



CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

The observance of Christmas is attributed to Pope Telesphorus, who died A.D. 138. At first it was the most movable of the Roman Church festive days, often confounded with the Epiphany, and celebrated by the Eastern churches in the months of April and May.

In the 4th century, Pope Julius I ordered that an investigation be made concerning the day of Christ's Nativity. Such evidence as was found caused the theologians of the East and West to agree upon December 25 as a uniform date for the observance.

One of the factors influencing their decision was that most of the heathen nations regarded the winter solstice as the beginning of the renewed life and activity of the powers of nature. The Romans, Celts and Teutons from the oldest times celebrated the season with great feasts and merriment. The wise administrators of the Roman church realized the advantage of transforming this celebration into a Roman Church festival.

"CHRISTMAS"

"Christmas" is a word meaning "the mass of Christ." It is commonly spoken of as the day upon which the birth of Jesus is celebrated. However, there are few people who have taken the time, or desire, to make a study of this question in order that they might really know the origin and purpose of the day called Christmas. They take it for granted that it is the most notable day of the year, and continue to celebrate it in various ways—by religious formal worship, gluttonous eating, reveling, unbridled drinking, and more commonly by exchanging of useless, costly, unwarranted, or embarrassing gifts.

We are all aware of the fact that during Christmas season the spirit of rivalry and competition enters into the giving of gifts, and the poor often give more than they can afford, and thus leave honest debts unpaid, or go without necessities until they have caught up with their Christmas spending spree.

It must be admitted that the manner in which Christmas as a whole is observed is no honor unto Jesus Christ; but on the contrary, is a dishonor. The Lord truly cannot be honored by frivolity, debauchery, revel-

ling, drunkenness, much less by the prevalent practice of telling falsehoods unto the children about Santa Claus. God is never honored with a lie and we must reap from our children just what we have sown into their lives.

"In 1644 the English Puritans forbade any merriment or religious services by act of Parliament, on the ground that it (Christmas) was a heathen festival, and ordered it to be kept as a fast."

Hislop, the English clergyman, in his excellent treatise on Roman so-called holy days adopted from the Pagans, has this to say about Christmas:

"The Festivals of Rome are innumerable; but five of the most important may be singled out for elucidation—viz., Christmas-day, Lady-day, Easter, the Nativity of St. John, and the Feast of Assumption. Each and all of these can be proven to be Babylonian. And first, as to the festival in honour of the birth of Christ, or Christmas, how comes it that that festival was connected with the 25th of December? There is not a word in the Scriptures about the precise day of His birth, or the time of the year when He was born. What is recorded there, implies that at what time so ever His birth took place, it could not

have been on December 25th. At the time the angel announced His birth to the shepherds of Bethlehem, they were feeding their flocks by night in the open fields. Now, no doubt, the climate of Palestine is not so severe as the climate of this country; but even there, though the heat of the day may be considerable, the cold of the night, from December to February, is very piercing, and it was not the custom of the shepherds of Judea to watch their flocks in the open fields later than about the end of October. It is in the last degree incredible, then, that the birth of Christ could have taken place at the end of December. There is great unanimity among the commentators on this point. Besides Barnes, Doddridge, Lightfoot, Scalinger, and Josephus in his 'Jewish Antiquities,' who are all of the opinion that December 25th could not be the right time of our Lord's nativity, the celebrated Joseph Mede pronounces a very decisive opinion to this same effect. After a long and careful disquisition on the subject, among other arguments he adduces the following: 'At the birth of Christ every woman and child was to go to be taxed at the city whereto they belonged, whether some had journeys; but the middle of winter was not fitted for such a business, especially for

women with child, and children to travel in.' Therefore Christ could not have been born in the depth of winter. Again, at the time of Christ's birth, the shepherds lay abroad watching their flocks in the night time; but this was not likely to be in the middle of winter. And if any shall think that the winter wind was not so extreme in these parts, let him remember the words of Christ in the gospel. 'Pray that your flight be not in winter.' If the winter was so bad a time to flee in, it seems no fit time for shepherds to lie in the fields and women and children to travel. Indeed it is admitted by most learned and candid writers of all parties that the day of our Lord's birth cannot be determined, and that within Church Community no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of till the third century, and not till the fourth century was far advanced did it gain much observance. How then, did the Romish Church fix on December the 25th as Christmas-day? Why, thus? Long before the fourteenth century, and long before the Christmas era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen, at that precise time of the year, in honor of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven; and it may be fairly presumed that in order to conciliate the heathen, as well as to swell the

number of nominal adherents of Christianity, the same festival was adopted by the Roman Church, giving it only the name of Christ. This tendency on the part of Christians to meet Paganism half-way was very early developed..."

