

What is Christmas?

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Introduction

The subject, What is Christmas? Will be discussed in the light of the Holy Scriptures. Encyclopedias clearly reveal that Christmas is paganistic; however, to ascertain the meaning of Christmas, one must possess the grace of God, be willing to lay aside all preconceived ideas, and accept the teaching of God's word. It is said that there is a single principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all argument, which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance. That principle is contempt before examination.

Professing Christendom consists of three categories: (1) Few will be valorous for truth. These diligent Christians often say, "Previously I believed thus; but after additional study of the subject, I no longer hold that particular view." (2) The majority are prejudiced and unwilling to investigate evidence contrary to their belief. The influence of preconceived opinion is so great that it brings darkness over the mind in the midst of clearest light. (3) Some are sincere but misguided. They hold to certain traditions, which they cannot prove; nevertheless, they sincerely desire to know the will of God.

Since the holiday seems dear to the majority of the people in the world, it behooves every courageous Christian to know the art of controversy. Usually, one who is established in truth does not become offended over disagreement. All faithful witnesses of the Lord encounter controversy. Disputation is not always an unhealthy sign. Some of the best books written and the greatest experiences encountered resulted from controversy. That does not indicate that there should be confusion in the church; unity must prevail there.

Polemics, the art of controversy, would be endless without a sound, evident principle to determine the side upon which the burden of proof lies. In every question, the burden of proof lies on the side of the affirmer. An affirmation is no authority without proof. If a person says "I believe in Christmas" and he cannot prove that it is Biblical, his proposition fails for lack of proof. Evidence must be given before it can be refuted. That which has no proof needs no refutation. However, if an affirmer can prove his point, the objector must prove his. Every man must seek to prove that which his cause requires.

Every person's attitude toward the rite of Christmas should be, Does it harmonize with the word of God? Scriptures are the only standard for the truth; all else will be destroyed. "...Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). Anything not found in the Scriptures cannot be proved by them. Christian psychology is a mind that has been renewed by the

sovereign Spirit. Thus it is made responsive to the mind of God (Phil. 2:5). Growth of Christians in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ is essential to avoid deception. Faithfulness to one's belief does not protect him from Satan's subterfuge.

A knowledge of Satan's methods is vital to avoid deception. The apostle Paul said, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2Cor. 2:11). Throughout the epistles, Christians are exhorted to *be not ignorant* (Rom. 1:13; 11:25; 1Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2Cor. 2:11; 2Pet. 3:8). Our minds, which were darkened before God regenerated us, have been renewed by the grace of God. Therefore, as we are subjected to truth we learn more about God, ourselves, and the devil.

Although Christians cannot be deluded to the point of destruction, Scripture proves they can be deceived. The Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples against those who pervert truth: "...Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matt. 24:4). The Roman, Ephesian, and Thessalonian saints were cautioned about the same evil (Rom. 16:18; Eph. 4:14; 5:6; 2Thess. 2:3). The Ephesian Christians were doctrinally sound; nevertheless, they were advised against Satan's strategies. Consequently, we should be cognizant of our need for Biblical instruction so that our attitude toward Christmas may be determined by Scripture. Non-observance of that season does not classify one with the religious group of Jehovah's Witnesses. They deny the Deity of Jesus Christ.

The Derivation of the Observance of Christmas proves it is Unscriptural

An annual festive season was observed by Babylon in the month of December long before the birth of Jesus Christ. The Israelites were led astray to observe the birth of Tammuz during their Babylonian captivity (Ezek. 8:12-18). Tammuz was celebrated as the son of the Chaldean queen of heaven. The idolatries of that pagan festival were incorporated into the Roman Catholic system in pretense of honoring Christ. They adopted the heathenistic custom, seeking to convert the pagans to their way of thinking.

The prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah revealed Israel's practice of adopting and worshipping heathen idolatries and warned them about it. Their exhortation was, "Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen...For the customs of the people *are* vain..." (Jer. 10:2, 3). Christmas trees were forbidden and condemned: "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. They *are* upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go..." (Jer. 10:3-5). Although Israel was admonished concerning heathenish practices, they did not heed. Likewise, professing Christendom is learning and practicing the ways of the world, against which they are emphatically warned: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and

vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8). (Study Col. 2:16, 20; Jas. 4:4; 1John 2:15-17.)

The Lord sent judgment on the Israelites because they learned and practiced the ways of the heathen. They made *cakes* and burned incense to the *queen of heaven*. The cakes for the queen of heaven were made in the shape of the rising sun. The Babylonians worshipped the sun (Ezek. 8:16); Jer. 8:1, 2). As Israel adopted the unbloody sacrifice of the Babylonians, Roman Catholics have adopted the unbloody sacrifice of the heathen. The Lord cautioned against heathen ways.

