scholarship, a man of indefatigable labors", was able to ascertain that Jesus Christ was born on 15th Tishri, 4 B.C., how is it that those who compile notes for encyclopedias can not relate anything more specific than the three above examples convey? Clearly the Sovereign God has done this to serve His own inimitable purposes!

Some Christians have considered this matter and then asserted: "Of course, we ***know*** that December 25, is not the real birth date of our Saviour; but the ***date*** is not really important. It is our ***recognition*** of His birth and its significance that counts." Whereas such remarks contain a degree of truth, they also constitute various forms of rationalization. Perhaps the speaker has no interest in investigating beyond accepted tradition and is content with the "status quo", right or wrong (i.e. he himself does not want to give ups the pagan customs practiced in current Christmas festivities); or else he does not ***want*** to know the truth lest it place a responsibility upon him to reveal that truth to others, a procedure which is almost sure to alienate friends and/or relatives

This exposition, then is directed to all who ***are*** desirous of knowing the Truth and who believe that any matter relating to Israel's Saviour Jesus Christ, can not be one of insignificance or indifference.

Since this so-important Birth occurred on the First day of the Feast of Tabernacles, consideration given to the word "tabernacle(s)" is not amiss. Its first appearance in the Old Testament is in singular form, "primarily in Exodus and Numbers, and always designates the sanctuary," according to W. E. Vine's EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL WORDS, Copyright 1984. This source further explains that the Hebrew word is a "synonym for the phrase 'tent of meeting'," and that "100 out of the 139 uses throughout the Old Testament signify the tabernacle as 'dwelling place'. God dwelt amidst His people in the wilderness, and His presence was symbolically manifest in the tent of meeting. The Hebrew word "mishekan" places the emphasis on ***the representative presence of God.***"

The Greek word "skene" in the New Testament has much the denotation. A derivative, "skenopagia", in Vine's work, is defined as "properly the setting up of tents or dwellings" - and - "represents the word 'tabernalces' in 'the feast of tabernacles' (John 7:2). "This feast, one of the three Pilgrimage Feasts in Israel," the explanation continues, "is called 'the feast of ingathering' in Ex. 23:16, 34:22. It took place at the end of the year, and all males were to attend at the tabernacle with their offerings. In Lev. 23:24; Deut. 16:13, 16; 31:10; II Chronicles 8:13; Ezra 3:4, 9 (Cp. Neh. 8:14-18), it is called 'the feast of tabernacles' (or booths, "sukkoth"), and was appointed for seven days at Jerusalem from the 15th to the 22nd Tishri (approximately October), to remind the people that their fathers dwelt in these (booths) in the wilderness journeys".

Since this festival, The Feast of Tabernacles, is of particular note in relationship to Christ's birth, and since the commandment to observe it is so well-expressed in Leviticus 23:39, that passage is here quoted in full: ***"Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto Yahweh seven days; on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath."***

Someone might ask, "How could the 'feast of ingathering' occur in July?" since July is the seventh month on the present Western calendar. The answer is that at the time the commandment was given, the seventh month was Tishri (Hebrew) - that is, September on the Gregorian calendar, the one used by Western nations today. In other words, the year began in the Hebrew month Abib, as shown in Exodus 12:1-2, where the Feast of Passover was instituted: "And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the ***beginning*** of months; it shall be the ***first month of the year to you.***" Dr. Bullinger notes concerning the word "month" in v. 2: "Hebrew name 'Abib' or 'green-ear-month'. Becomes the first month, and the fifteenth, the ruling date henceforth. Cp. 13:4; 23:15; Deut. 16:1." (It is recommended that the reader study these and all other added Scripture references). Abib, of course, corresponds to the month of March on the Gregorian calendar.

With this background information one is ready for the next step which is into John's Gospel in the New Testament, where are found those glorious words: ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*** (v. 1) - and v. 14: ***"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."***

Interestingly enough, in the 14th verse, the word "dwelt" comes from the Greek word "skenoo" which means "to tent or encamp, i.e. (fig.) to occupy (as a mansion) or (spec.) to reside (as God did in the Tabernacle of old, a symbol of protection and communion)." Tracing this word to its root, one finds that it refers to a "temporary residence". (Strong's Concordance, #4637). Moreover, "tabernacle" may be a verb, which Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines thus: "To dwell; to reside for a time; to be housed; as we say, Christ tabernacled in the flesh." Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1936 Edition, reads: "To reside temporarily; est. to ***sojourn in the flesh or be incarnate.***" (Emphasis added).

From these definitions, it can safely be concluded that the "Word" of John 1:14, ***"tabernacled"*** among us..."And if "He tabernacled among us", would it not be reasonable to associate His birth with the Feast of that name? However, suppositions are unnecessary when proof is available!

All Bible-reading Christians are familiar with the beginning verses of Luke 2: ***"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed."*** (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria). (Luke 2:1-2).

The name "Cyrenius" is Greek for the Latin "Quirinus", whose full name was Publius Suipicius Quirinus. In Appendix 179, of THE COMPANION BIBLE, Dr. Bullinger notes that someone by the name of Zumpt "fixes Quirinus" (Cyrenius) ***FIRST*** Governorship as 4 B.C. to 1 B.C" Furthermore, "Justin Martyr thrice says that our Lord was born under Quirinus..." Another note furnishes additional information: "According to Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 190-220), 'Our Lord was born in the twenty-eighth year when ***FIRST*** the ***CENSUS*** was ordered to be taken in the reign of Augustus'."

These notes are at the bottom of a rather complicated page on which Mr. Bullinger has set forth what he calls "Parallel Datings of the Times of Our Lord". The reason for the complication is that there were so many methods of reckoning time, such as "Anno Mundi, in the year of the world B.C., Before Christ; Anno Christi, in the year of Christ; and Anno Urbis Conditae, the year in which the City (Rome) was founded."

Dr. Bullinger summarizes his parallel datings in two columns, one showing the Hebrew calendar months; the other, the Gregorian, thus:

Hebrew		Gregorian	
Tebeth	29 days	December	7 days
Sebat	30	January	31
Adar	29	February	29
Nisan (Abib)	29	March	31
Zif	29	April	30
Sivan	330	May	31
Thammuz	29	June	30
Ab	30	July	31
Elul	29	August	31
Tishri	15	September	29
	280		280

Having made an intensive study of number in Scripture, Dr. Bullinger then shows the numerical value of the 280 days as equal to 40 weeks, i.e. forty sevens, the perfect period of human gestation (7 x 5 x 8 = 280). "The Component Numbers of 280, "he asserts, "are highly significant in this connection.

7 denotes Spiritual Perfection
5 denotes Divine Grace
8 denotes Resurrection, Regeneration etc.

1st Tebeth+25 December (5 B.C.); and 15th Tishri=29 September (4 B.C.). From 1st Tebeth to 15th Tishri (inclusive)=280 days. From 25th December (5 B.C.) to 29th September (4 B.C.)+280 days."

Having established the day and year of Jesus' birth (by means of his parallel dating), Dr. Bullinger uses the balance of Appendix 179, in THE COMPANION BIBLE, to draw some remarkable conclusions. These are paraphrased and/or summarized as follows: