

THE MYSTERY OF JESUS

CONTRADICTORY VIEWS ABOUT HIS EXISTENCE

by :

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History of mankind shows that the tendency to make myths forms an important element of human nature. Man has from time to time and in all the nations created myths by personifying natural powers and deifying historical personalities. Many prophets who appeared in the different parts of the world to lead men to One God were, after their deaths, themselves raised to the divine pedestal. All sorts of mythical and fabulous tales were invented about them, so that the historical facts were, in most cases, completely submerged and forgotten. Even Jesus, the prophet of the Israelites, who appeared just two thousand years ago, was made into a god. His story, as it has come down to us, contains very little apart from fabulous tales of virgin-birth, miracles, expelling devils to cure diseases, apparitions, supernatural voices, bodily resurrection and ascension into heaven. The accounts of his life and teachings contained in the Bible are unreliable and fragmentary. Very little can be said about him with certainty. Different sections of humanity hold highly divergent views about the chief events of the life of Jesus. Some go to the extent of denying even historical existence. It is difficult to see how a man whose life and teachings are shrouded in such mystery can be held up as an ideal religious teacher or a model for human beings.

The Historicity of Jesus

To begin with, scholars are not agreed even on the question of the existence of Jesus. Several important scholars have argued that Jesus of the Gospels and epistles is a purely mythical character. They point out that testimony other than Christian to the existence of Jesus is wanting in the first century, that the second century evidence cannot be shown to be independent of Christian sources, that Christian literature so abounds in forgeries that none of it can be taken to trust. Gibbon states the case ironically, but correctly, in the famous fifteenth chapter of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* :

“How shall we excuse the supine inattention of a Pagan and Philosophic world to those evidences which were represented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reason out to their senses ? During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of Nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the Church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and pursuing the ordinary occupation of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history. It happened during the life-time of Seneca and elder Pliny, who must have experienced immediate effects, or received the earliest intelligence, of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of Nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets, and

eclipses, which his indefatigable curiosity could collect. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe".¹

The total silence of the contemporary writers about Jesus has led J. M. Robertson to deny the historicity of the founder of Christianity. In his book *Christianity and Mythology*, he traces the origin of Christianity to a primitive cult of Joshua, a Palestinian deity with affinities to Tammuz, Dionysus, Osiris, etc., the central feature of which was a spring festival at which a human victim in royal robes was killed and eaten that his body and blood might bring salvation to the community. In course of years the human sacrifice was replaced by a mimic crucifixion and resurrection. After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in 70 C. E. the myth of the saviour-god, Joshua, became fused with the prevalent Jewish dream of a deliverer who should put an end to the existing world-order and set up the "Kingdom of God". The cult became propagandist and admitted converts by baptism in the name of "Joshua the Messiah", which translated into Greek, became Jeseus Christes—Jesus Christ. At this stage the figure of Pilate was introduced into the ritual drama as a representative of the hated Romans, and the story acquired an historical setting. The Jewish rabbis banned the movement as heretical. As a result it addressed itself to the Gentiles and became more and more anti-Jewish. Propaganda required a literature. This was supplied partly by the amplification of existing Jewish books, as in the case of the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*; partly by theological tracts in

1. Gibbon ; *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Modern Library edition, P. P. 443-44

epistolary form, such as those ascribed to Paul ; and partly by casting the ritual drama of the Joshua crucifixion and resurrection of Joshua the Messiah—Christ—into the narrative form which it assumes in the Gospels. Robertson thus declares the Gospel story to be purely mythical. He does not, however, deny the possibility that some historical figure or figures may have contributed elements to the story of Jesus ; but he denies that the Gospels afford any material for the biography of such a figure. Christianity cannot be traced to a personal founder who taught as reported in the Gospels and was put to death in the circumstances there recorded.²

Couchand also regards Jesus as a mythical character, but he gives a different explanation of the origin of the Christ myth. He holds the Nazoraeans, the followers of John the Baptist, who lived in ascetic communities, fasted and prayed, and initiated new members by baptism, and awaited the advent of the Messiah, as responsible for the creation of the Christ-myth. In his books, *The Enigma of Jesus* and *The Creation of Christ*, Couchand states that a study of the prophetic writings, notably of Isaiah 53, convinced some of the Nazoraeans, who were later called Christians, that the Messiah must have earned his office by suffering and death. Ecstasies induced by fasting and hunger led to actual visions of the slain and glorified Messiah. To the first Christians the death of the Messiah or Christ was not an earthly event at all. He was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"³ According to Couchand no idea of giving Jesus an historical

2. J. M. Robertson's : *Christianity and Mythology* (London 1900.)

3. *Revelations XIII* : 8

setting entered any one's head until the second century. By that time Jerusalem and its temples had been destroyed and Jewish nationalities defeated and discredited. But, as we know from Pliny, the worship of the Christ as God was widespread in Asia Minor and was giving the imperial authorities some trouble. To converts from paganism it was evident that the new god, like the all gods, must have had an earthly history. And because he was a new god who came to put an end to the reigning world order, his earthly history had to be fairly recent. So by 114, C E when Tacitus was proconsul in Asia, the story was current that the Christ had suffered less than a century before under Pontius Pilate, whose cruelties were well known to readers of Josephus.⁴

There are several other theories regarding the origin of the Christian story, all denying the historicity of Jesus. This is not the place to discuss or refute any one of these theories. I am of the view that the mythicists have gone a bit too far in totally denying the historical existence of Jesus of the Gospels. Nevertheless, their writings make us realize the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of recovering the historical Jesus from the mythical tales which have become associated with his person.

4. Couchand: *The Creation of Christ. An Outline of the Beginnings of Christianity*, London, 1939.

BIRTH OF JESUS

Christians believe that on the 25th December, 1958 years ago, was born a baby who, by his death on the Cross, thirty years later, paid the supreme sacrifice for their sins. The old story states that Jesus was born of a virgin mother in a manger at Bethlehem. He thus remained free from the taint of original sin ; for, he was in fact not a human Child, but the Son of God, the incarnation of the Word, the second person in the Divine Trinity.

Is there any truth in this story ? Does it have any historical foundation ? It pains me to have to demolish this beautiful story, but for the sake of truth no sacrifice—not even of our most cherished beliefs—is too great.

Was Jesus born of a virgin ?

The contemporaries of Jesus did not know of any such theory. They looked upon Jesus as one of the many issues of Joseph, the carpenter, and his lawfully-wedded wife, Mary :

“Philip findeth Nathanael, 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.” (St. John I : 45)

“And they said, is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ?” (St. John 6 : 42)

“And all bore him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son ?” (St. Luke 4 : 22)

“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas ?” (St. Matthew 13 : 55)

Mark and John make no mention at all of the virgin-birth, which they would and should have done if such an event had taken place. Luke, writing in about 90 C.E., calls Joseph the father of Jesus :

“The child’s father and mother were lost in wonder at all that was said about him.” (St. Luke 2 : 23)

This quotation is taken from E. V. Rieu’s translation of the *Sinaiticus Codex*, the oldest available edition of the Gospels.⁵ The translations of the Authorized Version of the Bible have mistranslated this verse as, “And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.”

Mary, the mother of Jesus, herself referred to Joseph as the father of her child. St. Luke is again our authority for this. When Jesus was about twelve years of age, the carpenter and his wife had taken him to the capital city of Jerusalem to be present at the great festival of Passover. So intense was the interest of Jesus in the temple as par excellence the House of God ‘that he stayed there listening to and questioning the religious teachers, while his unsuspecting parents had already started on their way home. When they found that Jesus was not with them, they

5. E. V. Rieu : *The Four Gospels*, Penguin Classics, London; 1952.

went back to the temple to look for him. On finding him, after three days' anxious search, the mother thus gently remonstrated with him :—

“Son! Why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.” (St. Luke 2 : 49)

Moreover, according to some ancient prophecies contained in the books of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the Jews was to be of the line of David. Both the genealogies of Jesus, given in the Bible, trace descent from David through Joseph, the carpenter :

- (1). “Abraham beget Isaac; and Isaac beget Jacob; and Jacob beget Judas and his brethren. And Jesse beget David the king; and David the king beget Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias. And Jacob beget Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.” (St. Matthew 1 : 2—16)
- (2). “And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of Age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli...which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David...which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham,...which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.” (St. Luke 3 : 23—38)

There are many disagreements between these two genealogies, but they are both agreed in declaring Jesus to be the son of Joseph. The words in the brackets in the Gospel of St Luke—viz., “as was supposed”—are obviously later interpolations. It must be remembered that the earliest available manuscript of the Gospels belongs to the fourth century, although these accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus were written in the first century C.E. If Jesus was not in fact the son of Joseph, then there would be no sense in giving these genealogies, for Jesus would not, in that case be proved to be of the line of David.

How did this belief originate ?

The sacred records show that before Jesus many teachers of religion, all over the world, were ridiculed and violently opposed while they were alive, and raised to the divine pedestal after their deaths. Death and distance lend a halo to every great man. As with the other great men, the disciples of Jesus also began to idolize and deify him after his death. The more they recalled his inspiring sayings and wondrous works the larger did Jesus loom in their imagination, till they began feeling that he was something more than human. They seized upon the phrase 'son of God' which Jesus had sometimes used for himself. Jesus has no doubt used it only in a metaphorical sense :

“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law; I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scriptures cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world. Thou blasphemest : because I said, I am a son of God ?” (St. John 10 : 34—36)

Jesus, in fact, called every righteous man a son of God :

“Happy the peace-makers ; for they shall be called sons of God.” (St. Matt. 5 : 9 Rien's trans.)

“Love your enemies...that ye may be the Children of your Father which is in heaven ” (St. Matthew 5 : 44 45)

This title has been used, in the Bible, for other prophets as well. For instance, Israel has been styled as “son of God” in the following verse :

“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first born.” (Exodus 4 : 22) In the Psalms this title has been applied to David :

“I will declare the decree : The Lord hath said unto me,
Thou art my son : this day have I begotten thee.” (Psalms
2 : 7)

But a section of Jesus' dazzled and devoted followers began, after his death, to regard him as a son of God in an exclusive and physical sense. Of course, there were many among his followers who still looked upon him as a man and a messenger of God, but these were soon outnumbered and overpowered by the believers in the Son-God theory. The educated and half-educated among these who regarded Jesus as a divine being and the son of God in a literal and physical sense interpreted their belief in the light of Greek philosophy. Plato in one of the most difficult but most influential of his writings, *Timaeus*, had spoken not only of the Supreme Being, but also of the world of Ideas as an internal living being, the pattern of the world which our senses perceive. The Jewish Greek Philosopher, Philo called this world of ideas the Logos (=Word) or Divine wisdom. He believed that God is so exalted that He cannot come into contact with matter, but He gives off as light from a candle, beings or powers which combine in one power or Logos. This Logos created the universe, and is the intermediary between God and universe. The writer of the fourth Gospel went a step further and declared that the Logos or Word had become flesh in the person of Jesus.

Once this dogma had gained currency the belief that Jesus was born of a virgin was only the next, and perhaps necessary step. It would have seemed incongruent for 'the Word that was God' to be born of the normal congress of man and woman. One impossibility leads to another. Setting aside all historical

evidence, the Church fathers declared that Jesus was conceived by Mary of the Holy Ghost before her marriage to Joseph the carpenter.⁶ Such a belief did not seem impossible or extraordinary in those days ; for all around the land of Jesus there lived peoples who had been, for centuries, believing in virgin-born sons of God.

Virgin-born sons of God of the ancients

Mithra, the Persian god of light and wisdom, was believed by his devotees to be born of a virgin.⁷ The Greeks regarded their sun-god, Apollo, and their hero, Perseus, to be sons of God born of virgins, Leto and Danae respectively.⁸ Tammuz or Adonis was the virgin-born son of God of the Babylonians. The Egyptian sun-god, Ra, was regarded by the priests of Sais to be born of the virgin Neiths.⁹ The Nordic hero Balder was believed to be the son of the All-father, Odin, and the virgin, Frigga. Even in the far off Mexico, the culture-hero Quetzalcoatl was regarded as the son of the virgin Xochiquetzal and the God Mixcoatl.¹⁰

Was Jesus born on 25th December ?