Can you associate the Lord Jesus Christ with heathen practices? A Biblically instructed Christian cannot hold the Bible in one hand and those performances in the other. The Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself once, and by that sacrifice of His blood He put away sin. An unbloody sacrifice is unnecessary. Christians are saved by the once-offered Christ, and His blood continues to cleanse.

History records the origin of the *host* (the wafer used in the Roman Catholic Mass). According to heathen custom, Osiris, the sun divinity, became incarnate that he might give his life a sacrifice for men and be the life and nourishment of the souls of men. In Egyptian religion, Osiris was the king and judge of the dead and husband of Isis. That was the original of the Greek and Roman Ceres is universally admitted. Ceres was an ancient Italian goddess of agriculture, under whose name the Romans adopted the worship of the Greek goddess Demeter. Demeter was the ancient Greek goddess of agriculture and the protectress of marriage and the social order, identified with Ceres by the Romans.

Ceres was worshipped as the discoverer and mother of corn. The child she brought forth was "the seed" or, frequently called in Assyria, "Bar," signifying the sun and the corn. The initiate pagans believed that the corn Ceres bestowed upon the world was not the corn of this earth but the divine son. That divine son, in their worship, was the one through whom they taught that spiritual and eternal life would be enjoyed. The Druids—some pre-Christian persons among the Celts or Gauls—literally gave their worship to that son, symbolized as corn, who was the sun divinity, according to the sacred article of the great goddess of Egypt. "No mortal hath lifted my veil. The fruit which I have brought forth is the SUN" (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons* [New York: Loizeaux Bros., 1948], pp. 160-163). That incarnate divinity, symbolized as the bread of God, was naturally represented as a round cake to identify him with the sun.

In Egypt the sun divinity as the seed was worshipped, and in Babylon the sun divinity as the corn was worshipped. Likewise, in Rome the *wafer* is adored. The following expression is found in the Roman litany: "Bread corn of the elect have mercy upon us" (Hislop, p. 263). This is one of the appointed prayers of the Roman litany addressed to the wafer in the celebration of the Mass.

The letters HIS are on each host used in the Mass. To Roman Catholics they mean Jesus the Saviour of men. However, to the worshipper of Isis, they mean Isis, Horus, and Seb. They signify to them the mother, the child, and the father of God—the Egyptian trinity or deity. Can the double sense be merely accidental? One may conclude that Roman Catholics have the *semblance* of Christianity and pagans have the *substance* of that upon which homage is bestowed.

The Scriptures reveal that during the days of Israel's apostasy, they adopted heathen idolatry. The Israelites practiced the worship of Baal; they also observed the worship of the sun image. That image was erected above the altar (2Chron. 34:4). The Lord had warned them against learning the ways of the heathen, because their customs are evil (Jer. 10:2, 3). Nevertheless, they went down into Egypt and sojourned there (Jer. 44:12). The Israelites followed the practice of worshipping the Egyptian's queen of heaven (Jer. 44:17, 19). They made cakes to worship her. Therefore, the *unbloody* sacrifice was of paganistic origin. The Egyptians, Babylonians, and Roman Catholics have their queen of heaven. Sometime in the fourth century, the queen of heaven, under the name of MARY, began to be worshipped among Roman Catholics.

The World's Observance of Christmas Does Not Justify its Celebration

Conforming to the Christmas season is learning and practicing the ways of the world. If the world is honoring Christ at that time, why do they not honor Him on the Lord's Day? One cannot honor Christ with a Bible in one hand and a paganistic custom in the other. In condemning Christmas cards, A.W. Pink said that you cannot associate the texts of Scripture with a paganistic custom anymore than you can associate the name Jesus Christ with the Roman Catholic Mass.

The Jesus upon whom the ungodly world and the religious world lavish their sentimentalities is not the anointed One of God, presented in Holy Scripture. There can be more than one Jesus but only *one Jesus Christ*. Most people who speak of Jesus do not know the Lord Jesus Christ of Scripture. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul omitted the name Christ in 2Corinthians 11:4: "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

During the Christmas season, men are exposed to *another Jesus* (not the Lord Jesus Christ)' *another spirit* (not the Holy Spirit), and *another gospel* (not the gospel of Christ). Another Jesus is portrayed as the lowly babe. Their message of another gospel is proclaimed by another spirit. Jesus becomes the theme of entertainment artists as they sing and portray the role of the lowly babe of Bethlehem.

Scripture does not authorize Christians to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Hence, Christmas will not be solemnized by those who believe the Scriptures and have a workable knowledge of them. In their past lives, Christians did serve other gods, which were not gods. However, since they have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, they are exhorted to not turn again to those things from which they have been delivered (Gal. 4:6-9). Because the Galatians had begun keeping "...days, and months, and times and years" (Gal. 4:10), the apostle questioned their salvation. The observance of the birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ is not isolated to years, seasons, and months. There is no season set aside to honor a certain aspect of His life. The Lord's Day alone has been set aside for Christians to assemble and worship (Acts 20:7; Matt. 28:1; 1Cor. 16:2; Heb. 10:25).

