"Of a certainty, the case of Jesus with God is like the case of Adam"—Al-Quran.
"Is not this the carpenter’s son?"—Matthew.

BIRTH OF JESUS
IN THE LIGHT OF THE QURAN
AND
IN THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPELS

by

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FOREWORD

I think a word as to the motive behind these pages will not be amiss. In bringing Jesus down to the human pedestal, nothing could be farther from my heart than in anyway to detract from the universal love, esteem and veneration he commands. Every Musalman looks upon him as a true Prophet of God and that, according to a Muslim, is the highest of honours. My sole idea in putting before the public these conclusions of my investigations into the sacred records of Islam and Christianity, is to rid all earnest seekers-after-truth of what to my mind is a superstition, pure and simple. If, in this humble attempt in the interest of Truth, the readers should find any points still obscure or unconvincing, I shall be glad to entertain further questions and, to the best of my lights, further elucidate them.

I may also mention that the original of these pages appeared in the form of a series of articles in the columns of The Light of Lahore, India. This should explain the repetitions in some places.

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BASHARAT AHMAD
PART I

BIRTH OF JESUS
In the Light of the Quran

CHAPTER I

No Procreation Without a Pair

Was Jesus born of a human father? However silly it may look on the very face of it, there are not a few among the Muslims, even the educated class, who actually ask the question in right earnest. An average Muslim gets positively shocked at any suggestion that indeed he was. As a matter of fact, the question should be just the other way about—viz., Was not Jesus born of a human father? and the matter for alarm and anxiety should be if someone were to say, “No! Jesus was born without a father.” As our own daily observation should tell us, there is no man who is born without a father. Fatherhood is an indispensable factor in the process of all procreation. It is a law of Nature. Why make an exception in the case of Jesus? Whoever comes forward with the theory that Jesus had no father, on him lies the burden of proof to substantiate his
contentions; for he is forcing upon us a thing contrary to the universal law of the Creator. It is for him to prove his case or his claim must be summarily dismissed. Not a single instance can be cited anywhere in the wide world where conception without male agency has been possible. In fact any such suggestion with regard to any woman is to cast a most serious slur on her honour.

So far as the Quran is concerned, this universal law of procreation admits of no exception. Beyond all shadow of doubt and in terms most unequivocal, the Book lays down:

"O ye mankind, We have created you of a male and a female."—(49 : 13).
"Verily, We have created man out of a mixture of seeds (i.e. male and female seeds)."—(76 : 2).

This should suffice to show that no procreation is possible without male agency. In fact this latter has been specially mentioned as playing a far more important part in the creation of man than female agency:

"Let man ponder what he has been created of. He has been created of water that comes out from between the back and the ribs."—(86 : 6—8).

Is it not conclusive on the point? No male agency, no conception. Yet again, it has been said that human birth takes place only when the male seed gets access to the womb:

"He indeed it is who has created the pair of male and female out of the genital seed when it is transmitted into female womb."—(53 : 44, 45).

This should leave no room for any doubt whatever. The birth of a child, according to the Quran, cannot take place but through the interaction of a pair, the intermingling of male and female seeds. This is the law of God and the laws of God, the
Quran elsewhere tells us, are immutable:

"And you shall find no altering in the law of God."—(33:52).

The absolute fixity of this particular law may be judged from the fact that the Quran advances it as a refutation against the Christian doctrine of the Divine Sonship of Jesus:

"How can there be a son to God while He has no mate?"—(6:102).

This again emphasizes the law of procreation through pairs, so much so that even in the case of God it is not possible for a son to find his birth unless He should take someone for His mate. According to the Quran, therefore, the immutable law is: No birth without a pair. The law knows no relaxation even in the hypothetical case of God. Even, supposing for the sake of argument, if He were to have a child born to Him, He must have a wife. A Divine pair must be there before a Divine son can make his appearance. Jesus must be subject to that law too. He was a man and no man can be born but through a pair—mother and father.

Much stress is laid in this connection on the creation of Adam. It is contended that Adam was born without a father and a mother both. Why cannot Jesus, in whose case only one factor is missing, take birth? But it is again a mere claim to assert that Adam was born without a father and a mother and a thing that lacks substantiation itself cannot be advanced as an argument to support another. To say that the Quran speaks of him as having been created out of clay is to betray lack of due scrutiny of the Quranic verses. It is no doubt mentioned that Adam was created of turab (dust), but elsewhere the same has been said of all
mankind:

"Verily, We have created you out of dust"—(12:5).

Surely the statement cannot be taken in the sense in which it is commonly taken—viz., that out of clay a statue was made and then life was infused into that statue, thus bringing Adam to human form. The Quran says that all men are created out of dust and yet we know that they are born of a male and a female parent. The expression therefore only refers to the origin of man which, obviously, is no other than dust. It is out of dust that we derive the food on which we live. This food, when subjected to the chemical process in man's internal machinery, is converted into blood and then into serum which, when transmitted into another appropriate apparatus, brings man into being. In the last analysis, thus, the Lord of creation owes his origin to dust. This is what "creation out of dust" implies, in the case of Adam as much as in that of any other man. This point is further cleared up in the following verses:

"And the creation of man began with wet dust, then his species was made out of an extract of contemptible water."—(23:7, 8).

Unless dust is mixed up with water, it cannot produce vegetables without which there can be no animal and human life. In this sense science bears out the Quranic statement that man was created out of dust. Taken in this sense which is the only true sense, the fact remains that without male seed there can be no human life. The reference to it is in no way inconsistent with law that man is created out of the genital seed. This latter is only a highly developed stage of the evolutionary process beginning with dust. The argument, therefore, that because Adam was created without both the
parents, Jesus could have been created without a father, too, falls to the ground.

How was the first pair of man and woman created is a question yet enveloped in mystery. No satisfactory solution has so far been forthcoming. The theory goes that in the beginning there was a species of creation midway between man and monkey. When it took a step onward on the ladder of evolution it assumed the form of man. When it degenerated, it was transformed into the ape. Maybe, the reference in the Quranic verse, "Be converted into base apes," is to some such stage of the evolution of animal life. However that may be, the fact remains that even the first pair was the product of the intermingling of the genital seeds of a male and a female. The Quranic law that man is born of a pair of male and female still holds good. Jesus could be no exception to this law. He must have had a human father.
CHAPTER II

Jesus’ Birth Compared to Adam’s

The advocates of no-father theory of the birth of Jesus make much of the Quranic verse:

“Indeed, the case of Jesus is the same with God as that of Adam. He created him [Adam] out of clay, then He bade him, Be! and he became.”—(3:48).

It is argued that the verse points to the supernatural way of Jesus’ birth. Just as Adam was born in a way out of the common, so was Jesus. I touched upon this in my last to show that the verse does not at all refer to any uncommon process of creation even in the case of Adam. The words “He created him out of clay” need not imply any departure from the common course of creation. As a matter of fact that, according to the Quranic phraseology, is the common method prevalent all over. The statement is applicable to every child that is born anywhere and any day, just as much as to Adam. Of the entire race of man it is explicitly said in the Book, “Indeed We created you out of clay.” If the same is said of Jesus, where does the uncommonness come in? He was born just in the same way as any other man.

