

**The Inscrutable Question: Dark Side of Christmas: Divine Good vs. Human Good; Principles of the Incarnation: "The Word became flesh," John 1:1-3, 14**

19- First of all, "works" may be defined biblically in one of two ways, (1) divine good or (2) human good.

20- Divine good is produced in the soul of the believer and may include thought, decision, or action. These thoughts, decisions, and actions are divine good only if they are based on biblical concepts, principles, and doctrines circulating in the individual believer's stream of consciousness and executed by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

21- Human good is produced in the soul of the believer and unbeliever alike and may include thought, decision, and action. These thoughts, decisions, and actions are human good if they are produced by the believer out of fellowship and are based on human energy motivated by human viewpoint.

22- All production by an unbeliever, whether thought, decision, or action, is always human good. However, the unbeliever may produce a category of human good called establishment good. These are the concepts of good citizenship based on establishment truth, e.g., obeying the law, submitting to the order code of Exodus 20:12-17, or Commandments 5-10, serving one's country in the military, etc.

23- Believers are encouraged to perform divine good however they may be led by the doctrine resident in their souls and under the influence, direction, and power of the Holy Spirit.

24- Unbelievers are to be encouraged to perform establishment good in any way they might be led from their inventory of ideas.

25- However, none of this has anything whatsoever to do with Christmas!!! Christmas is the celebration of the Virgin Birth of Christ and His incarnation from which comes the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation.

26- All other applications are nothing more than satanic camouflage wrapped in pretty packages topped with colorful bows inside of which are distractions to the real meaning of the Day.

27- Many mainline, denominational churches and most of those who call themselves Christians have without protest followed in the footsteps of the Arius, Socinus, the Puritans, and the Unitarians.

28- The impact of reinterpreting the meaning of the Incarnation upon our celebrations of Christmas is a part of Wolf's article on page 19. Remember, the Unitarian belief is that *we* are incarnated by God and thus *we* do His work during Christmas time:

The Incarnation plays little part in the process of creating or maintaining faith and its goal, the forgiveness of sins. The Incarnation merely makes it possible for the individual to receive Christ "in the heart." This can mean the historic Jesus (as evangelicals hold) or the Jesus of myth (as the Unitarians hold). Personal (and social) moral betterment thus becomes the emphasis of Christian piety, since "salvation" is either something you have already got out of the way (for the evangelical) or it is unnecessary (for the Unitarian). Thus, the meaning and use of Scripture, in sermons and Bible studies, is found in following the example of Jesus—or David, or Paul, or John the Baptist.

It was on this basis that the Unitarians transformed Christmas into something that both liberals and evangelicals could enjoy—a clear departure from the Puritan past (which forbid the celebration). By 1842, a new interpretation of the holiday was already in place:

I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come around ... as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*.

By the time that Charles Dickens, a Unitarian, put these words into the mouth of the nephew of Ebeneezer Scrooge, they rang true in the minds of his readers. It is “salvation by character.”

- 29- It was also a Unitarian, Charles Follen, who took the Christmas tree and popularized it in New England. Its original symbolisms contained vectors that taught the doctrine of the Incarnation.
- 30- As an evergreen the Christmas tree represented the eternal life of Jesus’ undiminished deity. Its lights pointed to Jesus as the Light of the World. Coming to this Light would result in eternal life for the believer. The tree itself taught the principle of the cross, the tree on which Christ would die for the sins of the world.
- 31- But these concepts are only known by those who are taught them. Consequently, the Christmas tree is widely accepted as a substitute today for a crèche. If the truth becomes widely known it too will be banned as an acceptable “holiday” decoration.
- 32- Then there is Clement Moore, also a Unitarian, who wrote the poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas,” in 1822. He took the story of a charitable Asian bishop and transformed him into a myth. He became an old elf who works his magic every Christmas Eve, bringing gifts to little boys and girls, but only *good* little boys and girls.