Merriment and gift-giving are associated in Revelation 11:10: "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth." The world will make merry and send gifts to one another, celebrating the death of the two prophets of the Lord. This is the only reference to gift-giving after the gifts the wise men brought to the *young child* (not infant) Jesus Christ; furthermore, their gifts were to Him, not to one another.

Adults honor Christmas because they receive personal pleasure from giving and receiving. Children observe the holiday because they have been taught the ways of the heathen. They are told about some mystical person called Santa, the letters of whose name also spell *Satan*, the father of lies.

Those who object to non-observance of Christmas should consider the following questions: Should we teach children the ways of the heathen to make them happy? Shall we tell them lies to make them happy? Should we mix Scriptures with heathen idolatry? Shall we fear what man can say about us when we please the Lord? How can Jesus Christ be honored when both giver and recipient are acting in the spirit of the world?

The Religious Observance of Christmas Does Not Prove its Authenticity

Christmas is a *religious* celebration, not a Biblical fact or proof. The question is not whether it is useful or injurious, but is it founded on the authority of Scripture? Most professing Christians care little about what the Lord says if it interferes with their religious practices.

The time of beginning of that celebration is not known. However, history reveals that Catholics adopted it from paganism and made it a religious custom sometime between the third and fourth centuries. Refutation of that error is not dependent on the knowledge of its beginning but whether it harmonizes with the word of God.

Commemoration of Christmas by the Roman Catholic Church and other religious groups for nearly 1600 years does not indicate that the practice is Scripturally correct. No religious institution has authority from its age, seeming success, or traditions. The world tends to base verity on success. However, if that were the standard for truth, Communism would be valid.

What is Christmas? Christmas is Christ's Mass. It heads the list of the five holy days annually observed by the Roman Catholic Church. The five holy days are Christmas (Dec. 25), Circumcision (Jan.1), Ascension Day (observed 40 days after Easter), All Saints' Day (Nov. 1), and the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8). Christmas is the combination of Christ's name with their Mass. Christians indoctrinated in the word of God cannot celebrate Christmas; they cannot associate Christ with the Mass.

What is the Roman Catholic Mass? The Mass is called the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. It is described as a sacrament and a sacrifice.

The Holy Eucharist is a *sacrament* and a *sacrifice* (a priest's official offering of a victim to God. In the *Holy Eucharist* Jesus Christ's body and blood, soul and divinity, under the *appearances* (whatever we can see, feel, touch, taste, or smell) of bread and wine, is *contained*, is *offered* to God in sacrifice and is *received* in Holy Communion. Our Saviour instituted the Holy Eucharist at His Last Supper, in the presence of the apostles. He did this when He took *bread*, blessed and broke it, and giving it to His apostles, said: "Take and eat: this is My body"; then He took a *cup* of wine, blessed it, and giving it to them, said: "All of you drink of this; for this is My blood of the new covenant (agreement) which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins." (Michael A. McGuire, *The New Baltimore Catechism and Mass* [New York: Benziger Bros., Inc., 1953], II, p. 150.)

The *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, published by command of Pope Pius V., says: "As often as the commemoration of this victim is celebrated, so often is the work of our salvation promoted, and the plenteous fruits of that bloody victim [i.e., Christ on the Cross] flow in upon us abundantly, through this UNBLOODY SACRIFICE." (T.C. Hammond, *The One Hundred Texts* [London: Society for Irish Church Missions, 1958], p. 215.)

In a book entitled *Holy Altar and Sacrifice explained*, by the Rev. Pacificus Baker of the Order of St. Francis, we find the Mass "is a *propitiatory* sacrifice, by which we may obtain pardon of our sins, and of our daily failings and offences against God." (Hammond, p. 215.)

From the preceding quotations two things are apparent: (1) The Roman Catholic Church acknowledges the sacrifice of the Mass to be an *unbloody sacrifice*. (2)

They state that by the Mass remission of sins is procurable. That would indicate that remission of sins can be obtained without the shedding of blood.

...Dr. Hay's *Sincere Christian* tells us that the sacrifice of the cross and that of the mass "are both one and the same sacrifice.... The sacrifice of the altar [is] a standing *memorial* of the death of Christ" (Hammond, p. 216)

In the light of those quotations, three questions must be answered: (1) How can the *memorial* of Christ's death be the death itself? (2) How can the *memorial* of a victim be the victim itself? (3) How can the Jesus Christ of Scripture be united with the unscriptural Roman Catholic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist?