The earliest records of the life and ministry of Jesus lend no support to the view that Jesus was

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6. Since 1854, it has been a Catholic dogma that Mary was also miraculously conceived free from original sin.
 7. Robertson : *Pagan Christs*, P. 338 ; Sir James Frazer : *The Golden Bough* Vol. 2.
 8. Smith: *A Smaller Classical Dictionary*, London; arts. *Apollo Perseus Danae*.
 9. Egerton Sykes : *Everyman's Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology*, art. *Neith*.
 10. Kinsborough : *Antiquities of Mexico* vol 6, p, 174.

born on the 25th day of December. If what Luke says, in the second chapter of his Gospel, is correct. We would have a strong reason for believing that Jesus was not born in December. The writer of the third Gospel states that when the angels appeared to the shepherds to give them the good news of the birth of Jesus, they were in the fields, "keeping watch over their flock by night" (2 : 8). This could not take place in December, for that month is the height of the rainy season in Judea, when neither flocks nor shepherds could have been by night in the fields of Bethlehem.

25th December was fixed as the date of the nativity of Jesus more than five centuries after this event by a Scythian monk, Dionysius Exiguus. Ernest Renan in his famous *Life of Jesus* writes :—

It is known that the calculation which serves as basis of the common era was made in the sixth century of *Dionysius the Less*. The calculation implies certain purely hypothetical data." 11

Significance of this date in the Calendar of Sun-worshippers

Like the belief that Jesus was a virgin-born son of God, the date of his birth was also taken from pagan mythologies and religions. 25th of December was an important date in the calendar of sun-worshippers. Nearly all the sun-gods of the ancients were reported to have been born on or very near that date. Mithra, the sun-god of the Persians, was said to be born on the 25th December; Appollo, the Greek sun-god, was also born on the same date ; Horus, the Egyptian sun-god, was born on the 28th of December.

11. Renan: *Life of Jesus*, Modern Library edition, p. 82, footnote 3.

The ancient-sun-worshippers had a special reason for holding this date sacred. After the Autumnal Equinox the day starts becoming shorter; the powers of darkness keep on gaining the upper hand over powers of light; the sun grows weaker and weaker. This goes on till the Winter Equinox, that is, 25th of December¹² From this date the day again starts becoming bigger; the sun begins to grow in strength and glory. The ancients, therefore, concluded that on that day the sun was born; and according to the cyclic theory of time accepted by the ancients, what happened once happens every year. 25th of December was therefore regarded as the birthday of the sun-god. So not only the beliefs in divine son-ship and the virgin birth of Jesus but even the date of his birth has been borrowed from the cult of the ancient sun-worshippers. This will show the extent to which the pagan beliefs and practices have been superimposed on the simple religion of Jesus the Prophet of God.¹³

It is not possible for us to say on what date Jesus was born, but we can say with certainty that he was not born on the 25th of December.

Was Jesus born on at Bethlehem ?

Of the four canonical Gospels, two—the Gospel according to St. Matthew and the Gospel according to St. Luke—mention Bethlehem as the birth place of Jesus. What weighed with them in fixing Bethlehem as

12. The astronomical calculations of the ancients were not very accurate.

13. *Sources of Christianity*: Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din, Mosque, Woking, England.

the birth place was the Old Testament prophecy of Micah. Bethlehem had been the home of the family of King David ; and when the prophet Micah (shortly before 700 B C.) wanted to depict the coming of the Messiah who would belong to the David's stock, he naturally glorified Bethlehem as the place of his origin. For Luke and Matthew this was a sufficient reason for believing that Jesus was born at Bethlehem. Thus it is that Matthew says that the Wise Men, on being asked by King Herod where the Messiah had been born, replied, "In Bethlehem of Judea ; for thus it is written by the prophet : And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, are not the least among the princes of Judea : for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." (St. Matthew 2 : 5—6)

Historically, however, there is no justification for believing that Jesus was born at Bethlehem. The reason given by Luke to explain how it came about that a Nazarene couple were at that moment at Bethlehem are in the least degree unconvincing. It is unlikely that a census was held, as Luke says, at the time of the birth of Jesus. Both Luke and Matthew agree that the nativity took place during the reign of Herod, and history does not mention any census that was held in the time of Herod. Even if we suppose that the census under Quirinus (in 6 C.E.) was held at the time of the birth of Jesus, no government in its census would have required a village carpenter to undertake a Journey of seventy miles simply in order to fill up the census-papers at the place where his *ancestors* had lived centuries before. And, lastly, is it likely that, even if Joseph had been required to go to Bethlehem, he would have taken with him on such a journey his wife, who

would not be required for the census, and who was, moreover in a very advanced stage of pregnancy? Most of the modern authorities believe Nazareth to be the birth place of Jesus.

The correct historical position with regard to the birth of Jesus, therefore, is that he was the first-born son of a Jewish girl named Mary and her husband Joseph, and that he was born at Nazareth sometime between 8 and 6 C. E., on a date which it is now impossible to determine.

The Birth of Jesus

Even if we ignore those who deny the historicity of Jesus, our troubles would not be over, for even those who accept his historical existence are hopelessly divided regarding nearly every detail of the life and teachings of Jesus. For instance, there are several views among them on the question of the birth of Jesus. Some think that Jesus was born of the virgin without the agency of a male parent, while others think that he was the eldest son of Joseph and Mary. The Jews, later on, coined a theory that he was an illegitimate son of a Roman soldier and the Jewish girl, Mary. Even the Evangelists are not agreed on this point. Only two of the four writers of the canonical Gospels mention his virgin birth. St. Mark and St. John are silent on this point, which they would not have been if they had believed such an extraordinary event to have really taken place.

St. Luke mentions the virgin-birth as a proof of the Divine-sonship of Jesus :

“And the angel answered and said unto her (Mary): the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest

shall over-shadow thee : therefore also the holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God."

(Luke 1 : 35)

St. Matthew supports St. Luke by stating that Mary conceived Jesus of the Holy Ghost before her marriage to Joseph. But this was not the view of Mary herself, for in the temple she addressed Jesus in these words :

"Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing " (St. Luke 2 : 48)

The contemporaries of Jesus also looked upon him as the son of Joseph and Mary :—

"Philip findeth, Nathanael, 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." (St. John 1 : 45)

"And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ?" (St. John 6 : 42)

"And all bore him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son ?" (St. Luke 4 : 42)

"Is not this the carpenter's son ? Is not his Mother called Mary and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas ?" (St. Matthew 13 : 55)

The divergence of views on the question of the birth of Jesus continued to our own times. A vast number of Christians and Muslims are believers in his virgin birth. The Ahmady Muslims of the Lahore school are, however, of the view that he was born like any other human child.¹⁴ Among the Western scholars also more and more are

14. (a) *The Holy Quran*, translated by Maulana Muhammad Ali, Lahore, Revised edition 1951, footnotes 442 and 427 ; and (b) Khwaja Nazir Ahmad : *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, Woking and Lahore, 1952.

inclining to the view that Jesus was born of the normal congress of man and woman. When Renan, in 1863, wrote these words in the second chapter of his *Life of Jesus*: "His father, Joseph, and his mother, Mary, were people in humble circumstance",¹⁵ he raised a storm of indignation and protests. But within two decades many more, including some Church dignitaries, began to say the same thing.

Even the date and place of the birth of Jesus are not known for certain. Most modern scholars reject 25th of December as the date of the nativity of the founder of Christianity. The traditional Christian view that Bethlehem was the birth place of Jesus has also been called into question by the modern scholars. They are of the view that Jesus was born at Nazareth about 7-5 B.C.

The Unknown Life of Jesus

The Bible tells us nothing about the infancy, youth and education of Jesus. We are told that at the age of 12 he left his father's house and went into the desert only to return after 17 years. Where was Jesus for those seventeen years? With whom did he associate? What influences worked upon him during these important years of his life? The Bible gives no information on these important questions. In 1890, however, Nicholas Notovitch, a Russian traveller, published a book, *The Unknown Life of Jesus* in which he revealed, on the authority of some Tibetan and Pali scrolls, that Jesus

15. Renan : *The life of Jesus*, Modern Library edition, p. 83.

left his father's house at the age of 13, and travelled in the company of some merchants towards Sind. From Sind he went to Rajputana where he stayed for some time with the Jains of Rajasthan. He then went to Puri which at that time had great religious importance. Jesus spent six years at Puri, Rajgarh, Banares and other holy places, studying books on religion, philosophy and medicine in the Sanskrit tongue. He preached to the people of these places, specially the Shudras, that God was one, and that, according to their own laws, all that exist, through Him. and that the Brahmins had obscured the great principle of monotheism by perverting the words of Brahma. His preachings aroused the wrath of the priestly class of India, and so Jesus had to take refuge in Nepal. There he spent six years among the Budhists where he found the principle of monotheism still in its purity. Thus after remaining in India for nearly 16 years Jesus yearned for his native country. He, thereupon, returned via Persia.¹⁶

7. Khwaja Nazir Ahmad : *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, Chapter 22.

CHRIST DID NOT DIE ON THE CROSS

SENSATIONAL DISCOVERY OF THE WINDING-SHEET OF CHRIST

The Death of Jesus

Now we take up the death of Jesus. Is there any unanimity among the different sections of humanity on this question? No, here the confusion is worse. The traditional Christian view is that Jesus died on the Cross and after remaining for three days in the tomb, he came back to life and finally ascended bodily into heaven. A large section of Muslims, however, believe that Jesus was not crucified at all. Another man resembling him was hanged in his place while Jesus ascended bodily to heaven. The view of Ahmady Muslims is that Jesus was nailed on the Cross as reported in the Bible, but was taken down alive in a state of swoon. What is regarded as the resurrection of Jesus is actually a recovery from unconsciousness and injuries. In support of their assertion, they point out :

(1) That it took a man two to three days (some times even more) to die on the Cross, but Jesus remained on the Cross only for three hours.

(2) When a spear was thrust into the side of Jesus just a few moments before he was taken down from the Cross, blood and water had come out, showing that he was still alive.

(3) His bones were not broken, although the bones of the two malefactors who were hung along with him were broken after they were taken down from the Cross.

(4) His body was taken away by a secret disciple of his and kept in a mountain cave where ointments were applied to it, apparently to heal his wounds and bring him back to consciousness.

(5) The Roman centurion also doubted the fact that Jesus had died.

(6) The so-called post-resurrection appearances of Jesus show him disguised as a gardener, which would not have been necessary if he had risen from dead. He had obviously escaped death on the Cross and was anxious to avoid rearrest.

The Ahmady Muslims further state that in search of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel", Jesus came to what is now West Pakistan. He settled down in Kashmir and died a natural death in good old age. They have

discovered his tomb in Mohalla Khaniyar at Srinagar, Kashmir.¹⁷

A Muslim looks upon Jesus as a Prophet of God to the Israelites and nothing more. What mattered was his teachings. These unfortunately, were corrupted and changed sometime after his death, and so the Prophet Muhammad appeared five centuries after him to revive his teachings and by completing them and enlarging their scope, to establish them for all nations and all ages. The appearance of Muhammad had been prophesied by Jesus himself. He told his followers :

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you unto all truth.” (St. John 16: 12-13)

The festival of Easter, which Christians all over the world celebrate to commemorate the so-called crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. The author of the *Catholic Teachings* states : “By his passion and death Christ gave complete satisfaction to the outraged justice of God.”¹⁸ I shall say nothing about the ‘justice’ of God Whose anger could only be passified by the sacrifice of an innocent man but what I shall examine here is whether the Christian belief has any historical foundation.

