

XMAS

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

*“Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way
of the heathen...for the customs
of the people are vain.”*

Jeremiah 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 Roman Catholic origin, brought over from paganism. But, says someone, Christmas is the time when we commemorate the Savior’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 (Mat 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” (Exo 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 Savior’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 (Exo 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” (Pro 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. 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 Roman Catholic institution, and now that you see this, you dare no longer have any fellowship with it (Eph 5:11); that you are the Lord’s “free man” (1Co 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; Deuteronomy 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 Roman Catholic “Christ-mass.” By all means send cards (preferably at some other time of the year) to your ungodly friends, and Christians too, with a verse of Scripture, but not with “Christmas” on it. What would you think of a printed program of a vaudeville having Isaiah 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 theater are far less obnoxious than the “Christmas celebration” of Roman Catholic 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” (Pro 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 a 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 that He has granted you concerning it.

Beloved fellow-Christian, “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (Jam 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” (2Co 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” (Mat 25:6)—out from a Godless Christendom, out from the Christ-

deserted “churches,” out from the horrible burlesque of “religion” that now masquerades under His name.

“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” (2Co 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” (Mat 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, 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” (1Pe 2:11)? We may gain the good will and good word of worldly religionists today by our compromise 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” (Exo 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 Savior, “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy 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 the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1Ti 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, Roman Catholic, and worldly customs. ❧

The following is from Charles H. Spurgeon’s exposition of Psalm 81 in the *Treasury of David*:

“Blow 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 give a solemnity to rites and times which no ceremonial pomp or hierarchical 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 feasts as the Lord appoints, but not those that 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 sacred season 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 also will 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.”

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