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that outside of their organization there is no salvation.

All are obliged to belong to the Catholic Church in order to be saved. ...When we say, "Outside the Church there is no salvation," we mean that those who through their own grave fault do not know that the Catholic Church is the true Church or, knowing it, refuse to join it, cannot be saved. (McGuire, p. 73.)

The Roman Catholic Catechism of Christian Doctrine states that the Holy Mass is one and the same sacrifice with that of the cross, inasmuch as Christ, who offered Himself as a bleeding victim on the cross to His heavenly Father, continues to offer Himself in an unbloody manner on the altar through the ministry of His priests.

...The Mass is the sacrifice of the New Law in which Christ, through the ministry of the priest, offers Himself to God in an unbloody manner under appearances of bread and wine. (McGuire, p.157.)

...The principal priest in every Mass is Jesus Christ, who offers to His heavenly Father, through the ministry of His ordained priest, His body and blood which were sacrificed on the cross. (McGuire, p.157.)

...The word "Mass" comes from one of three Latin words said by the priest frequently near the end of Mass: "*Ite, missa est.*" They mean: "Go, it is the dismissal (missa.)"....(McGuire, p. 159.)

...Bishops and priests of the Church are called "other Christs." They alone have the power to represent or to take the place of Christ, in preaching His Gospel and in offering His sacrifice for the glory of God and the salvation of men..... (McGuire, p. 159.)

...Priests exercise their power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ by repeating at the Consecration of the Mass the words of Christ: "This is my body...this is My blood."....(McGuire, p. 153.)

...The change of the entire substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is called Transubstantiation.... (McGuire, p. 152.)

...Jesus Christ is whole and entire both under the appearances of bread and under the appearances of wine.... (McGuire, p.152.)

...transubstantiation...change of the entire substances in which substance is entirely destroyed and an entirely new one takes its place, without any change of appearances.... (McGuire, p. 151.)

...The word *transubstantiation* is made up of two Latin words: "Trans" meaning change; and "substantia" meaning substance.... (McGuire, p. 155.)

..."Appearances are often deceiving," said Cyril. "John looked sick to me but he said he was really feeling fine." In the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist we have a great mystery of our faith. Concerning it, Saint Thomas wrote in his hymn *Adoro Te*: --"Sight, touch, and taste, in Thee are each deceived; the ear alone most safely is believed." Even though we cannot fully understand it, we believe in the word of Christ Himself.... (McGuire, p. 154.)

...When our Lord first promised to give us the Holy Eucharist, the people walked away from Him, because he said they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood (*John 6*).... (McGuire, p. 154.)

There are various kinds of Masses. The *votive* Mass is not connected with some holy day. If one desires, he may pay money and have Masses said for him concerning a person who is ill, a job, relief of suffering from purgatory, protection against inclement weather, etc. The *Requiem* Mass is said at funerals. The *nuptial* Mass is said at weddings. The *pontifical* Masses are conducted by bishops or other dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Lord Jesus Christ made no provision for either His apostles or ministers to continue any kind of sacrifice (Heb. 10:10-14). Christ offered Himself once in the end of the age. He will never offer Himself again. Believers are set apart forever by that one offering for sin.

Scripture nowhere indicates that God has ever appointed any individual to be "another Christ." To say that any man is "another Christ" is nothing short of blasphemy! Jesus Christ is the only Saviour, the only Mediator between God and men (1Tim. 2:5).

Roman Catholics believe that the Mass is the unbloody sacrifice, offered by the priest for the remission of sin. They believe that when the priest blesses the wafer and the wine, these actually become the literal body and the literal blood of Jesus Christ. That is the doctrine of transubstantiation. In other words, the bread is no longer bread and the wine is no longer wine, in their way of thinking.

When the priest blesses the elements, he alone eats the wafer and drinks the wine. This is called the mass. In holy communion, the people eat the wafer, but they do not drink the wine. Only the priest drinks the wine. They eat the wafer, which they believe to be the body of Christ. Thus, they become cannibals and devour the body of Christ. Every Roman Catholic is bound under the threat of damnation to believe that the consecrated host is the real, actual body of Jesus Christ. They make a god out of the Mass. Under the Levitical system, God stated that He would set His face against the person who ate blood (Lev. 17:10).

Catholics claim the bread becomes the literal body of Christ, and their senses of smell, taste, and sight may accidentally tell them that it is still bread. To be consistent, they must also claim that the cup is literally the New Testament (Luke 22:20).

The Roman Catholic Catechism, from which was quoted a statement in John 6, stated that when the Lord Jesus Christ promised the Holy Eucharist, people walked away from Him because He said they had to eat His flesh. Nothing in chapter 6 of John resembles the institution of the Lord's Supper by the Son of God. (Read John 6:35, 50, 51.) The Lord proved that His use of the word bread in John 6 was a *figure of speech*: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life" (John 6:63). To eat one's flesh, drink one's blood, eat justice, and to eat a book were familiar figures of speech to the Jews (Job 31:31; Matt. 5:6; Rev. 16:6; 10:9).