"Upright men strove to stem the tide, but in spite of all their efforts, the apostasy went on, till the Church, with the exception of a small remnant, was submerged under Pagan superstition. That Christmas is a Pagan festival is true beyond all doubt. The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is celebrated, prove its origin." -Hislop. The Two Babylons, pp. 91-93.

From the Bible records we compute that Jesus was born about the middle of October. The facts are given in the gospel by St. Luke, the beloved physician. We quote the records:

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia (or, Abijah): and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron and her name was Elizabeth." -Luke 1:5.

Zacharias, being a descendant of Abijah, would serve in the course of his forefather in the priesthood, which was in the eighth course, as we learn from I Chron. 24:7-19. There were

twenty-four courses of priests who served in the house of the Lord. Two courses served in each month. One course in the first half of the month, and the other course in the last half of the month. Zacharias being of the eighth course would, consequently, serve the last half of the fourth month.

Bible months begin with the "New Moons." See I Sam. 20:24,27. The first month of the year begins with the New Moon nearest spring Equinox, when days and nights are equal. Ex. 12:2; Lev. 23:5-11.

The first Bible month, Nisan, would therefore begin about the last half of March, and contain the first half of April, the second month April and May, the third May and June, the fourth June and July.

Zacharias, therefore, serving in his course, which was the eighth, would be at his duty the first half of the month we call July.

While Zacharias was in the temple and "executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course (that is the eighth)....there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord....The angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son...And it came to pass that as soon as his days were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived." -Luke 1:24.

Elizabeth, therefore, conceived sometime about the middle of July. Six months later would therefore be the middle of January, as one may readily count.

"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin....And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." -Luke 1:26-31.

As this announcement was made, unto Mary in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, which began about the middle of July, it would therefore be about the middle of January. Nine months later would bring us to the middle of October. This then would be the approximate time of the birth of Jesus, and not December 25th.

Should we therefore celebrate Christ's birthday in October? No! There is not one word in the Bible which says we should observe the birth of Christ. Nowhere in all the Scriptures do we find the word Christmas. God would not have us celebrate the birth of Christ, but rather the day of His death.

Inasmuch as we find no command in the scriptures to authorize us to observe Christmas, and as the day is not mentioned in the Bible, from whence did the day come and how came it to be observed as the birthday of Christ?

If an unabridged Webster, or Standard Dictionary, or an unabridged encyclopedia, or a good book on mythology, is consulted, it will be quickly learned that the 25th of December was celebrated by pagans centuries before the birth of Christ, and today is observed by practically every heathen religion under heaven.

Christmas, like all other heathen feast days still retained in the churches of our day, came from Babylon. After the flood of Noah's day, there lived a very wicked man named Nimrod, a great-grandson of Noah, and the founder of ancient Babylon. This man was so evil that it is said he married his own mother, who bare a child to him. His mother's name was Semiramis. After Nimrod's death, Satan used his wicked mother to propagate the evil doctrine of the survival of Nimrod as a spirit being. Semiramis claimed that a full grown evergreen tree sprang overnight from a dead tree stump, which symbolized the springing forth unto new life of

dead Nimrod. She also claimed that on each anniversary of his death, Nimrod would visit the evergreen tree and leave gifts thereon. This then is the origin of the Christmas tree. The 25th of December is supposed to be really the birthday of Nimrod. Santa Claus is but another form of the name St. Nicholas, and reliable reference books explain that Old Nick is a term for the devil.

The Chaldean mysteries founded by Semiramis have come down to us through the pagan religions, into the Catholic church, and from thence many accept them without question, and observe them according to the custom of the day.

We shall now give certain references gleaned from reliable encyclopedias, which confirm our conclusions just given. First, we quote from The New Standard Encyclopedia's article, Christmas:

"Among the Romans certain practices were adopted from another pagan feast in honor of the birth of the Sun, or Sol."

"The prejudice against Christmas observance, as too strongly tinged with the heathen traditions, was so strong in Scotland that, until recently, children in Presbyterian families had no Christmas. Even yet it is not a popular holiday in Scotland."

