



Christmas in Adventism

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Christmas is wholly pagan in its origin, and it has no sacredness whatsoever. It was not till some hundreds of years after Christ's birth that people thought of observing a day in memory of it, and it was some time later before they agreed as to what day they should take. To keep it as a sacred day, therefore, is as much a sin as to disregard a day which is sacred. To presume to sanctify a day which the Lord has not sanctified shows as much contempt for His authority as to treat as common a day that He has sanctified. Seventh-day Adventists who celebrate Christmas may as well worship on Sunday, as both rest on the authority of Catholicism.

The fact that nothing is said in the Bible about celebrating the day of Christ's birth, and that not the slightest hint as to when it occurred is given, is ample evidence that God does not wish to have any day devoted to it. To celebrate a day which it is well known cannot be the day of Christ's birth, is as absurd as it would be for me to go to a shop and buy a photograph of a man whom I never saw, and carry it about most carefully, and proudly exhibit it to people, as the picture of my father. When people have done all that God has commanded, they will have no time nor inclination to devote their energies to that which He has not

commanded. As many Seventh-day Adventists lightly regard God and His Sabbath, it is no wonder they celebrate Christmas.

The practice of setting apart a day for the commemoration of Christ's birth indicates an utter failure to understand the nature of that birth. It is a thing for and of eternity. Christ's "goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:3). He is the One who was, and is, and is to come; "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). God gave His only begotten Son from the beginning, even before the world was made; He is the Word that was with God in the beginning, and was God, and He was "made flesh" when Adam was created. His appearance as a babe in Bethlehem was to make so plain that none could fail to see it, that He does not despise us in our low state, but continues to dwell even in fallen, sinful flesh, in order that we may be born again, and become as new and as innocent as Adam was when God created him.

Every day and every hour, yes, every minute in our lives, should be a celebration of the birth of Christ; not the mere keeping of it in memory, but the actual repetition of it in us. Christ is to be formed in us, and the life of Christ manifest in our mortal flesh is to be "renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16). He is "the Son of man" (Luke 9:22), and therefore every soul of man may say continually, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given" (Isaiah 9:6); and as He who is our peace abides with us, so that the peace of God rules in our hearts, we may

continually join in the chorus of the heavenly host, "Peace on earth, good will to men" (Luke 2:14).

Christmas and the worship of the sun-god

Christmas is sun-worship. We read the following, in the book by Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons* (Filiquarian Publishing LLC 2007), Chapter III Festivals, Section I Christmas and Lady-day:

"Long before the fourth century, and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen, at that precise time of the year, in honour of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven; and it may fairly be presumed that, in order to conciliate the heathen, and to swell the number of the nominal adherents of Christianity, the same festival was adopted by the Roman Church, giving it only the name of Christ."

"Upright men strive to stem the tide, but in spite of all their efforts, the apostacy went on, till the Church, with the exception of a small remnant, was submerged under Pagan superstition. That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival, is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, 'about the time of the winter solstice'."

"Far and wide, in the realms of Paganism, was this birth-day observed. This festival has been commonly believed to have

had only an astronomical character, referring simply to the completion of the sun's yearly course, and the commencement of a new cycle. But there is indubitably evidence that the festival in question had a much higher reference than this – that it commemorated not merely the figurative birth-day of the sun in the renewal of its course, but the birth-day of the grand Deliverer. Among the Sabeans of Arabia, who regarded the moon, and not the sun, as the visible symbol of the favourite object of their idolatry, the same period was observed as the birth festival.”

“The Christmas tree, now so common among us, 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, as 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 recognised as the ‘Man the branch.’ And this entirely accounts for the putting of the Yule Log into the fire on Christmas-eve, and the appearance of the Christmas-tree the next morning. As Zero-Ashta, ‘The seed of the woman,’ which name also signified Ignigena, or ‘born of the fire,’ he has to enter the fire on ‘Mother-night,’ that he may be born the next day out of it, as the ‘Branch of god,’ or the Tree that brings all divine gifts to men. But why, it may be asked, does he enter the fire under the symbol of a

Log? To understand this, it must be remembered that the divine child born at the winter solstice was born as a new incarnation of the great god (after that god had been cut in pieces), on purpose to revenge his death upon his murderers.”

“Now the great god, cut off in the midst of his power and glory, was symbolised as a huge tree, stripped of all its branches, and cut down almost to the ground. But the great serpent, the symbol of the life restoring Aesculapius, twists itself around the dead stock, and lo, at its side up sprouts a young tree – a tree of an entirely different kind, that is destined never to be cut down by hostile power – even the palm-tree, the well-known symbol of victory. The Christmas-tree, as has been stated, was generally at Rome a different tree, even the fir; but the very same idea as was implied in the palm-tree was implied in the Christmas-fir; for that covertly symbolised the new-born God as Baal-berith, ‘Lord of the Covenant,’ and thus shadowed forth the perpetuity and everlasting nature of his power, not that after having fallen before his enemies, he had risen triumphant over them all.”

“Therefore, the 25th of December, the day that was observed at Rome as the day when the victorious god reappeared on earth, was held at the *Natalis invicti solis*, ‘The birth-day 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 come to life again. In the light reflected by the above

statement on customs that still linger among us, the origin of which has been lost in the midst of hoar antiquity, let the reader look at the singular practice still kept up in the South on Christmas-eve, of kissing under the mistletoe bough. That mistletoe bough in the Druidic superstition, which, as we have seen, was derived from Babylon, was a representation of the Messiah, 'The man the branch.' The mistletoe was regarded as a divine branch – a branch that came from heaven, and grew upon a tree that sprung out of the earth.”

Christmas among Seventh-day Adventists

There are conflicting views in the Seventh-day Adventist Church about whether we should and to what extent, engage in Christmas. The conflict often stems from the compilation of Ellen White writings in chapter seventy-seven of the *Adventist Home*. Ellen White is often misunderstood as giving license to celebrate Christmas. Moreover, even if we were to suppose that Ellen White endorsed Christmas celebration, and that Ellen White is not misunderstood, unless her writings agree with the Bible, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20), Paul would say to us “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).

Ellen White no more endorsed Christmas in the seventy-seventh chapter of the *Adventist Home* than Moses endorsed

divorce in twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. Some Adventists misunderstand Ellen White as actually allowing them to “celebrate” Christmas, as some Jews misunderstood Moses as actually allowing them to “divorce” their wives. It was because of the “difficult” Adventist parents who have failed to train their Children to have nothing to do with the pagan Christmas would find in ignoring Christmas that Ellen White permitted such failing Adventist parents to turn Christmas into an occasion of witnessing to their untrained children. In comparison, it was because of the “hardness” of the hearts of Jew husbands that Moses permitted hard heartened Jews to divorce their wives. Christ would say to Adventists as He did to the Jews (Matthew 19:7-8), because you found it “difficult” or because of your “hardness” that you were permitted, “but from the beginning it was not so.”

Christmas and a difficult matter for Adventists

It is asserted here that whatever Ellen White says about Christmas, to conclude that she endorses the celebration of Christmas, is to misunderstand her writings. The correct understanding is that Christmas is for those who find it a difficult matter to pass over this period. Even to them, Christmas should not be for amusement, but to painstakingly save souls from idolatry. In the twenty-seventh chapter of the *Adventist Home*, Ellen White starts with a message that there is no support for Christmas in the Bible. Ellen White says:

“The twenty-fifth of December is supposed to be the day of the birth of Jesus Christ, and its observance has become customary and popular. But yet there is no certainty that we are keeping the veritable day of our Saviour’s birth. History gives us no certain assurance of this. The Bible does not give us the precise time. Had the Lord deemed this knowledge essential to our salvation, He would have spoken through His prophets and apostles, that we might know all about the matter. But the silence of the Scriptures upon this point evidences to us that it is hidden from us for the wisest purposes” (*Adventist Home*, 477).