Judah was called a lion's whelp (Gen. 49:9). He was no more a lion than Christ's body is or can be bread. Issachar was called a strong ass (Gen. 49:14). He was not and did not become a donkey. Jesus Christ said, "I AM the true vine..." (John 15:1); "I am the door..." (John 10:9). The apostle Paul said that Jesus Christ is the Rock (1Cor. 10:4) However, Jesus Christ was not and does not become a literal vine, door, or rock.

At one time I carried pictures of my wife and son in my wallet. When I displayed them, saying, "These are my wife and son," no one mistook those pictures to be my literal wife and son. Jesus Christ spoke symbolical language when He said He was the bread of life. He must be appropriated by faith, and "...faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

The apostles did not understand Christ's words at the institution of the Lord's Supper in a literal sense (Luke 22:19, 20). Christ neither ate His own flesh nor drank His own blood. He had not yet died. He was very much alive at the institution of the supper. Since Jesus Christ was still with the disciples, How could their eating the bread and drinking the wine be done in *remembrance* of Him? Did Jesus Christ create another Christ? How can the memorial of Christ's death be death itself?

The name given by Catholics to the wafer after consecration is the *host*, which comes from the Latin word signifying *victim*. They believe that after consecration the whole substance of bread is gone, that it is no longer bread but the body of Christ. Consequently, when the priest breaks the wafer, he breaks the body of Christ. If that wafer is the body of Christ, how does the Roman Catholic Church provide for her transubstantiated host's protection from disappearance or corruption?

..."If the housel (host) be purified, or musty, or lost. Or if a mouse eateth it through careless," etc.

While you read the following, remember that every Romanist is bound, under pain of damnation, to believe that the consecrated Host is the very real, actual body of his Lord and Saviour.

"If something poisonous have touched the consecrated Host, then let him consecrate another, and take it in the way that has been said; and let that be preserved in a tabernacle in a separate place until the *species be corrupted*, and when corrupted, let it then be thrown into the sacrarium." (Hammond, p. 407.)

To Roman Catholics, the tabernacle is a receptacle where the blessed sacrament is held. It rests on the altar where the priest (another Christ) offers Mass.

They say the host may become corrupted or lost. Can you imagine someone losing the Lord Jesus Christ? How can the host become lost or corrupted if it is the body of Christ? His body is not subject to corruption because He has an impeccable human nature (Ps. 16:8-11; Acts 2:27-33). Since Christ's body cannot be corrupted, what is corrupted? The corrupted matter is that *bread*, which remains bread even after the priest (that other Christ) has consecrated it. The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient and complete (Heb. 10:14). Why do people waste money for another sacrifice? How can priests complete that which is perfect?

Catholics teach that the bread that has become the body of Christ is incorruptible, immortal. When the communicant eats the wafer, he eats the body of Christ. They say it ceases in digestion in the communicant. How can that occur

if that so-called body of Christ is incorruptible, immortal? Why should the presence of Christ be limited to digestion? Why can the human nature of Christ not go through digestion as it did through death?

What becomes of Christ when the appearances, under which He is supposed to be veiled, have ceased because of digestion? Can the finite devour the infinite? Roman Catholics give this explanation: The Christ-God, made such by transubstantiation, then leaves one whole and entire.

If Jesus Christ is not consumed and assimilated to nothingness when the Eucharist has ceased because of digestion, it is apparent that space would become filled with new Christ-Gods that were made such at the Mass.

Catholics participate over and over in the Mass because they believe Christ leaves them when they digest the wafer. They say the soul, like the body, needs frequent nourishment; and the Holy Eucharist provides that food that is best suited to the soul. They teach that Christ is ever eaten in communion without being consumed, that is without being assimilated to nothingness. That would be like filling one's mouth with gum, never disposing of it, yet continuing to add thereto. How can a mouth full of gum take another piece? If Christ is ever eaten without being consumed, why do they observe Mass three times on Christmas? Can the finite not be filled with one reception of the Infinite? To follow the practice of solemnizing Christmas indicates that one sympathizes with the Roman Catholic teaching concerning Christ's Mass.

The Lord's Supper is not an Observance of Christ's Mass

The Lord's Supper, which was instituted by Jesus Christ at His last observance of the Passover, is Biblically described (Luke 22:13-30). The type would give place to the Antitype. No uncircumcised Jew was allowed to eat the Passover (Ex. 12). Therefore, no unregenerate person should observe the Lord's Supper. The apostle John intimated that Judas went out prior to the institution of the Lord's Supper (John 13).

