “developments” and alterations among believers are the definite “adding” there brought before us, with the tremendous judgment prophesied. The original adding was, doubtless, the work of the enemy, although many children of God today are quite unconscious of this. It is blessed, however, to have our eyes open, and to take away whatever does not belong to the Lord (Jer.5.10). Simplicity and glad readiness for God's own will are very precious.

God hid the burial place of Moses (Deut.34.6); some may think to prevent man-worship, and pilgrimages. But we do not to know “why,” it is sufficient that God acted thus. He has also veiled the birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ, shall we not respect His silence? or shall we “add,” and choose a day of our own?

God has appointed no “anniversaries,” or yearly feasts, in the present dispensation. Shall we acknowledge His wisdom, or shall we bring in something new? Let us remember “the new cart” in the days of David, and the sad result (2Sam.6.3). God has likewise hidden from us much as to the bodily appearance of our Lord Jesus. Shall we try to intrude into the things that are not revealed (Deut.29.29), and paint our pictures? May we not be going against the principle of 2Corinthians 5.16? The fact that God has overruled pictures, and even caused a blessing, will not justify us. He has used unsaved men to work His will

(Isa.45.4), and He worked wondrously in overruling Naomi's journey to Moab, and gave through Jonah's disobedience, a remarkable type. But if He gives refreshing water when the rock is wrongly smitten this does not excuse the sin (Num.20.12). Let us keep to God's words. Some will tell us they have been helped by stained glass windows, and even by images: others will speak of elaborate music, etc., etc. Where shall we draw the line? But why start at all? Are we to make our inferences from feelings and apparent experiences, or to believe that our beloved Lord has Himself left us His revealed will? Are we to "keep" or to "add"? That is the simple question.

Some dear children of God may suggest, "But what is the harm in calling December 25<sup>th</sup> the birthday of Christ?" And others may ask, "Would not the poor lose much if the custom was discontinued?" It is easy to ask counter-questions, since much more money is spent on "self" in December than other months, and if our love to the poor requires the stimulus, it is saddening. But we need only say, "Is 'Christmas' a keeping of the commandment of the Lord Jesus, or an adding?" "If it is "keeping," let the Scripture be produced. If it is "adding," are we not on dangerous ground, beloved fellow believers ?

Much has been written, and could be written, on the peculiar unsuitability of December as a proposed "birthday" for our Lord Jesus, and the painful associations when a heathen feast day is "adopted," and this is the distressing fact, if the usual date is accepted. But the first thought comes before all these. If our Father wishes us to keep a day, why has He not told us which day, and graciously given us His instruction and guidance as to observing it? If He has not done so, let us be willing for Him to decide, and let us gladly keep our Lord's commandments and have a holy and humble fear lest we add to them (John 14.15). Is not this a simple attitude, the only one for children of God, and therefore, for you, if you are, by grace, His child?

Percy W. Heward

# **“Christmas”, An Anniversary:— But of WHAT?**

NOT the anniversary of Christ's birth, for the date is *not known*. God, Who veiled the burial place of Moses, has veiled this also. Search the Scriptures, and see if this be not so. The time of His death, and resurrection, and ascension can easily be traced. There are remarkable date-types for these. But nothing in Scripture gives us the date of His birth. Is it an accident? Or shall we *respect God's silence*? But it may be said, “Possibly the right day has been chosen after all: it is as likely as any other.”<sup>1</sup> Is it? Christ was born when shepherds were watching their flocks *in the field*, but December is, according to Jer.36.22, and John 10.22, a cold month. “The feast of the Lord” did not require travelling between September and March, and would the Roman government have appointed a *winter* journey for census? (see Matt.24.20) The thoughtful reader may ask, “Why has God specially told us that December was cold? Have we not here another example of His advance-answer to errors? He *has* answered evolution thus, *because He hates a lie*. And what if it is the same as to “Christmas”?

But if Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> is *not* the anniversary of Christ's birth, *what* does it commemorate? Alas, there is no difficulty as to the reply : —

## **THE BIRTH OF THE SUN GOD.**

Mythology, linked in measure with astronomy, gives sad evidence of *this* anniversary. The Saturnalia were pagan Rome's

---

<sup>1</sup>Such haphazard arrangement would, of itself, dishonour the God of order.

mad festival at the very time. Papal Rome has adopted the date, and changed the name, but *the revelry remains*. The rejected Lord Jesus is NOT honoured by display to encourage gluttony, and by amusements of “believers” and unbelievers together in the joy festivities of the “Season.” If the birth of Christ is nominally owned, separation by the death of Christ is openly disowned. And is a heathen anniversary fit for a heavenly people? What have children of God to do with the sun god, and his customs? How would a Daniel, who purposed his heart, not to defile himself with the king's meat (Dan.1.8), have acted ?

