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CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

Will Gordon H. Clark answer this question in print: *If the virgin birth is as essential as the Incarnation in Christian belief, why does not Paul mention it in Galatians 4:4, 5 nor John the Evangelist in John 1:1-18 ...?* Please notice that these two writers both strongly affirm the fact of Incarnation, emphasizing God's initiating Incarnation into human nature. It is Mary's *humanness* as revealed in the Gospels and Acts and not the method (virgin birth) of conception that is important to Paul and John the Evangelist.

Mr. Clark evades this question by saying that Paul's silence about the triumphal entry or John's about Peter's confession means that their silence about the virgin birth means nothing; however, in the above two passages either or both would have included the virgin birth if it was as important as the Incarnation. But it wasn't. Their common interest is in God's action through human nature in the particular woman, Mary.

Mr. Clark cannot say that I find the virgin birth too much as a miracle, for he knows as well as I that the Incarnation and the Resurrection are both such drastic miracles that all others are minor by comparison. I am raising only one question, and this on the basis of the two above passages, how can the virgin birth be equated with the Incarnation as equally important in any way? The Incarnation is essential fact or we become Unitarian in view, but let us only affirm and declare with Paul and John that Christ was born of the woman Mary.

Mr. Clark in his dealing with the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke neglects the important discoveries of 100 years of scholarship. These two narratives are not part of the foundation of our Gospels, which foundation is the *kerugma* and the Passion narratives. Attached to this essential structure, which of course, presupposes the Incarnation as a postulate, are the various pericopes, most of them very important, but some as the birth narratives showing a less important interest and emphasis ...

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Paul in Gal. 4:4-5 does not state and cannot state all that is essential to the Gospel. Nor can John, who in chapter one of his Gospel has selected the pre-existence of Jesus as his topic and not his human birth. We cannot legitimately expect everybody to say everything.

Further, the question of the letter seems to depend on lack of attention to what I wrote. A belief in the Virgin Birth is not essential to one's salvation. The thief on the cross know nothing about it. At the same time I maintain that the fact of the Virgin Birth is essential to God's plan; and further, a belief in the Virgin Birth is essential to a worthy ministry. The *kerugma*, or that which must be preached, is not some small part of the New Testament; it is the whole of the Bible, as Paul indicates in Acts 20:27.

I am not ignorant of the "important discoveries of 100 years of scholarship." The destructive critics "discovered" that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because writing had not been invented in his time. They "discovered" that the Hittite nation had never existed. Wellhausen "discovered" that the culture reflected in Genesis was the culture of the Babylonian captivity. Orthodox Christians have always known that this scholarship was mistaken.

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