No grace is conferred by baptism or the Lord's Supper. Regeneration, conversion, and Scriptural baptism are prerequisites to the observance of the Lord's Supper. Baptism is an ordinance of God; however, the Lord's Supper is a local church ordinance because its participants are under guardianship of a local church. *Christian fellowship* should be broad enough to include every person who has embraced Jesus Christ by faith. However, *fellowship at the Lord's Table* has certain limitations.

The Lord's Supper is not the transubstantiated elements of bread and wine, neither is it the consubstantiated substance of bread and wine, nor is it a sacrament. There is little difference between the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation.

Martin Luther affirmed that not only the accidents to the bread and wine but also the bread and wine remain in the sacrament of the altar. The bread and wine are really bread and wine, and the true flesh and blood of Christ is in them in the same degree as they (that is, Roman Catholics) hold them to be beneath their accidents. Luther likened the elements to fire and iron, saying they are two substances, yet they are so mingled in red hot iron that any part is at once iron and fire. He then asked, What prevents the glorious body of Christ from being in every part of the substance of bread? Thus, the only difference between Catholic transubstantiation and Lutheran consubstantiation is that Catholics believe that when the host has been consecrated, it is no longer bread or wine but the literal body and blood of Christ. Whereas, Lutherans teach that Jesus Christ is in the bread and wine, yet at the same time they are bread and wine.

John Calvin's description of the Lord's Supper is unintelligible. He said that the sacraments *contain* the grace which they signify. The Lord's Supper neither contains nor confers any grace; consequently, it is not a sacrament. *Sacrament* comes from the Latin word sacramentum, meaning an oath, which was sometimes taken by people as they entered the service of their country. An oath is not taken in observing the Lord's Supper.

The Bible describes the correct view of the Lord's Supper. The Lord Jesus is *spiritually* but not *bodily* present in the Scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper. Where two or three are gathered together in His name, agreeing, He is in their midst. Christ indwells every believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit, not bodily (Col. 1:27). Jesus Christ is omnipresent; but His body, although it is glorified, will remain at the right hand of the Father until He comes the second time.

Jesus Christ is in neither the bread nor the wine, but He is present at the supper. If He were not *spiritually present*, worship would be vain.

There is no place where the Lord Jesus Christ is not. He is near all men indiscriminately. However, peculiar to the believing communicant at the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ is present in *fellowship*. As the believer participates at the table, he has fellowship with God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and other believers (1John 1:1-7).

The body and blood of Jesus Christ are *spiritually* present to the *faith of the believer*. When he partakes of the bread, he is reminded of the purity of Christ's life, the impeccability of His body. His perfect human nature is symbolized in the unleavened bread. The bread reminds the participant of Christ's precious blood that was spilled on Calvary, by which he has been redeemed and not with such things as silver and gold (1Peter 1:18, 19).

Christ's presence at the supper is *objective*. He is not only present *in* the believer but to him. Scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper must be in *remembrance* of Him.

The apostle Paul instructed the Corinthian church in Scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper (1Cor. 11). Some of the Corinthians were incorrectly observing the supper. Their women were not conducting themselves as godly women, and the church house was used to eat their meals. Therefore, Paul acquainted them with the error of their ways.

The Lord's Supper must be observed in *remembrance* of Christ. A person does not need to be reminded to fill his stomach, but he must be reminded to fill his soul. When Jesus Christ died, the sun faded and the heavens were darkened; the rocks rent, yet men must be reminded to remember His death. Someone has said that we do not come as idle spectators but as active instruments, exercising every grace upon Christ who was crucified for us. Let us never be friends with our own hearts until they love Christ better and hate sin more.

"...This do in remembrance of me" (1Cor. 11:24) is in the present tense; it is an imperative. "This be doing" is a command of God. It is not legalism. To have a law is not legalism, but to obey a law with the idea of inheriting merit is. No merit is inherited in the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Union with Christ gives one the *right* to partake of the supper, while *communion* gives him the right to *enjoy* participation. As often as a Christian observes that ordinance, he shows the Lord's death until He comes. During Christ's absence, it is a *memorial feast* to be observed, remembering Christ's vicarious death (1Cor. 11:26).

One who unworthily eats or drinks at the Lord's table, eats or drinks damnation (judgment) to himself (1Cor. 11:28-32). Observe what happened to some of the Corinthians for improper observance of the ordinance. Some were weak, some sick, and some had died physically. Those who believe Jesus Christ was peccable cannot Scripturally observe the Lord's Supper. Those who do not believe that the blood of Jesus Christ was shed for sin once for all and that Christians are perfected by that sacrifice cannot worthily observe the Lord's Supper.

