

Author

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The Author is an Executive Member of Akoko Joint Muslim Council, Executive Member of West-Jomo and Chairman of its Publication Committee, Executive Member of Ondo Provincial Joint Muslim Organization and a Member of Nigeria_Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs.

He received his education in Christian schools and universities and he lived with clergymen. Notwithstanding his close contact with Christianity, he is not convinced of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The Christian attacks on Islam, especially the address delivered by Rev. S. C. Phillips during the season of Lent in 1944, which was published under the title, "Christ or Mohammad" as contained in the Daily Service (25/10/49), forced Alhaj Ajjola to resume a special study of the Bible so as to fully understand the doctrines of Christianity as preached and practiced by Jesus.

The Author, as a young man, is convinced that no prophet of God can be founder of a Faith whose teachings and practice would be so different to other Revealed Faiths as the Christian Missionaries of Nigeria have made one to believe in the 1940's and 50's. This is a Faith which is being forced on people.

Their axiom is, 'no Christianity-no education.' Yet, many of these educational institutions were built by the general public's effort and financed by the public fund.

In this book, Alhaj A. D. Ajijola offers a clear restatement of fundamental beliefs of the Christians and forceful criticism of Christianity. He describes the difficulties which the Christian doctrine raised for us today and he clearly shows that these difficulties arise from the fact that Modern Christianity is neither based on the teachings and practice of the Gospels nor on the teachings of the older prophets, but it is based mainly on the superstitious structure propounded by St. Paul, who never met Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) alive. The Author thus exposes the Myth of Modern Christian doctrines.

This book is of assistance to those who need a comprehensive and coherent exposition of Christian doctrines. It is a valuable book for both Christians and non-Christians alike.

Introduction

Islam and Christianity are two great religions seeking more and more converts in Nigeria. The contact between the followers of these religions increases day by day. During the colonial days many Christian religious leaders were hostile to Islam and presented Islam as a religion of the barbarians and some Christians even prayed and left no stone unturned in order to replace Islam with Christianity. But today, the Muslims and the Christians are trying to understand each other's religion more than at any time before and at the same time some vigorous efforts are being made by each of them to help each other understand their religion.

The humble writer believes that whatever the beliefs of any person may be, he respects them and he does not like them to be ridiculed. Therefore, let us think over our religious beliefs. Let the adherents of each come together with open minds and hearts and search for inner intentions of faith, and they should not be deterred and diverted by their over-enthusiasm to convert others, which inevitably provokes a closing of ranks and minds. While studying comparative religions the Christian is brought up to believe that his is the only true religion, with Judaism as a preparation for Christianity, and that all other religions are false. He thinks that God has chosen and set apart the children of Israel for the purpose of revealing His messages and sending His prophets. Hence, he believes only in the prophets and religious teachers of Israel and looks upon all other claimants to prophethood as impostors. The Christian missionaries have all along employed their energies to prove the holy founders of other religions to be charlatans and sinful men so that they might establish the unique claims of Jesus Christ. One has only to read their books about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and his religion to find how their religious preconceptions and prejudices have made them incapable of seeing the truth of others. They have not even hesitated to mistranslate the Holy Qur'an and spread many misstatements about Prophet Muhammad -(peace be on him) to serve their own purpose.

The Muslims on the other hand, believe in the divine origin of all the great religions of the world. The sacred book of Islam declares that God has raised prophets in every nation to guide human beings to the path of truth and righteousness. Being the loving Creator and Sustainer of all the World, He cannot become partial and choose one nation, to the exclusion of all others, for revealing His messages. A Muslim must believe in the founders of all the great religions. He

may feel sorry to see how the Jews and Christians etc., have partly forsaken and altered the true teachings of Moses, Jesus and the other prophets, but he can never speak against the holy founders of these religions. For, he has been directed by the Holy Qur'an to believe in them as true and righteous apostles of God. He has the same respect and love for them as he has for Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Whatever I may Write or have written about Christianity is directly related to my understanding of its Holy Book (the Bible) and I welcome any Christian criticism or clarification of some of these points that I have discussed in this book. I have dismissed the modern church doctrine on the authority of the Bible, and I invite any Christian to dismiss my argument or clarify some of the points I have discussed here also on the authority of the Bible and not through the Writings of any Christian scholar however eminent.

Christianity took its name from Jesus Christ. The religious books of the Christians which were revealed by God to Jesus Christ are part of the Bible known as the New Testament.

Jesus Christ was born in the small village of Bethlehem in Palestine, though his early life is not known to us, yet this much we know, that he studied Judaism in his early life. When Jesus Christ became thirty, revelations began to come upon him and he then started to criticize Judaism as it was practiced. He delivered many lectures. One of these is historically very important the Sermon on the Mount in which he declared:

“Blessed are they who are poor, because We kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are they who are meek because they will inherit the earth. Blessed are they who are sorrowful because they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful upon whom mercy will be done. Blessed are the pure at heart because they will see God”

When Jesus Christ reached Jerusalem to preach his teachings, the Jews became very glad but as soon as he preached his spiritual discourse, he was declared a rebel and according to Christian beliefs he was tried and crucified.

However, Jesus Christ, during his period of two to three years of preaching, emphasized the Unity of God, Brotherhood and Love as basis of human

organization. He also stressed the importance of morality and denounced greed and wealth accumulated unjustly.

Jesus Christ preached a system of ethics based on morality as the base of religion. Jesus confirmed the teachings of Moses:

“Do not commit adultery.

Do not kill.

Do not steal.

Do not bear false witness.

Do not defraud.

Honour thy father and mother.”

The spirit of the teachings of Jesus has been very beautifully summed up in the following passage:

“The mutual attacks of state on state, the mutual usurpations of family upon family, the mutual robberies of man on man, the want of kindness on the part of the sovereign and of loyalty on the part of the minister, the want of tenderness and filial duty between father and son—these and such as these are the injuries to the empire. And this has arisen from want of mutual love. If but that one virtue could be made universal, the princes loving one another would have no battlefields, the chief of families would attempt no usurpations; man would commit no robberies, rulers and ministers would be gracious and loyal; brothers would be harmonious and easily reconciled, men in general loving one another, the strong would not make prey of the weak; the many would not plunder the few; the rich would not insult the poor; and the noble would not be insolent to the mean and the deceitful would not impose upon the simple.”

Jesus gave the message of love and universal brotherhood to mankind.

Christianity, In its beginning was based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ but after he had gone, there were many additions and alterations in this faith.

Many Christian scholars in writing about Christianity, hardly refer to the Bible but refer to the opinions of Christian scholars. I was recently discussing with an expatriate Christian Missionary friend of mine, who said that there are two types of Christianity, namely:

1. christianity with an ordinary "c" which has been rejected in Europe by the renaissance of the 15th Century. This is the christianity that can be found in the Bible, and
2. Christianity with a capital "C". This is the Christianity developed by the philosophers and moralists to meet the challenging problems of our time.

This to me is very strange, as the only source of authority is the Bible.

I shall, therefore, base my arguments solely on the Bible while refuting the Pauline doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus Christ and Divine-sonship of Jesus which distinguishes Islam from Christianity. The religion of Islam has no place in it for any of these dogmas. Islam believes in the Oneness of God as against the Trinity in Christianity. It considers the Christian deification of Jesus to be a reversion to paganism. According to the Holy Qur'an, Jesus was not an incarnation of God, but a prophet and messenger of God and like all other prophets (including Prophet Muhammad), he was every bit a human being. Islam also rejects the doctrine of Divine-sonship. Jesus may be called a son of God in the sense in which all righteous human beings may be called the children of God, but not in any literal or special sense. In the same way, Islam rejects the dogmas of Original sin, the Vicarious sacrifice and the Atonement.

Islam preaches the pure and simple Unity of God, the Almighty, All-Loving, All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Holy, Unique, the Creator and Sustainer of the Worlds:

“Your God is One God; there is none save Him, the All-Loving, the All-Merciful.”
[Qur’an 2:163]

“Say, 'He is God, the One:

God, the eternally

Besought of all.

He begetteth not,

Nor was He begotten

And there is none

Comparable unto Him.'” [Qur’an 112:1-4]

The Muslims argue that Jesus is not the founder of modern Christianity. The present dogmas of modern Christianity took shape after Jesus, as a result of pagan influence. They show that Christianity has departed considerably from the religion as preached by Jesus.

The Muslims, until lately, did not become involved in education development early enough in Nigeria; but, Christian Missionaries who came from secular states of Europe with public funds, introduced education on the Western pattern which soon spread all over the country. Admission to these Christian schools was conditioned on accepting Christianity. Thus, the Christian missionaries used educational institutions to force the Muslim youths to follow their faith. I, myself have been subjected to this. For instance, Jubilee School-Ikare and Victory College-Ikare were built by the Ikare Communities of which the Muslims are in the majority, but up until 1946, when the writer was in Standard Six, no person was allowed to take Primary Six Examinations except one who became a member of the Church Missionary Society.

The writer broke the tradition with a series of petitions to the then Education Officer at Akare and in 1947, the writer as a Class I student at Victory College was forced to go to church and as a result, he left for his Secondary Education.

Even today, the Victory College has merely changed its tactics. In fact, it is pursuing a more ruthless policy of perversion of Muslim children into Christianity. As a normal rule, the Victory College-Ikare Authorities admit only Christian children, but, occasionally admit a few Muslim children as a pretence that there is no discrimination in the admission of students. Such Muslim children are subjected to vigorous propaganda to accept Christianity. They are forcefully baptized at the Victory College Chapel. Moreover, all the Muslim children are forced to attend Christian Services every morning and any failure of students to attend Chapel may lead to their dismissal.

This has led to the conversion of some Muslim intellectuals to Christianity. I do not consider it appropriate here to analyze the cause of this conversion, but I would rather discuss the means of bringing these Muslim children who have gone or are likely to go astray, back to the fold of Islam.

If this book can help Muslim children and Christians even in the least bit, to further understanding the fundamental doctrines of modern Christianity not based on the Bible, then I would claim that my humble attempt is justified.

I would like to urge upon all Muslims to try and read this book themselves and circulate it among their friends so that they may educate their communities about the superior teachings of Islam as compared with Christianity. I want to address this appeal especially to parents whose children are studying in Christian schools where they are likely to fall victims of Christian influence, in the cause of their secular education.

I am sure this book will be of great use to the Western educated Nigerian Muslims and the Nigerian Muslim Missionaries who may come in contact with Christian scholars or laity.

Christians have recently come out with a number of publications which are purported to explain Islam to the Christians. Since the end of the Civil War in Nigeria, Christians have redoubled their efforts to convert Muslims to Christianity. To

moot this challenge, I have decided to write this book titled "THE MYTH OF THE CROSS", basing my arguments strictly on the authority of the Bible and not on any far-fetched arguments of Christian scholars however eminent.

Many friends of mine have asked me from time to time what I consider to be the basic doctrines of Christianity. I have come to feel the need of a book which examines Christianity from the Biblical point of view, and thus seek to find the truth and errors of the modern doctrines of Christianity in Nigeria.

This book is a humble effort to explain Christianity to the Christians and Muslims. I hope my Christian friends will find this book useful in clearing the mist that covers some of the grossly misunderstood aspects of their religion like the trinity; the Divinity of Jesus and the Divine Son-ship of Jesus. I hope my readers will take note of the difference between Christianity as practiced by followers of Jesus and Christianity as practiced by Nigerian Christians. I also hope this book will go a long way to satisfy the intellectual cravings of Nigerian youths in this post-war Nigerian era of anxiety and restlessness.

No great originality is claimed, indeed, all the ideas expressed here owe their origin to one or other of the great thinkers of our time, whose labors have made theology and secular ideologies such an exciting business. In order to avoid lengthy quotations and numerous footnotes; arguments and points of view under discussion are presented in general terms without specific attribution or acknowledgement. This is a dangerous precedent, but under the circumstances it seems justified. Of course I take full responsibility for everything that is said here.

I have so far as possible consulted the literature put out by Christian Scholars.

In Part I of this book, I analyze the present doctrines of Christianity. In Part II, I examine some other aspects of Christianity from the Biblical point of view as well as making a brief reference to the Old Testament.

I am grateful to all the people who went through the manuscript and offered me very useful suggestions and those friends who have kindly helped me in the preparation of this book.

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May it please Allah to accept this humble service.

Alhaj Adeleke Dirisu Ajijola

Ikare (Western State of Nigeria)

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CHAPTER 1

THE FIRST BASIC DOCTRINE OF MODERN CHRISTIANITY

Christianity, as understood and believed by the Christians of both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant persuasions, consists of Three Creeds; namely, the Apostles, the Nicene and the Athanasian. The fundamental and basic doctrines of Modern Christianity may be summarized as follows:

1. Jesus is the Son of God or God. This is the basic of the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus and the Divine Son-ship of Jesus.
2. Jesus died on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sins and resurrected on the third day. This is the basis of the Doctrine of Original Sin and the Doctrine of Atonement.
3. Jesus has risen to the skies,
4. Jesus himself will come back again.

I shall deal extensively with these doctrines quoting several passages from the Bible and I hope to dismiss these Christian doctrines which are not based on the authority of the teachings of Jesus or on the authority of the Bible.

The first Basic Doctrine of Modern Christianity is that Jesus was the Son of God Himself: this is the basis of the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus and the Divine Son-ship of Jesus.

The first question to be asked after reading the Bible is: Was Jesus the Son of God or was God Himself?

The Christians normally argue that Jesus was God or the Son of God because of his having been conceived and born without the agency of the father. This Doctrine is perfectly put by the Athanasian Creed.

There is one Person of the Father another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; The Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal..... The Father is God, the Son of God and Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God..... Father like as we are completed by the Christians verity to acknowledge other Person by Himself to be God and Lord, we forbidden by the Catholic religion. Was that true to be three Gods or three Lords.

The Christians contend that there is abundant evidence for this "I and the Bible.

"I and the Father are One". The Jews took up stones again to stone him Jesus answered, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" The Jews answered "We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man make yourself God". Jesus answered them "Is it not written in your law, 'said you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" [John 10:30-36]

The above verses and other similar verses in the Bible should not be accepted in their literal sense; rather, they have to be seen as figurative statements capable of more than one interpretations. The title Son of God is conferred on a host of believers and Prophets in the Bible. The following passages from the Bible illustrate this very well:

“And you shall say to Pharaoh Thus says the Lord, Israel is my first born Son.”
[Exodus 4:22]

“You are the son of the Lord your God..... “ [Deut. 14:1]

“Father of the fatherless...is God..... “ [Psalms 68:5]

“He shall build a house for my name, and I will His Father, establish the throne of His kingdom for ever I will be and He shall be my son.....” [II Samuel 7:13-14]

“He said to me, ‘It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his Father’.” [I Chr. 22:10]

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” [Matthew 5:9]

“...so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.” [Matthew 5:45]

“And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father who is in heaven.”
[Matthew 23:9]

“Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God and every one who loves the parents loves the child.” [John 5:1]

“...the son of Egos the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” [Luke 3:38]

“For ‘In Him we live and move and have our being’ ;as even some of your poets have said, ‘For we are indeed His offspring.’” [Acts 17:28]

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” [Romans 8:14]

“...it is the Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” [Romans 8:16]

“...and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.” [John 11:5 2]

“For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the first born among many brethren.” [Romans 8:29]

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” [I Corinthians 3:16]

“And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My Sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” [II Corinthians 6:18]

“...and in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ it shall be said to them, ‘Sons of the living God’.” [Hosea 1:10]

“...for I am a Father to Israel and Ephraim is My first born.” [Jeremiah 31:9]

It is as clear as day from these passages, that in the Bible ‘Son of God’ signifies love and affection. Jesus (peace of God be upon him) was undoubtedly one of God’s beloved prophets.

Furthermore, we learn from the Psalms that this title was given to David long before it was given to Jesus. Psalms 2, verse 7 declares: “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” Similarly, Israel has been called the ‘Son of God’ in Exodus 4:22 and Solomon in I Chronicles 22:10.

Indeed, this phrase ‘Son of God’ meant nothing more than nearness to God. Jesus Christ himself said that every righteous and merciful man was a ‘Son of God’, He says as follows:

“Love your enemies.....that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven.” [Matthew 5:44-45]

“Blessed are the Peacemakers: For they shall be called the sons of God.” [Matthew 5:9]

These sayings should leave no doubt in our minds as to what this phrase meant for Jesus. In view of these passages from the Bible, there is no reason why Jesus should be regarded as the ‘Son of God’ in a literal or unique sense.

We read in the Bible that Adam’s Conception lacked the agency of both father and mother Does he then stand out greater than God and His Son? Similarly, we read about Melchizedech, King of Salem:

“He is without Father or Mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the son of God he continues a priest for ever.” [Hebrews 7:3]

All these are enough to invalidate the argument that Jesus was the Son of God because he has been conceived and born without the agency of the father.

Leaving the Bible and other holy books alone we can consider the customs and beliefs of our people to show that the word, son of God is used merely as a metaphor. For example in Ikare, Western State Nigeria, Princes are called ‘OMO EKUN’ meaning ‘Son of Lion’. This does not mean that the Prince so addressed was born by a lion. The curious aspect of this doctrine is that “God the Son” is claimed to be equal to “God the Father” and divine attributes are assigned to him. This claim is, to me beyond my understanding. For instance, when a Prince is called the ‘Son of Lion’, no one tries to find out where the tail of the Prince is since the expression is simply metaphorical.

Some Christians attribute the virtues of Son-ship to Jesus because it is alleged he performed some miracles. In fact, in Christianity miracles are given great significance; not only are they used as strong arguments to support certain claims

but it seems also that the central doctrine of the Christian religion is itself based on alleged miracles such as the rising of Jesus from the dead. It is not surprising that in the Gospels miracles take the place not only of arguments but also of religious duties, moral teachings and spiritual awakening. The dead are made to rise from the graves, multitudes of the sick are healed, sight is restored to the blind, the lames are made to walk, the deaf is made to hear, water is turned into wine, devils are cast out and many other wonderful deeds are done.

Though the Gospels lay so much stress on miracles, the great significance attached to them diminishes considerably when the following two outstanding facts are considered. In the first place, similar miracles were according to the Gospels performed even by the opponents of Jesus Christ, for he himself has this to say:

“And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?”
[Matthew 12:27; Luke 11:19]

The disciples of the Pharisees could perform miracles just as Jesus did. Again, Jesus is reported as saying:

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?” [Matthew 7:22]

Even false Christ could work the miracles which Jesus showed:

“For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders.” [Matthew 24:24]

There is also the healing pool of those days which again is a miracle:

“Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first

after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” [John 5:2-4]

If miracles were so commonplace in those days, even if the disciples of the Pharisees and iniquitous and false Messiahs could perform the self same miracles which the “Son of God” was performing. If there was such a miraculous pool as described above what was there so unique about those miracles of Christ?

Yet another consideration makes the evidence of the Gospel miracle worthless. The miracles in a prophet’s life is needed to assure the people to whom he is sent of the truth of his message. Also, to convince the ordinary minds that he possesses some supernatural power. The question, therefore is, supposing Jesus wrought the miracles which are recorded of him in the Gospels, what was the effect produced by those miracles? Certainly if such wonderful deeds were done, the masses ought to have followed him without hesitation. But the Gospels tell us that though multitudes of the sick followed him and were healed and faith was a condition precedent to healing, yet Jesus never had multitudes of follower. His following was very poor, perhaps no more than five hundred men. His own disciples also did not show in any marked degree the effect of the miracles performed by him upon their lives. Of the twelve specially chosen, one turned traitor, another became cursed and the rest all fled leaving their master in a sad plight. Therefore, even if Jesus worked miracles they would never seem to have fulfilled the objects for which miraculous power is vouchsafed.

There is not the least doubt that Jesus often spoke in parables and used symbolic language freely:

“Let the dead bury their dead.” [Matthew 8:22]

“The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God... for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come to forth.” [John 5:25-29]

There seems to be no doubt that words like these were the source from which sprang marvels like the following:

“And, behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose. And came out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” [Matthew 27:51-53]

Leaving aside the question of whether Jesus was the ‘Son of God’ or not, the crucial question is “Is Jesus God”? This question relates to the second Christian dogma of the Divinity, or more accurately, the deity of Jesus. The Nicene Creed states:

“I believe in..... one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages. God of God Light of Light, true God of true God. Begotten not made: being of one substance with the Father.”