The common conception, however, identifies Adam with the first man and the story goes that God first made a human statue of clay and then infused life into it. Thus was the first man created.
Like a common potter, God first prepared proper clay and then fashioned out of it the form of man. This is said to be the allusion in the words, "He created him out of clay," whereas the following words "And then He bade him, Be! and he became" are taken to imply the breathing of life or soul into that clay-work. Such a construction, however, is not warranted by the words in question. The word *khalaqahu* (He created him) clearly completes the whole process of creation of Adam, body and soul both. When it is said, "He *created* him," obviously there should be no more question of Adam's creation. It would therefore be redundant on the part of the Quran to say that thereafter God breathed life into him. *Khalaqahu* has already brought him into full existence, and there he is in flesh and blood. Life has already been breathed into him. It is thus incorrect to interpret the words "Be and he became" as referring to the process of soul-breathing. The soul had already been breathed into Adam without which the word *khalaqahu* could not be used of him.

Why then, it may be asked, has the case of Jesus been compared to that of Adam? If uncommon birth was not the point of similarity between the two, in what other respect is Jesus likened to Adam? A little pondering over the wording of this very verse should enable us to get over this apparent difficulty. The verse likens Jesus to Adam in two respects. Firstly, each was born out of clay. Secondly, each becomes something after birth under the Divine order "Be!" (*kun*) The word *thumma* (*ذَٰلِكَ*) clearly implies the order in which the two things happened. First came the creation of each. Subsequently, *after* that came about the other thing in which too Jesus was quite like Adam. The first point of similarity is not difficult
to understand. The origin of all mankind, according to the Quran, is clay. Thus Jesus and Adam both were alike in this respect, both having sprung from dust, like all other people. This is quite clear. But what was the other thing in respect of which also Jesus is likened to Adam? To each, says the verse, God said, “Be!” and each became something. What was this something? To find this out, we have only to take into consideration another verse of the Quran where the purpose of Adam’s creation is given, *viz.*,

إني جعل في الأرض خليفة

*i.e.*, “I want to make a vicegerent on earth.”—(2 : 30.)

Thus the Divine purpose with regard to Adam was that he must become His *caliph* or vicegerent on earth. And when God wills a thing what is the way it is done? He simply says, Be! and the thing is done. So says the Quran—

إنا أمره إذا أراد شيئاً أن يقول له كن فيكون

“Whenever God wills a thing, He simply says, Be! and it is done.”—(36 : 82).

In the verse in question which compares Jesus to Adam, exactly this expression is used. God had a definite purpose both in the case of Adam and Jesus. To each He said, Be! and each became, that is, fulfilled that purpose. We know in the case of Adam what that purpose was. He was to become, and so he became, the vicegerent of God. And so became Jesus the vicegerent of God. This is the second point of similarity between Adam and Jesus.

Now comes the question, What is the idea underlying this comparison between Jesus and Adam, with what purpose has the comparison been
made? As the context will show, the idea is to refute the Christian doctrine of Jesus’ divinity. To establish that divinity, the Church holds that Jesus was born in a supernatural manner, i.e., of the Holy Ghost. Not so, says the Quran. He was born, just as Adam was born, out of dust, the common origin of mankind. How could he be Divine? The Quran has to refer to his birth, because it was on his birth theory that the Christians base his divinity. They say it was supernatural and hence Jesus was Divine. The Quran meets them on their own ground and denies the very supernaturalness of his birth. He was born in the common way, it argues, as any other man is—viz., out of dust. Thus the main prop of Jesus’ divinity falls to the ground. He was not God or the son of God, says the Quran; he was only the vicegerent or prophet of God, just as Adam was. The verse thus sums up two things. It refutes the Christian doctrine of Jesus’ divinity. It also gives the true position of Jesus—viz., that he was a human being and a prophet of God. This exactly is the position ascribed to him by the advanced wing of the Church known as the Modernist Movement:—“Jesus was human in every sense of the word, physically, intellectually and spiritually. He was the son of God only in the sense in which any man may become the son of God, that is, in a moral and spiritual sense.” What a literal corroboration of the Quranic verse: “Indeed, the case of Jesus is the same with God as that of Adam”—i.e., he was human in every sense of the word as put by the Modernists—“He bade him, Be! and he became,” i.e., he was only the vicegerent of God, or, to put it in the words of the Modernists, the son of God in a moral and spiritual sense.

To interpret the verse as referring to any
uncommon birth of Jesus, as is done by some Muslims, is to endorse the very argument of the Church which the verse undertakes to demolish. If Jesus was really born in some superhuman way, he must have been superhuman in nature too. The whole point of the Quranic argument is that Jesus was born in quite a human way and hence he could not but be human. The no-father theory takes the whole bottom out of the argument and is therefore anti-Quranic.

Even granting, for the sake of argument, the common Mulla conception that the first man was made literally out of clay in the form of a statue into which life was breathed, it lends no support whatsoever to the no-father theory of Jesus. The self-same verse upon which the Mulla bases his statue-theory lays it down in so many words that whereas the origin of man is clay, all subsequent procreation takes place in the common course, viz., out of human seed. And Jesus comes under this latter category. Says the verse:

"The creation of man originated in wet dust, then He made his progeny out of an extract of dirty water."—(32: 7, 8).

Whatever, therefore, the various conjectures as to the creation of the first man, the universal law of procreation mentioned in the second part of the verse admits of no exception in favour of Jesus. One fails to understand how in the face of this categorical Divine law, it is alleged that Jesus was not born out of human seed? Are the laws of God susceptible of any change? Decidedly not. "Thou shalt find no change in the law of God," says the Quran. The law has been stated and it must have its course, irrespective of persons. It is immutable and must affect Jesus as anybody else.
As a matter of fact every species of creation is governed by two laws—the law of origination and the law of procreation. Take the case of a common wheat plant. It grows out of a wheat grain. This is the prevalent law. But what about the first plant, when there was no grain? How did that grow? Obviously in some other way which the little ken of man has not yet been able to comprehend. Likewise the origin of every form of creation is wrapped in mystery. But when once a particular thing has been started, no matter how, there is no more mystery as regards its multiplication. It follows a fixed immutable course—wheat plant out of wheat grain, barley plant out of a barley grain. It is to these two laws that the Quran referes in the words—هو يبدى و يعيد i.e., God originates and He repeats.—(85:13). The science of botany does not know of a single instance of suspension or violation of this law of procreation which is all-pervading. Man, bird and beast—it sways any and every form of creation. The origin of things must have been in some uncommon way. But that is no argument to uphold an uncommon birth for an individual thing in the chain of procreation. The first man may have been born without the human seed, but that privilege ends with the first man. When the law of origination has done its work, the law of procreation comes into play and in the case of man, that law, in the words of the Holy Quran, is: “Then He made his progeny out of an extract of dirty water—” (32:8). Jesus was man. How could he flout this explicit will of the Lord? He must have been born of “an extract of dirty water” too.

Furthermore, these are the only two laws of creation, the law of origination and the law of procreation. There is no third law, so far as the
Quranic light guides us. Jesus must have been subject to either of these two. If, presuming the impossible, he was created in accordance with the law of origination, he should have been born without father and mother both, for that is how the first man was born. But we know he had a mother. So he was not created according to that law. There is left only the other law, that of procreation which is that man is created out of a male and a female. He must have been subject to this law and therefore have had both father and mother.

