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Celebrating Christmas a Testimonial

THE CELEBRATION of Christmas is a testimonial that the creation of the universe was not just a cosmic accident and that human life has a divine purpose for its existence here on earth.

Those who argue otherwise deny the evident existence of God and say, in effect, that mankind has no reason for being other than to eat, drink, be merry, if he can, and die when he has to.

Such a fatalistic, hopeless attitude is largely to blame for wars between nations, for crime, for hunger and abuse of human beings, for drunkenness, debauchery, and unhappiness.

"In his incomprehensible wisdom God knew what would become of His creation," says a Christmas message from the Bible-Science Association, Minneapolis, "But He rejected the cost of preventing man's fall into sin because to prevent it would be to defeat the purpose of His creating. God could have created man so that he was programmed never to rebel and always to love Him in perfect obedience. But love given when

there is no choice to do otherwise is not really love."

And the New Testament tells us "God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Mankind has freedom of choice and the conflict between believers and non-believers is now, as always, a conflict of peace and war, of good and evil, and of life and death.

Mankind is not required to celebrate Christmas as the anniversary of the incarnation of the Son of God. No rituals are prescribed for it in the scriptures. It is up to individuals, families and communities to determine how Christmas is observed.

In discussing "The Meaning of Christmas" Lowell D. Milburn, director of the Baptist Department of Child Care, wrote in The Baptist Messenger:

"So often at Christmas we give our best gifts to each other and only the crumbs to God. Certainly gifts

to worthy causes are in order at Christmas. But most of all Christmas calls for the giving of ourselves as well as our gifts. God calls for us to give Him our best."

In Dairymen's Digest, editor Phil Porter relates a story of an old man telling his grandchildren things he had learned about Christmas. He said:

"The most cherished Christmas gifts I have ever given were at a time when I was so poor I couldn't afford to buy anything. To make up for what I though was the terrible hardship of poverty I wrote a note with the little token gifts I gave . . .

"Through the years, though fortune has smiled on me, none of the expensive material gifts I have given have meant as much to any of us as those few words from my heart."

As we focus upon the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem some 2000 years ago it is appropriate to consider the purpose for which He lived and meditate upon purposes which God may have for our lives.