

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White
 Cradle Roll 2: NEED VOLUNTEER!
 6:30 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Kristi Hooper
 Cradle Roll 2: NEED VOLUNTEER!
 Wed. Evening Service ---- Cradle Roll 1: Bertha Segebartt
 Cradle Roll 2: NEED VOLUNTEER!

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of November 13, 2016

Sunday School ----- 24
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 26
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 18
 Wed. Eve., 11/16/16 Service ----- 19

Week of November 20, 2016

Sunday School ----- 22
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 31
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 30



AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of November 13, 2016

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,298.00
 Total Received for Week of 11/13/16: \$ 1,298.00

Week of November 20, 2016

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,068.42
 Total Received for Week of 11/20/16: \$ 1,068.42

Average amount of UNDESIGNATED Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00

LISTEN TO -



ABIDINGRADIO.COM

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. *Admit that you are a sinner.*
2. *Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.*
3. *Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.*
4. *You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).*
5. *By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.*

Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!



As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today - OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
 Lois Mae Floyd ----- Pianist/ Organist
 ----- Greeter
 Shayne Hooper, Brian Crawford, Charity Crawford, LeAnna White -- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, ----- Outreach
 Bertha Segebartt ----- Custodian
 Flowers ----- Shirley White, Charity Crawford

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY
REMINDER

Volume XIX

November 27, 2016

Number 41



*Dr. John R. Rice
 1895 - 1980*

Should a Christian Observe Christmas?

by Dr. John R. Rice

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (Rom. 14:5-6).

I love the Christmas season. I find great joy in preaching on the Christmas themes of the angels, the shepherds, the manger, the virgin birth, and the wise men. I get a great thrill when I hear Christmas carols. I love the gathering together of loved ones, the giving of gifts. And I rejoice to be remembered by those I love.

Perhaps my own feeling is colored by the fact that for many years I have been away from home most of the year, but at the Christmas season I can be with my family.

How sad that many do not enjoy Christmas! Even some devoted Christians feel sour and are cantankerous and full of objections about the season. To you I would say in the words of Scripture - if you regard the day, regard it unto the Lord. And if you do not regard the day, then be sure you act Christian about it. Let nobody judge or criticize others for an honest, worshipful, spiritual and loving attitude about Christmas.

SOME OBJECTIONS ABOUT CHRISTMAS ANSWERED -

1. "December 25 Is Not Really Christ's Birthday"

The Bible does not tell us exactly when Christ was born, and there are no other trustworthy sources from which we can learn the time. Therefore, some think it wrong to observe Christmas.

I know a little girl who was born on February 29 - leap year. Now, is it wrong for her to observe her birthday on February 28 when there is no leap year? In other words, is it wrong for her or others to observe her birthday anytime except leap year? The precise date - February 29 - is not the important factor, but that another year has gone by and the little girl has grown a year older; and that fact should be recognized by loved ones.

Would you say it is wrong to observe Thanksgiving on a certain Thursday in November since not all our blessings have come on that day? Or would it be wrong to set a more convenient day if all agreed on a national day of thanksgiving? Whatever the day, it is still right to have a time when we publicly thank God and as a nation officially express our gratitude to the Father of Mercies for all His bounty, for all His goodness and for all His blessings. The important thing is not the day of the calendar on which we do it, but the fact that we give praise to the One who loadeth us with benefits.

Although many scholars do not believe that Jesus was born on December 25, it could still be the date on which the angels announced His birth. We love the dear Lord Jesus. We want everyone to remember His birth. We want to teach our children about the Babe in the manger, about the wise men from the East who came to worship Him, about the angel's announcement to Mary, about the angel chorus that told the shepherds of His birth. And December 25 is as good a day for that as any other day. It is not wrong

(continued inside)

to remember the birth of Christ on a day which is as close as we can come to His birthday.

2. “Christmas Means Only ‘Christ’s Mass’ - a Catholic Holiday”

We are told that the name of Christmas comes from “Christ’s Mass,” that it was instituted by Catholics and therefore good Protestants ought not to observe it.

That objection seems a little foolish. Nearly all the names we have, we inherited from the heathen. Many cities, towns, counties and rivers in America have Indian names. But when we see the Susquehanna River or read of Shawnee, Oklahoma or Comanche, Texas, we are not thinking about the Indians. And the names have no connotation of heathendom. Names mean what they mean, no matter what the origin.

Sometimes Seventh-day Adventists make much of the fact that the name of our day “Sunday” comes from the worship of the sun. I reply that their “Saturday” is named from the god Saturn. But no one has reference to the sun when he uses the word “Sunday” or when he worships on Sunday; and no one has any reference to the god Saturn when he works or serves on Saturday.