Thus a believer who was motivated to perform acts of charity as a response to the redemptive work of Christ became an unreal, mythic figure, who inspires us to be nice to one another. (Wolf, p. 20)

And the motivation for being nice is not reciprocal love for God motivating unconditional love for others but so that there might be a payoff at the end of the year. This is false motivation.

- 33- Finally there are Christmas carols. You can get the drift of Unitarian influence by reading the lyric of such Unitarian compositions as Edmund Sears’ “It Came upon a Midnight Clear,” Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day,” and John Pierpont’s, “Jingle Bells.”
- 34- The “peace on earth and good will toward men” implored by the first two is to be accomplished by the “incarnation of Christ into each one of us enabling us to do good, love others, and bring world peace.”
- 35- Sterling idea but impossible to accomplish. Until Jesus Christ returns at the Second Advent, He informs us, there will be wars and rumors of wars as nations rise against nations.
- 36- The impact of Christmas is not peace on earth. There will not be peace on earth among nations until the Lord Himself imposes it.
- 37- There will never be lasting and meaningful good will among men except among believers who have enough doctrine to direct reciprocal love for God toward their fellow man unconditionally.
- 38- Putting Christ back into Christmas is a long way down the road in this country. It will be of no use even then if the putting of Him back does not stress the Incarnation and ignore the fluff.
- 39- You can put Christ in your Christmas on an individual basis and you will have your next opportunity to do so this Tuesday. It can be by thought, decision, or action. But however you are led the principles of the Incarnation need to be fresh in your mind so your application will be meaningful.

### C. Principles of the Incarnation

- 1- First of all we must recall the definition of the hypostatic union:

In the Person of Jesus Christ are two natures—divine and human—inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, this union of God and Man in the Lord Jesus Christ is both personal and eternal.

2- The word “hypostatic” is derived from the Greek word:

**ὑποστασις / *hypostasis* /** - “nature; essence; substance”

3- We see the word “essence” related to the hypostatic union in:

**Hebrews 1:3a** - Jesus Christ, Who being the shining forth [ *ἀπαύγασμα / apaugasma* /: **radiation; transmission** ] of the Father's glory [ *δόξα / doxa* /: **integrity** ] and the exact image [ *χαρακτήρ / charakter* /: **precise equivalent** ] of God's nature [ *ὑπόστασις / hypostasis* /: **essence** ] ...

4- This verse indicates that Jesus Christ is undiminished deity. In His divine Person He possesses the exact equivalent of the divine attributes possessed by God the Father: **χαρακτήρ / charakter** /.

5- The Scripture also reveals that the Lord took on the exact likeness of mankind at the Virgin Birth. Paul discusses this in:

**Philippians 2:7** - but He deprived Himself of His privileges [ *κενόω / kenoo* / ] taking the form of a servant [ **true humanity** ], having been born in the likeness of man [ i.e., **Adam before the fall without a sinful nature** ].

6- Therefore, at the Virgin Birth, God became incarnate in the Person of Jesus Christ in hypostatic union.

See visual, “**Virgin Birth, Selection, & Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ**”: <http://www.gdcmedia.org/visuals/virginbirthselectionhypostaticunion.pdf>

7- The confirmation of the hypostatic union of undiminished deity with true humanity in the Person of Christ is further documented by the Apostle John in:

**John 1:1** - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

8- The prepositional phrase “in the beginning” is the Greek:

**ἐν ἀρχῇ / en arche /** - Refers to eternity past. The “beginning” has to do with the moment the universe was created. John is informing us that the Word already existed when the universe was created. Therefore, this can be translated “In eternity past.”

9- Next comes the imperfect active indicative of the verb:

**εἰμί / eimi /** - “to be”

imperf.: Duration; connotes linear action in past time.

act: The Word produces the action in eternity past.

indic.: Declarative; a statement of fact.

CTL: “In eternity past there always existed ...”