Ellen White then goes on to explain that the concealment of the birth of Jesus was to prevent idolatry. In other words, if the date of Jesus’ birth had been revealed, men would worship the day instead of Christ, turning such Christ’s date of birth into idolatry. Ellen White compares concealment of Christ’s date of birth with concealment of Moses’ tomb. Ellen White says:

“In His wisdom the Lord concealed the place where He buried Moses. God buried him, and God resurrected him and took him to heaven. This secrecy was to prevent idolatry. He against whom they rebelled while he was in active service, whom they provoked almost beyond human endurance, was almost worshiped as God after his separation from them by death. For the very same purpose He has concealed the precise day of Christ’s birth, that the day should not receive the honour that should be given to Christ as the Redeemer of the world – one to be received, to be trusted, to be relied on as He who

could save to the uttermost all who come unto Him” (*Adventist Home*, 477).

The seemingly support for Christmas by Ellen White in the *Adventist Home* ought to be read in the context of her opening remarks above. It is clear that Ellen White associates Christmas with “idolatry.” Having clearly associated Christmas with idolatry, Ellen White, inspired by the same Holy Spirit who inspired Moses, recognised that some Adventists would find it “a difficult matter to pass over” or to ignore Christmas, as Moses recognised that some Jews with “hardness” of hearts would find it hard to live with their wives. Ellen White says:

“As the twenty-fifth of December is observed to commemorate the birth of Christ, as the children have been instructed by precept and example that this was indeed a day of gladness and rejoicing, you will find it a difficult matter to pass over this period without giving it some attention” (*Adventist Home*, 478).

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, we find the same approach taken by Moses when, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he gave permission to the Jews to give a certificate of divorce to their wives if they no longer desired to live with their wives. Much as it was against the will of God for husbands to divorce their wives, seeing the “hardness” of their hearts, Moses was inspired to allow divorce. Knowing that some Adventist parents having carnal disposition to act worldly in that they would “find it a difficult matter” not give gifts to their children who

have been worldly “instructed by precept and example” to rejoice and merry in the pagan Christmas idolatry, Ellen White instructed that their “desire to make gifts may be turned into pure and holy channels and made to result in good to our fellow men by supplying the treasury in the great, grand work for which Christ came into our world” (*Adventist Home*, 478). For gifts to give to children, Ellen White recommended these should be spiritual, such as “books and publications upon present truth” (*Adventist Home*, 479).

If it was not for the difficulty of ignoring the day, given that people have been brought up to accept Christmas, Ellen White would not have had to explain how to engage with Christmas. When the people cannot be separated with pagan traditions of Christmas, and they demand to have a tree to hang on gifts, the answer is in strong terms a search for their hearts. Ellen White answered that, “there is no particular sin in selecting a fragrant evergreen and placing it in our churches, but the sin lies in the motive which prompts to action and the use which is made of the gifts placed upon the tree” (*Adventist Home*, 482). What motive leads Adventists today to show a strong desire for a Christmas tree to hang on gifts? “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). Moses struggled with the hardness of the hearts of ancient Jews bent on divorce, and had to allow them to issue their wives certificates of divorce. Jesus later clarified that it was

because of the hardness of their hearts that Moses resorted to this approach (Matthew 19:7-8).

Sadly, many Jews, blinded by their hardness of heart, felt at ease divorcing their wives and pointed at the Law of Moses. Likewise, many Seventh-day Adventists, blinded by their worldly desires, feel at ease celebrating Christmas and point at the writings of Ellen White. If you tell such Adventists that Christmas is pagan and should not be celebrated, they will ask: 'why then did Ellen White permit Adventists to have a Christmas tree?' The blinded Jews asked the same question: "Why then, they asked, did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" to which Jesus answered: "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning" (Matthew 19:7-8). Clearly, Ellen White, having clearly stated that Christmas has no Biblical support, that God concealed Jesus' birthday as He concealed Moses' tomb to save men from idolatry, being inspired by the Spirit of God to recognise the hardness of the hearts of many Seventh-day Adventists bent to Christmas idolatry, dealt with Christmas as Moses dealt with divorce.