So, it seems foolish to make an artificial distinction when none exists in the minds of people who observe Christmas.

January was named for the Roman god Janus. Are Christians, therefore, wrong to call the month by that name? To every sensible person, Christmas means simply Christmas, not some kind of mass. Catholics may observe it with a mass, but Protestants do not. (*Note from our Pastor: Baptists, who are not Protestants, don’t either.*)

It will be good to keep these things in mind.

3. “Christmas Was a Former Heathen Holiday”

It is true that before the birth of Christ, December 25 was a pagan holiday. The Encyclopedia Britannica says this date was a “Mithraic feast day” to celebrate the unconquered Son of Philocalus.

Evidently many new converts were tempted to keep the pagan feast celebrated on December 25. Possibly it was to counteract this pagan influence that Christian leaders decided to observe this day as “Christmas”, which means “Christ-sent,” hoping this would help new converts resist the temptation of partaking in the pagan feast. (Following the same reasoning, many churches have a special banquet and program for high school seniors on the night of the annual senior prom.)

At any rate, the celebration of Christmas is definitely not a continuation of a pagan custom. It is a unique Christian holiday to counteract the influence of a pagan holiday. Pagans did something on every day, and we cannot do away with all the days they used, whether for worship or for ceremonies about sowing or reaping or about the solstices or the new moons. We have the same sun heathens worshiped, and we benefit from its rising and setting, but we do not have the heathen ceremonies about that.

In 1936, I held a blessed revival campaign in the Binghamton Theatre in Binghamton, New York, sponsored by eight churches. The fact that in this theatre people had seen lewd movies or burlesque shows or legitimate theatre productions did not change the fact that now the building was used for the glory of God and souls were saved.

I myself am under new management too. Once the Devil lived within; now Jesus Christ does. So if heathens used December 25 for idolatry, why should Christians not use it now to honor Jesus Christ and His birth? Whatever day we set aside to honor Christ, it will be a day somebody else has used for bad purposes.

But now all the days belong to Christ and none to heathen gods. No Christian should be grieved if we think about the birth of Christ on December 25. Is that a worse sin than working to make money on that day? Why should anybody object if we sing Christmas carols, have a happy celebration with a feast and go over the Bible story of His birth and teach it to our children on Christmas Day? We would not honor God more by having less Scripture, less singing, less of the spirit of giving and less manifestation of love for others. All the days belong to Christ, and December 25 should be used to honor Him too.

4. “Christmas Trees and Decorations Are an Abomination”

Many people believe Jeremiah 10:1-4 is talking about Christmas trees and that therefore it is a sin to put one up. Notice verses 3 and 4:

“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.”

This is a description of an idol made of wood and covered with silver and gold. Notice that God tells Israel not to be afraid of these idols because **“they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good”** (vs. 5).

As a matter of fact, the Christmas tree has a distinctive Christian origin. In the eighth century an English missionary named Boniface went to Germany to preach Christ. The Germans, at that time, were heathen and worshiped idols. One of their objects of worship was the oak tree. But Boniface told them God was more like the evergreen tree which did not lose its leaves and appear to be dead in the winter.

So gradually, as people were converted to Christ, the evergreen tree became a symbol of the eternal God in whom they had learned to trust. Eventually the evergreen tree was used for decoration at the Christmas feast. Because God had shown His love to us through the gift of His Son, it became customary for Christians to give gifts to those whom they loved at Christmastime.

The decorations on a Christmas tree could not possibly be

K PUTIN TELLS THE UNITED STATES TO BE MORE LIKE ISRAEL IN FIGHTING TERRORISM - Russian President Vladimir Putin has advised the United States to look to Israel as an example for fighting terrorism. Speaking at the Valdai International Discussion Club, Putin criticized America’s weak approach to combatting ISIS and other terror groups in the Middle East, suggesting that this has enabled the increase in terrorism (“Russia Tells US to Be More like Israel,” Israel Today, Nov. 6, 2016). Putin said, **“Israel never steps back, but always fights to the end, and this is how it survives. There is no alternative. We need to fight. If we keep retreating, we will always lose.”** That’s good advice from an unlikely source. Israel is definitely the world leader in fighting Islamic terrorism.

K KNOWLEDGE SHALL INCREASE - About 2,500 years ago, during the Persian Empire, an angel told the prophet Daniel, **“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”** (Daniel 12:4). We are seeing a dramatic fulfillment of this in our day. Recent inventions include the following: Scientists have invented a way to use tiny mirrors to capture detailed 3D images of cell structures.