Speaking of Mary, the mother of Jesus, the Quran says: ﴿اِسْتَمِعْ إِنْ أُحِبَّ مُخَالِفَةَ ﷺ﴾ i.e. “Then she conceived him (Jesus).” Now let us see how in the light of the Quran, “conception” takes place. Says the Book: “God it is Who created you of the same species and of the same species He created his mate so that he may feel inclined towards her. Then when he covers her, she conceives a light conception and she goes about with it. Then when it becomes heavy, they call to God, their Lord: If Thou givest us a child whole and healthy, we shall feel grateful—” (7: 189). The words in italics make it perfectly clear how “conception” takes place. Male agency must come in. If, as the Quran says, Mary did conceive, she could not have done so but in accordance with this universal law of conception—viz., through the instrumentality of a man. Here is an authentic utterance of the Prophet which throws a flood of light on this point. When discussing of Jesus’ so-called divinity with the padres from Najran, he advanced the conclusive argument:

السَّمْتُ تَعَلَّمُونَ إِنْ أُعْيِسُ حُمْلُهُ اِمْرَأَةً كَمَا تَحْمِلُ الْإِمْرَأَةُ

i.e., “Don’t you know that Jesus was conceived by a woman just as any woman conceives a child?”
Mark the words "just as any woman conceives a child." Everybody knows that no woman can conceive without male agency. And even if the saintliest woman on earth to-day were to come forward with a similar claim made on behalf of Mary, viz., that she has conceived without such agency, through any supernatural process, her claim would be summarily dismissed in any court of justice. Conception without a mate is unthinkable in any woman and Jesus, according to the hadith, was conceived by a woman just as any woman conceives. Is it not absurd, in the face of such a clear testimony, to allege that Mary conceived without a husband and Jesus was born without a father?
CHAPTER III

Did People Accuse Mary of Unchastity?

"Then she came to her people with him, carrying him (with her). They said: O Mary! surely you have done a strange thing. O sister of Aaron! your father was not a bad man nor was your mother a bad woman. But she pointed out to him. They said: How should we speak to one who was a child in the cradle? He (Jesus) said: Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. And, He has made me blessed wherever I may be and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate so long as I live; And dutiful to my mother and He has not made me insolent, unblessed. And peace on me on the day I was born and on the day I die and on the day I am raised again—" (19: 27—33).

The common story based on these verses of the Quran goes as follows. Immediately after Jesus was born, he was brought by his mother to her people. Finding her with a child, they were naturally surprised and scolded her, accusing her of illicit conception. Thereupon she pointed to the baby to lay their suspicions at rest. The baby then began to talk while hardly a day old. This convinced the people of the miraculous birth of Jesus.

This is the conclusion drawn from these verses —viz., that Jesus was born without a father. To my mind, however, such a conclusion is in no way warranted from the verses, duly viewed in the light of the context. The very first question is: Did the people’s objection in these verses relate
to any abnormality in Jesus' birth? In other words, was it a question as regards Mary's chastity? I say, it was nothing of the kind. The people did not at all find fault with the birth of Jesus. The conclusion is irresistible when you view the people's objection in the light of the explanation that follows, from Jesus' own lips. What is this explanation? That he was a servant and a prophet of God, and so forth. Is there a word in that explanation touching upon his own birth? If it were a question about his birth, if his mother's honour were involved, Jesus' reply should have been to that effect. He should have cleared the position of his own mother and told the people how exactly he was born. The very fact that there is no such reference in Jesus' reply should convince a close critic that it could not possibly be a question of birth that was taken exception to by the people. It would indeed be ridiculous on the part of Jesus to talk of his mission and his duties whereas what the people wanted him to tell them was about his birth and his mother's chastity. He does not say a word in vindication of his mother's good name which is proof positive that it was not her chastity that was at issue.

What, then, was the talk about? Jesus' reply should enable us to see that at a glance. He tells the people of his mission and hence the conclusion that the people must have objected to his mission. Jesus came to the people with the claim that he was the Messiah whose appearance the Jews expected. The Jews were simply surprised at such a claim on the part of a man, so thoroughly helpless as Jesus. They had quite a different picture of the Messiah in their minds. They looked forward to him as their deliverer who would restore the kingdom of David. Naturally, they
were not prepared for a Messiah of Jesus' type who was an embodiment of helplessness. How could such a man claim to be the Messiah who was to restore the house of Israel to their pristine power and glory? Hence their surprise and indignation, to express which they remonstrated with his mother. Why with the mother and not Jesus direct? Because they considered him beneath their notice. Mary herself told them the same thing. "She pointed out to him" as the verse says, "Why do you take me to task about it," she said. "You had better address your objection to the claimant himself." Those elders of the Jewish faith, however, refused to address him. "How should we speak to one who was a child in the cradle," they said. In other words, he was only a boy and it was beneath their dignity to speak to him. This was exactly like the deputation of Meccans that waited on Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, to dissuade his nephew from his mission. In Jesus' case the Jews came to his mother and would not even condescend to take any notice of the claimant whom they considered too insignificant. Nevertheless, Jesus offered to deliver his message, as he was duty bound to do. He said there was nothing to be surprised at. He was the servant of God and his prophet and had been enjoined to do good and so forth. Thus these verses on which the no-father theory of Jesus is often based contain no reference whatsoever to his birth.

I may explain the various words in these verses that seem to have set the commentators on a wrong track. The very first word is tahmiluhoo, which when taken in the sense of "carried him," gives the impression that Jesus must have been a baby when the incident took place. But he could
not possibly be a baby, as the coming verses show. He says he had been made a prophet and given a book for the people’s guidance. Surely no sensible God would entrust a day-old baby with such a mission. Then he says he must say prayers and pay the poor-rate. This also could not be expected of a mere baby. Then again he must do good to his mother which shows that he must have been in a position to do so. No baby can be any help to his mother. The whole misunderstanding has been caused by the word tahmiluhoo.

The word also means “carrying on an animal” and the fact is that while Jesus came to his people to proclaim his mission, he was riding on a donkey, and this was done with a purpose. There was a prophecy concerning the Messiah that he would make his appearance on the back of a donkey. It was to fulfil this prophecy that a donkey was expressly procured for Jesus to ride on. As a matter of fact Jesus had already attained to the age of discretion when he came to his people and announced his mission.

The other words that give a handle to the no-father theory are, “your father was not a bad man nor was your mother a bad woman.” This is taken to imply, “Why have you turned out to be unchaste and given birth to a fatherless child?” This is due to ignorance of Arabic idiom. Any unworthy act on the part of someone may bring upon him the above reproach. In this case the unworthy act, in the eyes of Mary’s people, was the claim of Jesus to Messiahship which appeared to them preposterous.

The words اشارت اليه, “she pointed to him,” i.e., to Jesus to reply to the critics, throw further light on what the real question was about. If it were a charge against Mary’s chastity, her reference to
Jesus would obviously be out of place. She should have herself cleared her position, for she alone could have known about it. A child cannot say whether it was conceived legitimately or otherwise. The mother alone can tell that.

To sum up, the following points are established from the above verses:—

(1) That the question was about something concerning Jesus, not his mother’s chastity or he could not have volunteered to meet the critics.

(2) Mary’s silence shows that Mary’s chastity was not involved or she could not keep quiet. Hence it was not a question of Jesus’ birth.

(3) In the whole of Jesus’ reply there is not a word regarding his mother’s chastity which shows that could not be the charge of the critics.

(4) The reply shows that the objection was to his mission as a prophet, for it is this that he tries to prove.

(5) That Jesus was at the time a grown-up man and the question of his birth at this late hour of the day could not possibly arise.

Thus to base the no-father theory of the birth of Jesus on these verses is absolutely unwarranted for the simple reason that they do not at all touch upon that point.
CHAPTER IV

Why called Ibn-i-Maryam

Jesus has been repeatedly mentioned in the Quran as Ibn-i-Maryam or Son of Mary. It is argued from this that he must have had no father or he would have been called after his father. Furthermore, nowhere in the Quran is there any mention of the father of Jesus, which shows that he had none.