10- The subject comes next and John uses a word that goes back in the writings of the sixth-century B.C. Greek philosopher Heracleitus / HER-ah-KLIT-us /. It is the predicate nominative:

**Λόγος / Logos /** - “word; thought; language; a system of thought.”

11- Heracleitus first used *Logos* for the principle which controls the universe. He rationalized that there must be a source for his ability to think. The real you is what you think and the ability to think is unique to the human race.

12- The Sophists broke from the tradition of Heracleitus and contended that *Logos* was the rational power inside of man.

13- In agreement with this definition, Socrates and Plato used *Logos* to refer to the thinking of man. Aristotle added to the idea of rational thought the application of that thought into action and used it to define morality.

14- The Stoics didn't like Sophistry so they decided *Logos* had to do with the order of nature. They did recognize that there was a source for this order, that it had its origin in eternity past, and the source was God.

15- John uses *Logos* to emphasize that the only way anyone can understand God is to have the capacity for thought. He presents God as the *Logos*. If infinite God is to manifest Himself to finite creatures He must reveal Himself.

16- That revelation must begin with thought and then ultimately through the Incarnation. Thus *Logos* refers to the eternal thought of God now revealed in the hypostatic union of Christ. John goes on to write that this *Logos* "was with God," and again we have the imperfect active indicative of *εἰμί / eimi /*.

**CTL:** "In eternity past the Word always existed, and the Word always existed ..."

17- Here the verb describes the eternal association that the Word has with God, the prepositional phrase:

*πρός Θεός / pros Theos /* - "face-to-face with God."

18- From the first two clauses we learn that the *Logos* has always existed and that the *Logos* has always existed with God. Finally we learn that the *Logos* has always existed as God. Again we have the imperfect active indicative of *εἰμί / eimi /*.

**John 1:1 - [CTL]** In eternity past, the *Logos* always existed, the *Logos* always existed face-to-face with God, and the *Logos* always existed as God.

**v. 2 -** In eternity past there always existed this One [ *οὐτός / houtos /*: masculine singular; note God is not a woman ] Who has always existed face-to-face with God.

**v. 3 -** All things [ *τὰ πάντα / ta panta /* ] through Him have come into existence and apart from Him nothing that has come into existence came into existence.

19- John has now established that the *Logos* is eternal God. He concludes the introductory chapter to his Gospel by giving us the identity of this *Logos* in:

**John 1:14 -** And the *Logos* [ Jesus Christ as undiminished deity ] became flesh [ Incarnation at the Virgin Birth: true humanity ] and He dwelt among us [ in hypostatic union ].

20- Since it is impossible for fallen mankind to approach God then God took the initiative to come to us. This is the same *Logos* that Socrates, Plato, and Descartes sought but could not define either rationally or empirically.

21- This is the same *Logos* that Arius, Socinus, the Puritans, and the Unitarians refused to identify as Jesus Christ. Unfortunately there are many in Protestant Christianity today who still do not identify Jesus as the eternal *Logos*.

- 22- This is why we have a sterile Christmas, chocked full of color, gaiety, song, food, drink, and benevolence, but absolutely void of its true meaning.
- 23- The reason for the season is to celebrate Jesus Christ as God Who, from His own free will, chose to become incarnate taking on the form of true humanity excepting sin.
- 24- His mission was to execute the prototype spiritual life so as to arrive at the cross impeccable and become a qualified substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the entire world.
- 25- This is the true message of Christmas and it is summed up in both a passage of Scripture and in the lyric of a famous hymn. The passage is:

**Luke 2:11 - "Today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

**v. 12 - "And this sign is for your benefit: you shall find a baby wrapped in death cloths, lying in a feeding trough."**

- 26- The lyric is by the famed Methodist theologian of the eighteenth century, Charles Wesley. He composed over a thousand hymns, among them this carol entitled:

**"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"**

Charles Wesley

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord;  
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th' incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with men t' appear, Jesus our Immanuel here.

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

- 27- Here's wishing you a Christocentric Christmas and a prosperous New Year!