“The new technology, dubbed MEANS (mirror-enhanced, axial-narrowing, super-resolution) microscopy, works by capturing layers of the cell at different focal points, giving the researchers the ability to see the changes in layers of the cell. The process works by growing cells on small, custom-made mirrors. A glass cover slide is placed on top of the cells, and then the mirror can be added in place of a usual slide in a confocal or wide-field microscope” (Science Alert, July 1, 2016). Dutch scientists at the Delft University of Technology have found a way to read and write information at the atomic level, which would potentially allow the entire contents of the U.S. Library of Congress to be stored in a 0.1 millimeter cube (“World smallest hard drive,” Newsmax.com, July 20, 2016). Currently the memory can operate only at liquid nitrogen temperature, so the marketing of the technology is not yet feasible. Israeli scientists use nanobots and thoughts to control when drugs are administered (Times of Israel, Aug. 27, 2016). **“Researchers at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya and Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan have built the nanobots to which medication is attached and then are injected into the body. The nanobots have a ‘gate’ that opens or closes--thereby controlling drug release--depending on brain activity.”**

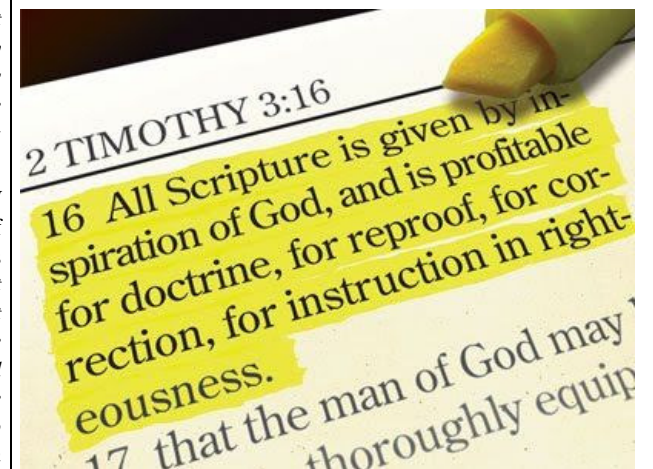
K BAPTIST BIG NUMBERS-ISM AND PRAGMATISM IN 1877 - The pragmatism that has characterized the vast majority of larger Baptist churches since the 1960s was already showing its ugly head in the 19th century. **“While it is true that a Baptist church is, in theory, a body of regenerated, baptized believers, it can hardly be doubted that, in our wild scramble for numbers, we of this generation--preachers and people--are becoming less and less disposed to insist upon what our fathers used to call the marks of a genuine ‘grace experience’ on the part of those who offer themselves as candidates for baptism and church**

membership. ... If a long church-roll were any evidence of efficiency, or if large numbers were indication of large graces, it would be easy to understand this all prevailing anxiety for numbers. But when it is perfectly clear to the dullest apprehension among us, that such is not the case, it must be confessed that this wild desire for counting up our hosts is too highly suggestive of David’s sad sin in numbering Israel. Who, where, and of what value are the multitudinous hosts of Baptists that we put into the Associations and Conventions in the bounds of the Southern Baptist Convention?” (J.C. Hiden, “Looseness of Discipline,” Working Christian, Mar. 22, 1877).

K WARNING ABOUT THE CLARK FAMILY - We received the following timely warning from a reader: “A growing trend I’ve noticed is a group out of New Jersey. I heard them several years ago when the doctrinally unsound but ‘cute’ ‘He Knows My Name’ was sung by one of their younger boys. The pop/sliding style was immediately popular with the young people (I’m only 36), and the polished ‘clean’ look of their kids became a seller for Independent Fundamental Baptists who didn’t have a guard up, or even if they did, they saw a clean-looking family that seemed to be fundamentalists, so they must be OK, right?”

The flood gates were quietly and unwittingly opened, so now it would be hard for these pastors to close that gate. Their teens and youth already have a taste and think the Clark Family is OK. Their first few CDs included patriotic songs, old-time songs popular with IFBs, and a few ‘edgy’ songs. They promoted polished vocals so it was difficult for IFBs to warn their youngsters against it. (Actually, it shouldn’t have been difficult, but few have the courage or discernment anymore.) Fast forward to their latest CD. The kids have gotten older, and what I can only assume is their unrestrained lust for CCM, which was somewhat hidden in earlier CDs, has become full blown. ‘Blessed’ is the title of their new CD and includes tracks by Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin, and the Newsboys, all-out CCM rockers.