There are Adventist parents who have neglected their duty to "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). The training here involves not only teaching, but also practicing what is taught until it becomes a habit, to love the Lord beyond mere amusements and self-seeking pleasures. To those parents, they

will find it 'difficult' to ignore Christmas, but that is no license to pay homage to the devil through pagan worship. If such parents should have a Christmas tree and gather their untrained children around the tree, Ellen White says, "in no case should mere amusement be the object of these gatherings" (*Adventist Home*, 482). It is much easier to train children the ways of the Lord from the Bible than celebrate Christmas without "amusement." It is much harder to celebrate Christmas in a 'good way' with a pure "motive" required by Ellen White than going back to the Bible and training children that Christmas is truly idolatry.

Christmas and idolatry among Adventists

Everything on earth revolves around either worshipping God or worshipping the devil. From the beginning, the devil set out to rob God of His authority and worship. Lucifer, who later became the devil, said: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14). One of the Idolatry worship instituted by the devil was 'Sun worship.' Job confirms that 'Sun worship' is iniquity, when he says: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: This also were an iniquity...for I should have denied the God that is above" (Job 31: 26-28). The other form of "idolatry" worship is Christmas – that is why God in

His wisdom concealed the birth of Jesus lest people worship the 'day' as an idol (see *Adventist Home*, 478).

The problem people have today is they easily accept things dressed as religious. To these, Paul says, they "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever" (Roman 1:25). The devil is the "creature" behind Christmas worshipped by millions. Joining into Christmas "idolatry" angers God, for He says, "And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods, and Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel" (Numbers 25:2-4).

Twenty-fifth of December is historically known to be the birthday of Tammuz. Tammuz was hailed as the son of the sun, was idolised and even worshipped. In effect, people worshipped the devil. When Tammuz died, pagans wept for him and continued to worship him through the Sun. God's people were also caught up in this Sun worship. We read: "then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? ... Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. ...Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them" (Ezekiel 8:12-18). It is no different today that God's people are

constantly coming in contact with paganism, such as Christmas, which is nothing more than sun worship.

The devil, the author of pagan sun worship, insults the plan of salvation by constituting and implanting in people's mind that the birthday of Tammuz, 25 December, is kept in honour of Jesus. As Ellen White says (*Adventist Home*, 478), the exact date of Christ's birthday was concealed by God and remains unknown. The devil must have thought, 'Why not call it the same date as the birth of Tammuz, 25 December?' Thus, gradually but surely, 25 December came to be known as the birthday of Christ. Christians accepted this idea, this was followed by the special mass on that day, 'Christ's Mass,' and so 25 December became 'Christmas.' What an insult to our Lord Jesus Christ that the devil succeeds in having himself worshipped under the guise of 'remembering' Jesus birthday! To that guise, Christ exclaims "But in vain ye do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

Worshipping God in Truth and in Spirit

Adventist children brought up by parents in a pagan way of celebrating Christmas, would have a short memory of feasting on 25 December with amusements and exchange of gifts from Santa Claus (father Christmas). What about God, what is His memory of 25 December? We read: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isaiah 57:15). God's memory also "inhabiteth eternity." To God, 25 December brings the vivid

memory of His saints being sacrificed to Tammuz and He still hears the saints' voices under the altar crying out for justice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:9,10). Yet, those professed Seventh-day Adventists with unsanctified and short memory see partying and a merry Christmas instead of Tammuz – what a sad memory!

To God, His worship is particular. To God, "the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4: 23, 24). Christmas is mixture of paganism and efforts by Christians to turn evil to good through singing of carols, yet there is no God's truth in Christmas. Those who follow after pagan worship, Jesus clearly says they worship in vain (Mark 7:7-8). To such, Paul calls them to come to the fold of God-fearing people: "therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). We are not to learn from pagans, and not to inquire about how pagan nations serve their gods (Jeremiah 10:2). We are told, "you shall not worship the Lord your God in that way" (Deuteronomy 12:31). We are to worship God in truth and in spirit. The devil has succeeded as he intended to set himself above God and be worshipped. How sad that Adventists are caught up in Christmas idolatry!