The Cessation of Sacrifices Condemns the Observance of Christmas

No person has power to change one substance into another. Great changes are wrought only by Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who was changed. The Lord Jesus Christ is not changed into bread and wine which can be eaten and drunk by individuals. He did become *incarnate*. Without His incarnation, there would be no Saviour. He could not have walked among the sons of men. He could not have ascended to sit at the right hand of the Father. He could not come

again to sit on the throne of His father David to reign forever. Conclusively, the incarnation of Jesus Christ is of the utmost importance.

Jesus Christ was in the *form* of God, but He made Himself of no reputation (Phil. 2:5-8). He did not empty Himself of His deity or attributes—an attribute is a self-distinguishing characteristic attributable to God alone. The change was not in His nature; His essence cannot be changed. Christ the Lord transformed Himself into the *likeness* of men. He was found in fashion as a man. He was Man, but He was more than man; He was God-man. God veiled Himself in human flesh.

No man can look upon the essential glory of God and survive. Therefore, that man might look upon God; He veiled Himself in human flesh. He assumed a human nature (John 1:14), and in that nature He went *through* death on the cross, remaining God through that experience.

Although Christ did not surrender His Divine attributes, He did relinquish the *independent exercise* of them. He Himself illustrated this during His personal ministry (John 5:19, 30). He did not deny His Deity but spoke as Mediator (God made Man), not as God absolutely considered. He is God and Changes not as to His character (essence). He only changed His manner of activity. His essential glory was covered by the human nature in the incarnation.

To be born of a virgin was the only way the Son of God could come into this world without contamination with original sin. His virgin birth is the foundation of our faith. His conception was by the third person of the Divine Triunity, the Holy Spirit.

In what sense did Christ empty Himself? (1) He took upon Himself the *form* of a servant. As the eternal Son, He had never before done this. (2) He humbled Himself and became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross. That He had never before and will never do again. As God-Man He became obedient; as God-Man He learned obedience by the things He suffered (Heb. 5:5-7). He had never before learned obedience because He had not assumed the form of a servant.

The Divine and human natures were united in one person; Jesus Christ is one Person with two natures. Christ did not consider His condescension robbery. His self-emptying was not self-extinction. The Divine Being was not changed into a mere man. In the incarnate state, the Lord Jesus carried out the mind that animated Him before the incarnation. The emphasis in Philippians 2:5-8 is His humiliation or condescension.

Christ's mode of manifestation resembled what men are. Apart from grace, men see in Him only a man; however, by grace, one sees Him as the eternal Son of God veiled in human flesh. The *likeness* did not express His *whole self*. There was a change in *form* but not *content*.

With the transformation of the Son of God, the *economy* or dispensation changed: “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, *he* is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2Cor. 5:16, 17). The word *therefore* indicated that the apostle Paul was concluding an important argument. This verse of Scripture is commonly explained thus: “Old things are passed away and *all things* for the new creature in Christ Jesus have become new.” No Christian can state that all the old things in his life have been removed and everything in his life is new. Chapter 7 of Romans emphasizes the conflict between the inward and outward man. Galatians 5:17 reveals conflict between the spirit and the flesh. Man’s flesh is the same flesh after regeneration.

The context of 2Corinthians 5:16, 17 must be considered to ascertain its spiritual significance. Two *economies* were *contrasted*. The economy under Moses was glorious, but it was superseded by Christ’s coming into the world and dying on the cross. The person who is saved by the grace of God is a new creature in Christ Jesus. He does not stand in the old but in the new economy, which has annulled the old.

The subject of 2Corinthians 3:1 through 6:10 is not what Christ does *in* but *for* individuals—not subjectively but objectively, not experimentally but judicially. God made the apostle Paul an able minister of the new testament (the new economy), not the old economy (2Cor. 3:1-18). The apostle was not writing a letter of self-praise, nor did he use testimonial letters written by other ministers or Christians. He remembered that he made use of such letters as a Pharisee prior to his conversion (Acts 9:1, 2). The Corinthian Christians were sufficient to prove Paul’s apostleship, which was questioned by legalizers.

The Lord, through the apostle Paul, proved to the accusing legalizers that here was nothing wrong with the old economy; but it had become obsolete. The children of Israel could not glory in that which was *done away*. The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled (filled full) the law of Moses; therefore a new economy exists (2Cor. 3:7, 11, 14).

Jesus Christ died for those whom the Father gave Him in the covenant of redemption (2Cor. 5:14). There was a time when Jesus Christ was minister of circumcision for the truth of God (Rom. 15:8). Now, having died for His own, having come forth from the grave, and sitting at the right hand of the Father, a new economy emanated. Henceforth, we do not know Jesus Christ as minister of circumcision. We know Him as the One who has *finished* the work He came to perform (2Cor. 5:16, 17). Whether one is a regenerated Jew or Gentile, old things that were associated with the old economy are passed away. All things have become new, because they are united with the new economy.