Funny arguments both. The first is based on ignorance of the common rule according to which such epithets are given—especially among the Arabs. A child is called after its father or mother according to the social standing or status of each. If the father is better known than the mother, it is called after him. But in case the mother enjoys a higher position in society, the child is equally nick-named after her name. The progeny of Ali, for instance, are to this day named, not after him, but after his wife, Fatima. The latter was the Prophet's daughter and as such held in greater affection than Ali and hence their offsprings are called Banu Fatima, i.e., the children of Fatima. So in the case of Jesus. His father, Joseph, was a common carpenter whereas his mother, Mary, had a distinct position in society. She had dedicated her life to the Synagogue as a nun, for which she was looked up to with special respect. Even in the sight of God, she enjoyed a
far higher position than her carpenter partner. The Quran refers to her in most complimentary terms. It was therefore more in the fitness of things to call Jesus after her rather than after an obscure fellow of a carpenter.

There is a yet deeper significance in the epithet Ibn-i-Maryam. These two simple words, if properly understood, serve as a bombshell to explode the whole fabric of Christianity. Let us see how Christianity has the doctrine of "original sin" for its very corner-stone. Eve, the common mother of mankind, committed sin and every child, therefore, born of a woman must inherit that sin. There is no running away from it. Sin has become the part and parcel of our nature. How to attain salvation then? It is impossible to get it through leading a virtuous life. That is forbidden to man. Inherited sin clings to him all his life. The justice of God is inexorable and must punish all his sins. That must mean the perdition of the whole of mankind. Divine love, however, comes to the rescue and God tries a subterfuge to satisfy the demands of justice and at the same time to save man. What is that ingenious subterfuge? He sends his own son, Jesus, in the form of a man. He goes to the cross to atone for the sins of all mankind. The demands of justice are thus satisfied by killing an innocent man on the cross. No other man can serve as an atonement because one sinner cannot atone for the sins of others. Jesus was God's own dear son, and as such sinless, and hence fit to offer himself as atonement for the rest of mankind. This is Christianity in a nutshell.

The epithet Ibn-i-Maryam explodes the whole of this man-made myth at one stroke. Jesus was the son of Mary, we are reminded, who was a woman and no child born of a woman can, accord-
ing to the Church itself, be free from the stain of sin. Jesus must, therefore, have shared the common inheritance of mankind and as such he too cannot be acceptable to God as a scapegoat. A sinless person alone can serve that purpose. The word Ibn-i-Maryam has thus been yoked to the name of Jesus to serve as a constant reminder that being a woman-born he could not be an atonement for sinful humanity. If, however, Jesus is regarded as sinless notwithstanding his having been born of a woman, the conclusion follows that no sin is transmitted through woman. If so, then all men, whom the Church considers as having been born in sin for the mere reason that they are born of women, must be sinless too. And if man is sinless, atonement of Jesus is uncalled-for. He is as good as Jesus and fit to work out his own salvation through leading a virtuous life. There is no hereditary sin now to keep him from rising God-ward. Thus in either case the atonement-of-Jesus theory is disproved. In one case it is futile, Jesus himself being a sinner, in the other it is redundant, every man being just as sinless as Jesus.

As I have endeavoured to show in my past instalments on the subject, the grounds on which the no-father theory of Jesus’ birth is based are one and all of the flimsiest possible nature. The fact that the Quran speaks of Jesus as the “son of Mary” whereas it makes no mention whatever of his father is advanced as another argument in favour of his fatherless birth. If a father were at all there, the Quran would have said so. But the Quran is silent on the point and hence the conclusion that he must have been born without a father. Could flimsiness go any further? This is a striking instance of how a superstitious frame of mind gets hold of a Muslim whenever he comes to
think or talk of Jesus. The most commonplace things are magnified and mystified into something extraordinary and mysterious. Where is the cause for surprise if the Quran makes no mention of Jesus’ father? Why give such an ordinary thing the halo of a mystery? There are other prophets, besides Jesus, mentioned in the Quran, whose fathers are not at all mentioned. Is it sound logic to infer from this that they were all born in some supernatural manner without the agency of human fathers? Our Holy Prophet’s father is nowhere mentioned either, but we know for certain that he was the son of Abdullah. Though there is no specific mention of Jesus’ father, a general reference to that effect is met with in the Quran. Just consider the verse:

“...And Zacharias and John and Jesus and Elias; every one was of the good...And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them on the right path—” (vi. 86, 87).

A reference to the verses in the Quran will show that some eighteen prophets have been mentioned here, and the word اباؤاهم (their fathers) has been used for all of them, including Jesus.

The Hadith too records clear reference to the effect that there was no peculiarity about the birth of Jesus. According to an authentic source, when the Christian deputation from Najran came to meet the Prophet, the dispute turned on the divinity of Jesus and his sonship. The Christians pointed to the supernatural birth of Jesus as a proof of his divinity. The Prophet rebutted this argument by saying: “Do you not know that Jesus was taken into conception by a woman just as any other woman takes into conception?” Now the point is, how does every other woman conceive? The normal course obviously is that conception takes
place through male agency. And yet again, the Prophet said: "Do you not know that no child is born but it has a likeness to its father?" In other words, fathership can be traced from the son's appearance. If the son is human in form, the father must have been human too. Jesus was human in appearance; hence his father must have been a man too, and not God Who is formless. Jesus was thus not the son of God, but the son of man in the literal sense of the word.

The sum and substance of the Prophet's logic with which he met his Christian disputants is that Jesus was born in the normal human way and hence he was human. Applying the same logic to the premises advanced by the upholders of the no-father theory, the conclusion that must follow is that Jesus was divine. The Christians argued with the Prophet on the strength of this very point which some Muslims advance to-day—viz., that Jesus was divine because his birth was supernatural. The Prophet controverted their very premises; for if these premises are granted, the conclusion that Jesus was divine becomes inevitable. Hence the Prophet denied their very premises. Jesus was born in quite the normal way, he argued and hence he was human. It is strange that whereas the no-father school of Muslims accept the Christians' premises,—viz., that Jesus was born without a father, they refuse to go the whole logical length and admit the conclusion too—viz., that Jesus was divine. They cannot have it both ways. If they must have the premises of the Christians, they are logically bound to have their conclusion too. The Prophet adopted the wisest course by rejecting their very premises and held that Jesus was born in a perfectly normal way.
CHAPTER V

Mary taken by surprise when given by the angel the good news of a son

I have already discussed some verses of the Quran upon which the fatherless birth of Jesus is based and shown that these have been utterly misinterpreted. In this chapter I wish to clear up another case of similar misinterpretation. These verses run thus:

"She (Mary) said, How can there be a child born to me while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste? The (angel) said, Even so it is. Thy Lord hath said, It is easy for Me and that We may make him a sign for the people and a mercy from Us and this is a settled fact." — (19: 20, 21).

There are so many things in these verses that apparently lend support to the no-father theory. According to the popular version, the angel consol ed Mary that she need have no anxiety. Never mind, if she had not been touched by man. It was easy for God to dispense with that necessity and give her a child without that condition being fulfilled. This view is further strengthened by the words, "and that We may make him a sign for the people." Jesus, it is contended, would not be a sign if born in the common way. It is his extraordinary birth that alone can make him a sign.