Christians (both Roman Catholics and Protestant) believe that Jesus was God from all eternity and the Second Person of the Trinity; that nearly two thousand years ago he chose to appear in a human form and was born of the Virgin Mary.

This dogma does not seem to have any support from the words of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Gospels. The truth is that Jesus strongly disclaimed Godhood or Divinity. Here are his own words:

“Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, that is, God.” [Mark 10:18]

Speaking about God, Jesus said:

“My father and your Father, and my God and your God.” [John 20:17]

This verse shows that Jesus stood in the same relation to God as any other human being. In other words, he was a creature of God. In his agony on the Cross, Jesus cried out:

“Eloi, Eloi Lama sabachthani?”

Translation:

“My God ! My God ! why has thou forsaken me?” [Mark 15:34]

Can any one imagine these words coming out of the mouth of God? Here we have the cry of a helpless man to his Creator and Lord.

The fact is, Jesus claimed only to be a Prophet a Messenger of God. The Gospels accord Jesus a status not a shade higher than that of a prophet and a messenger. He was a man to whom God had repealed His message for the guidance of other men. The following words of Christ himself support this contention:

“If ye are Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told J you the truth, which I have heard from God.” [John 8:39-40]

“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me: and whoever receives me, receives not me but Him who sent me.” [Mark 9:37]

“He answered, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel’.” [Matthew 15:24]

“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” [John 15:10]

“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives Him who sent me.” [Matthew 10:40]

“I have not spoken of myself but the Father which sent me. He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak.” [John 12:49]

God is comprehended from His attributes. If it is proved and granted that Jesus is Master of Divine attributes, one is justified in taking him for God. On the other hand, if the truth is otherwise and Jesus stands destitute of Divine attributes, the claim to his Divinity is unsound and hostile to truth.

A comparison may be drawn between the attributes and acts of God and those of Jesus:

1. It is not up to God to pray; it is up to man to beseech and tender supplication. The way of God is to attend to man's Petitions, It is written :

"The Lord is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous."
[Proverbs 15:29]

"But He withdrew to the wilderness and prayed." [Luke 5:16]

"And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly." [Luke 22:44]

"Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go yonder and pray.'" [Matthew 26:36]

"In the days of his flesh Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear." [Hebrew 5:7]

If the Messiah was also the Lord, whom then did he implore? Whom did he ask in all humbleness for aid? The verses above disprove no doubt the Divinity of Jesus.

2. God is Almighty

“...and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” [II Corinthians 6:18]

Jesus is not God and the type of Omnipotence ascribed to him is rendered meaningless by the following verses from the Bible:

“I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of Him who sent me.” [John 5:30]

“And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them.” [Mark 6:5]

“When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was- hoping to see some sign done by him. So he questioned him some length; but he made no answer.” [Luke 23:8-9]

3. God is All-Knowing. He knows the Unseen and the Seen, nothing escapes His knowledge.

“He has the knowledge of earth and heaven and all that is created.” [I Kings 8:39]

In sharp contrast to God, Jesus is not imbued with this attribute as evidenced from the following statements from the Gospel:

“But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in the heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” [Mark 13:32]

“In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he was hungry; and seeing of fig tree by the wayside he went to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again”-and the fig tree withered at once.” [Matthew 21:18-19]

“...came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased. And Jesus said, “Who was it that touched me?” When all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you”. [Luke 8:44-45]

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” [Matthew 16:19]

“But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me for you are not on the side of God, but of men”. [Matthew 16:23]

Judah was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. He betrayed him and recanted. Yet Jesus addresses them (including Judah) as follows:

“Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his Glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”. [Matthew 19:28]

It would seem, Jesus was not Omniscient as God; he knew neither of the obscure nor the manifest. He was in the dark even regarding so crude a matter as the produce season of the fig tree. It is, therefore, a flagrant blunder to take Jesus for God.

4. ‘Death overtakes Him not’:

“...who alone has immortality...” [I Timothy 6:16]

On the contrary, Jesus is reported to have died; consequently, Jesus cannot possibly be God.

5. It is God who is the Savior of Mankind and shields them from disaster. David says:

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous ; but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” [Psalms 34:19]

The Messiah was not in a position to rescue people from disaster; he himself requested God’s help:

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say, “Father save me from this hour”?
[John 12:27]

In the light of this verse, it is wrong to uphold Jesus as God.

6. God does not fear anyone. Jesus was most unlike Him, because he was overawed and cowed by the Jews as will be seen from the passages below :

“So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death, Jesus therefore no longer went about openly among the Jews, but went from there to the country near the wilderness, to a town called E’phraim; and there he stayed with the disciples.”
[John 11:53-54]

“Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.”
[Matthew 16:20]

“But after his brothers had gone up to the feast then he also went up, not publicly but in private.” [John 7:10]

How can one take a scared and timid man for God?

7. God’s dominion is on earth and in heaven. Everywhere His authority reigns supreme and His decree can neither be evaded nor can it be impeded. We know all too well that such qualities did not apply to Jesus:

“He said to them, ‘You will drink my cup but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father’.” [Matthew 20:23]

“And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt’.” [Matthew 26:39]

8. God is above all His creation. None can tempt him for good or for bad:

“Let no one say when He is tempted, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted with evil and He Himself tempts no one.” [Jas. 1:13]

It is not a matter of a day or two but for forty consecutive days the Gospels tell us, that Satan tempted Jesus who followed wherever he led him:

“And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread”. And Jesus answered him, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone”. And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him “To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours”. And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve’.”

“And he took him to Jerusalem, and sent him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; for it is written, ‘He will give His angels charge of you, to guard you and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone’.” And Jesus answered him, “It is said, you shall not tempt the Lord your God”. And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.” [Luke 4:1-13]

9. The Bible says :

“O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good ;for His steadfast love endures for ever.”
[I Chronicles 16:34]

The Gospels also state that Jesus declined to accept the complement of
‘Good’:

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.’.”
[Mark 10:18]

Jesus, from the above argument was not God.

10. Slumber seizes Him not nor sleep:

“He will not let your foot be moved, He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” [Psalms 121:3-4]

11. However Jesus even slept right through a roaring storm v whilst at sea so that others had to wake him up :

“And a great storm of wind arose, and (he waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher do you not care if we perish?’.” (Mark 4:37-38]

“The God our Father raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.” [Acts 5:30]

As Jesus was crucified there is no authority for crediting Jesus with Divinity. No power can crucify God.

12. None is greater than God. He is Absolutely Great. The Bible speaks thus of Jesus:

“You heard me say to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I.’” [John 14:28]

“And He who sent me is with me ;He has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to Him,” [John 8:29]

“Paul says: But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.” [I Corinthian 11:3]

13. Bringing the dead to life is attributed to God:

“Why, we felt that we had received the sentence of death ;but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who arises the dead.” [II Corinthians 1:9]

Instead of quickening the dead Jesus himself met with death and God raised him to life:

“...this He fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus ;as also it is written in the second Psalm, ‘Thou art my Son, and today I have begotten thee.’” [Acts 13:33]

Jesus is not God but His righteous servant. God favored Him by His choicest blessings. He was a paragon of virtue for the House of Israel.

14. God is Unique. There is none like unto Him and no one shares with Him in His Being Attributes and acts, Jesus was one man among men. Before his birth he was an embryo in his mother’s womb:

“And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom ; and the favour of God was upon him.” [Luke 2:40]

“...the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.” [Matthew 11:19]

“And Jesus said to him: ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests ;but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head’.” [Luke 9:58]

“If any one says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord has need of them and He will send them immediately.” [Matthew 21:3]

“And he said to thee, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death ;remain here, and watch’.” [Mark 14:34]

“When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; and He said, ‘Where have you laid him’? They said to him, ‘Lord, come and see’. Jesus wept.” [John 11:33-35]

Jesus was subject to and sought the fulfillment of human needs. Finally, as the Christian version goes, enemies nailed him to death.

Can a person of the limited dimensions and characteristics that the Holy Bible itself has shown Jesus to be, be the True God? Is it convincing that he continues to be upheld as God Almighty? Is it rewarding to religious faith that Jesus be sought after for assistance? The answer to these questions is inevitably-“No”. If thought to be God as well as His votary, the thought is a frail one. Those who take Jesus for God have not realized God fully. They come nowhere to grasping God; comprehending His Attributes or knowing that HE is a Master of tremendous capacities.

CHAPTER 2

THE SECOND BASIC DOCTRINE OF MODERN CHRISTIANITY

This article also includes the following subtopics:

- Did Jesus Die on the Cross?
- Scrutinizing the GOSPEL Crucifixion Reports

The second cardinal doctrine of Modern Christianity is that Jesus died on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sins this is the basis of the doctrine of Original Sin and the doctoring of Atonement.

The Christians assert that God has a Son, who is His only Son. This Son of God incarnated himself in the womb of Mary. She and her husband Joseph, the carpenter was informed of this by an angel. In fullness of time, the Son of God was born in the form of a human child. He was brought up like human children and when he grew old, he worked miracles. The Jews, among whom he was born, persecuted him and at last killed him by suspending him on the Cross. Thus, the Son of God incarnate, died and after death descended into hell where he remained for three days. Then he rose from the dead and now sits in the heavens on the right hand of God. Though he was innocent yet he bore this pain and death for the sake of human beings, so that his sufferings may atone for the sins of man. Now man will not be punished for his sins provided he believes in Jesus for the latter has taken upon himself the sins of all men.

This is what the Christian doctrine of Atonement means. According to Christian Belief, all children of Adam are sinful. Adam and Eve were expelled from heaven for their sin and all their children have inherited the sin and hence all are born sinful. It was for this reason that the Son of God did not cater the womb of Mary through the seed of man, but Mary conceived him without knowing a man, so that he may not inherit the sin of Adam, like the test of Adam's children.

This doctrine of Atonement raises the question: whether anyone except Jesus can be impeccable? In the Christian school of theology this dogma is of cardinal import. The Christians construct the premises and deduce Atonement along the following lines. Every man is under the sway of sin and its hold is universal A redeemer and savior is called for. Mankind cannot serve as its own redeemed since mankind is a race of wrongdoers. He assumed the body of man and therefore, he was whole and upright. Thus, he can make good the loss of man and offer Atonement.

If one adduces evidence that a man-or for that matter men-had led the lives of absolute moral purity, the Christians view will fail instantly. The warp and woof of Atonement will disintegrate. The infallibility of prophets stands as anathema to Christians who trade in Atonement Many Christians believe what the Gospels seem to say that men are of two kinds; evil-doers and righteous. If this is so, to turn around and paint everyone with the brush of sin is tantamount to denouncing the explicit teachings of the Gospels Thus we read:

“Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” [Matthew 13:17]

“So that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He makes His son rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”
[Matthew 5:45]

“As He spoke by the mouth of His Holy Prophets from the old.” [Luke 1:70]

“Because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” [Peter 1:21]

“There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out.”
[Luke 13:28]

“We know that anyone born of God does not sin, but he who was born of God keeps Him and the evil one does not touch him.” [1 John 5:18]

“Blessed at those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...for so men persecuted the prophets v ho werebefore you.”
[Matthew 5:10-12]

The above verses testify to the righteousness and holiness of the prophets who were born of God and were inmates of His Kingdom. Satan failed to obtain the least access to them. They were persecuted for righteousness sake (peace and mercy of God be upon all of them). Exalted to a rank as high, they must be infallible. Satan can never prevail on them In view of these verses, one is persuaded to acknowledge that the progeny of Adam embraces vicious as well as virtuous men Not all of them are given to excesses. Once one accepts this truth, it will render the Christian faith outlined above untenable. The superstructure of the doctrine of Atonement will come down with a thud.

The prophets are sent by God as models of virtue to teach people through persuasion. It is written:

“Many years thou didst bear with them, and didst warn them by thy Spirit through thy Prophets.” [Nehemiah 9:30]

How can a prophet taken as a model of good and a guardian people commit transgressions? His failing is inconsistent with his office. Any theory that brands prophets as sinners must be set aside as false.

The Holy Bible testifies to a host of pious and holy men who ever were ever obedient to God and who abided by His command. Never did the prophets, some of whom I list below, rebel against God’s wish.

The first of them is John (Yahya) (peace be upon him). The Gospels speak of John the Baptist clad with chaste and undefiled conduct.

“For he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.” [Luke 1:15]

“For the hand of the Lord was with him.” [Luke 1:66]

“And the child grew and became strong in Spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.” [Luke 1:80]

“Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe.” [Mark 6:20]

“John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” [Mark 1:4]

“Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist.” [Matthew 11:11]

“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’ ;the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they, ‘Behold, a glutton and drunkard, a

friend of tax collectors and sinners. Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”
[Matthew 11:18-19]

“The word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.” [Luke 3:2]

John is said in these verses to be an illustrious prophet far removed from all ills. God’s hand was on him. He is a recipient of His revelation He was filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb of his mother, a practitioner of baptism by repentance to deliver the infirm and unholy men, he was the greatest among those born of woman’s womb. Can such a man be a moral wreck? No Christian of sound mind can consider John lacking in goodness, particularly keeping in mind that Jesus himself had to have a special immersion from John. I challenge any Christian to find fault with John from the accounts contained in the Bible.

The second prophet is Abel son of Adam. Abel, from the loins of Adam was also truthful and pure in every walk of life He did not sin. The Gospels has the following to say about him:

“That upon you my come all the righteous blood she J on earth from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood Of Zechariah the son of Brachia, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.” [Matthew 23:35]

“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous God bearing witness by accepting his gift.”
[Hebrew 11:4]

“And not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.” [I John 3:12]

The third is Prophet Daniel, who is also immune from any immorality Testimony of his infallibility abounds in the Bible. Kind Nebuchadnezzar describes him thus:

“In whom is the Spirit of the Holy God’s.” [Daniel 4:8]

“Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom: but they could find no ground for complaint for any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.” [Daniel 6:4]

“The Daniel said to the King, “O King live for ever My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not him because I was found blameless before him; also before you, O King, I have done no wrong.” [Daniel 6:21-22]

The fourth is Prophet Josiah about whom the Bible says:

“And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.” [II Kings 22:2]

The fifth prophet is Zechariah and his wife; according to Luke:

“And they were both righteous before, God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” [Luke 1:16]

The sixth is the King Hezekiah according to the accounts in the Bible:

“He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel; so that there was none like him among all the Kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord ;he did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses, And the Lord was with him; where-ever he went forth, he prospered.” [II Kings 18:5-7]

“Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord-and said, “Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in thy sight.” [Isaiah 38:2-3]

The seventh person is Samson, son of Manoah. The Angels foretell the news of his birth to his mother:

'Therefore beware and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean for lo, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth to his death'. [Judge 13:4-5,7]

The eighth person is Samuel who made bold his righteousness before Israel, and the nation bore witness to his piety:

"Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand I have taken a bribe to blind my eyes with? Testify against me and I will restore it to you. They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand". And he said to them, "The Lord is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand". And they said, "He is witness". [Samuel 12:3-5]

The ninth person is Simeon about whom Luke writes:

"Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him." [Luke 2:25]

The tenth person is Joseph, the husband of Mary the Bible has this to say of him :

"And her husband, Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame resolved to divorce her quietly." [Matthew 1:19]

The above ten citations have been made to show that other prophets and righteous persons besides Jesus were endowed with divine grace and piety. There is quite a number besides them. It is said of Noah, Daniel and Job:

"Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly and I stretch out my hand against it and break its staff of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it,

they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness says the Lord God.”
[Ezekiel 14:13-14]

The Christians always argue that Adam violated God’s Law as he ate from the forbidden tree: subsequently a fall ensued. Any one born of the seed of Adam will follow suit. All people except Jesus the Messiah are sinful because they are born of Adam.

This doctrine does great injustice to mankind. It is not in consonance with the Holy Bible either. That Adam sins and his whole progeny is saddled with his sin till dooms day one is contrary to the teachings of the Bible wherein one finds the following:

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.”
(Deuteronomy 24:16]

“According to what is written in the law, in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded, “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, or the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin.” [II Chronicles 25:4]

“In those days they shall no longer say: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’. But every one shall die for his own sin; each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge” [Jeremiah 31:29-30]

“Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine the soul that sins shall die.” [Ezekiel 18:4]

“The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor, the father suffers for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. But if a wicked man turns away from all his sins which he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgression which he has committed shall be remembered against him ;for the righteousness which he has done he shall live.” [Ezekiel 18:20-22]

An interesting question is: "Is Mary the mother of Jesus a sinner since she was the seed of Adam?"

Some Christians argue that Mary is not innocent although the Messiah being her son does not inherit her sin as he the Messiah is innocent. The Christian religion attributes sin to the issue of Adam merely because they are Adam's sons, why is it that owing to his mother's sins, Jesus is not a sinner? Let us have another look. In eating the forbidden fruit Eve is also a partaker along with Adam, moreover, her sin is graver than that of Adam. It was she who ate first. Adam was seduced afterwards to follow her dictate. So it is written:

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate." [Genesis 3:6]

"And Adam was not deceived" says Paul, "but the woman was deceived and became transgressor." [I Timothy 2:14]

Eve's fault, it would seem, is twice as great as that of Adam, if this hypothesis is warranted then a child conceived of cohabitation will carry half of man's and half of woman's guilt, thus, making up a mediocre sinner. A child conceived only of woman shall inherit her two-fold sin thus becoming a perfect sinner. On this ground, a man born only of woman instead of being innocent shall carry more than ordinary sin.

Some Christians have supported their argument that all men are sinners by relying on the following words from Psalms:

"The Lord looks down from heaven upon children of men, to see if there are any that act wisely, that seek after God. They have all gone astray, they are all alike corrupt; there is none that does good, no, not one." [Psalms 14:2-3]

It is submitted that the above quotation is confined to a particular nation and age. On the occasion of taunt and reproach the usage of language demands words which are common and General in scope. Hence the verse following immediately reads:

“Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the Lord? There they shall be in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous.” [Psalms 14:4-5]

Others have supported their argument that all men are sinners by referring to David. David was a prophet, they argued yet, he took possession of the wife of Urias and eventually had her engaged in illicit intimacy with him. These Christians never ponder before they tax David with immodesty seeing that the Gospels opens with the verse:

“Jesus Christ, the son of David...” [Matthew 1:1]

If these Christians bold David liable to unchastity (God’s refuge), what of Jesus then?

These Christians who hold this view should ponder a while. David is God’s chosen prophet. He held communion with him. How come then, that a person no less than God’s prophet could be subject to such an abominable deed? God has endowed us with intellect. We can discern fake from genuine, false from true. The Bible itself is replete with hints which acquit David. This story is a fabrication in the Bible. No decent man will fall so low; certainly not a great prophet. The Gospel contains allegations pertaining to the sins of Jesus as follows:

1. Jesus took immersion from John. John’s baptism was for the “forgiveness of sins”. [Mark 1:4]

2. Jesus offered wine to people - [John 2:8]. It is written about wine:

“Wine and new wine take away the understanding.” [Hosea 4:11]

3. The Gospel also tells of Jesus’ lies. On the feast of the tabernacles, Jesus replied to his brothers :

“Go to the feast yourselves; I am not going up to the feast,” and after his brothers were gone he also went up, not publicly but in private. [John 7:8-10]

4. Jesus addressed, it is evident from the Gospel, to his mother with contempt:

“O woman; what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” [John 2:4]

There are many things derogatory to the eminence of Jesus. The only way out from these allegations is to renounce them as distortions and believe David and Jesus to be innocent prophets as is the belief of Muslims.

Some other Christian theologians accused Samson of adultery by referring to the Book of Judges:

Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a harlot and he went in to her. The Gazites were told, “Samson has come here,” and they surrounded the place. [Judge 16:1-2]

It is submitted that the verse in question goes to suggest only this: Samson in order to protect himself from his enemies took refuge in a house. This house happened to be that of a lewd woman. A story corresponding to this one is in the book of Joshua:

And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying. “Go, view the land, especially Jericho”. And they went, and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. [Joshua 2:1]

Those two men had no affairs with the woman. They merely used as a hide-out the house of a prostitute. Samson was in the same situation. If we assume Samson to be an adulterer, the prophecy of God that “the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth” will no longer hold. In the epistle to Hebrews it is written:

“And what more shall I say ? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon. Barak, Samson, Jephtha, of David and Samuel and the prophets...who through faith conquered

kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions.”
[Hebrews 11:32-33]

Samson, from the account above, had faith, was righteous, and received the promises of God. If these Christians who accused Samson would strain their mind but little, the case of Samson will appear less embarrassing than that of Jesus which Luke puts as follows:

“And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was sitting at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping she began to wet his feet with tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” [Luke 7:37-38]

It is not warranted to condemn Samson whose action is less serious than that of Jesus. Unless, if those who condemn Samson are equally prepared to bring a charge of sin against Jesus.