The *law*—the old covenant (Heb. 9) —was only a *shadow* of things to come (Heb. 10:1-14). Under the old economy, priests continually came offering sacrifices. Nevertheless, none of those could give a perfect conscience. They only pointed to the Lord Jesus who offered Himself *once* to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The *bloody* sacrifices could not perfect those who came; otherwise, they would not have continued to offer them. What folly then to think that an *unbloody* sacrifice, continually offered by priests, can cleanse those who come. The old economy offerings *ceased* with Christ's death. He accomplished all that they foreshadowed. There is no need for a shadow when one has Jesus Christ, the Substance.

The Lord Jesus offered Himself once; He died one time *forever*. His death will never be repeated. He has ascended to the right hand of the Father. His glorified body is there until He receives the kingdom from the Father. Then He will *bodily* return. His body is not on the earth today in any form. Conclusively, He is not in the Mass.

The antithesis in Hebrews 10:1-4 is between the priests *standing daily* offering their *imperfect* sacrifices and Jesus Christ *sitting* after He *once* offered Himself, the *perfect* sacrifice for sin. One's salvation is complete in the Lord Jesus Christ; nothing can be added to his standing in Him.

The transformation of the Son of God provided the way for the change that is wrought in a person's heart when God saves him. When God regenerates an individual, He gives him the principle of life which gives him a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 36:25-27). Thus, he is given the disposition for the things of God.

No constitutional change in the makeup of one's being occurs at regeneration. Joe ensues at the realization of regeneration, but the same person still exists. Man did not become less a man in the fall, nor does he become more of a man in regeneration. Man was man before the fall, man is man in a state of depravity, and he remains man after regeneration. He ever possesses a spirit—a tripartite being.

Man, in his state of depravity, possesses a spirit—the highest part of man. Pharaoh was not a Christian, but Scripture states that he was stirred in *spirit* (Gen. 41:8). Ezekiel recorded that the false prophets were led by their *spirits* (Ezek. 13:3, 8-10). The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that man knows himself by his *spirit* (1Cor. 2:11). Man's soul and spirit cannot be separated, but they can be distinguished. The spirit of man is required to understand the things of man, and the Spirit of God is necessary to understand spiritual things. Man could be no more than a beast if he possessed only body and soul. He may often act like a beast, but he is more; beasts do not possess spirits. The body without the spirit is dead (Jas. 2:26). Consequently, man is a tripartite being.

All three parts of man were affected in the fall. Donald Gray Barnhouse likened man's fall to a three-story building. He said the spirit of man, the third story, fell into the soul (seat of affection), the second story; then the whole thing collapsed into the body, the basement. A vivid description of that is recorded in Chapter 1 of Romans. Spiritual death brought a principle of evil into man's being, which darkened his mind (spirit); on the other hand, spiritual life enlightens the understanding and softens the heart. The infusion of the principle of life in regeneration by the Spirit of God is instantaneous, but the change that occurs in the new birth will continue until Christians awake in the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Israelites of old were severely chastened for adopting the ways of the heathen, and New Testament Christians are cautioned about following their example. Bringing paganistic ways under religious rites will not justify their observance. Christians cannot return to imperfect sacrifices; they have the Lord Jesus Christ, the *one perfect sacrifice for sin*. To observe Christ's Mass is, in effect, to crucify afresh the Son of God and expose Him to open shame (Heb. 6:6). To participate in the celebration of Christmas is to sympathize with the Mass, thus denying the one perfect sacrifice for sin.

The Bible is not a book from which one gains mere theoretical knowledge; it is a Book to be obeyed. Christians desire to study the Scriptures that they may know the will of God (Prov. 3:13-15; 4:5). Right use of Biblical knowledge will cause them to become more humble and gracious. It will enable them to give clearer witness. Incorrect use of Biblical knowledge causes professing Christians to become pugnacious and withdrawn.

The Christian life consists of more than increased Biblical knowledge. The most effective child of God is one who has experienced what he has learned. His knowledge is not merely something gained in a classroom or private study. A person requiring surgery desires a surgeon who has spent time in the classroom, library, his own private study with his text books, and much time under the influence and instruction of a live tutor in the operating room.

One places little confidence in the testimony of a professing Christian who has not experimentally learned what he has mentally learned. God, in His providence, produces circumstances whereby Christians experience truths which they have learned. Truth which is not known cannot be obeyed. One cannot expect obedience to faith where there is no doctrine of faith.

Christians who have learned the truth about Christmas must practice it. Non-observance of that festive season may deprive them of *personal* pleasure and cause suffering from friends and relatives. Will you offend friends and relatives? Or, will you offend the Lord Jesus Christ who purchased eternal redemption for you?

*From a series of messages preached by Pastor W. E. Best in October 1972.