

# What Christmas Is Really All About

A LIQUOR advertisement in a magazine is headed: "Here's to those who've taught us the true spirit of Christmas." It concludes "and hope you, too, will raise a glass to everyone who's shown you what Christmas is all about." Christmas spirit or Christmas spirits?

The ad's theme was that Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol" reveals the true spirit of Christmas because of "some loving and forbearing thoughts that know no season."

Dickens' enjoyable and popular literary masterpiece does not reflect the true spirit of Christmas. Neither do "The Nutcracker Suite," cartoons and fairy tales about anthropomorphic animals, nor the legend of Santa Claus.

Family feasts and the exchange of gifts among relatives and friends are wonderful but may fail to touch upon the real meaning of Christmas. Humanitarian generosity is admirable but it is not necessarily motivated by the true Christmas spirit.

Christmas is a religious celebration relating to the human birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Recognition

of this miraculous advent should lead one to the true spirit of Christmas but it might not. If the ritual goes no deeper than adoration of the Madonna and Child, or the gifts of the Magi, it may be no more significant than observing the birthday anniversary of a president or a scientist.

The true spirit of Christmas is a revelation of God to mankind of a new way to acquire a right relationship with God.

This is described in Luke 2:32 by Simeon, a devout Jew who saw the child Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem. He took the child into his arms and called him "A light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Thy (God's) people of Israel."

The coming of the Messiah had been foretold in holy scriptures for centuries but Hebrews expected Him to come in spectacular glory; not to be born into a humble family of common people.

Christ's miracles, teachings and example pointed toward the true spirit of Christmas. His crucifixion, burial and resurrection provide sig-

nificance to the celebration of His birth.

Faith was attributed to the Hebrew patriarch, Abraham, but individuals were expected to achieve righteousness through obedience to the laws of God. After the Ten Commandments were handed down to Moses the Pharisees expanded them into hundreds of regulations that made total obedience impossible.

The birth of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word of God is but the beginning of the much larger revelation that man may acquire righteousness through faith and forgiveness, rather than by good works.

Christmas is celebrated in many ways and by following many customs, ceremonies and traditions. Surely, most of these are appropriate, altruistic and enjoyable, but they also may be merely supplemental, just as lights, tinsel and wreaths are merely decorative.

The true spirit of Christmas is the revelation by God that man may come near to Him through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Dec 24, 1981

Dear Mr. Freddie Steering

I don't know what denomination  
you are but denominations don't get us to  
heaven any way. I Love your articles  
and look forward to them Thank God  
for men like you if there were only more  
I Love you and God Loves you Lots more  
I don't know your life but it shows in  
your articles. Thank You God Bless  
You Keep up God's work there sure not  
very many out there that really are.

Bohpie Boyd  
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