The Bible at least proclaims that John the Baptist, Zechariah and his wife, Daniel, Josiah, Hezekiah and Abel as righteous men and there was no sin attached to them in the Bible. Therefore, the Christians claim that all people except Jesus are sinful has no foundation. This, therefore, repudiates the doctrine of Atonement.

Did Jesus Die on the Cross?

This question is a hot-bed of controversy between Christians and Muslims. From the very outset of discussion on this subject, the Christian will commence the conversation in this familiar fashion: Christians and Jews, despite their discords, are at one that Jesus died on the Cross. The chronicles of the Roman Empire are in accord with this fact.

Six hundred years after Jesus, a man from the Arabian desert made his appearance and proclaimed contrary to the entire world:

“They slew him not nor crucified him.” [Qur’an 4:158]

This claim is a standing miracle of Muhammad the unlettered Prophet of the Arabian Peninsula (the choicest blessings of God be upon him). Its vindication by subsequent modern research constitutes a valid argument for the truth of Muhammad's claim.

Islam insists that God saved Jesus from death on the Cross. Joseph was gagged and thrown into a well but God saved him. Similarly, God saved the three companions of Daniel who were gagged and pushed into a furnace. In the same manner, the Jews attempted to kill Jesus on the Cross in order to render him accursed. God delivered him from the accursed death and brought him closer than ever to Him.

The death of Jesus on the Cross is not sustained by convincing evidence from the Gospel and in fact, there is a convincing evidence that Jesus did not die on the Cross. The following are some of the arguments to prove that Jesus did not die on the Cross:

1. The Old Testament says about the impostor prophet :

"... but that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to make you leave the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from the midst of you..." [Deuteronomy 13:5]

And again:

"And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God; you shall not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance." [Deuteronomy 21:22-23]

Jesus was a claimant to prophethood. Granted that no Muslim would dub him an impostor; but the Jews impliedly regard him an impostor, or granted that the Jews

crucified him and he subsequently died on the Cross, the logical conclusion will be (God's refuge), that Jesus is accursed. Yet, crucifixion and 'accursedness' became part and parcel of the Christian cult. It is written:

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us-for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree'." [Galatians 3:13]

This is the most erroneous belief of the Christians. For it portrays Jesus to be false in his claim to prophethood. His crucifixion negates truth-that indeed, was the Jews' design. Jesus was a true prophet and therefore, his death on the Cross is a myth.

2. In the Christian view, crucifixion is a 'must' because by this fantastic method they will be forgiven. From the gospels' viewpoint, crucifixion is not instrument at all to forgiveness. Jesus announces:

"But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins- he then said to the paralytic- 'Rise, take up your bed and go home'." [Matthew 9:6]

This statement was made by Jesus himself when he was alive. It shows that for the forgiveness of sins, death on the cross is not necessary.

3. Jesus was killed-the Christians hold-for their sake, that is to expiate their sins. Had he not been crucified, the mission of Paul and the faith of Christians would become void of meaning. It seems to me that Jesus did not die on the Cross and that the Christian preaching of the crucifixion is wrong since it was opposed both to God's will and to his mission. God says:

"For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice." [Hosea 6:6]

and Jesus says:

"Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." [Matthew 9:13]

God desires mercy and love, not sacrifice. Repentance is the sole means to absorb His mercy. Jesus preached repentance - was concerned throughout his life to invite people to repent. Redemptive death is contradictory to God's plan and a disservice to the office of Jesus.

4. In the book of Matthew we read:

"But he answered them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign :but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth'." [Matthew 12:39-40]

To investigate whether prophet Jonah was alive in the belly of the whale or dead, we have only to study the book of Jonah where we find the following:

"And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish." [Jonah 1:17; 2:1]

There are only two ways left for the Christians. They can either refuse Jesus' crucifixion and believe that he was protected from death on the Cross as the Muslims believe. This way, the prophecy of Jesus is proved true that his miracle came to pass; or they can stick to his death on the Cross-at the cost of rejecting his miracle.

5. When Jesus came to know of the crucifixion and the evil design of the Jews, he is reported by Luke to pray:

"And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done'. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him." [Luke 22:41-43]

Without the least shadow of doubt Jesus prayed in great humbleness only to be saved from this dreadful and disgraceful death. The cup was the cup of death. One question that arises here is, "Was Jesus' prayer heard?" If it was heard and granted it follows that the myth of Jesus' death on the Cross is false. If it went unheard then the truth of Jesus is questionable. The book of Proverbs states:

"The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."
[Proverbs 15:29]

The truth of it is that God listened to his cries and wailing as-such is the way of God- and delivered Jesus from the grip of an accursed death on the tree.

6. In the letter to Hebrews it is stated:

"In the days of his flesh Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear." [Hebrews 5:7]

This is a premonition and statement of an actual event. This prophecy is attested to in Proverbs.

"The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short."
[Proverbs 10:27]

This prophecy cannot be fulfilled unless we recognize that Jesus did not die on the Cross. It was due to the glad tidings of God that Jesus sustained the satisfaction that he could not die on the Cross. Therefore, when agony on the Cross intensified he cried:

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

It was to recollect the promise of God, God keeps His word; therefore, He saved Jesus from death on the Cross.

7. The Gospels reveal that in order to protect Jesus from the jaws of death, God brought extraordinary causes into play. One incident described in the Gospels is that God caused Pilate's wife to dream and she let her husband know:

"Besides, while he was sitting on the judgementseat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream'." [Matthew 27:19]

It was God's decree that Jesus should survive, Who is there to obstruct God's plans?

8. Jesus was the shepherd of Israel.

9. Jesus used to rebuke the Jews:

"... that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar." [Matthew 23:35]

Had Jesus also been slain by the Jews and had his blood been spilled, he should have foretold about it, It was a decisive factor. His marked silence on the occasion of his crucifixion signifies that he was not going to be killed on the Cross by the Jews or else the mentioning of his blood should have taken priority.

10. In his explicit sayings in the Gospels, Jesus refers mostly to his own suffering:

"...So also the Son of man will suffer at their hands." [Matthew 17:12]

"...But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." [Luke 17:24-25]

“...I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;” [Luke 22:15]

After the event of the crucifixion Jesus says:

“... O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” [Luke 24:25-26]

“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.” [Matthew 2:6]

Jesus himself says:

“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” [Matthew 15:24]

When Jesus made his appearance, the Jews were in exile and ‘the sheep of the house of Israel’ were lost. Thus, Jesus says:

“I have some other sheep which are not of this house, I have to bring them too”.

It is a fact that the Jews were dispersed from India to Ethiopia:

“...an edict was written according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews to the satraps and the governors and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia – and also to the Jews in their script and their language...” [Esther 8:9]

If Jesus died on the Cross at thirty-three and the chapter closed there, then this is tantamount to discrediting his prophethood. Thus, the only safe thing is to believe that he did not die on the Cross.

From the above elucidation it is clear as dawn that Jesus was due only to undergo sufferings. References to death and killing are too fragmentary. Where death or killing is mentioned clearly, the description is exaggerated. The two kinds of text can be reconciled; by saying that in the Bible suffering and agony is often termed 'death'. Paul says:

"I protest, brethren, by my pride in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!" [I Corinthians 15:31]

Scrutinizing the GOSPEL Crucifixion Reports:

The onus is on a writer like myself to settle the value of the Gospel narratives. It should be borne in mind that none of the four Gospel writers was an eye-witness to the crucifixion. For, the disciples of Jesus deserted him when the enemies hemmed in on him [Matthew 26:56]. It is likely that the Gospel writers were not even his disciples. Their editing, therefore, is mere hearsay. Their evidence is based on second-hand reporting. In the reporting of only one event, over twenty discrepancies more than suffice to discredit the evidence. I request my readers to sit in judgment on the case of the murder of one of the great among prophets. This case is of enormous consequence; for if murder was committed according to the Christians and Jews alike, the victim is accursed. The Christians who claim that the Messiah was killed, have no eye-witness at their disposal. They rely on the speculations and hearsay of the editors of the Gospels whose testimony is at variance. It is the law of all the courts of the world that when witnesses are at variance their evidence cannot be relied upon.

Below are listed the discrepancies among the Gospels:

1. Who shouldered the cross to Golgatha - Jesus or Simon?

According to Mark:

“And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene....to carry his cross....” [Mark 15:21-22]

According to Luke:

“....they seized one Simon of Cyrene.....and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus.” [Luke 23:26]

According to Matthew:

“...they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross.” [Matthew 27:32]

John-in sharp contrast to these three-narrates:

“So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place....called in Hebrew Golgatha.” [John 19:17]

2. Did the Messiah taste wine mixed with myrrh or vinegar before he was put on the cross?

According to Matthew:

“And when they came to a place called Golgatha they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall, but when he tasted it he would not drink it.” [Matthew 27:33-34]

According to Mark:

“And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh; but he did not take it.” [Mark 15:23]

Matthew reports that Jesus tasted the “wine mingled with gall”, but would not drink it. In the latter report, he did not at all take the “wine mingled with myrrh”. Luke and John omit the incident altogether.

3. The story of vinegar on the Cross.

Luke keeps mute on it. According to John:

“After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfil the scripture), ‘I thirst’. A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth.....” [John 19:28-30]

According to Mark:

“.... and one ran and, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying.....” [Mark 15:36]

According to Matthew:

“..... and one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink.....” [Matthew 27:47-49]

The three testimonies clash. John reports that by saying “I thirst”, Jesus let his wish be known to slake his thirst. According to the other two, neither did he ask for water nor did he say, “I thirst”. John states, “they” held the sponge to Jesus’ mouth. Matthew and Mark however reduce “they” to just one person.

Again Mark and Matthew are in dispute; Mark has it that the one man who gave Jesus the drink said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down”. Whereas in Matthew, it is not the one man but “the others” who utter it.

4. At what time was the Messiah put on the tree?

Matthew and Luke leave out the hour of Jesus being put on the Cross. John reports:

“Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, ‘Here is your King!’ ...Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.” [John 19:14-16]

It was about the sixth hour, i.e. afternoon, that Jesus was nailed on the Cross. Mark has another time to tell:

“And it was the third hour, when they crucified him.” [Mark 15:25]

In one report it is the sixth hour and in the other the third hour. How can we put our trust in such evidence?

5. Was it one thief or both who reviled Jesus?

According to Matthew:

“And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.” [Matthew 27:44]

According to Mark:

“.....Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.” [Mark 15:32]

Luke, the third witness, belies the former two:

“One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him saying, ‘Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ But the other rebuked him saying, ‘Do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?’” [Luke 23:39-40]

The three of them are in flagrant disagreement, the first two claiming that both the thieves reviled Jesus, the third testifying that one thief reviled and the second acquitted Jesus. John, the fourth one, reserves his say!

6. Where and how many were the women on this occasion?

“...but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.” [John 19:25]

“And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things.” [Luke 23:49]

“There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Josses and Salem, who when he was in Galilee followed him and ministered to him; and also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.” [Mark 15:40-41]

“There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.” [Matthew 27:55-56]

John reports that they were “standing by the Cross” and the synoptic Gospels state: “stood at a distance and saw”. John is the only one aware of Jesus’ mother being present. The synoptic Gospels are not aware of this. John spots Mary Magdalene near by the cross. Synoptic Gospels place her far off. There is a world of difference between the two reports. There is a difference in the number of women present-three, four or several women?

7. Did darkness engulf the whole world?

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.”
[Matthew 27:45]

“And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.” [Mark 15:33]

“It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.” [Luke 23:44]

This is the evidence of the synoptic Gospels. John is non-committal and his silence stirs bewilderment. It is illogical that John who is given to exaggeration should keep silent about such an important miracle. Who told the three simpletons that the whole world was covered with darkness? They were simple and ignorant and regarded their own tiny village as “the whole world”. Even this much cannot be proved until we know that there was darkness in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, history lends no support to this either.

8. The story of Jesus crying aloud and the tearing of the curtain of the temple.

Matthew reports;

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani?’ And Jesus cried again with a loud voice... And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ...” [Matthew 27:46-52]

Mark reports:

“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ ...And Jesus uttered a loud cry,...And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.” [Mark 15:34-38]

Luke says:

“... While the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two, then Jesus, crying with a loud voice said, ‘Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit! ..”
[Luke 23:45-46]

John vouches for none of these fantastic things. The omission of such significant incidents when they are called for discredits the evidence. Besides, there are conflicting statements in the synoptic Gospels. Mark confines himself to the loud cry of Jesus and to the tearing of the curtain of the temple from top to bottom. Luke’s version is that the curtain was torn into two from between-not from top to bottom. Matthew is not content and adds that the earth shook and the rocks were split, the tombs were thrust open and saints who had been dead and buried became alive and went home. If Matthew’s rendering holds good then the others are guilty of suppressing important events of history. On the other hand, if the rest are true then Matthew’s evidence is nothing but myth. It was only a freak, a trick of thought devoid of any reality. The latter picture, according to Chronicles, is true. Thus mutual conflict, untruth and contradictions annul the evidence.

9. Did Jesus give piercing cries prior to the curtain being torn or vice-versa?

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus cries out twice; in Luke only once. The first two records Jesus as saying “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” while on the cross. Luke does not incorporate it. John leaves it out entirely. Thus, two of them agree on Jesus crying twice. Luke reports instead Jesus saying, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!” But this is not mentioned in the other two reports! The reporters are at divergence on whether Jesus’ second cry and committing his soul was first or the tearing of the curtain of the temple happened first. In Luke, the curtain is torn asunder first and Jesus cries second. In Matthew and Mark, the curtain is torn not only after Jesus’ cries but also after he died.

10. Testimony of the centurion:

Luke says after the temple curtain was torn:

“Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, and said, ‘Certainly this man was innocent!’...” [Luke 23:47]

“And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that he thus breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was a son of God!’” [Mark 15:39]

“When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, ‘Truly this was a son of God!’” [Matthew 27:54]

These remarks are from the synoptic Gospels. John gives no account of this matter. First of all, the omission of this event in John’s report is quaint. Secondly, several differences appear in the reported version of the event. Mark says that the centurion passed his remark when he saw that Jesus had breathed his last. Luke first reports the centurion praising God and then making his remarks. Matthew incorporates many others with the centurion. They ‘saw the earthquake’ and ‘were filled with awe’ and exclaimed afterwards.

Apart from this, their testimonies differ widely from one another. In Matthew, the centurion is reported to remark, “Truly this was a son of God” According to Mark, the centurion says, “Truly this man was a son of God”. Luke’s version makes the centurion say, “Certainly this man was innocent” In Matthew, the centurion’s utterance is: “son of God” not “man”. In Mark, both “man” and “son of God” are used. In Luke, there is “man” and “innocent”, and “son, of God” is omitted. This gradual variation is interesting. Now the Christians are in a fix; if they discredit one report the rest will be dropped too. If all of them are harping on the same, then it should be admitted that “son of God” and “innocent” are only synonyms expressing the same idea. The Gospel writers used “son of God” in the sense of “innocent”-which answers the question of the sonship of Jesus.

11. Were people or the Jews aware of Jesus’ death when he cried?

Matthew and Mark made no contribution to this problem.

In Luke we find:

“And all the multitudes who assembled to see the sight, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things.” [Luke 23:48-49]

In John:

“Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.” [John 19:31]

It is evident from the report of John that the Jews demanded the ‘breaking of legs’ because they thought, until the last moment that Jesus had not expired, otherwise, the demand is senseless. In the eleventh hour, such a brutal and barbarous demand on the part of the Jews explodes the myth of the earthquake, the springing open of graves, the rising of the dead and the ripping of the temple curtain. In such circumstances, the Jews would never have made such a savage demand. At least Pilate would have upbraided them that despite their having seen awe-inspiring miracles, they still had the audacity to demand the breaking of Jesus’ legs and he would have told them to fear God.

John’s statement concerning the Jews puts it correct that Jesus had not died. In Luke, people are reported to have returned home beating their breasts when they observed the tragedy of Jesus. These people along with women saw it all standing at a distance! At this juncture, it seems pertinent to ask one question; assuming there was pitch darkness “from the sixth hour until the ninth”, - the sun was covered, the earth quaked, the rocks were riven - how did the people standing ‘far off’ observed these incidents? Either their watching is a cooked up thing or the story of darkness all over the world is a lie. In the light of sound enquiry, both of these assumptions are wrong. To some extent, the silence of Matthew and Mark on the matter and John’s omission of the spreading of darkness, lends support to our view.

12. Were Jesus’ legs broken?

The synoptic Gospels impart no information. After relating the Jews' demand, only John transmits:

“So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him ;but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.” [John 19:32-33]

Since it was the day of Preparation for the Sabbath, the Jews could watch no longer. The Messiah was not dead yet. In the latter part of the same day, they had demanded from Pilate the breaking of Jesus' legs, the permission for which he readily granted. Afterwards, the Jews went home. The matter of breaking the legs of Jesus was left completely in Pilate's hands. As we have noted, Pilate in his heart of hearts wanted Jesus to outlive these tortures. Probably, when he dispatched his centurion, he let his intention be known to him that the soldiers should omit breaking Jesus' legs. The legs of the two thieves were crushed and those of Jesus were left intact.

John describes why Jesus' bones were not broken: “when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs”, (the words “came to Jesus” repudiate the report of Luke that people saw Jesus dead while at a distance and darkness enveloped the ground; since the centurions could know of his death only when they “came to Jesus” at a very close range). This is John's own interpretation of the event and he was absent on the occasion. His testimony is only a hearsay, therefore, it does not stand the test of history and carries no weight, particularly when the other three witnesses possess no knowledge of it. Granting that some centurion did utter these words, more than once unconscious men have been taken for dead and this is his own mistake.

The fact of the matter is; if some one really has said, he might have been an officer in whom Pilate confided, he would have said it deliberately to distract the attention of the centurions lest some insincere persons would have become suspicious and tip off the authorities. It is also obvious from the Gospels' reports that to save Jesus, Pilate had thought out a good plan. On this occasion, he and his subordinates had recourse to some maneuvers. At any rate, according to John's report, the bones of Jesus were not broken and the synoptic Gospels are silent on the subject.

13. Gushing forth of blood and water from the sides of Jesus.

The synoptic Gospels are uncommunicative. Only John has this to say:

“But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.” [John 19:34]

From this act on the part of the centurion, it appears that he doubted whether Jesus was dead. He was not aware of Pilate’s’ tactics; when he pierced the side of Jesus, blood and water rushed forth, and it is evident that the flow of blood and water is a pointer to life and pulsation.

14. Who took possession of Jesus’ body and who placed it in the tomb?

“And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed.” [Matthew 27:59-60]

“And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.” [Mark 15:45-46]

“Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud, and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had ever yet been laid.” [Luke 23:53]

“...So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, came. They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths...as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.” [John 19:38-42]

In the Synoptics only Joseph of Arimathea is seen to take Jesus’ body and winds it in winding sheets, after which he deposits it in the grave. John puts Nicodemus along with Joseph of Arimathea in this performance.

15. Who was Joseph of Arimathea?

“When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus.” [Matthew 27:57]

“Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.” [Mark 15:43]

“Now there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their purpose and deed, and he was looking for the kingdom of God.” [Luke 23:50-51]

“After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews...” [John 19:38]

In Mark and Luke he is seen as a member of the Jews’ sanhedrin, a courageous and righteous man. In John, he is shown as being fearful of the Jews thus he keeps his allegiance to Jesus secret. Matthew tells us that he was openly a disciple of Jesus. Whatever the case may be, the question is how Joseph of Arimathea, who was cowardly enough not to let his faith be known for fear of the Jews, in such a critical situation when all the disciples of Jesus had betrayed him, had the audacity to demand Jesus’ body from Pilate? This narrative of the Gospels seems irrational. It is baffling to see that Pilate did not ask him what relation he had with Jesus and why he asked for his body; instead he rushed to hand over the body to him. From this incident alone, the Christians should think it over and conclude that all of it was due to Pilate’s well-engineered plan. It was but proper to select such a person for the removal of the body whose membership of Jesus’ community was not known.