Bro. Cloud, please warn IFBs about the danger of allowing Charlie Clark and his family to influence their church music.”



Christ, and certainly we should give ourselves and all we have to Him. But giving gifts to others is also a proper way to honor the Lord, according to Bible example and teaching.

At the feast of Purim, a feast to the Lord celebrating the great deliverance God gave the Jews in answer to the prayers of Mordecai and Esther and other devout Jews when wicked Haman planned to exterminate them, Jews were taught **“that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor” (Esther 9:22).**

Again, when the Jewish remnant who returned from the captivity began to mourn on a holy day as they met to hear the reading of the Law, they were instructed, **“Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord” (Neh. 8:10).** So they returned home for feasting and sending gifts.

So giving gifts, if it be done in the right spirit and motive, honors God on special days set apart for Him.

Remember that God does not need our material things except as He wants them for other people. So under some circumstances giving to others may be as pleasing to Him as giving to pastors and missionaries. We should take care to give in Jesus’ name, remembering specially the poor at Christmas. But the right kind of giving to others is certainly fitting on Christmas.

When the rich young ruler wanted to be perfect, he was instructed to give his property to the poor, not to Jesus (Matt. 19:21); when Zacchaeus was converted, he was led to say. **“The half of my goods I give to the poor” (Luke 19:8).** That pleased Jesus very much.

Jesus said that He would reward everyone who gave a cup of cold water in His name. He also said, **“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40).**

So, giving to others must please Christ very much, if it is done in loving thought toward Him and in His name. Certainly we should give to missions, to the poor and also to loved ones and relatives at Christmas. But be sure your motives are right.

7. **“Should Christians Tell Their Children There Is a Santa Claus?”**

Certainly not! Lying and deceit are wicked! Lying on Christmas is as great a sin as lying on any other day. It is shameful that Sunday schools often choose to teach a lying fable at Christmastime instead of teaching the marvelous true Christmas stories about the Baby in the manger, the shepherds in the field, the angel’s announcement of a Saviour born, the heavenly chorus and the wise men from the East. The story of the virgin-born Saviour is sweeter than any lie or fable invented by heathen people and spread by non-Christians.

I remember the sad, sad day when I, five years old, found that my father and mother and kin people had deceived me about Santa Claus - or Saint Nicholas. I was ashamed. I had been

victimized. Those I trusted more than anybody else on earth, devout Christians, had lied. I wondered if other things they said were not true either. So Christmas was something of a mockery to me for years until I began to learn the sweetness of a Christmas centered about the birth of Christ.

Lying is wicked, is plainly forbidden in the Bible and is certain to have bad results. And the lie about Santa Claus is especially hurtful in that it crowds out interest in Christ Himself. The Lord Jesus, in many so-called Christian homes, is crowded out by the old, fabled gentleman who is always seen on whiskey ads at this season of the year.

Parents should always tell the truth. My own children were happier about Christmas than those children who have known Christmas as the celebration of a lie.

8. **“What About The Abbreviation, ‘Xmas’?”**

Many people distribute leaflets urging us to “keep Christ in Christmas.” In these tracts they sometimes attack the use of “Xmas” as an abbreviation of Christmas. X, they say, is a symbol for an unknown quantity, and this is a devious device of the Devil to remove the name of Christ from Christmas.

While I personally feel it best not to use the abbreviated word “Xmas,” it was not a deliberate attempt - at least at first - to “take Christ out of Christmas.” Actually, in the Greek language a large letter similar to an X stood for the letters CH, and thus for Christ. Originally, then, Xmas was Christmas.

Be that as it may, I am strongly in favor of putting “Christ back in Christmas,” and I never use the abbreviated “Xmas.” ÷

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

K RABBIS ASK PUTIN AND TRUMP TO HELP BUILD THE THIRD TEMPLE - A group of leading rabbis in Israel have sent a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President-elect Donald Trump urging them to work together to rebuild the Third Temple in Jerusalem (“Rabbis Urge Trump, Putin,” Israel Today, Nov. 15, 2016).

Rabbi Hillel Weiss, a spokesman for the Sanhedrin, said Israel “is poised to rebuild the Temple.” He likened this present time to that of 2,500 years ago when Cyrus of Persia helped build the Second Temple.