To begin with, let me say at once, that so far as God’s power to create a child without the intervention of a male agency is concerned, there could
be no two opinions. He is Almighty and can do whatever He pleases. But the point at issue is not whether God can do so but whether he does so. He can create a child out of air, out of nothing. No one can question His unlimited power. That is beside the point. The question is, What is His law in this respect as laid down in the Quran? We must, therefore, be on our guard against confusing these two issues which are quite distinct. Another point of confusion is the Divine assurance to Mary: “It is easy for me.” The question is, What was this assurance about? Was it about God’s power to create a child without a father? Was Mary so weak of faith as to doubt His Almightiness? Or was it an assurance about the obstacle mentioned by Mary, viz., that she had not been touched by man?

These are two most important issues that must be cleared up and obviously it is all a question of interpretation. For correct interpretation, the safest course is to follow the rule given by the Quran itself. The Quran tells us that it consists of two kinds of verses. There are verses which are muhkamat (firm) and there are verses which are mutashabihat (figurative). The first are called the ummul kitab, i.e., the fundamental principles of the Book. They are couched in plain language and are free from any equivocation. They are susceptible of only one single interpretation. The mutashabihat, however, can have more than one meaning and must, therefore, be interpreted in the light of the fundamentals. Any interpretation which goes against a fundamental must be rejected. The fundamental principle of procreation, as I have discussed at length in my past instalments, is that a child is born of a couple—a male and a female. And the Quran elsewhere tells us that
the laws of God are immutable. It follows, therefore, that the law of procreation from a male and a female must be unalterable too. The verse under discussion must thus be interpreted in the light of this law which forbids that there should be any child without a father. The suggestion therefore that the Divine assurance to Mary was about giving birth to a fatherless child must be at once ruled out as inconsistent with the Divine law laid down in the Quran. When Mary was told, “it is easy for Me,” the implication was not that God would change His established law and a child would be born to her without her being touched by man. The implication was that it was easy for God to remove the obstacles that were there in the way of Mary being so touched, i.e., her marriage. This obstacle was insurmountable to Mary’s mind. She had dedicated herself to the synagogue and as such she could not marry. Naturally, therefore, when she got the happy tidings of the birth of a child, she was taken aback and mentioned the difficulty. How could it be, she meant to say, when it is forbidden to me under the sacred law to enter into a matrimonial alliance? God’s assurance came to console her that the difficulty was easy to remove, that she would marry and get a child.

Mary’s own words are significant enough. She could not conceive of a child without a male. She knew the Divine law well enough and, therefore, mentioned this very obstacle in the way. And it is to this same obstacle that Divine assurance relates. It is true, according to Mosaic law, there was no such obstacle in the way of her marriage. Any one dedicated to the synagogue was free to marry. But as the Quran informs us many ascetic practices had found their way into the synagogue —i.e., “Asceticism which they have
innovated." And one such ascetic innovation was that no one dedicated to the service of the synagogue could marry. Mary was thus quite justified in her surprise at the news that she would have a son. She was not unchaste, she said, and had not been touched by man so far. Nor could she possibly expect to be so touched in the future, having dedicated her life as a nun. The angel said, Well, even so it is as you fear, i.e., your difficulties are no doubt there, but God says He would remove these difficulties and you would get duly married. And God did bring about ways and means which made it possible for Mary to marry Joseph.

I have discussed above a verse of the Quran in which Mary is given the good news that a son would be born to her. She expresses her surprise. How could it possibly be, she says? I have not been touched by man so far, nor do I expect to be so touched, being a nun. The angel laid her doubts at rest, saying it was easy for God. This, as I have shown, means no more than that God would remove the obstacles of custom that were there in the way of her marriage.

In support of this interpretation, I would call attention to an analogous verse in the Quran concerning Zacharias when he, like Mary, was given the happy tidings of the birth of a male child. He expresses the same surprise, saying:

"My Lord! How can there be a child born to me while my wife has become barren and I myself have reached the limit of old age"—(19:8).

The reply to this surprise was the same as in the case of Mary:

"The Lord says, It is easy for Me. We created you before this while you were a nonentity"—(19:9).
Here the consensus of the opinions of commentators is that the words "It is easy for Me" mean that the obstacles in the way of childbirth in consequence of the wife's sterility and old age would be removed. Not a single commentator has sought to read any mystery into these words. If viewed with the same superstitious frame of mind the verse contains a good deal to be twisted into something fantastic. God says it is easy for Me. Zacharias, therefore, must have got a child in some extraordinary way. God can do everything. He can create a child out of air, water, dust, tree, anything and everything—even out of nothing. As a matter of fact the concluding portion of the verse reminding Zacharias that he himself was born out of nothing lends a good deal of support to some such sort of interpretation. Yet not a single commentator has taken it in that light. It is simply taken to mean that the natural debilities standing in the way of childbirth would be removed.

When, however, exactly the same words are used of Mary, superstition at once gets hold of their minds and they try to fish for something unusual in it. The Quran itself mentions elsewhere in the case of Zacharias what the difficulty was. "We cured for him his wife," says the Book. Obviously, therefore, the reference was not to whether God can or cannot create in an unusual way, but to the physical defect of Zacharias' wife. "It is easy for Me," refers to this defect. God says, We cured her. This should also guide us in the case of Mary. There, too, the words, "It is easy for Me," should mean just this, "I will remove the obstacles in the way of your marriage." Everything in the case of Zacharias took place in quite the normal course. The words are exactly the same in the case of Mary. Why seek abnormality there?
Love of the novel, however, has a great hold on man’s mind. Every word used in connection with the birth of Jesus is clothed with some sort of mystery. In the verse above-mentioned the words نَجِعَهُ اِلَّا الْنَّاسِ i.e., “that We may make him (Jesus) a sign for the people” are also thus exploited. Jesus’ birth, it is contended, must have been out of the usual or there would be no “sign for the people,” as the Quran says. It is only a miraculous thing that can strike the popular mind and serve as a sign. This again is due to lack of knowledge of the Quranic phraseology. According to the Quran, everything in the Universe from the sun to the smallest atom is a “sign” of God. Says the Book: “Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there is a sign for the people of understanding.” Every prophet is spoken of as a “sign” of God unto his people, in so far as his life serves as a standing testimony to the existence of God.

Again, it passes my understanding where would the “sign for the people” come in, even if it be granted that Jesus was born without a father. It could be a “sign” to Mary alone who heard the angel and conceived without a male. But it is an experience limited to Mary alone. How were other people to know, finding Mary pregnant, that this was the work of the Holy Ghost? Rather than make Jesus a “sign,” the suggested birth would give him the stigma every fatherless child carries.
PART II

BIRTH OF JESUS

In the Light of the Gospels

CHAPTER VI

Jesus called son of David through Joseph—never once denied when called son of Joseph—his mother's testimony

Sometime back I discussed this very question, the birth of Jesus, in a series of articles,* proving to the hilt that this gentle Teacher of Galilee was born in the common course of nature as every other mortal is, and in no supernatural manner as superstition and credulity would have us believe. This I did in the light of the Quran, taking the Quranic verses on the question as my data. Unfortunately, the popular belief among the Musalmans also imitates the Christian superstition that Jesus was born without the instrumentality of a human father. I say imitates because most likely the idea was imported into Islam by the Christian converts to the faith. It

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was, therefore, necessary, in the interest of truth, to explode this false theory which there is nothing in the Quran to support. On the contrary, there are a number of verses which are positive on the point, showing that Jesus could not have been born without a human father. This disposes of the age-long contention of Christians that the Musalmans are bound, by their own Book, to consider Jesus as superior to Muhammad, being the son of God and as such alone capable of being the saviour of mankind. In the present discourse I would attempt to convince the Christians on the authority of their own scriptures, the Gospels, that Jesus was the son of man, not of God, and as such the very corner-stone of their faith falls to the ground.