On the encouragement of Pilate, he could take heart to carry out the plan swiftly.

16. Who dug Jesus’ sepulchre, and where?

“Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, where no one had ever been laid...they laid Jesus there.” [John 19:41-42]

“...and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had ever yet been laid.” [Luke 23:53]

“...and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; ...” [Mark 15:46]

“And Joseph took the body...and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock;...” [Matthew 27:59-60]

The first three witnesses do not say under whose behest the grave was dug. From Luke's account, it is not clear if the grave had been there long. Thanks to Matthew who describes in clear terms that it was Joseph of Arimathea who had the grave dug. The foregoing passages are pregnant with the following facts:

1. The garden where the grave was situated was in the immediate neighborhood of the place of the crucifixion.
2. It was hewn in a rock; i.e., it was spacious.
3. It was not occupied by any one previously. Thus, the air was not polluted.
4. It was freshly dug.
5. Joseph of Arimathea had it hewn out purposely.

To these five points may be added that Nicodemus, who had joined hands with Joseph of Arimathea in this adventure, had called on Jesus the night before the crucifixion [John 19:39], and keeping in view that the whole strategy was also known to Jesus, the matter is made as clear as daylight. If anyone reflects with due care, he will admit that Pilate, in order to have his scheme become a success, provided Joseph and Nicodemus with the wherewithal to collaborate. They had stored in advance the needed spices and the like. Pilate also dropped hints as to

where the grave should be hewn and succeeded in his plan and Jesus was thus saved from death.

17. Where were the women when Jesus was laid in the tomb?

“Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.”
[Matthew 27:16]

“Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid.” [Mark 15:47]

“The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid.” [Luke 23:55]

John does not comment on this incident.

The synoptics are at variance again. Matthew and Mark report two Marys. Luke says that all women of Galilee who were there, were present. There is also a difference between ‘sitting before the tomb’ and ‘seeing where he was laid’.

18. The Jews demand the tomb to be watched.

Matthew reports the Jews saying to Pilate:

“.... and said, ‘Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again’. Therefore, order the sepulcher to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first’. Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard of Soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.’”
[Matthew 27:63-65]

Besides Matthew, no other editor has filed that incident. The silence of the other three narrators on this important issue is one of the Gospels secrets. At any rate,

Pilate looked down upon the Jews' demand and curtly answered, "Go, make it secure as you can". Pilate was laughing at the Jews' untoward activities, for they came on the second day after the crucifixion, even after the Sabbath and Jesus' body was no longer there!

19. Who visited Jesus' tomb first? When and why?

The narratives of the Gospels vary considerably:

"Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre." [Matthew 28:1]

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen." [Mark 16:1-2]

"But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared." [Luke 24:1]

"Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark...." [John 20:1]

The above narratives reveal the following:

i. Mary Magdalene was the first to appear at the tomb, according to John. According to Luke, the women of Galilee and the men with them, were the first to visit the tomb. Mark reports that it was Mary the mother of James and Salome, and Mary Magdalene all together who came first. This conflict cannot be set at rest.

ii. Matthew says, the women came only to 'see the sepulchre.' In the views of Mark and Luke, they came with the set purpose to smear Jesus with spices. John does not bother to say anything about it

iii. The time of arrival is given by the narrators in contradiction to each other:

John says, 'early, while it was still dark'; Mark says 'very early', '-when the sun had risen'. There are great differences concerning the persons who came first, the purpose of their visit and the time of it.

20. What happened next to those who came first to the tomb?

This is a long story reported in [John 20:1-10; Luke 24:2-7; Mark 16:3-7; and Matthew 28:1-7]. If we quote verbatim all the relevant references, the subject will be lengthy and they abound in divergences. First of all, I wish to draw the readers' attention to John's account of the disciples of Jesus:

"For as yet they did not know the scripture that he must rise from the dead." [John 20:9]

This statement controverts all other reports in respect of Jesus foretelling his resurrection from the dead (Matthew 27 : 63). It also runs counter to all the sayings of the scriptures employed to prove that Jesus will come to life a second time. This Jesus did not tell his disciples; had he told them, they would have been expecting to see him in his second life (since Jesus' death on the Cross was not foredoomed, the question of a second life does not arise).

It will suffice to consider only one among the aforesaid divergences.

John writes that Mary Magdalene went to Peter and the other disciples who had a way with Jesus, and delivered the news. She found neither angels nor others there. That was the first time. The second time she saw two angels, one at the head, the other at the feet of Jesus in the tomb. In Luke, we find the women of Galilee entering the tomb and seeing two men in white garments. These two men gave no message to the women for the disciples of Jesus. In Mark, the women see a young man sitting on the right and he told them to go to the disciples and tell them to go to Galilee.

Finally, we read in Matthew that both Marys saw a great quake and a descending angel who asked them, to tell the disciples that the Messiah will be in Galilee before them.

The foregoing is only a summary of the controversy as there is no scope for detailed account.

21. Did the women deliver the message of the angel or angels to the disciples?

Matthew and John give no account of the women informing the disciples of the message. Mark and Luke are not in agreement with each other.

Mark writes:

“They went out and fled from the tomb; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” [Mark 16:8]

Luke writes:

“And returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.” [Luke 24:9]

22. To whom and in what way did Jesus first appear?

According to Mark, he first appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9). John verifies the statement of Mark (John 20:13-17). Luke’s account is contradictory to the rest; as he reports that Jesus first appeared to two men who were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They said while they were talking together:

“Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but him did they not see.” [Luke 24:24]

Is there any possibility of reconciling these texts?

23. Did the disciples believe in the news of Jesus' rising on the third day?

John and Matthew do not enlighten us on the subject. Mark informs us that twice they refused to accept it. [Mark 16:11-13]

Luke transmits as follows:

“...but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.” [Luke 24:11]

Such grave contradictions in only one incident affirm that these assertions are not from God. The witnesses whose 'evidence' Christians not only believe, but insist on making others believe too, have no basis from what we have examined above to stand on. No sound judge will accept these statements as foundation for a decision since they are wrong. It is evident that Christian claims on these matters are false



THE ROLE OF ST. PAUL IN FORMULATING
MODERN CHRISTIANITY DOCTRINES

- Not to Abolish the Law
- Innovations
- Mother and Child
- Law Abolished
- James Rebukes Paul
- The New Testament
- CONCLUSION

How can one account for the difference between Christianity as preached by Jesus and Modern Christian doctrines. This can only be answered by knowing the influence of St. Paul on modern Christian doctrines.

St. Paul, whose real name was Saul, is one of those who leave an indelible mark on the pages of history. In whatever from they appear on the stage of the word, they always play a leading role. Through his inconsistent and contradictory actions, Saul became an enigma for the world of religion-a fact that leaves the thinker's mind greatly perplexed.

In the beginning Saul appears before us in the ugly role of a blood-thirsty persecutor and a firebrand lieutenant of the High Priest chasing and hunting the small group of humble people who had accepted Jesus, son of Mary as their Promised Messiah. But a little later we see him being himself hunted and persecuted by his former friends, the tyrannical Jews. When a Pharisee, he proved himself a thorn in the side of the early Christians and we see him standing self-assured in the crowd that witnessed the martyrdom of St. Stephen. But a few years later, he himself is slain for championing the cause of Christianity. When brought before King Agrippa we see him pleading for himself in a masterly manner and Pharisee-a very conservative sect that firmly believed in the Commandment-, "You

shall have no other god before Me.” But only a little later, we find him concocting a theory diametrically opposed to the idea of one God. Although Jesus had repeatedly called himself ‘son of man’, yet Paul insisted on making him a deity not only equal in rank with the Creator but co- substantial with Him.

The New Testament provides us with abundant proofs of the high-handed conduct of Paul in propagating the new faith. Having met with little success among the Jews, he turned towards the Gentiles. In order to entice them, he thought it expedient to recast the whole structure of the Christian faith. He introduced so many changes that his faith acquired a great resemblance to pagan conceptions. Through arbitrary innovations, he made many things lawful which were absolutely unlawful according to the law of Moses. He even mutilated the basic tenet of the law-Unity of God.

Not to Abolish the Law

Jesus had clearly told his disciples that he was not sent to change the law of Moses:

“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxed one of the least of the commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven ;but he who does them and teaches them shall be called greater in the kingdom of heaven.” [Matthew 5:17-19]

We also have the testimony from Luke:

“It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, but my words will not pass away.” [Luke 16:17]

This statement is again corroborated by Mark in [13:31]. But in spite of this positive and awe-inspiring command of his master, Paul without the least hesitation, announced that the law was superfluous and redundant and assuming the role of lawgiver, he declared:

“I do not nullify the Grace of God; for if justification werethrough the law Christ died to no purpose.” [Galatians 2:21]

And again he reiterates:

“Therefore by works of law no flesh will be declared righteous before him, for by law is the accurate knowledge of sin” [Romans 3:20]

Now the question arises: How did Paul manage to gain ascendancy over the Church and succeed in implanting innovations completely at variance with the original teachings of Jesus Christ?

The question is not difficult to answer. Paul came from an affluent and respectable family. His father had acquired Roman nationality. This fact alone guarantees that his family wielded considerable influence in the upper Roman society and the official circle. He performed self-appointed tasks. He was a native of Tarsus and belonged to the Pharisees—a sect known to hold bigoted views. Having learnt about Jesus and his claim, he came down to Jerusalem to lend aid to the High Priest and the elders in persecuting the followers of the new prophet.

“But Saul laid waste the Church, and entering house after house, he charged off men and women and committed them to prison.” [Acts 8:3]

During the entire period of the ministry of Jesus, Saul remained in the forefront of the persecutors. He had never met or even seen Jesus. The only time he saw him, was as claimed by him, only in a vision he had when he was going to Damascus on his mission of persecuting the followers of Jesus. He claimed, he saw a dazzling light and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

Paul’s claim to apostleship is based on this vision. According to him, Jesus chose him as his instrument for carrying his teachings to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. This is the only evidence Saul could produce for his bid for the leadership of the new Church. No wonder the Jews were highly skeptical about the whole claim and would not listen to him.

It is an undisputed fact of history that Paul simply refused to derive any benefit from the easily available opportunity of guidance from those who had been very near and

dear to Jesus. Because he could not suffer himself to play the second fiddle, he assumed leadership of the Church through sheer force of his personality.

It is indeed very strange that during his ministry while Jesus was living among his disciples in Palestine, he taught them that the law of Moses was no case to be abolished. He thoroughly engraved upon their minds that they were not to take his teachings to Gentiles.

“Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”. [Matthew 10:5-6]

And Jesus reiterates:

“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”. [Matthew 15:24]

Yet within a very short time after the crucifixion he appears, in a vision to abrogate his previous teachings. It is strange indeed that he does not appear to his own trained and tried disciples but chooses a person who was one of his bitterest enemies and completely neglects his devoted friends and followers.

As instructed in this famous vision, Saul went to Damascus where Ananias, a devoted disciple, opened his eyes fully to the truth. Having accepted Jesus, Saul lost no time in assuming the role of the leader. The Jews in Damascus were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the party, led by Saul, for arresting the renegades for persecution. They were flabbergasted to see their young leader not only advocating the cause of Christians but actually exhorting them to accept Jesus, who they believed died an accursed death on the cross. They were extremely disappointed and very much annoyed at this strange behavior of their champion. In vengeance they dubbed him a turncoat and conspired to kill him. But Saul's companions got wind of their evil intentions and at night let him down in a basket through an opening in the wall.

After this narrow escape, he was forced to go into hiding.

“I did not go at once”. Said Paul,

“Into conference with flesh and blood. Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles previous to me but I went off into Arabia, and I came back again to Damascus”. [Galatians 1:16-17]

In the solitude of the Arabian desert he sized up his position and racked his brains for the line of action to use in the future. He fully realized that very few Jews would, after having witnessed the crucifixion, accept Christ as a godly person. It would, therefore, be necessary to think of something else. “If the Jews”, thought Saul, “were inaccessible, the Gentiles would be easy to handle. But to attract the Gentiles, some sort of modifications would be absolutely necessary”. Bearing these considerations in mind, he returned to Damascus where he worked for some time and then went to Jerusalem. He stayed with Cephas for a fortnight.

“But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother”. [Galatians 1:19]

Innovations

It is evident that Paul was not at all keen to see the other disciples and the appointed apostles of Jesus. This is rather strange and unnatural. It would have been a normal behavior if he had shown eagerness to see and meet those who had lived with Jesus and had been taught and trained by him. But this evasion was not without purpose. In the solitude of the Arabian desert, he had marked out a course of action for himself in which he would not accept any interference or advice. Had he discussed this matter with the apostles or taken any of them into his confidence, it would mean a definite setback to his scheme of preaching a modified religion to the Gentiles. The apostles would have very strongly opposed the whole idea, and would have denounced the whole idea as an abomination. There is ample proof provided by the New Testament that the Disciples and the earliest followers of Jesus abhorred the innovations of Paul. They were deadly against the emancipation granted arbitrarily by him.

And certain men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers, “Unless you get circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” [Acts 15:1]

This caused no little dissension and Paul and Barnabas vehemently disputed the preaching of these men who, apparently had been sent by James, the head of the church at Jerusalem. Consequently, a deputation which included Paul, Barnabas and some other went to Jerusalem to thrash out these matters. On their way, this deputation stopped at various places and related in detail the conversion of the Gentiles to the congregations. Through his fiery speeches, Paul enlisted support of these congregations who were extremely pleased at the news that the Greeks, the Romans and other nations were accepting the new faith in great numbers. When this deputation at last reached Jerusalem, the elders of the Church received them with great enthusiasm.

James, the head of the earliest Church in Christianity and who was also the younger brother of Jesus, had called a meeting of the elders of the church to discuss the innovations of Paul and his companions. We must remember that in this congregation though the elders and the disciples living in Jerusalem were in the majority, yet they found themselves utterly helpless before the onslaught of the fiery speeches and arguments of Paul and his companions. The apostles and the disciples were, almost all of them, from poor families and, therefore, illiterate or semiliterate. They were no match to Paul and his companions who belonged to the upper class of society and were highly educated. Paul, an extrovert, was not only a man of great influence but gifted orator and skilful debater. He also had the support of clever companions. Through tactful handling and ingenious reasoning they gained the sympathy of their listeners and won their admiration. It was in such an atmosphere that James the brother of Jesus had give his ruling. He had to be judicious. He stood up and said:

“Therefore, my judgement is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the pollution of idols and from unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood. For from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues” [Acts 15:19-21]

The above ruling proves that James succumbed to the general consensus and granted a limited concession in respect of circumcision to the Gentiles only. This ruling was not a charter of general liberties with the law of Moses. On the contrary he advised that Law of Moses was being read and explained in all the synagogues every week. The details of the law could easily be learnt there. But Paul and his companions took all sorts of liberties. Adopting the role of a law-giving prophet he abrogated the law.

“In reality” said Paul, “the law produces wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there any transgression”. [Romans 4:15]

The abrogation of the law of Moses in the Christian Church has been a gradual process. In the beginning Paul started with a few innovations. Later the Gentile element kept on tampering with the books and introducing new ideas so that Christianity was radically changed from Judaism. Innovations introduced by Paul were simply to entice the Gentiles. He started with canceling the law of circumcision. But one wrong step led to the next inequity and ultimately it ended into a faith which more resembled pagan beliefs than the revealed teachings of Moses and the later prophets including Jesus, son of Mary.

The very first commandment said, “You shall have no other gods before Me”. But we all know that the Christian Church believes in two more gods besides the Creator of the universe. Paul had to incorporate the idea of ‘Trinity’ into his teachings as all the known religions of his time believed in three gods. The cult of ‘Trinity’ outside Judaism, was an established fact. The oldest known cult was the one started by Nimrod, the son of Cush. He is reported to have married his own mother Semiramis. Thus, it was Nimrod who was probably the first human being to be deified along with his mother-wife Queen Semiramis. His evil act of marrying his own mother was made into a mystery as he was the husband and the son of his own wife as well as he was his own father and his own son. His name means, “he rebelled”.

Mother and Child

Nimrod, the mighty hunter as he is called in the Bible, died young and his mother-wife Semiramis was accepted as the head of this apostate cult and she made it known that Nimrod had survived as a spirit being and claimed that a full grown tree had sprung up overnight from the trunk of an old dried tree in front of her palace. This she claimed was the symbol of springing forth into new life of the dead Nimrod. Her status was later raised to the “Queen of Heaven”. Nimrod also, therefore, became the “divine son of Heaven” as he was also supposed to be the son of Baal, the Sun-god. Thus, the “Mother and Child” became chief objects of worship. From Babylon this worship spread to other places, but the idea of ‘Trinity’ first appeared. This Trinity consisted of Baal, the Sun-god as father, Semiramis, the Queen mother and Nimrod, the divine child. A day was set aside to rejoice over and to celebrate the re-birth of the young god. As true imitators, the Christians also adopted the same days for their Christmas celebrations.

The worship of “mother and child” was also prevailing at the time of Jesus Christ. In Western Asia, the god Attis was worshipped as the child of miracle, born to a virgin mother Nana. He was a shepherd and the beloved of Cybele, the mother of gods. Some held that Attis was her son. He was killed in the prime of his youth by a wild bear. Some other say that he castrated himself under a pine tree and bled to death. A similar story is told about Cybele and Deoios, or maybe Attis was also known as Deoios. In Egypt, we have again the same belief with a change of names. There Isis and Osiris were worshipped as “Mother and Child”. According to the myth, Osiris was an offspring of an intrigue between the earth-god and the sky-goddess Nut. Her husband the sun-god Ra, laid a curse that she should be delivered of child in no month and no year of the calendar. But another of her lovers, Toth by name, had, in a game of draughts, won from the moon a seventy-second part of each day. These were added to the Egyptian year of 360 days. On the first of these five days was born Osiris ; on the second day Horus; Set was born on the third day; goddess Isis on the fourth day and the goddess Nephthys on the fifth. Set married his sister Nephthys and Isis was married to Osiris.

In ancient art, Isis is also shown suckling the infant Horus and in the annual festivals her image as ‘Mother of god’ was taken out with great pomp and shoo. In these processions are shown scantily covered and shaven priests; homage and devotion are expressed by them and the common man, the accompanying music and the jeweled images of the ‘Mother of god’ having a striking resemblance to the pomp and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. This resemblance is in no way accidental. It is a historical fact that Rome had borrowed extensively from Egypt in everything.

In Rome, the “Mother and child” deities are know as Fortuna and Jupiterpuer, in Greece, Demeter and Dionysus and in other countries such as India, Tibet and China, counterparts of Madona the Catholic ‘Mother of god’ can easily be found. The ‘Mother and child’ concept was only an off-shoot of the belief in the ‘Trinity’. During his contemplation in the Arabian desert, Paul was forced to realize that if he wanted quick results, he must modulate his views according to the popular concepts of the Gentile races. It was on this axiom that he based his future plans and actions. As he had found preaching to the House of Israel totally fruitless, he concentrated his energies in and diverted his attention wholly to the Gentile races. His efforts were not unrewarded. They were indeed attracted to this new faith.

It has already been stated that Paul started by revoking the law of circumcision as this was the foremost stumbling block for the Gentiles. This he removed by saying that true righteousness did not rest merely on removing the foreskin ; but rather it

rested on faith. He argued that Abraham was already righteous when he was commanded to undergo circumcision.