In truth, the Third Temple will be built during the early reign of the Antichrist. Revelation 11 describes the measuring of the Temple when the Two Witnesses preach in Jerusalem to proclaim Christ’s soon-coming kingdom. This is the first half of Daniel’s 70th Week (Dan. 9:24-27). The Antichrist will come on the scene with his unprecedented peace program and will make it possible for the Temple to be built. It will be occupied by the Antichrist half way through Daniel’s 70th Week when he proclaims himself as God. Christ said the Antichrist will stand in the holy place, referring to the rebuilt Temple (Matthew 24:15). Paul prophesied that the Antichrist will sit “in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (II Thessalonians 2:4).

called heathen nor have any idolatrous significance. Who thinks that heathens worshiped their gods with paper chains? that popcorn on a string is a form of idolatry? that electric lights on it for the joy of little children to brighten the home are sinful?

I love Christmas and its decorations, which are but an expression of joy in my heart as I think how God became man, how the Creator became a Babe, how **“though he was rich, yet for [our] sakes he became poor, that [we] through his poverty might be rich” (II Cor. 8:9).**

It is sad that the world as a whole does leave Christ out of Christmas. But for those of us who love the Lord, it can be a blessed time of fun and feasting and fellowship.

5. **“There Is Too Much Revelry During the Christmas Holidays”**

It is true that many do not honor Jesus Christ at Christmas. Some drink more liquor during Christmastime than at any other time. That is a sin. Many business people think of Christmas only as a time to make money. In this they are wrong. Sometimes even Christians lie about Santa Claus and deceive little children with a heathen legend when they could tell about the dear Lord Jesus. That is wicked. Deceit is the poorest possible way to honor the birth of our Lord.

I do not believe in having a Santa Claus at Sunday school or in the church service. Certainly to deceive little ones with a lie is a sin. No Christian ought to condone it. The truth is so much better than a lie. We should tell them how the dear Lord came into the world to save sinners.

Yes, people often dishonor God at Christmas. I am sorry they do. I hope you will not grieve God by such a sin.

But we should not turn Christmas over to Satan and wicked people because some misuse the Christmas season.

Should we abandon Sunday because it is often misused?

On the Lord’s Day there is more drinking, more revelry, than on any other day of the week. Should Christians, therefore, count the Lord’s Day the Devil’s day and give it up? Certainly not.

A great many teach that baptism is essential to salvation. They give more honor to the water than to the blood. That is wrong. But should we, therefore, disobey Jesus Christ about baptism because some others have overstressed baptism and made it a false doctrine?

The second coming has been a greatly abused and perverted doctrine with many. False cults have greatly perverted the doctrine of Christ’s coming. People set dates. They speculate on signs. Should the rest of us Bible Christians, then, ignore the clear Bible doctrine of Christ’s imminent return because the doctrine has been abused? Certainly not.

Nor should we ignore the Bible doctrine of the fullness of the Spirit just because many associate it with talking in tongues and with sinless perfection.

Just so - we would be very foolish to turn Christmas over to Satan and worldlings. If the world has a Christmas of revelry, let us make it a day of love and a time of honoring Christ. Let us make much of the Christmas story, of Christmas carols and Christmas love and fellowship.

Do other people make giving gifts a mere form? Well, it does not need to be so for Christians. We can give gifts that really express our love. We can make gifts the response of an honest heart. We can send greetings with Scripture verses and with holy admonitions.

Is it wrong to have a day of rejoicing? Is it wrong to feast and to send portions to others? No indeed.

When, under Nehemiah, the remnant of Israel had gone back to the Land of Promise from the captivity in Babylon and the Law was read and explained, the people wept. It was not a time for weeping, but a time for rejoicing. The wall of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, the gates had been hung, the city had been restored as the city of God, and the worship had begun.

Let us listen to the plain commands of the Lord in such a case, as given in Nehemiah 8:9,10:

“And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

And we are glad to learn in verse 12:

“And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.”

If Israelites would honor God by having a day of joy and feasting and of sending portions to others because the wall was rebuilt, the gates were set up, and the worship was established, then we today do well to have a day to rejoice over the birth of the Saviour and to send portions to one another and to make merry with spiritual joy.

I feel nearer to God at Christmas than at any other time. I seem to love the Word of God more at Christmas, when we read and quote it again and again. I like the time as a good excuse to get into people’s hearts and win them to Christ. And many have been saved because I brought a Christmas message or urged sinners to accept God’s great Christmas Gift.

Let us have, then, a happy Christmas and make Christ supreme on this day which we remember in honor of His birth!

6. **“Is It Proper to Give Gifts to Others on Christ’s Birthday?”**

Certainly Christ should be first. But then He wants and deserves first place on every other day also! Giving should honor