The Holy Quran declares that Jesus did not die on the Cross. It says :—

17. Khwaja Nazir Ahmad : *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, chapter 24 and 25.

18. J. F. De Groot : *Catholic Teachings*, Bombay, 1933.

“And for their saying : We have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah, and they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the Cross, but he was made to appear to them as such.”¹⁹

Now which one of the versions—Christian or Islamic—is historically correct ?

In recent years the Western scholars have made some very important discoveries which throw light on this issue. Some years back a British physician published an article in the *Hibbert Journal* in which he showed on purely medical evidence that Christ was taken down alive from the Cross. Now an even more sensational discovery has been made which lends added support to the Quranic version.

Recently a group of German scientists have made some important revelations regarding the winding sheet in which the body of Christ was wrapped after it was taken down from the Cross. They have shown that Christ did not die on the Cross. The Swedish paper, *Stockholm Tidningen*, published a leading article by the editor, Christer Iderlund, on this subject in its issue of April 2nd, 1957. An Urdu translation of the same name has been published in a pamphlet form by the Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Rabwah, (Pakistan). I am taking the liberty of rendering it into English.

“Did Christ Die on the Cross ?

“A group of German scientists had been making investigations regarding the shroud of Christ for the last eight years.

19. *Holy Quran*, English translation by Maulana Muhammad Ali, Lahore. Revised edition 1951, Chapter 4, verse 157.

The results of their research have been recently made available to the press. The two-thousand-year-old winding sheet of Christ has been found in the Italian town of Jurin. It bears the impressions of Christ's body.

“The scientists have informed the Pope about the discovery. But the Pope is silent ; because, as a result of this discovery, a vital secret of the religious history of the Catholic Church has been expressed. With the help of the art of photography the scientists have tried to prove, what 20 was regarded as a miracle by the people for the past two thousand years, was in fact natural physiological phenomenon. They have conclusively proved that Christ did not die on the Cross.

“The issue of Christ's shroud has been under discussion for the last one thousand years. This cloth was sent to Constantinople in 438 C.E. by queen Endoxi. Some time earlier it had been found near the Catacombs. For seven hundred years it remained in Constantinople. Finally De La Roche took away the cloth after an attack on Constantinople. When fire broke out, the cloth was in a silver box. As a result of the melting of silver it became slightly indistinct. But the marks of Christ's body were still visible.

“The people of France earned a lot of money by displaying this cloth. From France it was taken to Jurin, and it was displayed there after every thirty-three years. In 1898 C.E. an Italian advocate, Pia, took a photograph of the cloth. After developing it, when the advocate looked at the negative in the light of the sun, he was astounded to find that it bore an exact likeness to Christ. When the negative was printed it was found to be the very person whose face no one had seen for the past 1900 years.

"In 1931 C.E., when the cloth was again displayed, Guisepe Enric, a photographer, took another photograph of the cloth with the help of bulbs operating at 6,000 and 20,000 volts supply in the presence of an important dignitary of the Church. This photograph brought to light a sensational fact and proved for a second time what Pia had already shown. The picture bears an exact likeness to the face which the Church art for the last two thousand years has been describing as that of Christ.

"When a man looks at the photograph, which has been reproduced in the book *Das Linner Kurt Berna Stultgart* by Hans Nabes Verlag, he can easily understand the reaction of the Church. Pope Pius IX remarked: "This picture has not been made by any human hand." The scientists say that the cloth and history both confirm that it is the picture of Christ. The make and texture of the cloth show that it is the type of cloth which was found at Pompilii.

"The double marks on the cloth show that one half of the cloth was wrapped round the body of Christ and the other half was used to cover his head. The heat of Christ's body, and the effect of the ointment, reproduced on the cloth the impressions of Christ's body. The fresh blood of Christ as absorbed into the cloth also left marks on it. The marks on the base of the head and the forehead of Christ made by the crown of thorns, swollen right cheek of Christ, the deep spear mark on the right side, the marks on the back caused by friction with the Cross—all these can be clearly seen on the photograph (of the winding sheet). But the most astonishing fact is that in the

negative the two closed eyes of Christ seem as if they are open.

“The photograph also reveals that the nails were not struck on the palms but on the hard joints of the wrists. Another thing which becomes clear is that spear did not touch the heart of Christ. The Bible says that Christ ‘gave up the ghost’ but the scientists insist that the heart had not stopped functioning.

“It is also observed that had Christ remained lifeless on the Cross for an hour, the blood would have coagulated and become dry, and as such no blood marks would have been left on the cloth. But the fact that the blood was absorbed in the cloth shows that Christ was alive when he was taken down from the Cross.” 21

The Bible on the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ

Finally let us see what the Bible says on this subject. Surely the Christian view that Jesus died on the Cross, and the dogma based on that belief, must be the result of misunderstanding or forgery, for the details recorded in the Gospels, taken together, also establish beyond doubt that Jesus did not die on the Cross.

1. Jesus had himself compared his fate to that of Jonas the Prophet :—

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” 22

21. Vide *Hazrat Masih Nasri Saleeb Par Hargiz Faut Naheen Hua’y* (Urdu), published by the Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Rabwah (Pakistan).

22. St. Matthew, XII: 39–40.

Now Jonas was cast *alive* into the sea, remained *alive* in the belly of the whale for three days and was vomited out *alive*. So Jesus was also taken down alive from the Cross (in a state of deep swoon of complete anaesthesia), remained *alive* in the sepulchre, and came out *alive* from it.

2. Crucified men lingered for two or three days—sometimes even for as much as six days—before death came to their relief; but Jesus remained on the Cross only for three hours, from the third hour (9 a.m.) to the sixth hour (12 noon).

3. The two thieves who were hung along with Jesus were still alive when they were taken down and their legs had to be broken to cause their death. Jesus was spared this brutal treatment, for the soldiers mistook his deep swoon for death.

4. Shortly before Jesus was taken down, one of the soldiers pierced a spear in his side and “straight-way there came out blood and water”,²³ showing that he was still alive. The “Water” mentioned by the fourth evangelist has explained by Dr. Primrose as the result of the nervous upset of the blood vessels locally due to the over-stimulating effect of the scouring by staves.

5. The body was handed over to a secret follower of Jesus. He applied an ointment, known in the East

23. St. John, XIX : 34.

24. *A Surgeon Looks at the Crucifixion* by Dr. W. B. Primrose, Senior Anaesthetist, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, *Thinker's Digest*. London, Winter 1949 issues (condensed from the *Hibbert Journal*),

ever since as *Marham-i-Isa* (the ointment of Jesus), to cure the wounds and to bring him back to consciousness. The body was then kept in a rock sepulchre which was not covered with earth, only a stone being rolled over its mouth.”²⁵

6. It appears that the Jews soon afterwards came to know that the life of Jesus had been mistakenly spared. They went to Pilate and asked him :—

“Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people : He is risen from the dead. So the last error shall be worse than the first.”²⁶

This clearly shows that the Jews believed that Jesus was alive, for, by stealing a dead body no one could make it appear as living. The “first mistake” referred to by the Jews was obviously that they had mistaken him for dead when he was only in a deep swoon.

7. The so-called post-resurrection appearances of Jesus show him disguised as a gardener, which would not have been necessary if he had risen from the dead. He had obviously escaped death on the Cross and was anxious to avoid rearrest.

Thus the Christian scheme of salvation is based upon shaky foundations. There is nothing in recorded history to show that Jesus had died on the Cross.

25. Khwaja Nazir Ahmad : “*Jesus in Heaven on Earth*. Lahore and Woking 1952.

26. St. Matthew XXVI 1 : 64.

ISLAM & CHRISTIANITY

A VIEW OF THEIR SCRIPTURES AND FOUNDERS

“There are,” says Dr. Johnson, “two objects of curiosity—the Christian world, and the Mahometan world; all the rest may be considered as barbarous.”

As a Muslim I cannot quite agree with this view. I believe Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Vedantism and Taoism not only contain a great deal of truth but were, in their earliest phases, as much divine religions as Islam and Christianity. Their contributions to world culture also were not insignificant. But this much is certain that at present Islam and Christianity are the two most active missionary religions. A comparative study of these two great religions can be of great interest to the modern man.

The Scriptures of Islam and Christianity

Both Islam and Christianity are revealed religions. They are not the results of human conjecture, but are based on the truth and certainty of the Word of God. Christianity is what Christ preached after receiving Divine inspiration. Similarly Islam is the revelation which came to the Prophet Muhammad from God. From this the logical deduction would be that if the scripture of either religion has not been preserved in its pristine purity, then, to that extent, that religion has deviated from truth. Seen from this angle, Islam occupies a unique position for,

of all the scriptures, the Holy Quran alone has come down to us in an absolutely uncorrupted form. On the other hand, the inspired words of Jesus were altered and mixed up with interpolations and interpretations of the later writers. No written records of the sayings of Jesus were made during his life time. Several years after his supposed crucifixion, a few glorified memory-notes were made of the sayings and doings of Jesus. None of these has survived in the original form, but their existence has been inferred by the modern scholars from a study of the Gospels. One of these, called the **Urmarcus**: consisted of the notes of Mark written on the basis of the discourses of St. Peter about Jesus. This was developed at Romé in the year 70 C.E. into the Gospel according to St. Mark. This is what a modern writer observes about this Gospel :

“..... it was written after Peter’s martyrdom (65 C.E.), and at a time when Mark who had not himself been a disciple of Jesus, apparently had none of the personal disciples of Jesus within the reach by whose knowledge he could check his narrative. These circumstances of its composition account for the existence in it, side by side of numerous signs of accuracy and a certain number of signs of ignorance and inaccuracy.” 27

The existence of another document which has not survived in its original form is inferred from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, for they contain in common large sections of the teachings of Jesus not borrowed from Mark (nor probably from one another) and therefore derived from some other common source. It is customarily known today by the symbol “Q” and was perhaps originally compiled by Matthew and one of the twelve disciples.

The Gospel according to St. Matthew which was incidentally not written by Matthew, was composed in Greek at Antioch in about 90 C.E. It incorporated **Urmarcus**, "Q" and another supposed collection of material called "M".

The Gospel of Luke passed through several stages before it reached its present form. It was composed by Luke, the travelling companion of Paul (neither of whom had seen Jesus), by incorporating "Q" and **Urmarcus** into his own collection of the sayings and doings of Jesus, called "L" gathered from several sources. It was completed towards the end of the first century.

The Gospels of Mark, Luke and Matthew are called "The Synoptic Gospels" because they have much in common. The Fourth Gospel is very different from these. It was written at or near Ephesus about 120 C.E. by some unknown man. It was in 180 C.E. that it was wrongly ascribed to John, the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve disciples. The orthodox verdict is that it is rather "an inspired meditation" on the life of Jesus than a true history. This is what C. J. Cadoux says about its reliability or rather unreliability :

"The speeches in the Fourth Gospel (even apart from the early messianic claim) are so different from those in the Synoptics, and so like the comments of the Fourth Evangelist himself, that both cannot be equally reliable as records of what Jesus said. Literary veracity in ancient times did not forbid, as it does now, the assignment of fictitious speeches to historical characters; the best ancient historians made a practice of composing and assigning such speeches in this way." 28

Gospels Compiled in Fourth Century

The Gospels were composed after the early Christians had become divided into different sects. They were in fact composed to propagare the special teachings of the different schools of thought. The Gospel according to St. Matthew represents the point of view of James. The opposite faction—that of St. Paul—was represented by the Gospel of St. Luke. The Gospel according to St. Mark expressed the point of view of St. Peter. There were many other Gospels as well, representing other sects. But in the fourth century the Gospels, according to Mark, Matthew, Luke and John were included in the canon, while others were either declared apocryphal or condemned by the church councils. Before they were canonised, the Gospels did not have that sanctity which they have now and no one felt any compunction in altering them if anything contained in them did not meet with his approval. Even after they were included in the canon changes continued to be made in them, as is clear from the different early versions now available. The earliest version of the Gospels, the **Codex Sinaiticus**, belongs to the fourth century.