Christmas and Sunday observance

In an 1888 article by our Adventist pioneer and preacher of righteousness by faith (EJ Waggoner, 'Christmas and Sunday', *The Signs of the Times*, Vol 14, March 9, 1888), we read:

"Soon after the holidays, the following item entitled 'Christmas,' appeared in *Messiah's Advocate*, a journal published in Oakland: 'We have paid no attention to this day in the *Advocate*. We have no idea that the 25th of December is the anniversary of our Saviour's birth, but that Christmas is purely a Popish festival, and we think the sooner Protestants cease to adopt Papal customs, the wiser and better they will be.'

"We heartily agree with our contemporary: we believe that Christmas is purely a Popish festival, and we think that Protestants ought to have nothing to do with Papal customs. Yet we are sorry to know that the greater portion of professed Protestants, do follow the customs of Rome. Since our neighbor professes such a dislike for Popish customs, we have thought that a little comparison of Christmas and Sunday might not be amiss. We shall show that both are Papal institutions, having been borrowed, like all other customs of the Romish Church, from paganism.

"Concerning the origin of Christmas, McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia says: 'The observance of Christmas is not of divine appointment, nor is it of New Testament origin. The day of Christ's birth cannot be ascertained from the New Testament, or, indeed, from any other source. The Fathers of

the first three centuries do not speak of any special observance of the nativity.... 'The institution may be sufficiently explained by the circumstance that it was the taste of the age to multiply festivals, and that the analogy of other events in our Saviour's history, which had already been marked by a distinct celebration, may naturally have pointed out the propriety of marking his nativity with the same honorable distinction. It was celebrated with all the marks of respect usually bestowed on high festivals, and distinguished also by the custom, derived probably from heathen antiquity, of interchanging presents and making entertainments.' At the same time, the heathen winter holidays (*Saturnalia*, *Juernalia*, *Brumalia*) were undoubtedly transformed, and, so to speak, sanctified by the establishment of the Christmas cycle of holidays; and the heathen customs, so far as they were harmless (e.g., the giving of presents, lighting of tapers, etc.), were brought over into Christian use.'

"Chambers' Encyclopedia says: 'It does not appear that there was any uniformity in the period of observing the nativity among the early churches; some held the festival in the month of May or April, others in January. It is, nevertheless, almost certain that the 25th of December cannot be the nativity of the Saviour, for it is then the height of the rainy season in Judea, and shepherds could hardly be watching their flocks by night in the plains....

"Not casually or arbitrarily was the festival of the nativity celebrated on the 25th of December. Among the causes that co-

operated in fixing this period as the proper one, perhaps the most powerful was, that almost all the heathen nations regarded the winter solstice as a most important point of the year, as the beginning of the renewed life and activity of the powers of nature, and of the gods, who were originally merely the symbolical personifications of these. In more northerly countries this fact must have made itself peculiarly palpable, hence the Celts and Germans, from the oldest times, celebrated the season with the greatest festivities. At the winter solstice the Germans held their great Yule-feast, in commemoration of the return of the fiery sun-wheel; and believed that from the twelve nights reaching from the 25th of December to the 6th of January, they could trace the personal movements and interferences on earth of their great deities, Odin, Berehta, etc. Many of the beliefs and usages of the old Germans, and also of the Romans, relating to this matter, passed over from heathenism to Christianity, and have partly survived to the present day.'

"Prof. J. G. Müller, the author of the article on the worship of the sun, in the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, after mentioning that the sun was worshiped by the Persians, under the form of Mithras, which finally became the *Sol Deus Invictus* of the Romans, says: 'The Mithras-worship even exercised its influence upon the fixing of the Christian Christmas-festival in December. As the new birth of the sun-god was celebrated at

the end of December, so, likewise, in Christ, the new Sun, in the field of spiritual life was adored.’

“The Encyclopedia Britannica, after mentioning the obscurity in which the origin of the Christmas festival rests, says: ‘By the fifth century, however, whether from the influence of some tradition, or from the desire to supplant heathen festivals of that period of the year, such as the *Saturnalia*, the 25th of December had been generally agreed upon.’