And thus “Christmas” is

### **the Anniversary of a Compromise.**

The narrow path seemed too narrow, and there was a broadening, even as we find a tendency today not to be “too strait.” The *nominal* church adopts some of the amusements of the world, to “retain the young people,” and the older ones too. Thus it was of old and thus it is, — but *Christ* is the Same. Constantine or Christ? — *Who* is our Lord and Master ? Ah, dear friends, the question probes. Are there not children of God, humbly willing to go forth to their beloved Lord WITHOUT THE CAMP, bearing His reproach, and giving up the *anniversary of a compromise*, with prayerful *firmness*? Away with festivities, that have *such* an origin. Away with presents and cards, reminding of such a source. Let us not cause others to stumble by a half-way separation. Let us “sigh and cry for all the abominations,”<sup>2</sup> because of love to Him *Who died* for us. Our love to His dear people who do not know whence Christmas is calls for this definiteness, though ever humbly illustrating Heb.5.2, Gal.6.1. The Holy Spirit *never* leads to world-bordering.

Percy W. Heward

---

<sup>2</sup> *The preceding chapter in Ezekiel (8) refers to the very evil enshrined in “Christmas” (verse 16).*

# THE PERIL OF THE “AND.”

## Thoughts on “Christmas.”

“They Feared the Lord, *And*—” 2 Kings 17.32,33.

“Ye Cannot Serve God *And*—” Matt.6.24.

“WHY should I not keep CHRISTMAS? Though it is NOT in Scripture, one day is as good as another, and godly men have kept it. Moreover, Christmas encourages good will: and I like to keep it.” Such is the plea of many, — whether put into words or not. But the very first thought is wrong. Rather, “Why SHOULD I keep it?” Why should I ADD to God's words? Proverbs 30.6 is significant. Can you, dear reader, find ONE suggestion in the New Testament to appoint “special” days: except the first day of the week? See Galatians 4.10. And can you find one example in Scripture of an approved anniversary WITHOUT ANY HISTORICAL BASIS? Untruthfulness is not a little thing. “Godly men have kept it”: — and they have made VARIOUS MISTAKES. No one brings forward this argument EXCEPT WHEN IT SUITS HIM: for every one knows that godly men have done many things they would not do. Let us be honest, beloved friends. By grace, it may be, you will not “baptize” an infant. How will you reply to those who plead “godly men” ? Why not answer your own argument as to Christmas in the VERY SAME WAY? Never bring in an argument that is partly dishonest, if I may speak plainly for the Lord's glory.

I am not sure there is so much “good will” in Christmas. Ask the burdened shop assistant. There seems more commercialism than love. And is EVERY gift an expression of good will? How many “Christmas presents” are with a wish OTHERWISE? “Good will” to the pampered flesh SEEMS the message of the supermarket shelves. Most spend more on

THEMSELVES, and their relatives at this time. If there IS “good will”, let there be a remembrance of Christ (2 Cor.8.9), born in a manger, and let EVERY home live MORE PLAINLY, and SPEND LESS and send the money to the suffering. Till this takes place, should there not be more silence about good will? Did YOU, dear reader, spend LESS OR MORE on “personal” desires and friends last Christmas? The Lord Jesus unveils much in Luke 14.12.

“I like it” is a very powerful plea: but “They that are Christ's crucified the flesh, with the affections and desires” (Gal.5.24). The writer dare not boast: he would earnestly join with others to confess sin, and to humbly long that the Lord's will may be paramount and central in a devoted life. “If any one WILL to do His WILL” is precious. The peril of the “AND”! Ah, dear reader, is it not so? Bazaars and socials get a FOOTING BECAUSE Christ's Name is used first. But the glorious Lord Jesus Christ is not to be made a figure-head: He is “a Leader and a Commander.” Disgrace not His holy Name. Have you not heard of a company gaining subscriptions, BECAUSE a great man is a figure-head director? If it fails, what then? Will a really great man give his name thus? O, I beseech you, do not take WITHOUT HIS WARRANT the Name of Christ, and prostitute to worldliness. He hates robbery. “Feasts” and “socials,” “parties” and “bonbons,” “revelry” and “games” would not “take on” so well, among those for whom the devil has set a decoy, if the label of “Christ” were not fixed thereon. If December 25<sup>th</sup> were STILL the Saturnalia, or STILL CALLED the Sun-god-feast, — as it actually is — Christians would not keep it. THE NAME IS THE TRAP. Jeroboam “held” Israel by a feast (1 Kings 12.27), and HIS leader has not changed plans.

Having sown the wheat-resembling TARES, and made a nominal “Christian world”, the devil MUST have some NEW names for the OLD customs, to fit the new scheme. Is there

any other KEY to Christmas? I know of none. Then let the Lord's true people be separate. It will cost a little, but nothing compared with His precious blood, to purchase us from a ruined world. There is music in the words: — "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Christmas has NEVER drawn the line between Christians and the world; and CANNOT. Why? BECAUSE IT IS OF THE WORLD — except in HALF ITS HYBRID NAME. 'This is the tremendous peril of the "and", Christ and—: He is not the Lord of compromise (Matt.4.10, HIM ONLY). Thank God for a contrast with Christmas in the inspired words: — "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the Living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN THING; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor.6.14-18).

Percy W. Heward