If we take into account the facts that the earliest written records of the sayings and doings of Jesus were made from memory after the supposed crucifixion when the glorification of Jesus had begun, that even those earliest documents are not available in their original form, that the Gospels composed on their basis were written on the different factions and by men who had not even seen Jesus, that for three centuries they had no special sanctity and could be changed without any compunction, that no version of the Gospels prior to the fourth century is

available ; that the earliest available versions differ among themselves, we shall be compelled to admit that the Gospels, especially the Fourth Gospel, cannot be relied upon as records of the sayings of Jesus, particularly on disputed points of religion.

Quran Compiled in Prophet's Life-time

On the other hand there is no such doubt about the Holy Quran. It contains nothing but the revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad. It was committed to writing and learned by heart by hundreds of persons in the life-time of the Holy Prophet himself. Ever since his times there have been men in every age who have committed the Holy Quran to memory. During the caliphate of Hazrat Othman, four official copies of the Holy Quran were made on the basis of the earliest written copy and the memories of the people who had learnt it by heart, and placed at four different centres of the then expanding Muslim empire so that no textual variations may appear.²⁹ The purity of the text of Holy Quran is admitted by all Western scholars. They differ only on the question of the arrangement of the material, which some regard as the work of Hazrat Othman. Maulana Muhammad Ali has, however, shown that the Holy Quran was arranged in the present form by the Prophet himself.

Jesus and Muhammad

So much for the sources of Islam and Christianity. We shall now say a few words about the founders of the two religions. It is indeed depressing to find that the

29. Preface to Maulana Muhammad Ali : English translation of the *Holy Quran* Lahore, Revised edition, 1951.

Christian missionaries, in their zeal to spread their religion, spare no efforts or occasion to condemn the founders of other religions. In the eyes of a Muslim, however, there can be no greater sin than to speak ill of the holy prophets of any religion. Islam makes it obligatory on its adherents to revere and believe in the truth of the prophets of all the nations :

“ Say (O Muslims) : We believe in God and that which is revealed to us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets (of all nations) received from their Lord. *We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered.*” (Quran 11 : 136).

In spite of all that the enemies of Jesus may say, I must believe that he led a pure, noble and inspiring life. He showed a rare combination of mildness and courage in dealing with his misguided compatriots. Similarly all that the Christian missionaries have written against Prophet Muhammad can be shown to be the result of bigotry and ignorance.

Non-Muslims' Tribute to the Prophet

This is how the well-known historian Lane-Poole sums up the character of Prophet Muhammad :

“ He who, standing alone, braved for years the hatred of his people, is the same who was never the first to withdraw his hand from another's clasp ; the beloved of children, who never passed a group of little ones without a smile from his wonderful eyes and a kind word for them, sounding all the kinder in that sweet-toned voice..... He was one of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life-spring. He was the messenger of the one God ; and never to his life's end did he forget who he was, or the message which was the marrow of his being. He brought his tidings

to his people with a grand dignity sprung from the consciousness of his high office, together with a most sweet humility whose roots lay in the knowledge of his own weakness.”³⁰

As for the greatness of the achievement of Muhammad, this is what Lamartine, one of the greatest poets of the nineteenth century, says :

“ Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was superhuman : to subvert superstitions which had been interposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto man and man unto God : to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry, then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human powers with so feeble means, for he had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design no other instrument than himself, and no other aid, except a handful of men living in a corner of the desert. Finally never has a man accomplished such a huge and lasting revolution in the world, because in less than two centuries after its appearance, Islam in faith and in arms, reigned over the whole of Arabia, and conquered, in God’s name, Persia, Khorasan, Transoxania, Western India, Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia, all the known continents of Northern Africa, numerous islands of the Mediterranean, Spain and a part of Gaul.

“ If greatness of purpose, smallness of means and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history to Muhammad ? The most famous men created arms, laws, and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world ; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls. On the basis of

³⁰. Stanley Lane-Poole : *The Speeches and Table Talk of the Prophet Muhammad*, Edinburgh, 1882.

a Book, every letter of which has become Law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race.”³¹

So much has been written on the character of the Prophet Muhammad, that I do not think it necessary to go into details on this point. I shall only refer the reader to Maulana Muhammad Ali's "Muhammad the Prophet" (Lahore, 1925) and Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din's "The Ideal Prophet" (Woking, 1952)

Historicity

Before I pass on to the next topic, I must, however, mention two things. The first is that Jesus of the Gospels and Muhammad offer no comparison at all, for while Muhammad is a thoroughly historical character, every detail of whose life is preserved in critically tested books of traditions: the life and character of Jesus are shrouded in mystery. There are scholars who totally dismiss the historical existence of Jesus, treating him as one of the mythical characters. But even if we admit that a person called Jesus was actually born in Judea a few years before the beginning of the Christian era, our knowledge about him is so fragmentary and uncertain, that no clear picture of his life and character emerges in our minds. There are doubts about the date, place and manner of his birth; there are all sorts of theories about the first thirty years of his life; there are differences on the question of his death.

Complete Model

Secondly, although I regard the characters of Jesus and Muhammad to be equally true, noble and inspiring, yet Jesus did not get opportunity to become a perfect model for men in all walks of life as the Prophet

31. *Historic de la Turquie*, quoted by Dr. Zaki Ali in his book, *Islam in the World*, Lahore, 1947.

Muhammad did. Jesus never married and so he could not become an ideal husband and father. He did not triumph over his enemies and so he had no chance of showing true forgiveness or how a victor should behave towards the vanquished enemy who has spared no pains to annihilate him and his followers. Jesus did not rise to power to become a model of a benevolent and just ruler and judge. I think the modern man has completely shaken off the medieval notions that the life of celibacy is better than married life and that political power and greatness must necessarily corrupt the noblest man. We must turn to Muhammad, and not Jesus, if we want to see the picture of ideally happy and pious married life and of a wise, just and benevolent ruler whom nothing could corrupt or divert from working for the welfare and improvement of the people.

Jesus did not get the chance to put into practice many of his precepts and teachings. For instance, he advised his followers to sell their garments and purchase swords, but could not demonstrate to them, or educate them on, the right use of the sword. To enter into a defensive war becomes our highest duty when helpless old men, women and children are being tortured for no fault of their own and when, the freedom of belief and practice is denied to people by fanatics and aggressors. It was only the Prophet Muhammad who showed us how a soldier of God should behave on the battle-field and in moments of defeat and triumph. The Prophet Muhammad witnessed both the phases of persecution and success. He showed rare patience, constancy and courage as a persecuted preacher of religion and in the hours of deepest gloom; and unparalleled self-control and forgiveness when his bitterest foes were at his mercy. He is, in short, a model for us in all walks of life.

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF DOCTRINES

Passing now to the examination of the religious belief of the two religions, we find that Christianity presents a triune conception of Godhead as opposed to the Oneness of God in Islam. Christianity looks upon Jesus as a divine being, the incarnation of the second person in the Divine Trinity and the son of God in a literal and exclusive sense. He was, for the Christians, the deity crucified for the sins of men. Islam, on the other hand, regards Jesus as a Prophet of God. Like all other prophets, including Muhammad, he was every bit a human being. Islam rejects the doctrines of divine-incarnations, crucified deity and atonement. Similarly Islam also rejects the Divine-sonship of Jesus. He may be called a son of God in the sense in which all righteous human beings are children of God, but not in any exclusive or literal sense.

I shall endeavour to show, firstly, that Jesus did not himself preach the Christian dogmas—his views regarding God and his own position and mission were exactly those of Islam—and, secondly, that the Christian dogmas cannot be defended philosophically. Islamic beliefs, on the other hand, are rational and universal.

Christianity declares that there are three persons in Godhead—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. But, strangely enough, Jesus has nowhere even mentioned the Trinity. It is in Greek philosophy, and not the sayings of Jesus, that we find the separate

personification of the Absolute (God the Father), the World of Ideas or Logos (God the Son) and the Spirit of the universe (God the Holy Ghost). Jesus always talked of the oneness of God :

“The Lord our God is one Lord.” (Marks XII : 29)

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew IV : 10)

Rationally considered also, the separate personification of the different aspects of God seems to us as a relic of paganism. Divinity cannot be divided into two or more persons. God is the Self-sufficient, Eternal and Infinite Being, and to attribute divinity to three persons is to display complete ignorance of the essential nature of God. Trinity either means the separate personification of the different aspects of God or the making of God's creatures as partners in His Godhead. Both these are unworthy notions and amount to a denial of the Perfection and Oneness of God. Islam gives the true conception of God when it declares the Uniqueness of God, and says that He has no partners in His Godhead. Nothing can come out of Him and become His equal and rival in Godhead. He is one in essence and motive power :

“Say, He is God, One,
God the eternally Besought of all,
He begetteth not, nor was begotten,
And there is nothing like unto Him.”

(Quran CXII : 1-4)

And again.

“God, There is no God save him, the Alive, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave ? He knoweth that which is in front of

them, and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He wills. His throne includeth the heaven and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Great." (Quran II : 255)

Jesus' Divinity

Now we take up the second Christian dogma, that Jesus was God. Some modern Christians, including Dr. Kenneth Cragg (the author of *The Call of the Minaret*) are beginning to deny the divinity of Jesus. We are pleased to notice this change which will bring Christianity nearer to Islam, but the majority of Christians still continue to believe that Jesus is God. This is what the Rev. J. F. De Groot says in his book, *Catholic Teachings* :

"The teaching about Christ's divinity which is to be found in so many places of Scripture, has always been proclaimed by the Church as one of the most important truths of Catholic faith. The Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.), which was the first General Council of the persecutions, solemnly condemned Arius who contended that Christ was not God but a creature." 32

This belief also has no support in the words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. Jesus clearly denies being a God or a divine being in the following words :

"Why callest thou me god ? There is none god but one, that is, God "

(Mark X : 18)

He admits that the Father was greater than him, and in his last agony on the Cross Jesus cried out ;

"Eli, Eli, Iama sabachthani ? that is to say, My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken me ?" (Matthew XXVII : 46).

Can any one imagine these words coming out of the mouth of God? Jesus claimed only to be the sent-one or prophet of God.

“And this is life eternal, that They might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

(John XVII ; 3)

Reason also refuses to accept a man who was born of a woman, suffered from human wants, ignorance and limitations, and grew in stature, power, wisdom like all other human beings, as God. To put human limitations upon God and to believe in His complete manifestation or incarnation in the human body is to deny the Perfection of God. Islam has saved us from such superstitions by frankly rejecting the divinity of Jesus :

“And they surely disbelieve who say : Lo ! God is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah himself said : O children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord.”

(Holy Quran V : 72)

“The likeness of Jesus with God is truly as the likeness of Adam. He create d him from dust, then said to him Be, and he was.”

(Holy Quran III : 58)

According to Islam, Jesus was only a prophet of God—sinless, pure and truthful, like all other prophets— but every bit a human being :

“O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning God save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of God and His word which He conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers, and say not Three.”

(Holy Quran IV : 171)

“He (Jesus) said : I am indeed a servant of God. He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet.

(Quran XIX : 30)

The Islamic view is that prophets, one and all, were human beings who by virtue of their devotion to God and sinless life became worthy of being chosen as His messengers. They were mystics par excellence, but for them mystic experience was not an end in itself but the beginning of a world-transforming and devoted career. God conveyed His word to them so that they may practise truth in their own lives and lead others also to righteousness. The greatest of the prophets, Muhammad, declared :

“I am only a mortal like you. It is inspired in me that your God is One God, therefore take the straight path unto Him and seek forgiveness of Him.”

(Holy Quran XLI : 6)

Sonship

The third Christian dogma, that Jesus is the son of God in an exclusive sense, is also contrary to the teachings of Jesus. In the Bible, David and Israel are also called sons of God. In fact the founder of Christianity said that every one who does the will of the Father in Heaven is a son of God. It is virtuous deeds and devoted life which make a man worthy of being called a son of God. Is not this what he says in the following words ;

“Love your enemiesthat ye may be called the children of your Father which is in heaven.” (St. Matthew V : 44-45).