“Another item pointing to the heathen origin of Christmas is the fact that the mistletoe, which was regarded by the ancient Druids with the highest veneration, has always been, especially in England, a favorite Christmas decoration. McClintock and Strong’s Encyclopedia (article Christmas) says that the dressing of houses with mistletoe on Christmas day is ‘a custom probably as old as the Druidical worship.’ Druidism, it may be remarked, was the worship of the ancient Britons; it was allied to the Baal or sun worship of the Phoenicians, and, like it, was accompanied by human sacrifices.

“Bingham, in his *Antiquities of the Christian Church* (book 20, chapter 4), gives the following account of the status of Christmas in the ancient church: ‘As to the manner of keeping this festival, we may observe that they did it with the greatest veneration. For they always speak of it in the highest terms, as the principal festival of Christians, from which all others took their original. Chrysostom styles it the most venerable and tremendous of all festivals, and the metropolis and mother of all

festivals.... and we may observe that the day was kept with the same veneration and religious solemnity as the Lord's day. For they had always sermons on this day, of which there are many instances of Chrysostom, Nazianzen, Basil, Ambrose, Austin, Leo, Chrysologus, and many others. Neither did they let this day ever pass without a solemn communion.'

"Finally, to show all possible honor to this day, the church obliged all persons to frequent religious assemblies in the city churches, and not go to any of the lesser churches in the country, except some necessity of sickness or infirmity compelled them to do so. And the laws of the State prohibited all public games and shows on this day, as on the Lord's day.'

"If it be asked how the Christmas festival came to be adopted by the church, we can answer only in the following words of Dr. Killen's in the preface to his '*Ancient Church*': 'In the interval between the days of the apostles and the conversion of Constantine, the Christian commonwealth changed its aspect. The bishop of Rome, a personage unknown to the writers of the New Testament, meanwhile rose into prominence, and at length took precedence of all other churchmen, rites and ceremonies of which neither Peter nor Paul ever heard, crept silently into use, and then claimed the rank of divine institutions.'

"That is undoubtedly the way in which it was introduced. If it be asked *why* this was allowed, we shall let Mosheim answer in the following words: 'It is certain that to religious worship, both public and private, many rites were added, without necessity

and to the great offense of sober and good men. The principal cause of this I readily look for in the perverseness of mankind, who are more delighted with the pomp and splendor of external forms and pageantry, than with the true devotion of the heart, and who despise whatever does not gratify their eyes and ears. But other and additional causes may be mentioned, which, though they suppose no bad design, yet clearly betray indiscretion.'

“*First*, there is good reason to suppose that the Christian bishops purposely multiplied sacred rites for the sake of rendering the Jews and the pagans more friendly to them. For both these classes had been accustomed to numerous and splendid ceremonies from their infancy, and had made no question of their constituting an essential part of religion. And hence, when they saw the new religion to be destitute of such ceremonies, they thought it too simple, and therefore despised it. To obviate this objection, the rulers of the Christian churches deemed it proper for them to be more formal and splendid in their public worship.

“*Secondly*, the simplicity of the worship which Christians offered to the Deity, had given occasion to certain calumnies, maintained both by Jews and the pagan priests. The Christians were pronounced atheists, because they were destitute of temples, altars, victims, priests, and all that pomp, in which the vulgar suppose the essence of religion to consist. For unenlightened persons are prone to estimate religion by what

meets their eyes. To silence this accusation, the Christian doctors thought they must introduce some external rites, which would strike the senses of people, so that they could maintain that they really *had* all those things of which Christians were charged with being destitute, though under different forms....

“*Fourthly*, among the Greeks and the people of the East, nothing was held more sacred than what were called the mysteries. This circumstance led the Christians, in order to impart dignity to their religion, to say that they also had similar mysteries, or certain holy rites concealed from the vulgar; and they not only applied the *terms* used in the pagan mysteries to the Christian institutions, particularly baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but they gradually introduced also the *rites* which were designated by those terms. This practice originated in the Eastern provinces; and thence, after the times of Adrian, (who first introduced the Grecian mysteries among the Latins), it spread among the Christians of the West. A large part, therefore, of the Christian observances and institutions, even in this century, had the aspect of pagan mysteries.’ – *Eccl. History, Book I, col. 1, part 2, chapter 4, sections 1-5.*

“The object was, in short, to gain converts from among the pagans. The same thing also applies to the Sunday festival, the heathen origin of which we shall now proceed to show.”