“He received circumcision as a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.” [Romans 4:11]

When the elders at Jerusalem learnt about the presumptuous encroachments of Paul, they tried to undo the damage and James wrote to the new congregations:

“What does it profit my brethren, if a man says he has faith save him?Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with works and was completed by works”.
[James 2:14-22]

Law Abolished

Seeing that the Israelite elders still persisted in the strict observation of the law and strongly resisted his efforts to introduce innovations, Paul hit upon the idea of doing away completely with the law and he contended:

“For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is transgression”.
[Romans 4:15]

Having disposed of the matter of the law for good and to his own satisfaction and to the satisfaction of the Gentiles, Paul now turned his attention to the ‘Trinity’ of the pagans. A very important part of the pagan faiths was the belief in a god who was young and handsome and was supposed to have died or mutilated himself for the sake of mankind. These young gods were invariably supposed to be the offspring of the ruling supreme god. When Paul pondered over the matter, he found a ready solution in the historical fact that Jesus, son of Mary, had been put on the cross. The Jews and other who had witnessed the crucifixion did believe that he had died on the cross and later when his body was reported not to have been found in the grave, they had all wondered. This mysterious disappearance of Jesus could certainly be put to an advantageous purpose. Moreover, it was commonly known that Jesus was born of a virgin mother though many were skeptical about it. Paul turned all these ideas to his own advantage and concocted the theory of sonship. As the Gentiles were used to or rather were in the habit of worshipping a number of deities out of which three were held more important, Paul provided three deities, i.

e., God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Ghost. This new religion of Paul had very little resemblance to Judaism the religion of Moses and the religion about which Jesus had again and again declared that:

“It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away’ than for one dot of the law to become void”. [Luke 16:17]

James Rebukes Paul

No doubt Paul did succeed in bringing the Gentiles into the fold of the religion conceived and devised by him and though he preached in the name of Jesus Christ, yet his gospel was at complete variance with the teachings of Jesus. That is why James the Head of the Church and younger brother of Jesus considered Paul nothing better than a renegade and a polluted person. That was why he advised Paul to go and cleanse himself according to the law of Moses.

“Do therefore what we tell you”, advised James, ‘We have four men under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses”. [Acts 21:22-24]

Paul no doubt did achieve tremendous success among the Gentiles through his arbitrary deviations from the teachings of Jesus, yet the true Church under James remained firm and loyal though “The Rock of the Church” showed feet of clay and wavered and seldom knew his own mind. James and his fellow elders refused to budge from the original teachings of their master. They steadfastly continued to teach what they had learned direct from Jesus and paid no heed to visions that led to the darkness of pagan idolatry. Evidence of the conflict between James and his companions on the one side and Paul and his associates on the other, can easily be found in the New Testament even though the New Testament, as it is now, consists mostly of Paul’s own writings and the remaining books support ideas introduced by him.

The New Testament

We must remember that the New Testament was canonized in the year 325 at the Council of Naecia where 27 books were selected by a majority vote, of course in that congregation the majority was of those who believed in the ‘Trinity’ and other pagan conceptions. Those who represented the true church were a small minority and though they vehemently opposed all abominations, they were on pain of torture

and death, forced into silence. The Bishop of Rome, the head of the majority church, had the Emperor Constantine at his back to support him. Few dared oppose the Bishop and the Emperor.

The books that were accepted in this congregation had little historical evidence as to their authenticity. Truth has remained obscure behind the curtain of uncertainty and skepticism. It is impossible to know for certain the real authors of these books. The claim that these books were inspired has yet to be proved.

The fact remains that Paul did succeed in his purpose and his concepts and ideas were gladly welcomed by the Gentiles and his religion prevailed everywhere. Does this mean that he was a divinely inspired reformer and he worked under the Divine command? The Bible provides the answer to this question:

“But the Prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other Gods, that same prophet shall die.” [Deuteronomy 18:20]

And again:

“Therefore thus says the Lord God, we, see because you have uttered delusions and seen lies, therefore behold, I am against you says the Lord God. My hand will be against the Prophet who sees delusive visions and who give lying divinations; they shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord God.” [Ezekiel 13:8-9]

And we all know how Paul met his end.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding arguments, I have inquired into some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; the examination has led me to the conclusion that the dogmas of the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus, the Divine-Sonship, the Original Sin and Atonement are neither rational nor in conformity with the teachings of Jesus. These dogmas came into being and were due to pagan influences. They show that Christianity has

departed considerably from the religion of Jesus. Having demolished the alleged basis for these doctrines, it is now left for any Christian in Nigeria or in any part of the world to refute any of my arguments on the authority of the Bible.

How can one account for the difference between Christianity as preached by Jesus and Modern Christianity? This question can only be answered by knowing the influence of St. Paul on Modern Christian doctrines. Since the appearance of St. Paul and his playing a leading role in the moulding of Modern Christianity, the Christian has abandoned the religion of Christ.

What is most essential for the dignity of man and social progress is freedom of thought, the very freedom which the Churches have striven through, centuries of religious wars and persecutions to destroy. The progress that Europe and America have made in the fields of science, democratic institutions and social welfare has not been due to Christianity but rather as a consequence of becoming free from the strangle-hold of the Christian Churches.

According to the Christian priests, salvation from Hell depended not so much upon the manner of life people led or the good deeds they performed as upon the faith they had, as well as in the words of the Christian minister who chanced to be preaching. In the state of ignorance then prevailing among the people, this faith was hardly to be distinguished from supernatural fear. The "Holy Man", from the Pope to an Ikare Clergyman was someone to be regarded with awe and often with terror.

On these lines, the Christian Church for centuries kept the laity in subjection. For what end? The history, when dispassionately studied, shows clearly that the church as an organization failed to use its tremendous influence on the side of justice, honor, love and compassion. Instead, the hierarchy of the Christian Church of Rome devoted itself consistently to worldly affairs until the Pope became one of the leading political powers of Europe. The main object of the Roman Catholic communities, from the large and opulent monastery to the humble cell of the village priest was to maintain the supremacy of the Papacy, claimed as no potentate has ever claimed before: Universal dominion over the minds and bodies of mankind. This pursuit of worldly power maintained by the suppression of all who questioned even the least of the Church's actions was soon linked with an even greater crime against mankind-the attitude that Christianity adopted towards the spread of science, that is towards the attempt by inquisitive men to explain natural phenomena. Until the seventeenth century men of genius had either to recant what

they knew about truth and submit to Christianity or be prepared to be tortured to death or imprisoned as the instances of Bruno, Galileo and a host of other reveal. The diabolical instruments of torture invented by the Spanish Inquisition and heresy-hunters all over the Christian world have no parallel in the history of mankind!

In no instance did the Christian Church encourage the pursuit of knowledge, save only when some knowledge seemed to support her own pretensions. Therefore, at best the influence of the Church was static; at the period of the Reformation the priests were offering the people the same "spiritual" food they had been concocting at the time of Constantine.

The Reformation was the result of these faults and follies on the part of the Church .It was partly a political movement and partly a revolt by those who, awakened by their conscience and fresh developments, were dissatisfied with the monstrous growth of abuses sanctioned by Rome. The reaction against Rome was, however, of little benefit to mankind at large, since it produced the long and dreadful religious warfare that so split Europe that any potentate with some personal end to serve could, by taking the name of Protestant or Catholic, obtain a large following of the fanatical, the ignorant or the self-seeking mass of people.

The Renaissance in its ultimate analysis was a severe setback to the temporal power of the degenerate church and as the church wielded political power at that time, it reacted with all the vigor and venom at its command. Consequently, the leaders of the Renaissance became the sworn enemies of the Church and soon this movement transformed itself into enmity towards Christianity which culminated in hatred and that today the majority of the population in Europe and America is either agnostic, atheist or existentialist!

However, leaving aside the question of Modern Christian doctrines, we must now examine the Bible critically and other aspects of Christianity.



Chapter IV

EXAMINATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The books collected into the New Testament do not constitute the utterances of Jesus nor of his disciples. Jesus was a Jew and so were his disciples. If any of Jesus' utterances were to be found preserved in their original form, they could only be in Hebrew language. Same is the case with the utterances of his disciples. But no copy of the New Testament in ancient Hebrew exists in the world. The old copies are all in Greek. Christian writers try to cover this grave defect by saying that in the times of Jesus the language in general use was Greek. This is impossible for more reasons than one. Nations do not easily give up their language. It is for them as valuable an inheritance as any property or other possession. In Eastern Europe, there are people who for three or four hundred years have lived under Russian rule, but their languages remain intact to this day. France and Spain have ruled over Morocco and Algeria for a long time. Yet the language of these former subjected people is still Arabic. Two thousand years have passed since the time of Jesus. Yet the Jews have not forgotten their language. Even today, in parts of Europe and America, Jews speak "Yiddish", a corrupt form of ancient Hebrew. If this long lapse of time spent amongst other people has not destroyed the Jewish language, then Roman rule in Palestine which had begun only about 50 years before the advent of Jesus was long enough for a people to forget their language. But there are other important considerations also to be kept in view:

1. Nations which attain to any importance in history do not give up their language, and the Jews were a very important people indeed.
2. The religion of the Jews was recorded in Hebrew and for this reason particularly it was impossible for them to give up their language.
3. In the scale of civilization and refinement, the Jews did not regard themselves as inferior to the Romans, rather they felt superior and this must have made them proud of their language and reluctant to give it up.
4. The Jews entertained hopes for the return of their political power; nations which fear the future become pessimistic and therefore tend to lose pride in their language. But the Jews in the time of Jesus were awaiting the advent of their King who was to re-establish Jewish rule. Looking forward to such a future, they could not have been so negligent in protecting their language.
5. Jewish authors of that time wrote in their own language or in some corrupt form of it. If their language had changed, we should have had books of the time written in a language other than Hebrew.
6. The oldest manuscripts of the New Testament are in Greek. But in the time of Jesus, the Roman Empire had not become divided into two halves. The centre of the Empire was still Rome. The Roman and Greek languages are very difficult. If Roman influence had at all penetrated Jewish life, it should have resulted in the assimilation of Latin (and not Greek) words into the Hebrew language. Yet the oldest manuscripts of the Gospels are all in Greek. This proves that the Gospels were written down at a time when the Roman Empire had become divided and its eastern possession had become part of the Greek Empire, so that the Greek language had begun exert its influence on Christianity and its literature.
7. Phrases such as the following which are preserved in the Gospels in their original form are all Hebrew phrases:

(a) "Hossana" - Matthew 21 : 9

(b) “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani” - Matthew 27 : 46

(c) “Rabbi” - John 3 : 2

(d) “Talitha cumi” - Mark 5 : 41.

8. From the Acts, it appears that even after the crucifixion, Jews spoke Hebrew:

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we, every man in our own tongue, where in we were born? Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and in strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” [Acts 2:3-13]

It is evident that at this time the language spoken in Palestine was Hebrew. Speaking any other language was extraordinary. Among the names mentioned is Rome, which means that the Roman language was not spoken in Palestine and whoever spoke it seemed a stranger. We are not concerned here with the merits of the narrative but we only wish to point out that this passage from The Acts proves conclusively that even after the crucifixion the language of the Jews was Hebrew. Those who knew other languages were exceptions, When some of the disciples spoke these other languages-among them Latin, some people thought they were drunk and talking nonsense. If the country as a whole used Roman or Greek, no such reaction would be possible.

It is clear, therefore, that the language which Jesus and his disciples spoke was Hebrew, not Latin or Greek. So copies of the New Testament written down in Latin or Greek must have been written down long after the time of Jesus, at a time when

Christianity begun to penetrate into Roman territory and Roman imperialist power had become divided into the Italian and Greek parts. Books of this kind, composed 100 or 200 years after Jesus by unknown authors and attributed by them to Jesus and his disciples, can be of little use to any believer today. It was necessary, therefore, that we should have had another book sent to us from Heaven, free from these defects and one which readers could regard with certainty as the very Word of God.

Chapter V

AUTHENTICITY OF THE BIBLE

- Character of the Gospel
- Christian Leaders Can Change the Bible
- Testimony of Christian Scholars

Christianity is a matter of history. It follows that its truth depends on the accuracy with which the inspired words of its founder have been recorded and not the textural purity of its Scripture. If the message which was revealed by God to the founder of a religion has not reached us exactly as it was delivered, but has been misreported and altered, then to that extent that religion may be regarded as having deviated from the truth. In this section we shall see how far the inspired words and revelations of Jesus and other prophets of the Bible have been faithfully recorded and preserved in the Gospels.

The first criterion then by which we can measure the usefulness of a book is freedom from external interference. A revealed Book is superior to a man-made book because we can assume that the former will not lead us into error. God is the prime source of guidance. In a Book revealed by Him therefore, we may expect to find only light and truth, no darkness or error. If our conception of God does not imply such a trust in what He reveals then that conception has no value. If communication from God also can err, then what ground have we for holding Divine teachings superior to human teaching? Belief in a Book entails belief that, that Book is free from error. It is possible, however, that a book originally revealed by God may come to suffered addition and subtractions at human hands then that book can no longer serve as a guide.

Every age gives rise to new sciences in the light of which even a book which professes to teach anything is exposed to new criticism. The value of a book is either more securely established or it becomes more doubtful than ever by scientific test.

No Christian can deny that there is much controversy as to the authenticity of the Bible and no Christian authority has produced the original Gospels. There is no evidence that the New Testament was written in the presence of Jesus. There was sufficient evidence that the original Gospels from their memory and there is no evidence to show that the Gospels from were committed to memory that reproduction should be relied upon.

The humble writer believes that the Gospels as it is today, is the sole work of Saint Paul and not Jesus, this leads to the question: "Is Modern Christianity the Christianity of Jesus or is it Paulism?"

Saint Paul openly admitted that the Gospels which he was preaching was his own making and not that of Jesus, when he says:

"I have planted the apples, but God gave the increase". [I Corinthians 3:6]

Moreover, the doctrine of resurrection on which many Christian scholars' belief hangs, is the sole work of Saint Paul as there is nothing in the teachings of Jesus himself on this issue. St. Paul admitted that he invented this mystery when he said:

“Remember that he Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised form the dead according to my Gospel”. [II Timothy 2:8]

Character of the Gospel

For our knowledge of the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ we depend on the Gospels. There are four Gospels included in the Bible-the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The first three are called “The Synoptic Gospels”, because they proceed on the basis of the same document and have much in common. The Gospel of John is very different from these. The divinity and pre-existence of Jesus are affirmed in this Gospel alone. In the opening lines the writer of this Gospel makes the claim that the Logos, which was God who created the Worlds had become incarnate in Jesus. The Gospels of John was written in Greek at or near Ephesus between the year 110 and 115 of the Christian era by some unknown writer. No independent scholar now regards it as the work of John, the son of Zebedee. The modern Biblical scholars have questioned, not only the views of the author, but also the genuineness of the words put by him in the mouth of Jesus. This is what C. J. Cadoux, who was Mackennal Professor of Church History at Oxford, writes in his book Life of Jesus:

“The speeches in the Fourth Gospel (even apart from the early messianic claim) are so different from those in the Synopticsand 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.” [p. 16]

Canonical Gospels do not faithfully present the inspired message or Gospels of Jesus. We must bear the following facts in mind:

1. that no written copy was made of the inspired sayings of Jesus in his life-time;
2. that the earliest records of the sayings of Jesus, which were made some time after the passing away of Jesus, have all been irretrievably lost;
3. that in the Gospels, which were written between 70 and 115 C. E. on the basis of some of these lost documents, the material contained in them was handled rather freely; the Gospel-writers feeling no hesitation in changing it for what they

considered to be the greater Glory of Christ or to bring it in line with the view of their respective sects;

4. that none of the Evangelists had known Jesus or heard him speaking (it has been proved by modern critics that the Gospels according to Matthew and John are not the works of the Apostles whose names they bear);

5. that they were composed to propagate the points of view of the different factions and that they were chosen from many others which represented different factions;

6. that the Gospels were written in Greek, whereas the language spoken by Jesus was Aramaic;

7. that for at least a century after they were written they had no canonical authority and could be and were actually changed by the copyists of the different sects to serve their own purpose;

8. that the earliest extant manuscripts of the Gospels-Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Alexandrinus-belong to the fourth and fifth centuries-that is, more than three centuries after the Gospels were first written;

9. that there are considerable differences among the various extant manuscripts; and

10. that the Gospels taken as a whole are full of contradictions and inconsistencies.

These facts disclosed by distinguished Christian scholars, go to show that the Gospels of Jesus, by which we mean the message which Jesus claimed to have received from God, has not reached us in its original form. The four Gospels included in the Bible cannot be considered identical with the inspired Gospel of Jesus. The manner of their composition and the circumstances through which they have passed are such that the four canonical Gospels cannot be relied upon to give

us true knowledge of what Jesus had said and taught. C. J. Cadoux sums up the position in these words in *The Life of Jesus*, [pages 16, 17]:

“In the four Gospels, therefore, the main documents to which we must refer to if we are to fill-out at all that bare sketch which we can put together from other sources, we find material of widely- differing quality as regards credibility. So far-fetching is the element of uncertainty that is tempting to ‘down tools’ at once, and to declare the task hopeless.”

“The historical inconsistencies and improbabilities in parts of the Gospels from some of the arguments advanced in favor of the Christ myth theory. These are, however, entirely outweighed-as we have shown-by other considerations. Still, the discrepancies and uncertainties that remain are serious-and consequently many moderns, who have no doubt whatever of Jesus’ real existence, regard as hopeless any attempt to dissolve out the historically-true from the legendary or mythical matter which the Gospels contain, and to reconstruct the story of Jesus’ mission out of the more historical residue.”

Many other eminent Christian Scholars have commented on the authenticity of the Bible. The Rev. E. Griffith Jones, B.A., D.D., Principal of the United College, Bradford says in his article, “The Bible-Its Meaning and Aim” contributed to the commentary on the Bible edited by Arthur S. Peake, M. A., D. D.:

“Secondly, the Bible as we have it is a much edited body of Literature, and the various editors have treated their earlier sources with considerable freedom: nor have they always been very skilful in their treatment.”

The Bible differs from one version to another, we refer to the Revised Standard Version published in America under the auspices of some of the greatest scholars of the Bible. It is indeed a worthless attempt to purge the Bible of all dross that had crept into it. It has thrown out the word, ‘Virgin’ proof of the prophecy which has always formed a part of the ‘conclusive’ proof of the divinity of Jesus, it has now substituted the word, ‘young’.

Mr. C. J. Cadoux who I have already referred to, also repudiates the Christian belief of the virgin birth. He says in his *The life of Jesus*:

“Towards the end of the second century A. D. it came to be widely believed by Christians that at that time of his birth, his mother was still a virgin, who bore him by the miraculous intervention of God. The view, however, though dear to many modern Christians for its doctrinal value, is unlikely to be true in point of fact.”

Let us now see how the present Gospels are estimated as to their origin, chronology, differences, authorship, language, contents etc. I start with the Structure of the Synoptic Gospels. The following chart can throw some light as to how it is thought that they were originated.

For any future reference let us also have the probable chronological order of the books of the New Testament:

Approximate Date

(AD)

Event/Book

30

The Crucifixion

50

First Epistles of Paul

62

Last Epistles of Paul

65-70

Mark's Gospel

70?

Epistle to the Hebrews

80

Luke's Gospel

85-90

Mathew's Gospel

90

Acts

90-100

John's Gospel and First Epistle

95-100

Revelation

100?

1 and 2 Timothy and Titus

James I and II Peter, II and III, John and Jude are all so uncertain that we cannot place them in the preceding table, even approximately.

It is clear from the preceding chronological order of the books of the New Testament that the first record ever made was in 50 A. D., i.e. 20 years after the crucifixion. Now how can it be possible to remember the events correctly after so many years particularly when the ministry of Jesus was very short, i. e. one to three years. The authors of The Living World of the New Testament said:

“The length of Jesus’ ministry has always been the subject of debate. The major problem is raised by the chronology of the Gospel of John, which refers to two, and probably three, successive Passover festivals in Jerusalem during Jesus’ ministry... Mark, followed by Matthew and Luke, on the other hand, includes only one journey to Jerusalem, one Passover, and leaves the impression of a short ministry of about a year.”

The author of *The Early Church and the New Testament* after giving a comparative statement showing the characteristics of the three Gospels (Synoptic Gospels) and the differences between them writes [pages 160-163]:

“In the Passion Narrative, Matthew gives details which are peculiar to himself, and these are as follows:

- (a) Christ’s word to Judas in Gethsemane.
- (b) Juda’s suicide.
- (c) Pilate’s wife’s dream.
- (d) Pilate washing his hands.
- (e) The cry of the multitude “His blood be upon us and upon our children”.
- (f) The opening of the graves and the resurrection of the saints.
- (g) The sealing of the tomb.

These details, with the exception of the first, are all far more characteristic of hearsay than of the evidence of an eye witness. Christ’s word to Judas probably does come from a reliable source and may well represent a genuine tradition not

known to Mark or Luke. The remainder more probably illustrate the first beginning of Christian legend. These additions thus point to a comparatively late date for the Gospel and so also do the last verses of the last chapter which contain the command to 'make disciples of all nations' and to baptize 'in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'. These contain reference to the practices of the Church rather than a literal report of the words of Jesus. Baptism in the primitive Church, as we can see from Paul's letters, was into the Name of Jesus only."