“Happy the peace makers ! for they shall be called the sons of God.” (Matthew V : 8 ; E. V. Rieu' trans.)

Jesus called himself a son of God in this (metaphorical) sense, as is clear from the following words :

“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your laws? I said, Ye are gods ? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken, say ye of them

whom the Father hath sanctified. and sent into the world, Thou blasphemist, because I said, I am a son of God ?”

(John X : 34—36)

The Quran in very forceful language rejects the son of God theory.

“And they say : God hath taken unto Himself a son. Be He glorified ! Nay, but whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth is His. All are subservient unto Him.”

(Holy Quran 11 : 116)

“It beftteth not (the Majesty) of God that He should take unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him ! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only Be ! and it is.”

(Holy Quran XIX : 35)

Philosophy is again on the side of Islam. Reason tells us that no being from whom another being can come out and exist as a separate individual and become his equal and rival, can be regarded as perfect.³³ To attribute a son to God would be to deny the perfection of God.

Original Sin

In view of what has already been said, it is not necessary to discuss in detail the Christian dogma that man is born in sin, that God the son was sent to the world to pay the penalty for the sins of men by his death on the Cross, that no man can be saved unless he believes in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. This dogma is a denial both of the Mercy as well as the Justice of God. It presupposes that God cannot forgive sins without imposing penalty and punishment on some one, not necessarily on the offender. Besides, it is difficult to see

33. cf. Bergson : *Creative Evolution*, Modern Library edition P. 16.

how the suffering of one man can atone for the sins of entire human race. Islam, of course, rejects all such superstitions which, no doubt, entered Christianity as a result of pagan influence.³⁴ According to the Quran Jesus did die on the Cross. In any case, Islam declares that salvation cannot be achieved by the suffering of any other person, human or divine, but the personal efforts and grace of God :

“That no laden one shall bear another’s load, and that man hath only that for which he maketh efforts, and that his effort will be seen.”

(Holy Quran LIII : 38-40)

“Whosoever goeth right, it is only for the good of his own soul that he goeth right, and whosoever erreth, erreth only to his hurt. No laden soul can bear another’s load.”

(Holy Quran XVII : 15)

Islam promises salvation (which in Islam means the fructification of the latent powers and divine possibilities of man) to all those who believe in God and do good deeds:

“Nay, whosoever surrendereth his purpose to God while doing good, his reward is with his Lord ; and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve.

(Holy Quran : II : 112)

Islam is a simple and rational creed. In the words of Dr. Laura Veccia Vaglieri :

“In order to lead men to a belief in one God, he (Muhammad) did not delude them with tales of happenings which deviate from the normal course of nature—the so-called miracles ; nor did he compel them to keep quiet by using celestial threats which only undermine man’s ability to think. Rather, he simply

34. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din : *Sources of Christianity*, Woking, 1924.

invited them, without asking them to leave the realm of reality, to consider the universe and its laws. Being confident of the resultant belief in the one and indispensable God, he simply let men read in the book of life. Muhammad Abduh and Ameer Ali both state that Muhammad was content to appeal to the intimate conscience of the individual and to the intuitive judgment of man.” 35

The core of Islamic teachings is the belief in the Oneness of God and the universal brotherhood of man. The Quran declares that prophets are chosen by God from among men. They are raised in all the nations to lead men to the right path in the light of the Divine guidance. Man can make his life better in this world and attain salvation in the next by sincerely believing in God and living up to the teachings of the prophets. Islam thus liberates the spirit from prejudice and sets free the will of man from the ties which has kept it bound to the will of other so-called hidden powers. Priests, false guardians of mysteries, brokers of salvation, all those who pretended to be mediators between God and man consequently believed they had authority over other people's wills, are removed from their pedestals. Man becomes the servant of God alone and towards other men he has only the obligation of one free man towards other free men.

35. Laura Veccia Valgieri; *An Interpretation of Islam* (Eng. Trans) Rabwah 1958.

MORAL TEACHINGS OF THE TWO FAITHS

Non-resistance to evil

Both Islam and Christianity exhort men to virtuous deeds. They want men to become truthful, courageous, patient, forgiving, charitable, modest and chaste. But in some of its teachings Christianity is apt to be too idealistic and one-sided. For instance, Jesus is reported to have said :

“ But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.
(Matthew V : 39).

Such a conduct cannot be held to be good and commendable in all cases. Submission to bullies and aggressive tyrants is only likely to increase human woe and evil. It will encourage them to exploit and subdue others and increase confusion and disorder. Islam declares that evil in all cases must be repelled. If the evil one can be reformed or prevented from doing evil by kindness and forgiveness then this course will be the best ; but if kindness makes him more bold in doing harm to others then chastisement in proportion to the crime must be meted out to him :

“ The good and the evil deeds are not alike Repel the evil deed with that which is better, then lo ! he between whom and thee was enmity will become as though he was a bosom friend.”
(Holy Quran XLI : 34).

“ The pardon of an ill-deed is an ill like thereof. But whosoever pardoneth and reformeth (the evil-doer), he shall have his reward from his Lord. Lo : He loveth not wrong-doers,
(Quran XLII : 39).

Monasticism

Christianity is too other-worldly. It favours monasticism and the crushing of natural urges. The result of such a teaching is the production of stunted and contorted hypocrites instead of full-grown human beings. Islam keeps a healthy balance between this world and the next. It says that the spirit cannot grow by crushing the body. Human instincts are not intrinsically bad. They must not be crushed, but wisely controlled, channelized and used purposely to make life richer and better. This world has a meaning and purpose, and it is only by leading a normal and fruitful existence in the world and by appreciating and enjoying the beautiful gifts of God that man can come near to God and prepare himself for the other world. Islam favours the *via media*.

Wine, Sex, Gambling.

While, on the one hand, Christianity favours monasticism, on the other, it has nowhere prohibited the three gateways to nearly all crimes and sins—wine, gambling and shameful display of physical beauty. Wine, in fact, forms a necessary element of the Holy Communion, and the first miracle of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, was the converting of water into wine. It is in the Holy Quran—which contains complete moral guidance—that these things are prohibited. Regarding wine and gambling, the Holy Quran says :

“O ye who believe ! Strong drinks and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan’s handiwork. Leave it aside that ye may succeed. Satan seeketh only to cast enmity and hatred by means of strong drink and games of chance and to turn you from remembrance of God and from His worship. Will ye then have done ? ” (Holy Quran V : 90-91).

The Quran prohibits the shameful display of physical charms in the following words :

“ Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest, That is purer for them. Lo ! God is Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and not to display their beauty save what is naturally visible of it (*i.e.*, face and hands), and to draw their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornments.”

(Quran XXIV : 30-31).

Islam and not Christianity is a Universal Religion

The religion of Jesus (not the traditional Christianity) was in essence the same as Islam. It did not, however, contain complete guidance for all walks of life and for all nations and ages. The complete code of life for the entire humanity was brought by the Prophet Muhammad. His mission was to unite the religious traditions of all the nations into a single faith and culture, and the people of all nations in a single brotherhood.

1. The mission of Jesus was only for the children of Isarel, whereas Prophet Muhammad came with a message for all the nations of the earth. Jesus clearly stated :

“ I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel ” (Matthew XV : 24).

Addressing his disciples, he said :

“ Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not : But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matthew X: 5-6).

On the other hand, Prophet Muhammad from the very beginning addressed himself to the entire humanity. It was revealed to him :

“ We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) but as a mercy to all the nations ”
(Holy Quran XXI : 107)

“ Say (O Muhammad): O Mankind, lo I am the messenger of God to you all—the messenger of Him unto Whom belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no God save Him.”
(Holy Quran VIII : 158).

2. Christianity believes that God had specially chosen the Hebrew race for revealing His message. The followers of Jesus believe only in the prophets of Israel. All others they regard as impostors. But Islam says it would be a denial of the universal providence of God to assert that the prophets were raised only in one nation. According to the Quran, God is the Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds. He makes no distinction in the matter of His guidance. He has raised prophets in all the nations of the earth. The religion of all these prophets was the same in essence :

“ There is not a nation but a prophet hath passed among them.”
(Holy Quran XXXV : 24).

“ And for every nation there is a messenger. So when their messenger cometh, the matter is decided between them with justice, and they are not wronged.” (Holy Quran X : 47).

“ Mankind are one community, and so God sent (unto all nations among them) prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and revealed therewith the Scripture with the truth that they might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed.”
(Holy Quran II : 213).

Islam requires of the Muslims to believe in the prophets of all the nations :

“ The righteous are those who believe in the Unseen and establish worship and spend on others of that which We have bestowed upon them, and *who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (O Muhammad) and what was revealed to prophets before them.*”

(Quran II : 3-4).

“ Say (O Muslims) : We believe in God and that which is revealed to us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received from their Lord, and that which the Prophets (of all nations) received from the Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered.”

(Holy Quran II : 136).

Islam is the culmination of the religious traditions of all the nations. By accepting the prophets and the religious teachings of all the nations, Islam seeks to unite the whole humanity in one religion and brotherhood.

3. Islam, and not Christianity, contains complete guidance for all walks of life and all ages. Jesus Christ himself admitted that he had not conveyed the full truth, for the time was not yet ripe for a universal religion :

“ I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you unto all truth.” (John XVI : 12-13),

Five centuries after him the Spirit of Truth appeared in the person of Muhammad to convey the whole truth to mankind. God revealed to Muhammad :

“ This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion, Al-Islam. (Holy Quran V : 3).

Position of Women

Jesus was the last of the line of Israelite prophets. He introduced reforms in the teachings of the Hebrew prophets, wherever he felt such reforms were due. He reinterpreted some of the religious precepts of Moses to bring them in line with the needs of the time : but others he left as they were. The so-called Old Testament of the

Bible advocates massacre, condones polygamy, accepts slavery, and orders the burning of witches. Jesus, who had come "not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil", apparently saw nothing wrong with these. He said or did nothing to abolish slavery or to improve the condition of women. St. Paul, the real founder of traditional Christianity, went to the extent of laying the whole blame for the fall of man, and the genesis of sin, on women :

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (I Timothy, 2 : 11-14)

It was Prophet Muhammad who brought about the much needed changes. His reforms covered all aspects of life. To mention just a few, the Quran raised the position of woman to an equality with man. For the first time in the history of mankind, she was given same rights as those of man :

"And they (women) have rights similar to those of men over them in a just manner." (Holy Quran II : 228).

She was given the right of owning property and inheriting the estate and wealth of her father and husband :

"Unto men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned." (Quran IV : 32).

"Unto men (of a family) belongeth a share of that which parents or near kindred leave, and unto women a share of that which the parents or near kindred leave; whether it be little or much—a legal share." (Holy Quran IV : 7).

Woman was declared to be the helpmate and companion of man :

“ And of His signs is this : He created for you help-mates from yourselves that ye might find rest and peace of mind in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect.”

(Holy Quran XXX : 21).

To impress upon his followers the sacredness and exalted position of woman, the Prophet declared :

“ Paradise lies at the feet of the mother.” (Nasa’i 25 : 6).

Elimination of slavery

Islam was the first religion to improve the condition of slaves and take steps for the total abolition of slavery. As a first step, the Holy Prophet made kind and brotherly treatment of the slaves a duty on all Muslims :

“ Your slaves are your brethren. So if any one of you happens to have a slave, let him give him the same food that he himself eats, and the same clothing that he himself wears. And do not give them such work as is beyond their power to perform, and if you ever happen to give them such work, you should help them in doing it.” (Sayings of Muhammad, *Bakhari, Kitab Al Itq*).