"The custom of making presents at Christmas time is associated with the gifts presented to Christ by the wise men of the East: but, in reality, at least so far as English speaking people are concerned, it is derived from an old heathen usage."

"Many of the usages of the Germans and Romans were adopted from heathenism to Christianity."

From The Encyclopedia Britannica, Edition 1910, Article Christmas, we glean the following:

"Before the 5th century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come in the calendar, whether on the 6th of January, the 25th of March, or the 25th of December."

"In Britain, the 25th of December was a festival long before the conversion to Christianity."

"The 25th of December, the day that was observed at Rome as the day when the victorious god reappeared on the earth, was held at the *Natalis invicti solis*, 'the birthday of the unconquered Sun.' Now the yule log is the dead stock of Nimrod, deified as, the sun-god, but cut down by his enemies; the Christmas-tree is Nimrod redivivus-the slain god comes to life again." -Hislop, pp. 98.

"In many countries the boar was sacrificed to the god (Nimrod) for the

injury a boar was fabled to have done him."

"On Christmas-day the Continental Saxons offered a boar in sacrifice to the Sun."...."In Rome a similar observance had evidently existed; for a boar formed the great article of the feast of Satan."...."Hence the boar's head is still a standing dish in England at the Christmas dinner, when the reason of it is long since forgotten." - Idem, pp. 99-101.

"Even where the sun was the favorite object of worship, as in Babylon itself and elsewhere, at this festival he was worshipped not merely as the orb of day, but as god incarnate. It was an essential principle of the Babylonian system, that the Sun or Baal was the one and only god. When, therefore, Tammuz was worshipped as god incarnate, that implied also that he was an incarnation of the Sun. In the Hindu mythology, which is admitted to be essentially Babylonian, this comes out very distinctly. There, Surya, or the Sun, is represented as being incarnate, and born for the purpose of subduing the enemies of the gods, who, without such a birth, could not have been subdued." -Idem, p.96.

"The wassailing bowl of Christmas had its precise counterpart in the 'Drunken festival' of Babylon; and

many of the other observances still kept up among ourselves at Christmas came from the very same quarter. The candles, in some parts of England, lighted on Christmas-eve, and used so long as the festive season lasts, were equally lighted by the Pagans on the eve of the festival of the Babylonian god, to do honour to him: for it was one of the distinguishing peculiarities of his worship to have lighted wax candles on his altars. The Christmas tree, now so common to people, was equally common in Pagan Rome and pagan Egypt. In Egypt that tree was the palm-tree; in Rome it was the fir; the palm-tree denoting the Pagan Messiah, was Baal-Tamar, the fir referring to him as Baal-Berith. The mother of Adonis, the Sun-God and great mediatorial divinity, was mystically said to have been changed into a tree, and when in that state to have brought forth her divine son. If the mother was a tree, the son must have been recognized as the 'Man the branch.' And this accounts entirely for the putting of the Yule Log into the fire on Christmas-eve, and the appearance of the Christmas-tree the next morning." -Idem, p.97.

"There can be no doubt, then, that the Pagan festival at the winter solstice-in other words, Christmas-was

held in honour of the birth of the Babylonian Messiah." -Idem, p. 102.

Thus we learn from these encyclopedias and reliable writers the fact that the 25th of December, is not a Christian holy day, but, on the contrary, a pagan feast day adopted and retained by the churches to our present day. Those who follow the custom of observing Christmas, follow not the Bible, but pagan ceremonies. Of accepting and observing the manners of the heathen, the prophet of the Lord is very explicit, as he denounces the practice in words which cannot be misunderstood. We quote about the well loved Christmas tree:

"Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen....for the custom of the people is vain: (useless, foolish) 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 gold; (or, as in our day with artificial silver and gold, or tinsel) they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not." -Jer. 10:2.

The propagation of Christmas with all its heathen practices, is pagan and harmful. Those who accept and observe the ancient pagan holiday should heed the admonition of the Lord Jesus Himself, who said:

"In vain do they worship me,

teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."

We trust that each truth-seeker will seek out of the Bible, not only the heathen practice of Christmas, but also other pagan rites and ceremonies and days, such as sprinkling, Easter, Sunday, etc., which have crept into the churches of today. Verify our references from the reliable books we have given, or others you may have at hand. Be among those who prove all things, and hold fast to those which are good.

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