The Christian doctrine as to the immaculate conception of Jesus is based on the well-known prophecy of Isaiah as to the advent of one Immanuel. It runs thus:—

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

“Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.”—(Isaiah 7:14, 15).

According to the Christian belief this prophecy of the Old Testament found literal fulfilment in the person of Jesus. Matthew has a rather tell-tale description of Jesus’ birth. It seems a deliberate attempt to fit in with this prophecy somehow. It is a very clumsy attempt though, as we will show, self-contradictory and self-betraying.

Let us first of all see how far the rest of the Gospels support the version of Matthew. Obviously, if Jesus was really born without a human father, it was the most momentous event of his life and no biographer of his could afford to pass over it in
silence. Now what is the testimony of the three other Gospels in this connection? They are all at one on the point that Jesus was the son of Joseph, the carpenter. There is not a word in these three, about his virgin birth. My first argument in support of this contention is the genealogy of Jesus. In this genealogy as given both in Matthew and Luke, Jesus has been called the son of David:—

"The book of generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."—(Matthew 1:1).

"And the Lord shall give unto him (Jesus) the throne of his father, David."—(Luke 1:32).

As a look at the genealogical table both in Matthew and Luke would show, Jesus' descent to David has been traced through Joseph. Joseph has been shown to be a direct descendant to David and for that reason Jesus is called the son of David. Joseph is the one connecting link. Joseph must therefore have been the father of Jesus or the very genealogical table is absurd. If Joseph was not the real father of Jesus, it would be stupid to trace his descent through him. He is the only connecting link between Jesus and David. Remove the link as do those who say that Jesus was the son of God and forthwith you believe the entire description of Jesus' genealogy as set forth at such detail in Matthew and Luke. If Joseph was not really the man of whose seed Jesus was born, the mere fact that he was the husband of Mary would not justify such a genealogy either. The fact of genealogy through Joseph is thus conclusive on the point. Jesus must have been the offspring of Joseph, just as any human child is the offspring of its father.

Then, again, I would quote verses to show that in his own day Jesus was commonly known as the son of Joseph and called so and he never once took
exception to it. Here are the verses:

"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brothers, James and Joses, and Simon and Judas?

"And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?"

—(Matthew 13:55, 56.)

Jesus should have at once objected. The people were surprised how a common fellow, one of them, held such high claims. He should at least have reminded them that he was not a common man. Was not his birth uncommon? Was he not the son of God? An argument of this sort was the only right thing to remove the people's surprise. And if there were any grounds for it, Jesus would not have missed it. The fact, however, that he never once directly or indirectly took the slightest exception to it, shows beyond a shadow of doubt that as a matter of fact he was the son of Joseph and rightly known as such. Neither Jesus nor any of his contemporary people had the least notion that he was the son of any other than Joseph, the plain carpenter of their village.

Likewise John says:

"The Jews then murmured at him because he said I am the bread which came down from heaven:

"And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it, then, that he said, I came down from heaven?"—(John 6:41, 42.)

What does Jesus say in reply to this? Not that he was not the son of Joseph but of God. He simply explains what he meant by the bread from heaven. That he was the son of Joseph was only a truism and hence no refutation or explanation on that point. Every time that people object to his mission, they do so on the ground of his being
a common man of common parentage. In case Jesus was the son of God, even in his own knowledge, he could not possibly hold his peace on this most vital point, the very pivot of the whole controversy between him and his opponents. His silence, however, seals the fact once for all that neither in his own mind nor in the minds of his people was there the least notion as to his supernatural birth.

The testimony of Mary, however, should carry the greatest weight on a point like this. She was the mother of Jesus. She was directly concerned as to how exactly things had happened. With her it was a personal experience and she alone could tell how she had conceived—whether by Joseph or God. According to her testimony, too, Jesus was the child of Joseph. Here is what she says after a long search after Jesus in company with her husband, Joseph:

“And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him: Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.”

—(Luke 2:48.)

The Gospels of John and Mark contain not a word as to Jesus’ virgin birth. John’s excessive love for the Master is well known and he would have been the last person to omit an event like this in his master’s life which was sure to lend him Divine halo. He is silent because in his day the idea did not at all exist. Says he:

“Philip findeth Nathania and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

—(John 1:45.)
CHAPTER VII

Matthew's Self-contradiction—Luke's "As was supposed"

In the last chapter I attempted to show on the strength of quotations from the Gospels that the idea of virgin birth had no existence whatever in the lifetime of Jesus nor when the Gospels were recorded. His contemporary people call him the son of Joseph and not once the son of God. Jesus himself never once takes exception to being so called. His mother too calls Joseph as his father. The Gospel writers also connect him with David through Joseph. Such is the overwhelming evidence in the shape of so many Gospel verses in black and white—all converging on the one point that in the beginning nobody ever dreamed that Jesus was born in some supernatural manner, that Joseph was regarded his father, by himself, his mother and everybody else. The virgin-birth figment is thus a fabrication and interpolation of a much later date, to suit, as I would point out, a definite plan.

I am not unaware that Matthew does give a description of the virgin birth of Jesus, how he was conceived before Joseph and Mary came together and so on. But anyone who has the least knack of reading between the lines will not fail at once to detect how these lines have crept in. The Gospel itself gives the explanation:
"Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall give forth a son and they shall call him Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us"—(1:22, 23).

Obviously, the attempt has been somehow to make the prophecy of the Old Testament fit in. "Now all this was done" should indeed be, "Now all this was inserted," for, as I will show, it was at a much later stage that these passages came in. That they could not possibly be the words of Matthew himself is apparent enough. The very same first page on which we find this description of miraculous birth of Jesus, also contains the genealogy of Jesus. In the genealogy, as already discussed, Jesus has been called the "son of David," for the only reason that Joseph was in the direct descent of that Prophet. The genealogy thus makes Jesus the son of Joseph and this could not be a correct description at all if Jesus were not born of the seed of Joseph. Nevertheless on the same page is mentioned the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus—a glaring self-contradiction of which a saintly man like Matthew could not be accused. One of these descriptions, therefore, shall have to be thrown out as a later interpolation and the choice must fall on the miraculous birth which carries its own evidence of being a later addition. "Now all this was done," the description says, that an old prophecy might be fulfilled in Jesus. There was a purpose in this case but none in the case of the genealogy. Hence, obviously, it is the virgin-birth story that must be discarded as an interpolation. Matthew's hands are clean of this dishonesty. He faithfully set forth what he knew Jesus to be, "the son of David," as he tells us, through Joseph the carpenter.
Besides the genealogy, Matthew in still clearer words calls Jesus the son of Joseph:

"Is he not the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brothers, James and Joses and Simon and Judas?"—(13:55).

The carpenter's son! What room for any doubt is left after such clear words? If the miraculous birth story, as given in chapter I, were really from the pen of St. Matthew, the same pen could not call him "the carpenter's son." This is the second point of self-contradiction. In two places we have Jesus as the son of Joseph and only in one place as the son of God. The only reasonable way out of it is to reject the latter as spurious. The reason, as given in the very context, is obvious:

"Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

"Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son"—(1:22, 23.)

Higher criticism admits that the Gospel of St. Matthew is based on that of St. Mark. Now Mark has not a word as to Jesus' birth. Matthew, therefore, could not be the author of the virgin-birth story.