The following is just one of the many verses of the Holy Quran exhorting men to emancipate slaves :

“ Ah, what will convey unto thee what is the Ascent, — It is to free a slave and to feed in the day of hunger an orphan near of kin, or some poor wretch in misery, and to be of those who believe and exhort one another to perseverance and exhort one another to pity.”

(Holy Quran XC : 12-17).

The Prophet then prohibited the taking of fresh slaves in these words :

“ God has spoken to me saying : There are three classes of men with whom I will make war on the Day of Judgment. Firstly, the man who makes a covenant with some one in My name and

then breaks it. Secondly, *the man who enslaves a free man, sells him and eats his price.* Thirdly, the man who employs a man to do a work and exacts full work from him but does not pay him his wages. (Sayings of Muhammad : *Bukhari, Kitab Al-Bai*).

Finally came the categorical command of God to give freedom to all slaves :

“ And such of your selves as seek a writing of emancipation, write it for them if you are aware of aught of good in them, and bestow upon them of the wealth of God which He hath bestowed upon you.” (Holy Quran XXIV : 33).

On the other hand, Jesus said or did nothing to emancipate the slaves or to improve the lot of these miserable creatures.

International Relationship

Christianity does give some guidance with regard to what Aristotle called private virtues, but is absolutely silent in the matter of political virtues. The result of the separation of religion and politics in Christianity has been the growth of Machiavellism in the West. Islam, on the other hand, being the last divine religion, and foreseeing the eventual evolution of humanity, had to formulate a basic code of comprehensive guidance for mankind in all their activities, whether they fall within the public or the private sector. Islam ensures international peace and social justice, and prevents the exploitation of man by man, by bringing the international relations and economic dealings under the control of religion and morality, and by defining the basic duties of the individuals to the state and of the state to the individuals. It lays down some basic principles which every community is enjoined to adopt, and then gives them the liberty to develop its structure according to the needs

of the age, provided this superstructure observes the basic principles and remains within their scope.

Political structure

The first basic principle of Islamic political system is that the sovereignty of the state rests with God and no legislature or parliament has the right to pass a law or Act which is contrary to the spirit and letter of the commands of God as contained in the Quran :

“ Say : O God, Owner of Sovereignty ! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt, Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo ! Thou art Able to do all things.”
(Holy Quran III : 26).

The second basic principle is that all public offices, including chief executive posts, are trusts from God, and the trustees must exercise the authority given to them as per the commands of God and for the benefit of the people. As the head of the State is appointed by the people, he can also be removed by the people if they find that he is not carrying out the commands of God. In Islamic state no one, not even the head of the state, is above law. For the breach of the law even the Khalifa can be summoned in the court and punished, if found guilty.

The third basic principle is that Islam gives the right to vote to all the citizens. It further orders that all public matters must be decided by consultation and after taking into consideration the views of the citizens of the Islamic state :

“ So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and *consult them upon the conduct of affairs*. And when thou art resolved, then put thy trust in God Lo ! God loveth those who put their trust in Him.”
(Holy Quran III : 159)-

“ And those who answer the call of their Lord and establish worship, *and whose Government is by consent among themselves* and who spend on others of what We have bestowed on them.”

(Quran XLII : 38).

Islam thus brought into the first true democracy in which there were no distinctions of free-born and slave, citizens and serfs, and no discrimination on the basis of sex, race or creed. All are equal before law and enjoy the same rights and privileges.

Socialisation of national economy

In the economic field, Islam has minimised the possibility of exploitation of man by man prohibiting monopoly, blackmarketing, and interest (*riba*), that is, fixed extra returns for money lent for any purpose. Says the Holy Quran :

“ Those who live on interest cannot rise up save as he ariseth whom the devil hath prostrated by his touch. That is because they say : Trade is just like interest ; whereas God permitteth trading and forbiddeth interest ” (Holy Quran II : 275)-

Islam further imposes a tax on the capital of all rich persons for the benefit of the poor, so that no one may be deprived of the necessities of life and all may have equal opportunities in life. This tax is called *Zakat*. It is different from, and over and above, *Khairat* or voluntary charity. Finally, by its judicious laws of inheritance, Islam makes the concentration of wealth in few hands impossible.

My purpose in giving these details was to show that Islam gives guidance on many issues on which Christianity is silent. The Prophet Muhammad completed what was left incomplete by Jesus. Islam is the true religion of

Jesus, revived by a fresh revelation and perfected to cover all aspects of life and to give guidance to people of all times and nations. It is, in short, a complete and universal religion. It does not only respond to man's devotional urges, but to human life as a whole. It does not only give us an infallible metaphysics, but also a comprehensive and sublime code of individual and social ethics, a sound economic system, a just political ideology, and many other things besides. It is not a solitary star, but a whole solar system, encompassing the whole and illuminating the whole.

ISLAM OR CHRISTIANITY

by :

MIRZA MASUM BEG

During a friendly discussion on some of the doctrines of the Christian faith, a minister of the Church remarked, in full confidence that either Islam was wrong and Christianity was right, or Islam was right and Christianity was wrong ; both could no be right. And he had to be told that all religions, since they came from the same Divine source, were right and true originally and it was later on that people, in order to serve their own mean motives, intermixed their own ideas into the sacred teaching and corrupted it. This hard fact has now been borne out palpably by modern research and investigation.

Religion of Jesus

The Teacher of Galilee brought a simple, monotheistic message for the guidance of his people, the Israelites. When one of the scribes came and asked him, which is the first commandment of all ? Jesus, as reported in the Gospel according to St. Mark (12 : 29), replied :

“The first of all the commandment is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment.”

It was exactly an echo of what Moses and the prophets, who came after him, had said long before. Turn over Deuteronomy, the fifth Book of Moses, chapter 6, and read verses 4 and 5 :

“Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.”

The Prophet of Arabia taught the same sublime lesson of the Unity of Godhead in the most perfect form :

“Say, He, God is One. God is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is like unto Him.”

All religions, as claimed by the Holy Quran, were pure and right at the time of their revelation; it was, as time passed on, that people corrupted and contaminated them. And Christianity was no exception to this general rule. Modern research has confirmed this hard fact in all its nakedness; and Christian scholars of learning and repute have confessed it with the intrepidity which should accompany a diligent and critical enquiry into facts. We shall reproduce the finding of one such scholar of the Christian faith, Rev. Tucker, who writes in his book “The History of the Christians in the Light of Modern Knowledge,” page 320 :

“Thus Gospels were produced which clearly reflected the conception of the practical needs of the community for which they were written. In them the traditional material was used, but there was no hesitation in *altering it*, or making additions

to it, or in leaving out what did not suit *the writer's purpose*. An excellent example of such amended Gospel is found in the Gospel of Marcion which, apart from minor changes, was the narrative of Luke, with everything omitted that revealed the true humanity of our Lord and his connection with the religion of the Old Testament."

Finding of Research Scholars

The present-day Christianity, it is no gainsaying the fact, cannot hang together with Islam ; both are diametrically opposed to each other. That Jesus was the heavenly Son of God who did not belong to earthly humanity, who assumed human form through a virgin in order to propitiate for the sins of humanity by his own blood on the Cross, who rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven to take his seat on the right hand of the Most High God as the Lord of his own people, and who will come again to this earth to judge the world—this teaching, we confess, is wholly repugnant and irreconcilable to Islam and we concur with the Reverend Minister of the Church that either this teaching is right and Islam is wrong or Islam is right and this teaching is wrong ; both cannot be in the same camp. But this queer and quixotic creed, it should be clearly understood, has nothing to do with the simple, monotheistic religion preached and practised by Jesus Christ. This fantastic faith, it has been clearly established by modern research, is the fanciful invention of the fertile brain of St. Paul. Dr. Arnold Meyer, Professor of Theology of Zurich University who instituted a sifting enquiry into the Church dogmas mentioned above, writes on page 122 of his book, *Jesus or Paul* : 'If this is Christianity, then such Christianity was founded by St. Paul and not by our Lord.'" This free and impartial finding of Dr. Meyer has, furthermore, been approved

and upheld by the research of another savant of the Christian faith, Dr. Johannes Weiss of Heidelberg University who writes on page 130 of his book, *Paul and Jesus*: "The faith in Christ as held by Paul was something new in comparison with the preaching of Jesus ; it was a new type of religion."

Quranic Disclosure

This grim fact that the Gospels contain a teaching which was absolutely unknown to Jesus, has been discovered in the present age through a long and assiduous investigation. But it may be stated for the information of the Church Minister that it was disclosed 1400 years ago when it was a sealed secret and no one even doubted the genuineness of the Bible, by the *Ummi* Prophet who was perfectly unlettered and ignorant of the teachings of other religions :

"Do you (the Prophet) then hope that they (the Jews and the Christians) would believe in you, and a party from among them indeed used to hear the word of God, *then altered it* after they had understood it, and they know this?...Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say, this is from God!"

(Quran 2 : 75, 79)

The world has taken fourteen centuries to find out and discover this hidden truth which the Holy Prophet Muhammad had divulged and disclosed at a time when the authenticity and authority of the Bible was not even called into question. The Prophet, every fair-minded and impartial critic of Islam will agree, spoke under inspiration from the Most High God when he proclaimed this truth.

The Great Law

The Holy Quran has, in a very beautiful way, enunciated the great Law of life: "God sends down water from above, and thereby gives life to the earth after its death" (16 : 65). What is true in the physical world is even more true on the spiritual plane. The water from heaven is the Divine Revelation, the death of the earth is its corruption, and the giving of life signifies its spiritual awakening. Water from heaven, we observe, brings life to the whole of nature ; but when it loses its vitality in consequence of its earthly admixture, a fresh supply of it comes from above to meet the situation. When Judaism founded by Moses, lost its purity, Jesus was raised to rectify and reform it ; and when the teaching of Jesus was corrupted with human interpolation, the elixir of life came from above in the form of a fresh Divine Revelation incorporated in the pages of the Holy Quran. It contains guidance with comprehensive arguments which afford a criterion for separating truth from falsehood. "We have revealed to thee the Book," says the Most High God addressing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, "that thou mayest make clear to them that wherein they differ."

The Most High God has taken it upon Himself to protect the teaching of the Holy Quran against change and alteration. "It is a glorious Quran in a guarded tablet" ; "Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian." And it is a standing miracle of the Holy Quran that the purity of its text has been guarded, under a Providential plan, against every kind of corruption and contamination, so that even an adverse critic of Islam, Sir William Muir, has had to

admit that "there is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text." Yet another scholar of the Christian faith, Bosworth-Smith, has even a more lucid statement to make on the purity of the Quranic text. Writes he on page 18 of his book, *Muhammad and Mohammadanism*: "In the Quran we have beyond all reasonable doubt the exact words of Muhammad without subtraction and without addition."

Islam vs. Pauline Creed

Christianity, as practised and propounded by the Church, is another name for the creed founded by St. Paul. Islam and this creed, we agree with our Christian friend, cannot both be true. They are, as a matter of fact, poles apart from each other. Islam denounces and disclaims this creed in the most vehement terms. A few verses of the Holy Quran :

- (1) "The Messiah, son of Mary, is but an apostle ; apostles before him have indeed passed away, and his mother was a truthful woman, they both used to eat food."
- (2) "O followers of the Book ! do not exceed the limit in your religion, and do not speak lies against God, but speak the truth ; the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God and His word which He communicated to Mary and an inspiration from Him Believe, therefore, in God and His apostle and say not Three. Desist, it is better for you. God is only One ; far be it from His glory that He should have a son, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His and God is Sufficient Protector."
- (3) "Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely God is the third (person) of the Three ; and there is no god but One God : and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve...The Messiah, Son of Mary, is naught but an apostle."