Now let us see what reasons are given for corruption in the New Testament and how it occurred. L.D. Twilley in his book *The Origin and Transmission of the New Testament* wrote in pages 44-45:

"The scribe may alter a text to agree with his theology. This is a very rare form of corruption, but was definitely employed by Marcion, a heretic. Thus from the very early times there was a very great variety of different readings of the text in existence. Early in the fourth century a certain scholar named Lucian carefully compared different readings of the New Testament with which he was acquainted and produced a revised form of the text.....This is also referred to as Byzantine Text."

Another writer in his book *The Bible and Its Common Reader* says:

"We must guard also against the assumption that the New Testament as we have it today is in precisely the form in which it was originally written...Possibly some small roll of papyrus of uncertain or unknown authorship, seemingly too valuable to lose, may have been inserted into the work of some author recognized and known. In other words, probably no single book in the New Testament of today is precisely as it was when it left the hands of its original writer. Nor must we fail to remember that the definite and final form of the New Testament was not concluded and put into circulation as a book until more than three centuries after its first portions were written by St. Paul."

Another writer in his book *The Rise of Christianity* says:

"We cannot too often remind ourselves that the Gospels were circulated in manuscript; editorial insertions and additions were easy; those which commended

themselves gave credit to manuscript which served as the originals of future copies: and it must never be forgotten that, though earlier fragments have been found, none of our existing manuscripts of the New Testament goes back beyond the fourth century of our era.”

The author of *The Early Church and the New Testament*” while discussing Johannine literature on pages 198-200 and comparing some of the books of the New Testament says:

“John’s version of the Resurrection Appearances is certainly distinctive, since even the opening verses are different from Mark’s (remember that nothing in Mark beyond 16:8 can be treated as part of the original Gospel). Since we must discount the end of Mark, and with it Matthew, there remain a few verses in Mark, Luke’s Gospel, the Acts and Paul’s letters with which a comparison may be made....”

This means that the last verses of Mark’s and Matthew’s Gospels are additions since they are now discarded. Now here is something about the original language of the Gospel according to Matthew:

“Matthew’ says Ireneus, ‘wrote his Gospel in a Hebrew language in the midst of the Jews.’ Papias says the same: ‘Matthew set down in order the words of the Lord in a Hebrew dialect’. It is generally agreed today that the earliest version of St. Matthew’s Gospel was written in Aramaic and in less connected form. This earliest Gospel, this ‘setting down in order the words of the Lord’ as old bishop put in, was circulated zealously among the Christian community and each one, as Papias adds: ‘translated it into the best of his ability.’ The time came when the church wished to codify these translations and thus we have the official Greek version made very probably by the author himself. This version would be enlarged and completed, since by this time two other Gospels Mark and Luke, had appeared.”

As regards the author of the Gospels, in the same book *Early Church and the New Testament*, it is written while mentioning the chronology of the various books :

“The Gospel according to St. John is later than either Mark or Luke, but it was probably written not very long after Matthew. (The author is unknown to us, just like Matthew.)”

The authors (H. Clark Kee and F. W. Young) of the book *The Living World of the New Testament*, on pages 67-68, also write about the doubtfulness of the fourth Gospel and some other books:

“Among the late writings of the New Testament are several others (the epistles of Peter and James) that were also written under the names of the earliest leaders of the Church; yet their style and content make it clear that they were written at the later day. The three letters of John have traditionally been ascribed to the disciple John, but there is considerable doubt as to whether the John associated with these writings was the apostle John, a disciple of the apostle, or simply a leader to the Church of Asia Minor by the name John. Even the Gospel of John does not identify its author although it gives a prominent place to ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’, who may or may not have been the John the apostle’..... The claims of Jesus to Messiahship which usually only implied or indirectly stated in the first three Gospel, are boldly proclaimed in the fourth gospel. It is clear, then, that the Gospel that bears the name of John is more concerned with the significance of Jesus for Christian Faith than with what Jesus did or said.”

As regards Mark, E. W. Barnes writes:

“Who was Mark? We do not know: he can hardly have been the cousin of Barnabas. Stories told by Peter were used, possibly after they had filtered through the recollection of several persons, one after another... We are thus left with the conclusion that the author of Mark was a Christian: and inasmuch as Aramaic appears to have been his mother tongue, a Jew.”

Now let us see what the Christian writers say about various vital contents of the Christian faith. In *The spiritual Crisis of the Scientific Age* by G. D. Yarnold, 1959 we read in pp. 79-80:

“Bultmann now sees the whole problems as contained within the use by the New Testament authors of a completely mythical cosmology. Not only the accounts of supernatural events, such as the Virgin Birth, the Miracles, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, but the entire Biblical outlook, conditioned (so it is claimed) by Jewish Apocalyptic and gnostic ideas of redemption, represent a mythological view of the universe which has passed away and which must be replaced by a new world-view before the Gospel becomes meaningful to the scientific age. We are no longer to ask, is this historically true? Or, can this statement be accepted at its face value?

Instead, we are to recognize that the New Testament writers, being children of their own age, employed modes of expression and theological concepts which have ceased to be valid, and whose acceptance by the modern world can only result in a kind of schizophrenia.”

In the end let us see how far the discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls have affected Christianity. The book *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, 1957 edited by Kristel Stendahl is worth mentioning here. On pages 1 and 2 we read:

“Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that it is the very problem to which this volume addresses itself-the Scrolls and the New Testament which has been the catalyst responsible for the wide interest in the Qumran discoveries. It is as a potential threat to Christianity, its claims and its doctrines that the Scrolls have caught the imagination of layman and clergy.....But the success of his book (Edmond Wilsons’ book *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea*) was due not only to his skill to tell the story but also to his intimations that these Scrolls had drastic ramifications for Christianity-that the rise of Christianity should, at last, be generally understood as an episode of human history rather than propagated as dogma and divine revelation.”

Christian Leaders Can Change the Bible

The Bible can be changed at any time by the Christian leaders. For example, in the early days, it was altered by copyists and today there is a revised version. All these have led to many contradictions resulting in inconsistent stories of the founder of the religion and the humble writer doubts whether this can create confidence in the hearts of its believers. We are told in Peake’s *Commentary on the Bible*:

“In certain cases, we have two versions of similar sayings in one and the same Gospel without being literally identical. In some very important passages, it is impossible to harmonise the version. This is particularly true of the stories of the Virgin Birth and of Resurrection. As regards the Birth stories in Matthew, we find ourselves in doubt in many like points, and there is reason to believe that a reverent imagination has been at work on traditional material.”

In view of the above facts, it is no longer possible to insist on the Gospel narratives and it is very difficult for one to accept the Gospels as the words of God.

For instance, the Revised Version throws out the main text of the last twelve verses of St. Mark which deal with the ascension of Jesus. The instances of the verses which have now been removed can be multiplied to any number. One wonders how the words of God can be removed or amended at the whim of the Church Leaders.

The New Testament on which the Modern Christian doctrines rest has undergone violent changes and every edition almost differs from the other. Some of the changes that are now taking place are so fundamental that they strike at the very root of Christianity. For example, the only two references of the ascension of Jesus that were found in the Gospels of Mark and Luke have now been removed. Before the removal of these passages the relevant verses read as follows:

“So then after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.” [Mark 16:19]

“And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up to heaven.” [Luke 24:51]

So far as the relevant verse in the Gospels of Mark is concerned, it has been removed along with a number of other verses which immediately preceded and succeeded it. But verse 51 of Luke’s Chapter 24 now reads as follows:

“While he blessed them he parted from them.”

The words, “carried up to heaven” have been removed.

Testimony of Christian Scholars

After citing the internal evidence of the confused character of the New Testament, we cite the testimony of Christian scholars:

1. In the Commentary on the Bible by Horn (1882) we read that the facts relating to the composition of the Gospels, which have reached us from the ancient historians of the Church, are so uncertain and so slender that no definite conclusion can be drawn from them. Even the best authorities seem to accept as Gospel truth

the speculation current in their time, and, out of sheer reverence, those who come after accept their authority. The narratives, partly false and partly true, pass from one writer to another and after a time begin to be treated as though they were above criticism. [Vol. IV, Part 2, Chapter 2]

2. In the same volume we have that the first Gospel seems to have been recorded in the year 37 or 38 or 41 or 43 or 48 or 61-62 or 64 A.D; the second at any time from 56 to 65 AD, probably between 60 and 63; the third about 53 or 63 or 64 ; and the fourth in 68 or 69 or 70 or 97 or 98 AD The evidence with regard to the Epistle to the Hebrew, the second Epistle of Peter and the second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of James and the Epistle of Jude, the Revelation of St. John is so confused that we had better not speak of it. These have been attributed to the disciples without any sound reasons.

3. Eusebius in his History of the Church writes, that the first Epistle of Peter is genuine. His second Epistle has never been part of the Holy Book, but has been current in reading. [Vol. IV, Chapter 3]

4. In the same book (Chapter 25) we read that the Epistle of James and the Epistle of Jude and the second Epistle of Peter and the second and third Epistle of John have all been held in great doubt. It is not known whether these were composed by the writers of the Gospels or by other with their names.

5. In the Encyclopaedia Biblica (Vol. IV, p. 4940) the following is recorded:

“The New Testament was written by Christians for Christians; it was moreover written in Greek for Greek-speaking communities and the style of writing (with the exception, possible, of the Apocalypse) was that of current literary composition. There has been no real break in the continuity of the Greek-speaking Church and we find accordingly that few real blunders of writing are met with in leading types of the extant texts. This states of things has not prevented variations; they are not for the most part accidental. An overwhelming majority of the ‘various readings’ of the MSS of the New Testament were from the very first intentional alterations. The New Testament in very early times had not canonical authority, and alterations and additions were actually made where they seemed improvements”.

That is to say, the New Testament was written by Christians for Christians. Moreover it was written for Greek-speaking people, and the style was in keeping with current taste. There has been no break in the continuity of the Greek-speaking Church. There are, therefore, no serious errors, of transcription in the current versions, though we cannot say there are not contradictions. The contradictions, however, are not accidental but deliberate. It seems that from the very beginning some authors entered these alterations into the text of the New Testament.

The truth seems to be that the New Testament in the beginning was not regarded seriously as a revealed Book. Improvements were, therefore, made unhesitatingly wherever these seemed possible.

6. Again we read:

“What is certain is that by the middle of the fourth century, Latin Biblical MSS exhibited a most confusing variety of text, caused at least in part by revision from later Greek MSS as well as by modifications of the Latin phraseology. This confusion lasted until all the ‘Old Latin’ texts were supplanted by the revised version of Jerome (383-400 AD) which was undertaken at the request of Pope Damasus and ultimately became the Vulgate of the Western Church.”

[Encyclopaedia Biblical, p. 4993, Vol. IV]

What is absolutely certain is that in the middle of the fourth century, the Latin copy of the Bible was in a most confused state. The confusion was the result of a comparison with the Greek copy and of a change in Latin terminology. These confusions remained until Jerome’s revised version, prepared under orders of the Pope between 383 and 400 A.D., took the place of the Old Latin version among Christians.

7. Similarly we have:

“More important than these external matters are the variations which in course of time crept into the text itself. Many of these variations are mere slips of the eye, ear, memory or judgment on the part of the copyist, who had no intention to do otherwise than follow what lay before him. But transcribers, and especially early

transcribers, by no means aimed at that minute accuracy which is expected of a modern critical editor. Corrections were made in the interest of grammar or of style, slight changes were adopted in order to remove difficulties, additions came in, especially from parallel narratives in the Gospels, citations from the Old Testament made more exact or more complete. That all this was done in perfect good faith and simply because no strict conception of the duty of a copyist existed, is especially clear from the almost entire absence of deliberate falsification of the text in the interests of doctrinal controversy. It may suffice to mention, in addition to what has been already said that glosses, or notes originally written on the margin, very often ended by being taken into the text and that the custom of reading the Scriptures in public worship naturally brought in liturgical additions, such as the doxology of the Lord's Prayer; while the commencement of an ecclesiastical lesson torn from proper context has often to be supplemented by a few explanatory words, which soon came to be regarded as part of the original." (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 12th Edition, p. 646, Vol. III)

8. Again we have:

"It appears from what we have already seen, that a considerable portion of the New Testament is made up of writings not directly Apostolic."

(Encyclopaedia Britannica, 12th Edition, p. 643, Vol. III)

9. The following is also worth noting:

"Yet, as a matter of fact, every book in the New Testament with the exception of the four great Epistles of St. Paul is at present more or less the subject of controversy, and interpolations are asserted even in these."

(Encyclopaedia Britannica, 12th Edition, p. 643, Vol. III)

10. The New Testament is not free even today from interpolations and alterations. As examples we have the following:

i. “Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an Angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man as there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time to that case, said He unto him, ‘Wilt thou be made whole?’” [(John 5:2-6)]

For hundreds of years, we had this account reproduced in the Gospels. Nobody ever thought that it was unreliable. But when there began controversies between the Muslims and the Christians in the nineteenth century, verse 4 and part of verse 3 were deleted from the above passage in the Revised Version published in 1881, out of fear of Muslim criticism, and it was noted on the margin that many ancient authorities insert, wholly or in part, the words deleted from the text. The question is when this portion was found in many ancient authorities, why was the change made? Moreover, the very fact that a certain verse is found in certain copies and is missing in others is proof of the fact that the original text has been tampered with. There can be only two alternatives. Either we will have to admit that the verse was not found in the original text and had only been added by some scribes. On the other hand, it might have been there in which case we will have to infer that certain scribes intentionally expunged the verse from the text. In both cases the text will be considered as having been tampered with.

ii. In John we have:

“For there are three (that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one and there are three) that bear witness (in earth), the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” [John 5:7-8]

The above passage formed part of the New Testament for centuries. But when the Christians entered into conflict with the Muslims and the latter began to hurl attacks at such passages, the former altered the text of their sacred Scriptures and the words within brackets were expunged from the Revised Version published in 1881. Now the significant point to note is that: If the words so expunged did not form part of the original text and were introduced into the text by somebody, it means that in 1881, Christian scholars admitted that alterations had been made in the text for

expediency's sake; it therefore follows that the process of tampering with the Christian Scriptures still continues.

iii. It is again reported:

“And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring this hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place: and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” [Matthew 17:14-21]

Christian exponents seem to be convinced that after faith in Jesus, nothing further is required in the way of good works to attain the pleasure and love of God. But from the passage of Matthew quoted above it appears that this great end cannot be achieved except by prayer and fasting. Prayer and fasting, therefore, are important instruments for the assimilation of the grace of God. Because the disciples of Jesus did not make use of these instruments, they were unable, according to the Gospel narrative, to cast out a bad spirit, in spite of the fact that they had declared faith in Jesus. Muslim critics used this passage for a vital criticism. They said that mere faith in Jesus was not enough. Good works were also necessary and Jesus himself had stressed the importance of prayer and fasting, and had made use of them as instruments of spiritual advancement. If prayer and fasting were also necessary, then faith in Jesus could not be enough, and could not release man from the obligation to do good. This criticism was so vital that Christian exponents found themselves unable to give any reply. The only way of escape they found was in deleting the verse from the Gospel. Accordingly, in the Revised Version of the Gospel according to Matthew, we do not find this verse at all. The whole verse has been deleted and it has been proved that the Gospel text is still subject to human interference.

It is said that in Mark 9:29 the word 'Prayer' is still retained; and that if the change had been made from any bad motive, the word 'Prayer' should not have been retained in Mark. But this plea does not hold true. Muslim criticism was not based on the word 'Prayer', for prayer is still offered by Christians. The objection was based on the word 'Fasting'. The verse that has been deleted showed that Jesus was in the habit of fasting and that he looked upon fasting as necessary for spiritual advancement; so the Law could not be regarded as a curse. In order to avoid this criticism, the whole verse was deleted from Matthew and the word 'Fasting' was deleted from Mark. It is also possible that one party of the revisers thought it necessary to omit the whole verse, while another party thought it sufficient to omit only the word 'Fasting'.

Chapter VI

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are contradictions in the Gospel accounts and such contradictions also prove that the Gospels do not constitute a revelation of God or that human interference has changed the original revelation out of recognition. Any ordinary author

possessing an ordinary measure of consistency will not allow contradiction in what he writes. How then can we tolerate contradiction in a 'Book of God'? We give some examples here:

1. With regard to the birth of Jesus, we find from Matthew (1:1- 22) and Luke (1:32- 33) that the Messiah was to be one of ordinary human beings. From the Gospel of John (1:1), however, we find that the Messiah is the word which was ever with God and was in fact, God so that all have been made out of Him.

2. From Matthew (3:13-17), Mark (1:9-12) and Luke (3:21-22) and (4 1) it appears that Jesus received baptism from John and he left him at once or on the same day. But in the Gospel of John, there is no mention of any baptism and the meeting between Jesus and John is said to have lasted two days.

3. From John (1:19-44), it appears that Jesus after remaining with John and his disciples for a few days, Jesus went straight to Galilee. But from Matthew (4:1), Mark (1:12) and Luke (4:1), it appears that Jesus, after receiving baptism from John, went to the woods to have a trial of strength with Satan and remained there for forty days.

4. From John (1:35-51), it appears that soon after meeting John, Jesus made two of John's disciples, one Andrew and the other unnamed, his own disciples and on the way to Galilee, he made Simon Peter and Nathaniel his disciples. But from Matthew (4:12-22), Mark (1:12-20) and Luke (4:14-15; 5:1-22), it appears that after meeting John and remaining for forty days in the woods, Jesus fasted and on hearing of the imprisonment of John went to Galilee and preached there in many places and for many days, and beside the lake at Galilee he admitted Simon Peter, Andrew, John and James as his disciples. This means that the place where, according to the other Gospels, the admission of these disciples took place and the time also at which the admission took place according to John is not the same as the time given by the other Gospels. The other Gospels put the time about two months later.

5. In John (4:3 and 43-45), we are made to understand that the native place of Jesus was Judea and that Jesus believing that a prophet is not honored in his native place, left it for Galilee where he was much honored. But, in contradiction to this, Matthew (13:54-58), Luke (4:24) and Mark (6:4), we are told that the native

place of Jesus was not Judea but Galilee. Not honored in Galilee, he said no prophet had been honored in his own native place.

6. In John (3:22-26) and (4:1-3), we are told that even before John was put in prison, Jesus had started preaching his message and baptizing people. But in Matthew (4:12-17) and Mark (1:14-2), we are told that Jesus started preaching after John was imprisoned.

7. According to Luke (3:23), Joseph the husband of Mary was the son of Heli; but according to Matthew (1:16), he was the son of Jacob.

8. According to Luke (3:31), Jesus descended from David through Nathan but Matthew (1:6) traces the ancestry of Jesus through Nathan's brother, Solomon the King.

9. In the genealogy given by Matthew, we have from Joseph to Abraham, forty-one persons but in the genealogy given by Luke, we have fifty-six persons. Besides this, the names in the two genealogies do not correspond.

10. In Luke (24:50-51), we are told that Jesus was carried up into heaven at Bethany. But in The Acts (1:12), we read that the ascension took place on a mount called Olivet.

11. Luke (24:21-29, 36 and 51) says that on the day on which Jesus rose from the dead, or the night following, he ascended to the sky forty days after he rose from the dead.

12. In Matthew (10:10), we read that Jesus told his disciples to provide "nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves", but Mark (6:8-9) says that Jesus told his disciples that they should take nothing for their journey save a staff only. Mark, however, admits that Jesus ordered the disciples to be shod with sandals. From this, it appears that according to Matthew, Jesus forbade the wearing even of shoes and the carrying of staves, but according to Mark, the disciples had orders to carry staff and to wear shoes.

Chapter VII

SUPERSTITIONS IN THE GOSPELS

A study of the New Testament shows that it is not free from the element of superstition.