We read the following from the continuation of the article (Elliot Joseph Waggoner, ‘Christmas and Sunday (Continued)’, *The Signs of the Times*, Volume 14, March 16, 1888):

“In one of its issues in 1884, the *Christian at Work* said: ‘It is now seen, as it is admitted, that we must go to later than apostolic times for the establishment of Sunday observance.’

“This classes it among the institutions of which Killen says that Peter and Paul knew nothing; and Dr. Scott in his comments on Acts 20:7 admits that it was one of the institutions which, Killen says, ‘crept silently into use, and then claimed the rank of divine institutions.’ He says: ‘The change from the seventh to the first day of the week appears to have been gradually and silently introduced, by example rather than by precept.’

“As Christmas, though under a different name, was observed as a festival by the heathen long before its adoption by the Christian church, so Sunday was from the earliest ages a heathen festival day. Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary says of Sunday: ‘So called because this day was anciently dedicated to the sun, or to its worship.’

“The ‘Encyclopedia Britannica’ (Art. ‘Egypt’), says: ‘Sun worship was the primitive form of Egyptian religion; perhaps even pre-Egyptian.’

“The ‘Scaff-Herzob Encyclopedia’ (art. ‘Sun’) says: ‘The worship of the sun as the most prominent and powerful agent in the kingdom of nature, was widely diffused throughout the countries adjacent to Palestine. This worship was either direct, wither the intervention of any statue or symbol, or indirect. Among the Egyptians the sun was worshiped under the title of

Ra.... Among the Phoenicians the sun was worshiped under the title of Baal. At Tyre, Gaza, and Carthage human sacrifices were offered to him. Among the Chaldeans the sun was worshiped under the title of Tammuz; and that the Arabians worshiped the sun, we know from Theophrastus. ...

“Still more propagated was the worship of the sun among the Syrians (Aramaeans). Famous temples were at Heliopolis, Emesa, Palmyra, Hierapolis. Sun worship there was very old, and direct from the beginning; and even in later times sun and moon were worshiped at Hierapolis without the intervention of any image. Among the pure Semites or Aryans, direct worship to the sun was paid from the beginning, and still later. Thus among the Assyrians, and afterwards among the Persians under the form of Mithras, which finally became the *Sol Deus invictus* [the invincible sun god] throughout the West, especially through the Romans.’

“In the *Old Testament Student* of January, 1886, Dr. Talbot W. Chambers has an article entitled, ‘Sun Images and the Sun of Righteousness,’ from which we make the following extracts concerning the prevalence of sun worship: ‘The universality of this form of idolatry is something remarkable. It seems to have prevailed everywhere. The chief object of worship among the Syrians was Baal-the sun, considered as the giver of light and life, the most active agent in all the operations of nature. But as he sometimes revealed himself as a destroyer, drying up the earth with summer heats, and turning gardens into deserts, he

was in that view regarded with terror, and appeased with human sacrifices....

“In Egypt the sun was the kernel of the State religion. In various forms he stood at the head of each hierarchy. At Memphis he was worshiped as Phtah, at Heliopolis as Tum, at Thebes as Aman Ra. Personified by Osiris, he became the foundation of the Egyptian metempsychosis....

“In Babylon the same thing is observed as in Egypt. Men were struck by the various stages of the daily and yearly course of the sun, in which they saw the most imposing manifestation of Deity. But they soon came to confound the creature with the Creator, and the host of heaven became objects of worship, with the sun as chief....