It is the Pauline Creed, as discussed at some length above, that is going by and passing under the name of Christianity; and Islam, we said, denounces such a creed uncompromisingly. The deleterious dogmas, as professed by the Church, for instance, a belief in the Son-God who is the third person in the Holy Trinity, the Immaculate conception, the crucifixion and thereby the Atonement of the sins of humanity, the Ascension and the Return to this earth, have now been dashed to the ground, by modern research and investigation, as Pagan principles wherewith the true teaching of Jesus has not even the remotest connection. "Paul," observes Dr. Arnold Meyer, "raised Jesus from the position of a Jewish Messiah to that of the Divine Redeemer of the Gentiles and of the whole world."

Divine Promise to Abraham

The Most High God had promised to Abraham, as recorded in the Old Testament, Genesis (12 : 2), "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." The Holy Quran also corroborates and confirms it in clear, concise terms, saying, "We granted him (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob and ordained prophethood and the Book among his seed" (29 : 27); "And We have given to Abraham's children the Book and Wisdom, and We have given him a great Kingdom." (4 : 54). The Patriarch was blessed with two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. From the Children of Isaac sprang up the twelve tribes of the Jews commonly called the *Bani Israel* (the Israelites); the Children of Ishmael likewise, multiplied and became a great nation called *Bani Ishmael*. Thus the *Bani Israel* and the *bani Ishmael* were brothers in relation the each other.

Curse on the Jesus

In accordance with His promise, the Most High God blessed, in the first instance, the Children of Israel with the great gift of prophethood, and raised among them, in long succession, a large number of prophets for their good and guidance. But the incredulous Israelites treated them with cruelty and affliction, and even put some of them to death, as the Bible would have us believe. The time at last came after 1400 years of persistent persecution of the Divine Messengers, that these ungrateful and incorrigible people should be chastened and chastised. But the Most Merciful God is slow to punish. To give them the last warning that they might recoil from their evil course and reform, He sent Jesus the Christ, son of Mary. Jesus tried his best to wean them from their transgression ; but the Jews would not listen to him ; and they conspired, most wickedly, to take his life upon the cursed Cross. So, Jesus flung upon them the curse of the Most High God, saying : "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruit thereof" (Matt. 21 : 48). Prophets before Jesus, too, had cursed the children of Israel for their perversion and persecution of the Apostles of God. Turn over Malachi, chapter 3, verses 7 and 9, and read :

"Ye, sons of Jacob ! Even from the days of your fathers, ye are gone away from My ordinance and have not kept them . . . ye are cursed with a curse."

So it happened. Jesus was the last prophet who appeared among the Children of Israel ; and after him, the Divine gift of prophecy, the Kingdom of God, was taken away from them, smiting them down with the curse of perpetual barrenness and spiritual lifelessness.

Birth of Jesus

Jesus was born at Bethlehem, a village seven miles from the town of Nazareth in the province of Galilee (Palestine). There was yet another Bethlehem farther south, in the province of Judea, near Jerusalem, the city of the ancient King David. This Bethlehem, in order to distinguish it from the Bethlehem of Nazareth, is called Bethlehem—Judea. Jesus was born at Bethlehem—Judea, as stated by St. Matthew in his Gospel (2 : 1). We read in the Encyclopaedia Biblica (col. 3361) :

“The discrepancies of the evangelists compel us to make some hypothesis : Jesus was born in Nazareth and not in Bethlehem—Judah, and the transmitters made mistake—some said Bethlehem and some said Nazareth.”

Matthew had made this mis-statement deliberately, for he was out to foist on the person of Jesus any and every prophecy that he came across in the ancient scriptures pertaining to the appearance of the Messiah. When this hard fact of history was adduced before the Reverend Minister of the Church, he remarked rather despairingly that the opinion of the Encyclopaedia Biblica was not binding on him ; and he had to be told that the compilers of this book were the most accredited scholars of the Christian faith. Moreover, Jesus has been described in the Gospels as *Jesus of Nazareth* ; *Jesus of Galilee* ; *Jesus, Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee* ; but never as Jesus of Bethlehem-Judah. We read in the Gospel according to St. John that the opponents of Jesus hurled an objection strongly in his face that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem-Judah, the city of David, but he came from Galilee :

“But some said, shall Christ come out of Galilee ? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was ?

(John 7 : 41, 42).

“Can there any good come out of Nazareth ? (John 1 : 46)

“Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet” (John 7 : 52)

But, strange enough, Jesus never answered them saying that he was born in Bethlehem-Judah, the city of David, as St. Matthew would have us believe. If Jesus had actually been born at Bethlehem—Judah, he would have straightway asserted this fact to silence the carping tongue of his opponents. But Jesus evaded the pertinent objection with the remark : “A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and his own house.”

Born in ordinary natural way

Jesus was born, at Nazareth, of Mary and Joseph in the ordinary natural way. The evidence of the mother herself, as well as the evidence of the whole Jewish nation, establishes this fact beyond the least shadow of doubt. Jesus, once, got separated from his parents at Jerusalem where they had gone to attend the feasts of the *Passover*. They found him after three days in the temple discussing religious problems with the doctors :

“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* have sought thee sorrowing” (Luke 2 : 48).

“Philip findeth Nathaneal, 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).

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

“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Judah and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? (Mark 6 : 3).

That Jesus was acknowledged as the son of Joseph in the physical sense cannot be denied. His opponents told on his face contemptuously that he was the son of a carpenter, but Jesus did not even repudiate their statement, asserting that he was not the son of Joseph, the carpenter, but born of a virgin without the agency of a human father. The only answer that Jesus could make to the opponents' objection, was: “A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house” In the Gospels, Jesus has been spoken of as *the Son of Man* as many as four-score times. And let us see what Christian scholars of light and learning have to say in this connection. In his book, *History of the Apostolic Church*, writes Hastings on p. 318 :

“Jesus is the Messiah, yet a mere man, born by natural generation to Joseph and Mary.”

The Son of Joseph

Professor Dummelow of the Cambridge University, acquired the services of forty-two Christian scholars of great fame to compile a *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. Commenting on the doctrine of Immaculate conception, they have stated : (p 622).

“The accuracy or inaccuracy of the genealogies does not affect the main point at issue, our Lord's descent, *through his legal father Joseph*, from David. Joseph's family certainly claimed descent of David.”

Furthermore, it will be interesting to know what the Jewish Encyclopaedia has to say on this point :

“The Jews who are represented as inimical to Jesus in the Canonical Gospels, took him to be legitimate and *born in the ordinary natural way*.” (Vol. VII : 170).

And again :

“All the believing Jews and all the rest of the Nazarene Jews esteemed Jesus with one consent, *as a mere man*, the son of Joseph and Mary.” (Vol. III: 276).

The theory of Immaculate conception is based on only two verses, 34 and 35 of the Gospel of St. Luke chapter 1. But Professor Weiss brushes them aside as mere forgeries, and Hastings recommends their eradication in the following words :

“Removal of verses 34 and 35 which contain the only reference to virginbirth, as interpolations, is justified” (Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, 806).

We conclude this subject with a categorical statement of the Encyclopaedia Biblica (col. 2957) :

“The Virgin-birth disappears from the source altogether.”

From the Seed David

Jesus was every inch a human being, born of human parents in the ordinary natural way. The Gospels give his genealogy to show that he was from the line of David. Even Paul, with all his hyperbolic statements, had to admit in his Epistle to the Romans (1 : 3) : “Our Lord which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” ; and it is stated in the Acts of the Apostles that “God had sworn with an oath to him (David) that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise Christ to sit on his throne” (2 : 30). Thus, Jesus was born from the seed of David according to the flesh. But

the ministers of the church hurl a huge joke on the world when they say that Jesus was born of immaculate conception without the agency of a human father. Writes Paulus in his *Commentary on Matthew* :

“For we all await the Christ who will be a man among men...; the Messiah will be descended from the seed of David; he will not be born of a virgin, for it was God’s promise to the ancient King that he who is to come, would issue from his seed. Are we to think that God was merely mocking him.”

These two statements, born from the seed of David, the fruit of his loins according to the flesh on the one hand, and Divine Sonship without the agency of human seed on the other, are evidently in contradiction to each other; and when this hard fact was brought to the notice of the Reverend Minister of the Church, he confessed fair-mindedly, it may be stated to his credit that the genealogy had been drawn up in fulfilment of the scriptural prophecy that the Messiah would come from the line of David. He felt, of course, a little abashed when we remarked that the genealogy then, had to be cooked up in order to foist an old prophecy on the person of Jesus, otherwise the heavenly Son of God who did not belong to the earthly humanity, had nothing to do with it.

In a Metaphorical Sense

Jesus, the fact cannot be gainsaid, did use the appellation *Son of God* for himself. But he used it merely in a metaphorical sense, much in the same way as other outstanding personages, for instance the prophets and the earthly kings, believed to be God’s appointed, used to be called in the time of Jesus. We read in the Gospels :

“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works had I shewed you from my Father ; for which of those works do ye stone me ? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not but, for blasphemy ; and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods ? If he called them gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken ; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God ?”

(John, 10 : 31-36)

Jesus was evidently referring to the Book of Psalms (82 : 6) in the Old Testament which stated : “I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.” In Exodus, the Second Book of Moses (22 : 28), even judges, as God’s representatives, had been called “gods” ; and Jesus, making a reference to these scriptural statements, argued with his opponents that if judges could be called “gods”, how could he be accused of blasphemy if he said in the same metaphorical sense that he was a son of God.

The Gospels have recorded yet another event of great historical importance which dispels all doubt pertaining to the use of the term *son of God*. Jesus was produced before the Sanhedrin to be tried under the charge of blasphemy : “Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God ? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am”. (Luke 22 : 70). Matthew puts it as, “Thou hast said”. Peaks, a well-known commentator of the Bible, writes honestly while commenting on this verse : “We should perhaps take the ambiguous reply, *Thou hast said*, as a refusal.” Jesus meant to say in reply to the question, “Ye say that I am the Son of God, but I do not say so.”

The Jews could not prove their allegation against Jesus, and the charge of blasphemy that he claimed Divine Sonship for himself fell to the ground. But they were determined to lay their hands upon him. Another dangerous charge of sedition against the Roman Rule was raked up against Jesus, and he was haled before Pilate, the Governor, to stand his trial. Turn over Luke (23 : 3, 4), and read : "Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews ? And he answered him and said, Thou sayst it," meaning thereby, as explained in the foregoing lines, "Thou sayst it, but I do not say so." Here also Jesus pleaded not-guilty to the charge. "Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man." It is, thus, abundantly clear that Jesus used the appellation *Son of God* for himself in a wide metaphorical sense and not in the literal, physical sense as the Teachers of the Church would have us believe.

An Apostle of God

All these insurmountable difficulties, it was pointed out to the Church dignitary, stare us in the face for the evident reason that a wrong, untenable position has been imposed upon Jesus. Call him a prophet of God, and all the abstruse obstacles vanish away like a column of smoke in thin air. That Jesus was a true and righteous prophet of God who had been raised for the guidance of the Israelite people, is also amply borne out even by the present mutilated edition of the Bible. When the Jews were offended, we read in Matthew (13 : 57), by his teaching, "Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." A few more verses will further clarify this point that

Jesus claimed to be a prophet of God, an apostle from On High and nothing beyond it :

- (1) "I can of mine ownself do nothing ; as I hear, I judge ; and my judgment is just ; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father *which hath sent me.*" (John 5 : 30)
- (2) "For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." (John 6 : 38)
- (3) "Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am ; and I am not come of myself : but He that sent me is true, Whom ye know not. But I know Him ; for I am from Him, and *He hath sent me ..* Then said Jesus unto them, yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him *that sent me*" (John 7 : 28, 29, 33)

A messenger, or one who is sent forth to execute an errand is called *an apostle* in the language of religion.