Now I will deal with another loophole contrived to support the virgin-birth fiction. This occurs in Luke 2:23:

"And Jesus himself began to be thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph which was the son of Heli."

Much capital is made out of the bracketed words, as was supposed. Their worth is apparent from the very fact of their being put within parenthesis. Higher criticism is positive on the conclusion that the original did not contain these words which were put in later on and hence put within brackets to mark them out from the original.
There is, however, a yet more tangible proof that the words "as was supposed" could not be the words of St. Luke himself. They imply that the saint himself did not share the popular belief and considered Jesus not the son of Joseph but of God. Why, then, should he at all proceed with the genealogy and trace his descent through man? Through Joseph and David and Abraham, he carries the table on till he comes to the last link:

"Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam" (3:38).

Mark the words, the son of Adam! If, according to St. Luke, Jesus was the son of God why at all trace his descent right back to Adam, the common father of humanity? The whole description would be a mere waste of ink and paper. He should have said in plain words that Jesus was the son of God. Instead of this, however, he says in so many words that he was the son of Adam. Hence the words in bracket, "as was supposed," cannot consistently be his own words.

Assuming, however, for the sake of argument, that these are the words of St. Luke, the whole thing comes to this. St. Luke says, although in his own days Jesus was known to everybody as the son of Joseph, yet I don't agree. Now the question arises which shall we have—contemporary evidence or St. Luke's own view? That contemporary evidence is the only conclusive authority on a question like this is beyond dispute. The people who lived with Jesus every day of their life were certainly in a better position than St. Luke, who came much later, to tell whose son Jesus was. Luke's personal view must, therefore, carry no weight. What, after all, was his source of information? There is only one source, the source of contemporary evidence and that St. Luke contradicts.
Did he derive his information through Divine inspiration? In that case he should have clearly corrected the popular belief. He should have said something to this effect: though the people in his own day considered Jesus the son of Joseph, they were mistaken; he was the son of God. Rather than say anything like this, he gives in detail the human genealogy of Jesus and links him up with Adam. Not once he speaks of any virgin or virgin conception and so forth.

Two conclusions, therefore, are irresistible: Firstly, that the words "as was supposed" could not consistently be those of St. Luke. Secondly, that, even assuming them to be Luke’s, they being the contemporary testimony, constitute a conclusive testimony as to Jesus’ human parentage.

The fact is that neither St. Matthew nor St. Luke are responsible for the words lending support to the virgin birth. They are interpolations of a much later period—the period when the Gospels were being rendered into Greek. There were good reasons to clothe Jesus with the halo of a virgin birth and make of him a son-God—weighty reasons of State. This will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER VIII

Virgin birth an ancient myth—son-God really sun-God—Virgin-birth story a later interpolation—why coined

In the preceding pages I have shown, from the evangelic record itself, that the virgin-birth idea had no existence in the lifetime of Jesus nor in the day of the Gospel writers. The story was coined at a much later period and incorporated in the Gospel. "There were good reasons," as I have already stated, "to clothe Jesus with the halo of a virgin birth and make of him a son-God—weighty reasons of State." These reasons I wish to disclose in this chapter.

To properly understand the coinage of this virgin-birth story with regard to Jesus, it is necessary to know the whole chain of which it formed just one link. There was, in the first place, nothing new in it. It had come down from times immemorial and was prevalent amongst many an ancient sun-worshipping people who looked upon their gods as the incarnations of the sun. Apollo and Dionysus, two Greek gods, were supposed to be sun-incarnates. And so was Hercules among the Romans, Mithra, among the Persians, Adonis among the Syrians, Osiris, Isis and Horus in Egypt and Baal and Astrate in Babel. They were all sun-gods and according to an eminent authority, Dr. Carpenter, they had the following features
common to them all:—

1. Every one of these sun-gods was born on or about the 25th of December, the day of the Christian festival of Christmas.

2. Every one was born of a virgin.

3. Every one was born in a cave or some underground chamber.

4. Every one lived a life of suffering for mankind.

5. Every one was called by such epithets as intercessor, salvation-giver, healer and light.

6. Every one was overpowered in this life by the forces of Darkness.

7. Every one went underground where Hell is.

8. Every one rose again from the dead, went up to Heaven and was worshipped by the people.

9. Every one founded a school of saints and a church in which people were baptized and admitted as disciples.

10. Every one has his memory commemorated through the Lord’s Supper.

A glance of comparison will show that the present-day church scheme of dogma and ritual is an imitation of the old sun-worshipping cults. Every one of these mythological touches has been added to the portrait of Jesus. It is obvious on the face of it that the Israelite Prophet Jesus, the son of a humble village carpenter, has been made to sit on one of these ancient pedestals of sun-gods with all the paraphernalia of the ancient superstitious beliefs attached to him. And among other things, it was necessary to give him virgin birth too, which was done.

It was in the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine that Jesus underwent all this metamorphosis and from a poor mortal became a son-God. There is evidence strong enough to throw light on
this. The idea springs into being at the time when the Bible was rendered into Greek. Before that there is no trace of it. As already shown, the whole story is based on the prophecy in Isaiah:

"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel"—(7:14).

Now higher criticism has made a revelation with regard to this prophecy that knocks the whole bottom out of the virgin-story. Such an eminent authority as Dr. Davidson's research on the point has come to the conclusion that the word "virgin" is a mistranslation of the Hebrew word in the original. The original word here was *Alamma* which means only "a grown-up woman." In Greek it was rendered as *Parthenos* which means "Virgin." And this, as I will just show, was done with a purpose. It shows beyond doubt that the virgin-birth idea crept in at the time when Christianity put on the Greek garment. A clear text in the Hebrew original was distorted from a "grown-up woman" into a "virgin." This tampering with the Old Testament text should suffice to explain the incorporation in Matthew of the virgin-birth account which is in such a clear conflict with the rest of the evidence on that point.

But the question remains why all this was done. Why at all were such liberties taken with sacred writings as to twist one word so as to make it mean quite another? True, it was done when Christianity embarked on its career among the Romans of old. But why? It is not difficult to see the reason. It is a fact of history that the Roman king Constantine was the one man who, with his conversion, made Christianity what all of a sudden it became. At a single leap it became the State religion and the religion of a whole people. But history also tells that this royal convert was little enamoured
of the gentle teacher of Galilee or his teachings. He cared not a hang what religion to have or not to have. In his conversion, he was inspired solely by reasons of State. This is admitted by orthodox Christian critics themselves. Constantine was a man of despotic bent of mind and wanted to rule as such. Such a rule, however, was impossible in the democratic atmosphere which then prevailed in Rome. So he hit upon a stratagem. Roman populace was at the time divided into two groups. There were those who were Constantine's equals and rivals, the people of the aristocratic classes. They were all worshippers of the sun-god Apollo. The others were those who had generation after generation been used to a life of slavery. They were almost wholly Christians. Constantine's ambition could not fail to detect in this section the right sort of material to bend to his own will and use them as tools in his designs of despotism. To rally these classes around him, the surest way was to embrace their religion—Christianity. But it was no easy task to renounce the old inherited and royal religion and substitute it by another. A via media, however, was not hard to find out. The old cult of sun-worship might be retained in every dogma and detail. Only Jesus was to be put on the pedestal of Apollo. This was done. Both the sections of people were satisfied. The upper classes saw no change in their customary forms of worship except that the name of Apollo was replaced by that of Jesus. The common slaves, the Christians, were over-joyed that the Emperor should embrace their faith, even though in name. Besides they were an ignorant people and did not know much of their religion. The mere fact that Jesus was now worshipped was enough to make them devoted to Constantine's rule, however
despotic. Thus it was that an ancient sun-worship cult was caught hold of and labelled as Christianity. Jesus, consequently, was clothed with all the paraphernalia of that cult, including virgin-birth.