1. Mark, for instance, has to say

“And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness for forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.” [Mark 1:12-13]

The incidents recorded here are nothing but delusions. The laws of God are against them. On this earth man lives in the company of men and not in the company of animals, satans or angels. It is inconceivable that the law of God were different at that time. We do not have satans living visibly with men in this world, nor do we find angels doing visible services for men. To witness such things in dreams and visions is a different matter. Such experience were had by persons in the past, and they can be had even today. But neither did we in the past nor do we at present have human beings living with animals such as wolves and lions. Nor do we have Satan coming to a human being and carrying him off with him, so that the man follows him and obeys him against his will, rebelling only occasionally. Nor do we have angels coming and doing such services as baking bread, cooking and fetching water. In fairy tales we do have such accounts, but what place can they have in a religious book? If the New Testament was a book like Kipling’s Jungle Book, it would have been a different matter altogether. But the New Testament is a book for the religious guidance of man. What use can such a book have for fairy tales of this kind? Jesus was a virtuous and pious man. We cannot attribute such fantastic thing to him. He was an honored prophet of God and was sent for the guidance of his people. It is impossible that he should have taught such things. It is impossible that his teaching should have upset the mental balance of his followers and driven them from the path of reason into the morass of superstition. We are constrained therefore, to say that these superstitious elements were added to the Gospels at some later time. Jesus is not responsible for them, nor are his disciples. The responsibility for the introduction of these superstitions into the text of the Gospels lies on those Christians who came later, who were no longer spiritually sensitive and who preferred popular applause to strict truth.

2. In Mark we read

“And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, now with chains: because that he had been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in piece; neither could any man tame him. And always night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For He said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many, And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (the wereabout two thousand): and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.” [Mark 5:1-14]

This passage contains so many superstitious ideas that the reader is left wondering how they very crept into the Gospel account. We are told, firstly, that a man had become so violently insane that he could not be held by the strongest chains. Medical science and ordinary human experience do disbelieve such a statement. There certainly can be chains strong enough to hold and restrain the most violent maniac. Did not people in those days know how to make chains strong enough to hold human beings?

Secondly, we are told in his passage that the maniac would cut himself with stones. Such a thing is most amazing. For years apparently, a man goes on cutting himself with stones and yet he does not die.

Thirdly, we are told that Jesus addressed his man, saying, ‘Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit’. Such a thing would only be said by persons entrapped in primitive and ignorant ways. It would not be said by a prophet. If unclean spirits could ever enter human beings, why do we not see such phenomena today? Have we no means of tracing unclean spirits? True, medical science today identifies mental diseases as neurasthenia, hysteria, insanity and so on, but medical science

attributes them to other factors, not to unclean spirit. The Gospel account, however, tells us that a rational, truthful person like Jesus thought that when a person goes mad it is because an unclean spirit enters him. To attribute such a superstitious thought to a Prophet seems a cruel thing. It is to project one's own superstitions on to a great teacher. Jesus himself could never have said such a thing. Nor could his disciples. It is certainly a fabrication of later times. But the superstitious thought is deepened further. We are told that Jesus asked the unclean spirit his name, and the spirit answered, 'My name is Legion: for we are many'. This means that there was not just one spirit but an army of them. We are told further that the spirits pleaded with Jesus not to send them away out of the country. But Jesus did not agree, upon which the evil spirits begged him to send them into a herd of swine, that they might enter into them. To this Jesus readily agreed. The unclean spirits then went away entered into the swine and the herd ran violently down a precipice into the sea. And in this way 2,000 of them were drowned.

How superstitious and stupid does this passage seem! We are told that the evil spirits wanted leave, to quit the body of man and to enter into the swine. This herd of swine must have been somebody's property. The question then arises, what right did Jesus have to destroy another man's property? If it is said that the son of God had rights over all manner of property, then the question is, why call God, the God of love? If God as Master of everything can destroy things in the possession of ordinary human beings, then what law or order do we have in the world? And what evidence do we have of the beneficence of God?

Besides this, there is another serious superstition taught in this passage. We are told that when the evil spirits entered into the swine, the swine ran over a steep place into the sea. The question can be asked: Why this difference of behavior? When the evil spirits entered a man, he did not hurl himself into the sea. But when they entered into a herd of 2,000 swine, they all ran into the sea and died. The whole passage is superstitious and stupid. Anybody who is convinced of the greatness and rationality of Jesus cannot attribute these things to him or to his disciples. He will have to conclude that such passages have been added to the New Testament account by later writers.

3. Jesus is reported to have said that if his followers had faith as small as a grain of mustard seed, they would be able to show Signs greater than those shown by him. This can be found in John:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be Glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.” [John 14:12-14]

One can be tempted to ask if Christians today can restore the dead to life?

4. In Luke we found the following

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” [Luke 11:24-26]

What abject superstition this is! What possible meaning can such accounts have? Can they be attributed to a man like Jesus? To tell a lie is bad enough but to coin a superstition is just as bad. To attribute lies and superstitions to God and His prophets is cruel. The unwary and ignorant writers of the Gospels have been responsible for perpetrating this cruelty. In doing so, they have ruined the Gospels and made them unworthy as religious books.

Chapter VIII

DOUBTFUL ETHICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In Mark we have:

“And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might’ find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.” [Mark 11:12-14]

From this, it appears that:

(a) Jesus who lived in a country where the fig tree was to be found in abundance did not know when figs were in season;

(b) He was, it seems, so devoid of good manners that instead of being sorry for his own mistake, he proceeded to curse a lifeless tree, saying ‘No man eat fruit of thee hereafter’.

The Muslims do not believe Jesus is God. They regard him only as a Prophet of God. They cannot even believe that he could have said what is here attributed to him. One cannot but be amazed at those who regard him as the son of God, and as the best exemplar of morals, and who yet tolerate these descriptions which attribute unmannerly conduct to him. The Muslims never stop to think whether such things could ever be said by Jesus and whether they were not wrongly attributed to him by others.

Christian apologists today tend to explain away this passage. They suggest that the curse applies not to the fig tree but to the Jewish nation meaning that Jews hereafter would not be able to bring forth any fruit. The explanation is lame. Those who are conversant with ordinary literary forms cannot be impressed by such explanations. If the fig tree was to be used as a metaphor, was it necessary that Jesus should have walked up to one, at a time when he was suffering from hunger? According to the passage in Mark, Jesus saw the fig tree full of leaves, and he decided to go near it, hoping he would find some fruits. It was after he had seen it closely and found nothing but leaves (the time for figs had not yet come) that he cursed the tree. Jesus, in short, goes to the tree to satisfy his hunger. The tree has leaves on it and Jesus hopes to find some fruits. The narrator adds that the time of figs had not come yet. All this shows that this incident was not meant as a metaphor. The narrator makes it quite clear that Jesus went to the tree because he was hungry, and was hoping to find some fruit. But the time of fruit had not come yet. It is possible that this particular tree was late in yielding fruits, or that it suffered from some disease and failed to yield fruits. Jesus, however, became annoyed and cursed the tree.

If all this is correctly reported, have we not sufficient reason to ask whether those who curse inanimate objects like trees, rivers, mountains or stones be regarded as rational beings? Did the writer who attributed this to Jesus think that generations of readers, who would come after, would swallow this Scripture of a sane and decent person like Jesus. Christian devotees may be fooled by such a narrative, but the Muslims cannot attribute these things to Jesus not because he was in any way different from the other Prophets, but because we do not expect such things from even ordinary decent and well-behaved persons.

In Matthew we have:

“Give not that which is Holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” [Matthew 7:6]

What is here described as “Give” and as “Pearls” is really the revelation and Signs of God. “Dogs” and “Swine” in the verse mean the people who had refused to believe in Jesus. There is no doubt that the Signs of God are Holier than the Holiest things. They are more precious than pearls. But there is no doubt either that things which are Holy and precious as pearls are meant just for those who have faith in Him. The Prophets do not bring faith only to those who already have it. This is

apparent from history that Prophets have never appeared except in times of great disbelief. They have appeared only when the world is enwrapped in darkness, and their mission is to guide the world from darkness to light. Their message is addressed to those groping in the dark. It is for them that they come into the world. It does not seem possible that a beloved of God should describe as dogs and swine those whose only fault is that the light of faith has not yet dawned upon them. It is impossible that a prophet should say that the Signs of God should not be revealed to disbelievers for fear lest they trample them under their feet. If a prophet were to say such a thing, how will disbelievers ever come to believe? The attribution of such a saying to Jesus is cruel. It amounts to saying that the very people for whom he had come were described by him as dogs and swine and this for no fault of theirs, nor for any mischief which they had committed, but only because the truth had not yet become manifest to them. Contrast this with the example of the Holy Prophet of Islam as reported in the Qur'an:

"Maybe thou wilt kill thyself by over-exertion in the work because they believe not."
[Qur'an 24:4]

The verse describes how anxious the Holy Prophet was to take his message to all disbelievers. If we contrast the Jesus of the Gospels with the Holy Prophet of Islam, we find a world of difference. One is prepared to work himself to death for the sake of those who will not believe; the other would turn away from them, calling them dogs and swine and ordering his disciples not to recite the signs of God to them.

There is no doubt that the Holy Prophet of Islam [PBUH] transcends all the other Prophets in his moral example. But we cannot believe that Jesus was as devoid of good morals as the Gospels make him out to be. True, he had not reached the spiritual heights which the Holy Prophet of Islam had, nevertheless, he was a prophet of God and had been sent by Him to teach people morals and the ways of the spirit. His example must have distinguished him from millions of other human beings, but woe to the writer who attributes such unmannerly conduct to him.

In this connection, we cannot omit to mention the incident relating to the woman of Canaan mentioned in Matthew (15:21-26) and Mark (7:24-27). This woman approached Jesus in great humility. In accordance with the custom of her people, she fell at his feet and wanted only guidance from him. But Jesus, according to the Gospel writer said:

“It is not meet to take the children’s bread and to cast it unto the dogs”. [Matthew 15:26]

This poor woman must have approached Jesus with great longing and expectation. And she went not to beg for bread or cloth or for any such material thing; all she wanted was spiritual guidance. She wanted from him just what Jesus had come to give. But the Gospel reports that Jesus sent this woman away and abused her to her face, called her a dog and dishonored her. Jesus, if the Gospel account is true, did not only dishonor this woman from Canaan but also dishonored the entire fair sex and proved by his own utterance that he had nothing to give to poor women. All his thoughts were concentrated on the well-being of the Jewish race. He would prefer to have his feet anointed by a sinning Jewish woman (Luke 7:36-38) rather than saying a word of comfort to a non-Jewish woman. If Christians accept this part of the Gospel narrative as true, they are quite welcome. But for our part, we cannot believe that his disciples could have said such a thing about him. We therefore regard these remarks as fabrications of later writers. And they were made at a time when the real Jesus had disappeared from the world and an imaginary Jesus was being manufactured by ignorant writers. In John we have the following:

“And the third day there was a marriage in Canaan of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him. They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” [John 2:1-4]

Similarly in Matthew we have:

“Then one said unto him. Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother and who are my brethren?” [Matthew 12:47-48]

These passages from John and Matthew respectively show that Jesus did not have much regard even for his mother, a relationship which is held in the highest respect and esteem by all decent persons. Will an ordinary Christian today address his mother saying, ‘Woman what have I to do with thee’? Will any Christian today dismiss his mother contemptuously and yet be counted as decent? Why then did the Gospel writers single out Jesus for such a ridiculous description? Respect for mothers is a common virtue even among primitive communities. It is an aspect of

good manners which the worst of human beings display. But if the Gospel narrative is to be believed, this last teacher of Israel, this hero of the Mosaic tradition, who came to lead a people from darkness into light and to teach them good morals, was rude to his mother and behaved insolently towards her.

According to Christian belief, Jesus was the son of God. Why was he born in the lap of Mary? If he had accepted being born in Mary's lap, and had subjected her to a mother's travails for nine months, and sucked at her breast for two years, and had for years burdened her with the duty of his upbringing, could he not have repaid a mother's debt by showing the courtesy and respect due to her?

The truth seems to be that these are only apologies. Christians do not hold Jesus in half the reverence in which they hold the fabricated Gospels. The fabricated Gospels are their own creation and Jesus was a creation of God. They are not prepared to adopt the straight course of admitting that the Gospel accounts are mistaken. They would rather have Jesus defamed than reject the Gospel accounts. But rational and decent human beings who have pondered over the life of Jesus and tried to grasp his purifying example cannot but admit that the Gospels as we find them today are full of fabrication and errors. They contain elements which do not promote, but which tend instead to destroy the spiritual cravings of man. With the Gospels in such a plight, it was necessary that God should have sent to the world a new revelation free from errors and capable of inculcating in man not only high morals but also a high spiritual outlook. That revelation is the Holy Qur'an.

Chapter IX

HAS JESUS COME TO ESTABLISH A NEW RELIGION

APART FROM JUDAISM

Jesus declares clearly that he had come not to destroy but to fulfil the older books. Thus in Matthew we 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 befulfilled.” [Matthew 5:17-18]

From this it is evident that the mission of Jesus was to restore the Mosaic teaching, but the New Testament as we have it today teaches that the Mosaic teachings was abrogated completely by Jesus. The teachings of Jesus must have been reproduction of the teaching of Moses, except for what the Scribes and Pharisees had themselves added to it. But the New Testament seeks to correct not only what the Scribes and Pharisees had invented but also what Moses and subsequent Prophets had taught in their time. This position is contradictory. One part of the New Testament teaches

one thing, another part quotes another. When such a book contradicts itself in such a manner the book shall be presumed to be of various authors.

The books of the New Testament are said to have been dictated by the disciples of Jesus, and we cannot say that the disciples were not sane. The great disciples of Prophets always possess a high degree of sanity. We must, therefore, conclude that the disciples did not dictate the writing of such a book. They talked as they went about. Those who heard them passed on the substance of what they heard to others. When these other sat down to record what they had heard, they added many of their own thoughts. The result was the New Testament as we know it today, a bundle of contradiction.

Jesus Never Formulated Articles of Faith

Jesus did not formulate any Articles of Faith. The attitude of the Christian teachers is that you must not question the teachings of the Church but must simply have faith in the God of the Church; to my mind, these teachings are more of mysteries. The Christian beliefs formulated by St. Paul are unreasonable and repugnant to the conscience of man, such beliefs cannot expect any reasonable allegiance from the advanced nations of the world as it is a religion of primitive people. The whole of modern Christian doctrines was not formulated by Jesus, but by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans where he laid the foundation of Modern Christian doctrines and based his exposition on the heathen practices of his days.

The first weakness of Christianity may be likened to when a young man confronted with basic problems relating to reconciling of his every day affairs with the claim of religion. Christianity is a dualism which regards the world as sinful and seeks to turn its back to the reality of life projecting its hope into a future world. As a result, it creates a Sunday attitude towards religion which has no place in the rest of the secular week.

Therefore, Christianity based on the dogmas formulated by the Fathers ceases to exist in the land of culture and advancement. These have treated man as a child and have fed men with many a credulity; but when the child matures in intelligence and judgment, he begins to query things in the light of reason and culture. That is why education is alienating the human mind from the Church.

In the matter of culture and civilization, a few of the Nigerians who have either seen the Western World from a distance or colored lens owing to certain pre-conceived notions and an acute sense of insecurity have been taken by the artificial achievement glamour of the Western Civilization. Some of them have been so overwhelmingly impressed by the West, that they look upon it as the apogee of man's creative achievements and they erroneously conclude that these achievements are due to Christian Civilization. But, as a matter of fact, Christianity has proved an irreconcilable enemy of human advancement. It crushed science as long as it had the powers to do so and it would do the same today if the modern world allowed it. The modern progress in the West should not be taken as man's faith in the church dogma; the West made no progress as long as it was in the grip of Christianity.

It is opposed to new ways of human progress and persecuted those who sought after truth. Christianity is irreconcilable with modern ideas of democracy and equality of man and many of the se-called Christian states practice racial pride and even the South African Apartheid policy is stated by the Dutch Reformed Church as directly derived from the Biblical Revelation. The doctrine of atonement that Adam fell a prey to sin and punished the whole human race because of this means that God's judgment cannot be satisfied by any repentant act of men. Therefore, He decided that His son should die on the Cross and then raised him the third day and took him into heaven. This doctrine of representative suffering or vicarious suffering is repugnant to my sense of reasoning.

The Christian faith deals only with the spiritual side of life and offers no solution to the material side. For instance, it offers no solution to industrial relations, family life, nor does it advocate any economic doctrine. Christianity has no social philosophy although there are some Christians who call themselves Christian Socialists.

The message of Christianity is that the Law is a curse. If the Law is a curse, then all that it ordains or prohibits must also be a curse. Christianity no doubt preaches love, but Christian nations decline to act upon that teaching. If they had taken this teaching to heart, Europe should have presented a spectacle of perfect peace and not one of constant conflict and wars. Christianity – having declared the Law to be a curse – cannot put forward any definite programme. For, whatever the programme, it will be a part of the Law and hence a curse. Its enforcement will bring no relief to mankind but will only increase their misery. Christian nations appear to believe that Divine Law, however brief and simple is a curse. But laws made by man however complex are blessings. The result is that for want of anything better, whatever a

successful and dominant Christian nation strives after is described as the Christian ideal, whatever philosophy may at any time be in the ascendance is called Christian philosophy and whichever social system becomes prevalent or popular is called the Christian system. If at any time Great Britain is predominant, it is the victory of Christian Socialism. If Germany comes to the fore, it is also the victory of Christian Socialism and if the United States of America wins the race for ascendancy, it equally is the triumph of Christian Socialism.

Thus, Christianity is the ally of the successful and the victorious, so that whatever system becomes prevalent, it means the spread of the Christian civilization. At one time, for instance, the prohibition of divorce was a characteristic of Christianity. Today divorce is dearly prized among the Protestant nations. Their faith is thus like a wax model which may be molded into any desired shape; there is no danger of its breaking apart. Christianity as a religion, therefore, never had and never will have a programme for the welfare of mankind.

Its doctrine paralyzes the intellect and it is based on mysteries and miracles. Its adherents must not question the teachings of the church but must accept the faith. In prayer, the Christians beg God through Jesus Christ to grant them worldly favors.

Christian Rituals

The rituals of Christianity varies from sect to sect. The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Church rituals are different from the Anglican Church rituals or the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement of Nigeria.

There are other sects, the Jehovah Witnesses, the Christian Science, the Rosicrucians and the Moral Rearmament whose rituals are fundamentally different from the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestants.

The Church

For half a century after the death of Christ there was little organization in the Christian Movement. The earliest converts saw no necessity for organization, for they regarded this world as a temporary thing which speedily and with the Second Coming of their Lord (Christ). But Christ did not appear, and the Christians gradually had to adjust themselves to the practical fact that since hundreds of years might elapse before the Second Coming, it was essential to develop a definite Church organization. This led to the setting up of the present Modern Church.

The Rituals

The service of the worship in the early churches was plain and simple consisting of prayer, the reading of the scriptures, hymns and preaching. Gradually, however, the service was transformed into beautiful and significant ceremony. The simple commemoration of the Last Supper became a liturgical rite suffused with spiritual symbolism and central in the life of the Church. The Mass and Baptism became an important sacrament of purification. Other elements added to the rituals were the generation of the Saints, Penance and Confession.

During early Christendom, the believer worshipped God and sought salvation mainly through his own efforts. Following the growth of Church organization and the crystallization of its dogmas, the Church now constitutes the indispensable intermediary between God and man and the Pope claims that his pronouncements are infallible.

The Christian rituals consists of singing accompanied by other forms of music and the burning of incense especially among the Catholics in order to create a sort of rapture in the mind.

Monasticism and Celibacy Way of Life to the Christian

Christianity is rather unworldly. Jesus Christ is reported to have told the people:

“If a man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”
[Luke 14:26]

Again:

“Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” [Luke 14:33]

“When a man told him that he would follow him but he should be allowed to go and bury his dead father, Jesus said, ‘Follow me; and let the dead bury the dead’”.
[Matthew 8:22]

He also said:

“Think not of the morrow, for the morrow will take care of itself”. He even told his disciples to make themselves “eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake”.
[Matthew 19:12]

The outcome of such teachings can only be disastrous to mankind and lead to 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 killed but wisely controlled and channeled. This world has a meaning and purpose and it is only by leading a normal and fruitful life in the world and by appreciating and enjoying the beautiful gifts of God that man can move forward to the other world. Islam favors the middle path. The Holy Prophet [PBUH] declared that there was no monkery in Islam. The motto of Islam is summed up in the expression of the Qur’an:

“Our Lord, grant us well being in this world and well being in the Hereafter.”
[Qur’an 2:201]

“And of the bounty of thy Lord on (thee) be thy discourse.” [Qur’an 93:11]

“And neglect not thy portion of this World.” [Qur’an 28:77]

“Say: ‘Who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of God, which He hath produced for His servants’.” [Qur’an 7:32]

While on the one hand Christianity favors monasticism, on the other, it nowhere seems to have prohibited the three gateways to most crimes and sins—wine,

gambling and improper display of physical attention. Wine, in fact, forms a necessary element of the Eucharist or the Holy Communion and the first miracle of Jesus as reported in St. John's Gospel, that Jesus converted water into wine.