Nation's Evidence

People who listened to Jesus also took him to be a prophet :

- (1) "And when he came into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee..... And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables they perceived that he spoke of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet." (Matt. 21 : 10, 11, 45, 46)
- (2) "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the son of man am? And they said, Some say thou art John the Baptist some, Elias, and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets." (Matt. 16 : 13)

One, Simon Peter, however is reported to have said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But Jesus reprov'd and reprimanded him, "And he straightly

charged them and commanded them to tell no man that thing" (Luke 9 : 21) Immediately after the event of Crucifixion, Cleopas and another disciples of Jesus were going to a village called Emmaus, talking together, of what had happened. Jesus also joined them on the way. But they recognized him not ; "their eyes were holden." Jesus enquired of them :

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad ? And the one of them whose name was Cleopas answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days ? And he said unto them, What thing ? And they said unto him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth *which was a prophet*, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." (Luke 24 : 17-19).

Jesus was human to the bone of his back. He had not only a human body, but also a human soul and human wit and intellect. He was, all the same, a prophet who had been raised for the guidance of the Children of Israel ; and to be a Messenger of the Most High God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is, of a truth, the most exalted position that could be conferred on man. We shall indeed be guilty of a libel against Prophet Jesus if we should divest him of this high honour, and worship and adore him as a Pagan god. We respect Jesus with all the honour and respect due to a prophet of God.

Jesus' Mission

From a study of the Gospels it is obviously clear that Jesus had a threefold mission to accomplish and perform : firstly, to fulfil the Law of Moses ; secondly, to seek and save the Lost Tribes of Israel and thirdly, to announce the

advent of the Prophet of Arabia. The Holy Quran, too, outlines this threefold mission of Jesus in one short and sweet verse (61 : 6).

“And when Jesus, son of Mary, said : O children of Israel, surely I am the Messenger of God, verifying that which is before me of the Torah, and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad.”

I. Revival of the Law of Moses.

Jesus was not the bearer of a new law, but he was to follow and act upon the Law of Moses. When he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, every answer that Jesus gave to his tempter, began with the words, “It is written” and was with reference to the Law incorporated in the pages of the Torah. One of the scribes asked him; “which is the first commandment of all?” Jesus replied :

“The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, this is the first commandment.”

(Mark 12 : 29).

Jesus thus repeated *verbatim* the words of Moses as given in Deuteronomy (6 : 4, 5). A few more verses will further clear up this point. Turn over Matthew (5 : 17—20) and read :

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets ; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you,

That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the Kingdom of heaven."

Addressing his disciples, Jesus is reported to have said on one occasion (Matt. 23 : 2) :

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not."

Jesus, it is obviously clear, corroborated and confirmed the Law of Moses. He complied with and conformed his own actions to it, and also required his disciples to observe and obey it. We are, however, not a little shocked to see that Paul, setting at defiance most impudently these explicit commands of his Master, has taught that obedience of the law is a curse. In his Epistle to the Galatians (3 : 10, 13) Paul writes :

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse ; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them ... Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

II. To seek and save the Lost Tribes.

Jesus had been sent merely for the good and guidance of the Children of Israel ; "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt. 15 : 24), was the blunt reply that Jesus gave to a non-Israelite woman of Canaan who approached him, praying. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil," and when the disciples intervened on her behalf, Jesus said ; "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." To

his disciples, when he sent them out in the country to preach his Gospel, Jesus gave the explicit direction. "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not But go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt. 10 : 5). Luke has reported another saying of Jesus : "The son of man is come to seek and save that which is lost." (19 : 10) It is, thus, obviously clear that Jesus' mission was exclusively towards the Children of Israel ; it was not of a universal nature. An incident has been recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 10. One Cornelius who was an Army officer and a pious man, begged Peter to receive him in the fold of Christ. But Cornelius was a heathen centurian, and Peter, in the first instance, declined to convert him, saying "you know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation : but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." (10 : 28). He, however, consented later on, and converted Cornelius. When the news reached Jerusalem, the other disciples were perturbed ; "and when Peter was come up to Jerusalem they that were of the circumcision (the Jews) contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised (non-Jews) and didst eat with them" (11 : 1—3).

One is naturally tempted to ask, who were these Lost Tribes, to seek and save which Jesus had been sent by the Most High God? It has already been stated in the foregoing lines that the descendants of Jacob who was also named Israel, multiplied in large numbers and became the Twelve Tribes well known in history. They settled in the holy land of Palestine. The two tribes of Judah

and Benjamin (henceforward known by the name of Judah) occupied Southern Palestine, whereas the remaining Ten Tribes (called Israel) lived in the Northern Palestine. Their mutual relations, after some time, became strained, and war broke out. Judah sought the help of the Assyrians who invaded Israel in 740 B.C. and carried a number of them to Assyria. This was the beginning of the captivity of the Ten Tribes. Twenty years later, in the reign of Shalmaneser IV, the Assyrians attacked Israel again, and carried away all the remainder of the Ten Tribes into captivity from where they never returned. We read in the Old Testament, the Second Book of Kings (17 : 23) : "So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day." In 686 B.C. the Assyrian Kingdom was overrun by the Babylonian army under the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar ; he also ransacked Jerusalem, and whatever had remained behind of the Ten Tribes was again carried away by him. The Ten Tribes, thus came into the Babylonian captivity. Through the ages that followed they passed into the captivity of the Persians in the time of Darius Hystaspis, and then of the Scytheans whose rule extended as far as Afghanistan and India. The Ten Tribes were, thus, pushed farther and still farther east from their homeland and were lost to the parent country for ever. So Jesus spoke of them as "the lost sheep of the House of Israel," and "the children of God that were scattered abroad."

Jesus in Kashmir

Jesus had proclaimed from time to time that his mission was "to seek and save that which was lost." We read in John (10 : 16) : "And other sheep I have which

are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, *and they shall hear my voice.*” But according to the Gospel teaching, Jesús had been preaching for a year only in Jerusalem and its suburbs when the Jews apprehended and killed him on the Cross; neither could he search and seek the Lost Tribes of Israel, nor could he make them hear his voice. Did Jesus fail in his mission? we enquired of our Christian friend, and told him that a prophet never fails in his mission, for he has on his back the mighty hand of the Almighty God. Jesus died not on the Cross. He was unconscious. A Roman soldier pierced his side with a spear, and blood came out, showing that life still pulsated under the skin. The disciples lavished all care on him, and Jesus revived. He passed his time in concealment, but was seen by the disciples for forty days. He met them for the last time on the mountain in Galilee and blessed them and gave them instructions regarding the propagation of his teaching, and then departed for the Eastern countries to seek the Lost Tribes. He travelled through Persia, Afghanistan and the North-Western part of India and reached Kashmir. The Kashmiris and the Pathans are the descendants of those Ten Tribes of Israel. Jesús, as a matter of fact, found out “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” and made them hear his voice. Jesús was successful in his mission. He lived among them to a good old age of 120 years, and his tomb can still be seen in Mohalla Khanyar, Srinagar, in Kashmir.

It was in fulfilment of the Divine covenant with the Patriarch that the Children of Israel were blessed with prophethood and kingship. But the time had come, we said, with the advent of Jesús when Jews had to be punished for their inordinacy. So, Jesús tolled the knell of their departing glory, saying : “The Kingdom of God

shall be taken away from you and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruit thereof" (Matt. 21 : 43). This nation which was to be the next recipient of the Divine blessing, was the *bani Ishmael*. We read in the Book of Genesis (17 : 20) :

"And as for Ishmael, I heard thee (Abraham). Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly ; twelve tribes shall he beget and I will make him a great nation."

The Gospel

Jesus was both a warner as well as the bearer of good news. He uttered, on the one hand, a grim warning to the Jews, portending their fall from Jehovah's favour but, on the other hand, he also gave the glad tidings of, the coming of the World-Prophet. The Gospel of St. Barnabas who was a well-known Apostle of Jesus, has given the name of this Great Prophet. Said Jesus :

"And when I saw him, my soul was filled with consolation, saying, O Muhammad, God be with thee and may He make me worthy to untie thy shoe lachets. The disciples asked, O Master, who shall that man be of whom thou speaketh, who shall come into the world ? Jesus answerd, He is Muhammad, the Messenger of God."

This Gospel was read in the Churches for sometime; but was, later on, tabooed for the reason that it bore incontrovertible testimony to the truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. And it was for this reason that the message of Jesus was called *The Gospel* which means *the glad tidings*, the happy news of the coming of the Prophet of Arabia. The Holy Quran also corroborates and confirms it (61 : 6) :

"And when Jesus, son of Mary said : O children of Israel, surely I am the messenger of God to you, verifying that which is

before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad."

Ahmad was another attributive name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

The Prophecies

Fragments of this important truth are still to be found even in the present overhauled and altered edition of the Bible, pointing clearly to the advent of the Great Prophet of Arabia Turn over the Gospel according to St. John, chapter 16, verses 12, 13

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you unto all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come."

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (Paraclete), that he may abide with you for ever." (John, 14 : 15, 16).

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John, 15: 26).

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John, 16: 7).

The World Prophet

From these verses, it is obviously clear that the Promised Prophet

(1) will appear after Jesus;

(2) will abide with the people for ever, and guide them into all truth; that is to say, he will bring the final code of life and seal the law; the period of his prophet-

hood will be everlasting, and no prophet shall appear after him. Also compare the Quranic teaching on this point : (a) "Muhammad is not the father of any of you, but he is the Apostle of Allah and the seal of the prophets" (33 : 40) ; and the Holy Prophet himself has said : "I am the Last of the Prophets, and there is no prophet after me," which fact has, further, borne out by history, and no prophet has appeared after Muhammad during the last 1400 years. (b) "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as your religion." (5 : 3).

(3) "shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak." We read in the Holy Quran : "Nor does he (Muhammad) speak out of desire, it is nothing but revelation that is revised. The Lord of Mighty Power has taught him." (53 : 3) ; "Say (Muhammad)...it is only a delivery (of commandments) from Allah and His Message" (62 : 22).

(4) "shall testify of me"—The Holy Prophet testified to the truthfulness of Jesus, and cleared him and his mother, Mary, of all the slanderous charges that the Jews, most wickedly, had brought against them. Says the Holy Quran (4 : 171) : "The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only a messenger of Allah and His word which He communicated to Mary and a mercy from Him" Again, "The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a messenger; messengers before him had indeed passed away. And his mother was a truthful woman" (5 : 75).

The advent of the World-Prophet was certainly the greatest event of human history ; it had been foretold by all the prophets of the world. To the Israelites the

happy news was first given by Moses, their great Law-giver, saying (Deut. (18 : 17-19).

“And the Lord said unto me... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

The Promised Prophet who would be the like of Moses, was to be raised among the brethren of Israelites, that is, among the descendants of Ishmael, the *bani Ishmael* in Genesis (25 : 18) it was stated :

“These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names..and these are the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred and thirty and seven years and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. And they dwelt from Havilah into Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goes towards Assyria; and he died in the presence of *all his brethren.*”

That not a vestige of doubt or difficulty be left in the identification of the Promised Prophet, Moses had also mentioned the place of his appearance. Turn over Deuteronomy (33 : 2):

“And he (Moses) said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up forth from Seir unto them; he shined from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them.”

Mount Sinai was the place where the Law was given to Moses; and the rising of the Lord from Seir referred to the appearance of Jesus. But the third manifestation of the Lord was to take place on Mount Paran which is the name of a hill in Makka. That Paran is situated in Arabia (Hijaz) is borne out by verse 21, chapter 21, Genesis : “And he (Ishmael) dwelt in the wilderness of

Paran, and his mother (Hagar) took him a wife out of the land of Egypt." Yet another unmistakable sign which establishes the identity of the Promised Prophet most palpably, has been mentioned: "He came with ten thousand of saints." When the Holy Prophet Muhammad appeared on the hills of Paran, on the occasion of the Victory of Makka, he was accompanied by exactly ten thousand saints.

Not Jesus

In the course of a discussion with the present writer, a missionary of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, New York, only recently, tried in vain to foist this prophecy on the person of Jesus, the Christ; and he had to be told that even 33 years after the death of Jesus, his disciples continued to wait for the Promised Prophet. Wrote St. Peter addressing his followers (Acts 3 : 19-24):

"Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."