“In Persia the worship of Mithras or the sun is known to have been common from an early period. No idols were made, but the inscriptions show ever-recurring symbolic representations, usually a disk or orb with outstretched wings, with the addition sometimes of a human figure. The leading feature of the Magian rites, derived from ancient Media, was the worship of fire, performed on altars erected upon high mountains, where a perpetual flame, supposed to have been originally kindled from Heaven, was constantly watched, and where solemn services were daily rendered. The remnant of the ancient Persians who escaped subjugation by Islam, now known as Parsees, unite with their reverence for holy fire equal reverence for the sun as the emblem of Ormnlz....

“Under the Roman emperors the Oriental solar worship was introduced with great pomp.... This god was proclaimed the chief deity in Rome, while all other gods were his servants. Of course this predominance of the sun worship did not continue, but the worship itself survived. For we find fifty years later, when Aurelian (274 A.D.) celebrated his triumph over the queen of the East, the temple of the sun received the gift of fifteen thousand pounds of gold....

“So at the end of the second century, when Diocletian would take a very solemn oath in the face of the army, it was by the ‘all-seeing deity of the sun.’ He was still the universal object of worship, to the philosophic as an emblem, to the people at large as the deity himself. And curiously enough, this cult is found in an important sect of the ancient Christian heretics, the Manichaeans. They sang hymns to the great principle of light, and addressed prayers to the sun, or at least, when praying, turned their faces to that tabernacle in which, as they supposed, Christ dwelt.’

“The *North British Review* (Vol. 18, p. 408), in an article defending Sunday observance, called Sunday ‘the wild solar holiday of all pagan times.’ This is in harmony with the statement by Webster, that Sunday is so called because it ‘was anciently dedicated to the sun, or to its worship.’ Remembering this, and also what has been said of the readiness with which the early church adopted heathen customs, the reader will be able, by the following quotations, to see how the Sunday festival became a

'Christian' institution. Immediately following the statement concerning sun worship which we quoted from the 'Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia,' we find the following under the article 'Sunday:'

“Sunday (*Dies Solis* of the Roman calendar, day of the sun, because dedicated to the sun), the first day of the week, was adopted by the early Christians as a day of worship. The sun of Latin adoration they interpreted as the Sun of Righteousness.... No regulations for its observance are laid down in the New Testament, nor, indeed, is its observance even enjoined.’

“Of course no regulations for its observance are laid down in the New Testament, because it is a heathen institution. But from the above we can readily see how the heathen world so readily became nominally Christian. They did not have to give up anything; they simply worshiped the same thing under a different name. To the same effect is the following from Dr. T. W. Chambers, in the *Old Testament Student*, from which we have before quoted:

“The Emperor Constantine, before his conversion, revered all the gods as mysterious powers, especially Apollo, the god of the sun, to whom, in the year 308, he presented munificent gifts; and when he became a monotheist, the god whom he worshiped was, as Uhlborn says, rather the ‘Unconquered Sun,’ than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed, when he enjoined the observance of the Lord’s day, it was not under the name of *Sabbatum* or *Dies Domini*, but

under its old astronomical and heathen title, *Dies Solis*, so that the law was as applicable to the worshipers of Apollo and Mithras as to the Christians.'

"With this evidence we do not see how anybody can accept Sunday as a Christian institution, and reject Christmas as a heathen festival. The evidence that Sunday was adopted into the Christian church direct from heathenism is more positive and more abundant than the evidence showing that Christmas is a relic of paganism."

Conclusion

God who created our first parents, a perfect pair, after the same pattern sort to keep husbands and wives together, but for hardness of their hearts, He resorted against His original plan, through Moses, to allow husbands to divorce their wives. God who concealed the birthday of His Son to prevent idolatry, but for their disposition to amusement, against His original will, through Ellen White, allowed Adventist parents to have a Christmas tree. Whilst Ellen White instructed those who will find it a difficult matter to pass over Christmas without paying any attention to it, that they should not engage in its amusement but rather use it as an opportunity for the salvation of souls, many Adventists are motivated by the amusement of Christmas. Since Christmas and Sunday observance rest on the same authority of Catholicism, those Adventists who celebrate Christmas may as well join Catholicism to openly worship the sun-god on Sunday.

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