To do things thoroughly, however, it was necessary to make this borrowed cult put on Biblical feathers. The Hebrew Alamma, a "grown-up woman," of Isaiah was therefore rendered into Greek Parethnos, "virgin." And a few verses were thrust on the text in Matthew as regards Jesus' birth. Likewise in Luke, the words "as was supposed" were added where Jesus is spoken of as the son of Joseph. These were only so many links in a chain forged by greed and ambition coupled with statecraft. Jesus of the church is only Apollo in borrowed plumes and if to-day he is supposed to have been born of a virgin and considered the son of God, it has nothing to do with the noble soul who lived and preached in Palestine. That true Jesus now stands out clear, in the midst of all this mist and myth that selfishness and superstition have woven around him. He was a plain man, the son of a plain village carpenter, Joseph, and a plain noble woman, Mary.
CHAPTER IX

Emmanuel means "God with us"—Eli Eli Lama sabachthani—i.e., Fear thee not, surely God is with us—prophecy literally fulfilled in the Prophet Muhammad.

I believe this book would be incomplete unless more light is thrown on the prophecy of Isaiah foretelling the advent of one Emmanuel. Our Christian brethren have tried, but vainly as I have conclusively proved in the previous chapters, that this Emmanuel was no other than Jesus. Their one argument for such a conclusion is that, according to the said prophecy, Emmanuel must be one born of a virgin and Jesus was so born. It has already been shown that this was a mistranslation of the original Hebrew word, alamma, which only means a grown-up woman, not a virgin. Thus when the virgin-birth condition has turned out to be a fabrication, Jesus ceases ipso facto to be Emmanuel. For the only ground on which he was so called, the virgin-birth, falls to the ground. Jesus, therefore, was not the Emmanuel of the prophecy of Isaiah.

"God With Us"

Scrutiny of the word Emmanuel itself opens up a new vista of light on the question. The word is a compound one which literally means, "God
with us." This exactly is the meaning given in Matthew 1:23—

"They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, 'God with us.'"

Here, then, is an unmistakable clue to identify who Emmanuel was. The Christians consider virgin birth to be such a clue and such a mark of identification. That theory explodes; for higher criticism has shown that virgin is a mistranslation of alamma. Now the only sure mark with which to locate Emmanuel is the attribute, "God with us." To explore this avenue of quest, let us, therefore, see whether according to this test Jesus stands any chance of being identified as Emmanuel.

"My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me!"

Emmanuel thus is a prophetic word and carries its own identification. The man foretold must be such as must have this "God with us" as his distinguishing badge. In other words, he must have an unshakable faith in God and God's help. This faith should be so ingrained in his very being that it should forsake him no more than the blood in his veins. The test of such a faith, obviously, requires the darkest and most trying of hours. Under common circumstances, in the daily routine of life, one can display faith in God in the face of smaller troubles. But when there comes a time when all hopes are cut off, and one's doom seems a matter of a second or two, the firmest of faith often gives way before the enveloping gloom of despondency unrelieved by a single ray of hope. It is at such a moment that the true test of "God with us" can be held and the true measure of one's conviction in God gauged.

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When put in such a crucible, I regret, we find Jesus hopelessly wanting. One such moment did arrive in his life. This was when he was put on the cross. It was then that he should have given proof of his being Emmanuel and shouted from the cross, "God is with me." But we find him give quite an opposite account of himself. He says, Ἐλι Ἐλι, λάμα σαβακθάνη, i.e., "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me!"

A man with such little faith in God cannot very well claim to be Emmanuel, "God with us." And it seems as if there was Providence working behind this which made Jesus utter these historic words from the cross. It seems as if Divine purpose planned a refutation of the Christian claim from Jesus' own lips. It is interesting to note in this connection that whereas the mist of doubt and un-authenticity envelops almost the whole of the Gospel record, there is a universal agreement on this one verse as being genuine and Jesus' own. This cannot be said of any other verse in the Gospels. This is the only verse, according to all critics, that has come down to us exactly as the words came out of Jesus' own lips. Divine purpose was obviously at work to preserve it, so that the prophecy of Emmanuel should not be misapplied to Jesus.

"Fear Thee not. Surely God is With Us"

Now turn to another picture and you find a wonderful—nay literal—manifestation of Emmanuel, "God with us." A like moment when all seemed to be up, does occur in the life of the Prophet Muhammad as well. A secret gang resolves upon putting an end to his life within his own four walls. The Prophet, in the dark of the night, makes good his escape, and at daybreak, takes
shelter, along with his faithful companion, Abu Bakr, in a cave at a distance of 3 miles from Mecca. Getting scent of it, the blood-thirsty would-be assassins take up the trail and trace the refugees right up to the cave. The expert guides positively declare that the wanted man is within the cave, where to his footprints have been traced. One peep inside and the Prophet is no more. The assassins’ drawn swords would be on him. There is neither a way of escape. He has been cornered beyond all possibility of a rescue or an outlet. Abu Bakr fears that the last moment has come. His heart is filled with grief and concern for his beloved Master. And, quite humanly, he gives vent to that feeling. Forthwith come the words as if with the flash of lightning: "لا تتقنون إن الله معنا"—“Fear thee not. Surely God is with us.”

What a testimony of facts as to who Emmanuel really was—not Jesus who cried in the hour of trial, “My God, why hast Thou forsaken me,” but Muhammad who in a like moment of extreme danger and utter hopelessness exclaims with the deepest conviction: God with us! Exactly the very words, it must be noted, of the prophecy. If the Prophet were to say the same in Hebrew, he would have repeated the exact word of Isaiah—Emmanuel.

The Spider’s Web

What a manifestation of “God with us!” Was it a mere vain brag or did events justify that God really was with the Prophet? What was there to prevent the assassins from taking the fatal peep in? Nothing more vulnerable than a spider’s web, the weakest protections on earth! History records a similar scene of “God with us” in the case of Moses when he was pursued by the Pharaoh
and his hosts. But then a whole sea of water was made to intervene between him and his assailants. Here the bulwark is nothing stronger than a mere spider's web that any passing breeze might waft away. Yet this weakest of protections becomes an iron wall because God's hand comes in. The guides say the Prophet must be inside the cave. One of the pursuers says this cannot be, for in that case that web should not be there. Another man, a grazer of sheep, says that he sees the web daily there. What a manifestation of Divine presence and direct intervention! Not one of them proceeds a step further to remove the web and have just a peep inside. Nor does it strike any one that it does not take a spider long to repair its web and the one there may have been made after the Prophet's entry.

Thus the prophecy of Emmanuel, "God with us," found a twofold fulfilment in the life of the Prophet Muhammad. In the most critical moment in exactly the same words, though in Arabic, he gave proof of his firm, unshakable faith in God being with him. Furthermore, subsequent events confirmed the fact of God being there with him; for a mere spider's web became an iron wall and saved him. It is thus clear as broad daylight that the prophecy of Isaiah as to the advent of Emmanuel found literal fulfilment in the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

He it was who said, "God is with us," and facts bore his claim out. Jesus, on the other hand, confessed that God was not with him. Thus, beyond a shadow of doubt, Muhammad, not Jesus, was the Emmanuel foretold.