It is Islam which totally prohibits and condemns these master evils.

Chapter X

CHRISTIANITY NOT A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

The Christianity of Jesus Christ was not meant to be universal. Though as far as its message and basic teachings were concerned, the religion of Jesus was not different from Islam, yet it did not contain complete guidance for all aspects of life and for all nations and ages. During the countless centuries of human history, when the different races of mankind were living in more or less complete isolation and there was no quick means of communication between one nation and another, God was sending different prophets to the different nations. Jesus was one of these national prophets. He was the Messiah of the Israelites.

This is what Dr. C. J. Cadoux, an authority in Christianity writes in *The Life of Jesus* with regard to the limited or national scope of Jesus' mission.

“The office of Messiahship with which Jesus believed himself to be invested marked him out for a distinctly national role; and accordingly we find him more and less confining his preaching and healing ministry and that of his disciples to Jewish territory, and feeling hesitant when on one occasion he was asked to heal a Gentile girl.”

Each nation having been separately guided to the truth by the national prophets, the time was ultimately ripe in the plan of God to raise the World-Prophet and reveal through him the Universal Religion. And so, when the world was on the eve of becoming one, God raised the Holy Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] to represent the essential message of all the prophets, shorn of all that was a temporary or limited nature and purged of all the later accretions and misinterpretations. He amalgamated the religions and traditions of the different nations into a single universal faith and culture and united the peoples of all the races and lands into a single world-wide brotherhood.

In considering the proposition whether Jesus is a Universal teacher or as an alternative whether Christianity is a Universal religion, the reader must bear in mind the facts disclosed in the Bible itself.

Jesus says:

“Think not that I 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.” [Matthew 5:17-18]

What Moses and the earlier prophets have taught in this respect forms part of the history of the religions of the world; but Jesus himself had no such plan to change the history of the world. The question to ask is what was the intention of Jesus himself? What was the design of God Who sent Jesus? This, nobody can express better than Jesus himself and Jesus said clearly:

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” [Matthew 15:24]

“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” [Matthew 18:11]

The teachings of Jesus, therefore, is only for Israel, not for others. It is said by some Christians that Jesus exhorted his followers to go to other people:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” [Matthew 28:19]

But to argue from this that Jesus had commanded his followers to take his message to people other than Israel is not correct. It means only this that the followers of Jesus were commanded by him to preach his message to all tribes of Israel and not to all nations and people as such. Jesus speaks in clear terms:

“Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” [Matthew 19:28]

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.” [Matthew 15:26]

Again we read:

“These twelve Jesus sent forth and commanded them, saying, 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 10:5-6]

Nobody should imagine that the idea here is that Christian preachers should first go to Israelite towns, then to others. For, to go to the lost sheep of Israel does not mean only to visit their towns, but to convert them to Christianity. The idea, therefore, is that until the Israelites have become Christian, no attention is to be paid to the others. Jesus makes it quite clear that the task of preaching to the Israelites and converting them will not be completed until his Second Coming.

Thus we read:

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man come.”
[Matthew 10:23]

From this, it is clear that Matthew (28:19) requires Christian preachers to establish Christianity in the towns of Israel and not merely to visit those towns. It is made quite clear that this duty of preaching to the Israelites will not be over until the Second Coming. In preaching to others, while the Second Coming of Jesus had yet to take place, Christian preachers are acting against the teaching of Jesus.

The apostles also regard it as incorrect to preach the Gospel to non-Israelites. Thus we read:

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that those about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.” [Acts 11:19]

Similarly, when the apostles hear that Peter had preached the Gospel to non-Israelites in one place, they were annoyed:

“And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest unto men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” [Acts 11:2-3]

On the other hand, the Holy Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] from the very beginning of his ministry addressed himself to all mankind. It is the Holy Prophet who declared:

“Say :O mankind - truly I am a messenger to you all from Allah.” [Qur’an 7:159]

‘We have not sent thee (Muhammad) but as a mercy to all nations.’ [Qur’an 21:107]

The revelation of the Qur'an, therefore, was meant to remove those differences and divisions which existed between religion and religion and between people and people, and which had first arisen out of the inevitable limitations of earlier teachings. If the Qur'an had not come, these divisions would have endured. The world would never have known that it had but One Creator, nor would it have realized that its creation had one large purpose in view. Differences between religions prior to Islam seem to require rather than to resist the coming of a teaching which should unite them all.

Christianity believes that the Israelites are a Chosen people, and that God has sent His revelations and prophets to them alone. The Christians accept only the Israelite prophets; all others they consider to be impostors. But Islam says that it would be a denial of the universal providence of God to assert that prophets were raised only in one nation.

The God of the Bible is a National God

The God of the Bible is a National God of Israel as the Bible talks not of God but of the God of Israel.

“And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me.” [I Samuel 25:32]

“And also thus said the king, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.” [I Kings 1:48]

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord.” [I Chronicles 16:36]

“And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath with His hands fulfilled that which He spakewith His mouth to my Father David saying.....” [II Chronicles 6:4]

“God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.” [Psalms 72:18]

Jesus regarded himself as a teacher for the Israelites. If others approached him, he would send them away. In Matthew we read:

“Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is vexed grievously with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.” [Matthew 15:21-26]

The Prophets of the Old Testament only addressed their teachings to the sons of Israel.

Chapter XI

A BIRD’S EYE VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Modern Christian leaders and preachers have to a large extent lost contact with the revelation of God in the Old Testament. The highest they do is to pay lip service to the Old Testament by occasionally including passages of it in their lectionary and by using the Psalms in their worship. Since the Christians themselves have rejected the Old Testament, I shall have to refer briefly to it.

In examining the Old Testament, one discovers that it suffers many defects, interpolations and changes in form, as well as content. These defects are such that there is hardly anyone who accepts the authenticity of the Old Testament as true

and exact divine revelations to the holy prophets of Israel. Admitting that the Jews, Christians and the Muslims agree that God really spoke to the Prophets of Old Testament, both external and internal evidences no longer support the views that the records of the Old Testament as we possess it today, constitute the words of God as they were first revealed.

From the history of Israel, we learn that in the time of Nebuchadnezzar the books of Israel were burnt and destroyed. They were rewritten by Ezra and on close examination, there is a good deal of internal evidence to show that the books have been interfered with:

“So Moses the servant of the Lord dies there in the Land of Moab according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the Land of Moab over against Beth-Peor but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.” [Deuteronomy 34:5-6]

These verses show clearly that they were composed and added hundred of years after the time of Moses. It does not stand to reason that God ever addressed Moses, saying “Nobody knows about your sepulchre unto this day” since such words cannot be addressed to a living human being.

On reading the Old Testament, one finds many contradictions for example:

“Therefore Micheal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.” [II Samuel 6:23]

“And they give sons of Micheal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite.” [II Samuel 21:8]

The book contradicts itself by describing Micheal as childless in one place and the mother of five sons in another.

Furthermore, the Old Testament consists of many savage teachings such as the following:

“And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them, thou shalt not make covenant with them nor show mercy unto them.” [Deuteronomy 7:2]

To put to death all one’s enemies after their defeat, not to enter into any understanding with them and to refuse to show any mercy to them are more of the practice and conduct of cruel earthly kings than of any divine teachings. They cannot be attributed to the Beneficent and Merciful God. Certainly such teachings must have been incorporated in the Old Testament after Moses. Such an interpolation has made the holy book become rather foul.

The Old Testament also contains many irrational teachings as can be seen from the following:

“But his wife looked back from behind him and she became a pillar of salt.”
[Genesis 19:26]

This seems more like magic; it is reminiscent of stories told to children about ghosts and fairies and therefore has no place in the Book of God. The account which the Holy Qur’an has given of this incident is more acceptable since it is devoid of any form of superstitious act or belief:

“She (Lot’s wife) was of those who stayed behind.” [Qur’an 7:84]

In other words, she was not converted into a pillar of salt or any such thing; rather she refused to go with Lot and sacrificed the love of God for the love of relation.

The Old Testament also defamed many Prophets of God. In Genesis we read:

“And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and two daughters with him, for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the first born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth. Come,

let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first born went in and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came pass on the morrow, that the first born said unto the younger, Behold I lay yesternight with my father; let us drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.” [Genesis 19:30-36]

No comment is necessary to this terrible report. Suffice it to say that it offends our sense of morality and decency. But the present Old Testament does not hesitate to attribute this to a prophet. From this we have to conclude that the Old Testament, as we know it today is not the Old Testament revealed to Moses. It must have been composed by Jewish scholars at a time when they had developed hatred for the sons, real or supposed, of Lot, Moab and Ammon. The faith of these Jewish scholars had become so weak, their hearts had become so hardened that to defame Moab and Ammon they did not hesitate to attribute to the Prophet Lot conduct which is reprehensible in the extreme; the attribution of such conducts to any prophet is most revolting and untenable. One wonders if the Christian and the Jewish world today is prepared to accept atrocious practices attributed to the Prophets of God?

If the Old Testament, as it is today, is accepted by the Christians as a divine revelation from God, the question one would like to ask is, what spiritual benefit can accrue from the atrocious teachings of such a book which seems to have become mutilated and has been changed out of recognition from its original form. To regard a book which has suffered in this way as the very word of God is to invite ridicule against God and religion; one wonders what faith or trust can such a book inspire in its readers. These defects of the Old Testament clearly point to the need of a perfect book which should be free from these defects for the guidance of man and that book is the Holy Qur'an.

Conclusion:

The Christians ought to make a critical study of their faith. In this book I have made a critical examination of the doctrines of Modern Christianity. This examination has led me to the conclusion that the dogmas of the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus, the Divine Sonship, the Original Sin and Atonement are neither, rational, nor in conformity with the teachings of Jesus.

These dogmas came into being after Jesus and were due to Pagan influence. They show that Christianity had departed considerably from religious teachings of Jesus. It is these dogmas that have created the anti-religious movements which have taken root in Russia and many other European countries. The views of these movements are based on a misconception of the nature of religion. Their three chief objections to religion are:

1. That religion helps in the maintenance of the present social system which has borne the fruit of Capitalism with a consequent crushing of the aspirations of the poor.
2. That it helps the people subject to superstition and thus hinders the advancement of science.
3. That it teaches them to pray for their needs instead of working for them and thus it makes them indolent.

This attitude to religion is spreading fast among Western educated and West orientated Nigerians. Yet, Nigerians by nature are religious people. Today a change is imperceptibly overtaking Nigeria, the old order is disintegrating and a new one is however yet to come. We Nigerians look to Europe for inspirations and ideals. But to any the social and political structures of the West are crumbling. Should we Nigerians take the pattern of the house that we want to build in post-war Nigeria from the structures that are sagging as a result of their violation of eternal laws.

The West built its powers and prestige on Nationalism and Laissez faire industrial capitalism which led to imperialistic exploitation and imperialistic wars. Its structure of a spurious democracy was shattered by Fascism and Communism. Shall we worship the state or racial and territorial nationalism putting patriotism in place of God? Shall we worship the dialectical materialism of the Communists which makes life as a regimentation for production and distribution? "Man is a worshipping animal, he creates gods and makes idols which he worships so long as they appear to grant him favors, but he shatters them when they do not serve his purpose".

The materialistic West lost all faith in the true God of justice and humanity and installed other gods in His stead, but these wishful creations would give it no abiding satisfaction. These gods are impelling their votaries to invent world-

destroying weapons that could wipe away all of humanity during a few hours. Life in these nations is becoming cramped, distorted and perverted. For instance, on my recent visit to America, I was surprised to see how unsettled and unhappy the American people are. I could not believe what I saw and heard in America. The Afro-Americans in America hated the whites and the whites detested the Afro-Americans in America. This leads to suspicious agitation among all the different sections of American population. No body seems to know what life is meant for. Man is at war with himself, with others and with his entire environment. Shall we borrow any life-giving panacea from this vast asylum of violent lunatics? Shall we follow the recipes of the physicians who have not been able to heal themselves? Nigeria is on the crossroads of either accepting the religious ways of life or adopting the unreligious ways of life of Europe.

During the Colonial Era, with the help of organized European Missionaries in Nigeria, many Christian religious leaders were hostile to Islam and presented Islam as a religion of barbarians. Some Christians even prayed and left no stone unturned in their efforts to replace Islam with Christianity.

Chapter XII

ISLAM, THE TRUE RELIGION

The last prophet of the Islamic Religion is the Prophet Muhammad [Peace Be Upon Him]. He was a prophet, administrator, legislator, moralist, reformer, political scientist and economist, all these traits gathered in one personality. There was hardly any aspect of manifest or disguised human slavery to which he did not turn his attention in order to diagnose the disease and suggest the cure.

Let us start with the fundamental doctrine that Muhammad [PBUH] preached the basis of all true religion. He emphasized the Unity of God whose creation was a visible sign of His presence but Who in His essence was invisible. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Say, He is Allah, the One! Allah, the Independent and Besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him." [Qur'an 112:2-5]

"Eyes cannot reach Him but He reaches the eyes. And He is the inscrutable, the All-Aware." [Qur'an 6:104]

Besides the Unity of God, the only other requirement is a virtuous life describing virtue as the essential nature of the real self of man and a common heritage of all noble souls.

In order to vitalize the Muslims the Holy Qur'an prescribes belief in One God, Salat (Prayer), Saum (Fasting), Zakat (Poor-rate) and Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca). The Holy Qur'an says:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but truly righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Books and the Prophets, and spends his money out of love for Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask for charity, and for ransoming the captives; and observes Prayer and pays the Zakat; and those who fulfil their promise when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and afflictions and the steadfast in time of war, it is these who have proved truthful and it is these who are truly God-fearing." [Qur'an 2:178]

The creed of Islam is so simple and rational that its fundamentals cannot be easily attacked. The philosopher appreciates and interprets vanities as a religious experience. Islamic religion denounces formalism and hardened orthodoxy which worships the letter more than the spirit. Therefore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] emancipated man from priesthood.

In many historical religions, the priests form a class that becomes the guardian of the souls of men. Religion is practiced by this class as a profession venerated as superior to every other occupation. In the Christian Church in Nigeria (the Anglican Church for instance), the priests are organized in a hierarchical order as follows: Archbishop, Bishop, Provost, Archdeacon, Canons, Reverend, Curates, Catechists and Lay readers. The Nigerian Roman Catholics follow similar examples with their hierarchy culminating at the top in the person of an infallible Pope. Islam was the first religion which realized the danger of religion not making men free but enslaving their spirit.

Islam therefore makes every man his own priest. No intermediaries are needed between man and God. When a call emerges from the human soul, God responds. He demands no animal or human sacrifice to be propitiated. Every soul is directly responsible to Him and in matters of moral law, all are equal before Him. The institutions of Mullams, Alfas and Alhajis as we have here in Nigeria, is unknown to Islam. Many people take advice from these self-styled Muslim Priests because of fear. It has been established by modern psychological research that fear is at the bottom of most complexes from which a large number of men suffer. Countless phobias paralyze the life activities of human beings and make them unable to face life.

A person sincerely believing in an All-Powerful Beneficent God is cured of all fears. Such a person goes about the business of life facing pleasant and unpleasant situations with an equanimity that is enviable. He has no feeling that he is at loggerheads with a blind or a hostile universe and does his best and leaves the results to God.

Islam did away with the necessity of having special temples or special places of worship where God alone could be worshipped. No doubt, mosques were built. But it was the Holy Prophet [PBUH] himself who said: "One of the special features of Islam is that every place on the wide earth of God is our place of worship. Masjid or Mosque is the place of public religious services. The same word is used in the Qur'an for the place of worship belonging to the Christians and Jews.

For Muslims, prayers have no aesthetic paraphernalia or abracadabra as this is not required. The man who leads the prayers is not an ordained priest. He wears no formal or professional robes and carries no aura of mystical sanctity about him. Any Muslim selected on account of his knowledge and character is asked to conduct the service.

Neither at birth, nor when a person accepts Islam, at weddings or at funerals is any priest required. On every important occasion and in every critical situation, the Muslims have nothings else to offer except prayers and in prayers, except respectful and devotional postures, there is no ritual for which a professional religious priest is needed. Some Muslims may specialize in religious learning in which they acquire the title of Imam, but religious life as a profession is discountenanced by Islam. Hence, the problem of theocracy as it troubles the Christian religion never troubles Islam because the problem of Church versus State could never arise in the Islamic polity.

Today responsible Nigerians are diligently exploring means of promoting inter-tribal understanding and good-will among different sections of Nigeria. The most important problem confronting the world body is the so-called ideological conflict. Some atheists are advocating the application of Secular ideologies like Capitalism, Socialism, Communism and Welfare State Doctrines. But, the Muslims must oppose all application of Secular Ideology because they do not provide for the spiritual needs of man.

Religion is something that human nature demands. It is said that there are three basic human needs: food, clothing and shelter. These are physical needs. Beyond these are spiritual needs as well which science and philosophy fail to satisfy. As the human stomach requires a home to live in, so the human mind also requires certain things and one of such things is the consolation from the questions which beset the human mind. The human soul remains unsatisfied therefore restive till the satisfactory answer to the important question is received. Religion fulfils the spiritual requirements of man by providing for suitable answers to fundamental human problems.

Christianity cannot provide any solutions to the burning problems of the day as Christianity does not have any plan for man to live on this earth. In Christianity, the rich are exhorted to be kind to the poor. Spirituality is equated with poverty. It is preached that the poor can find it easier to enter the kingdom of heaven and it would be more difficult for the rich to enter it than for the camel to pass through

the eye of a needle. The religious man is expected to despise the good things of this world and the next world will compensate him for what he lacked in this mundane existence. The poor are asked to suffer in patience for a short while for their existence on earth after all is very transient.

The early Christians believed that the end of the world was very near; since the whole was going to blow-up very soon; why they asked, should one bother about material goods? Christ had said that man does not live by bread alone and that the sustenance of the spirit was more necessary. As the early Christians were very poor, they begged God to give them their daily bread. These doctrines are not relevant to the world problems. If adopted, it will only expose the world to more exploitation.

The Prophet of Islam was a practical idealist. He realized that metaphysical or utopian idealism had little use for the common man. In the entire scheme of Islam, the body is indissolubly linked with the soul. The soul is not a product of the body but is so linked with the body that whatever happens to one affects the other either directly or indirectly. The world of God's creation is a real world; everything in nature is a gift of God meant to be enjoyed by His creatures. There are, no doubt, realities higher than the physical world but the physical world too is spiritual in its own way. The body must be looked after to become fit, strong and pure in order to help the harmony of the spirit.

Muhammad [PBUH] transformed all honest work into worship. He said that the man who is seeking livelihood for his family is also worshipping God. "The wage-earner is a friend of God" He was the first great religious teacher who announced in clear terms that for the common man, poverty was a great evil. He said "Poverty brings a man to the brink of loss of faith in God". In the revelation, God mentions as one of the blessings conferred on the Prophet [PBUH] that he was originally poor and God had granted him freedom from want. But this was only one aspect of his economic outlook. He was equally, if not more, afraid of superfluous wealth which makes the possessor luxurious, callous and unjust. "I am not much afraid of your poverty as of your wealth." A man is as much enslaved by wrongfully hoarding wealth as he is degraded by poverty. The middle path of economic sufficiency and security is the path of all social justice and all genuine culture. Muhammad [PBUH] was determined to liberate man economically. Here are some of the chief measures that he adopted:

1. On account of the differences in opportunities and aptitudes, some people are bound to earn more than others. It is falsehood to say that men are born with equal capacities. Free initiative must not be curbed; only unlawful means of the

acquisition and accumulation of wealth must be stopped by legal sanctions as well as moral injunctions.

2. Usury in all forms and speculations in trade must be legally stopped. Money must not be earned without effort. Usury must not be mixed with trade.

3. Trade and partnership in trade even between capital and labor are allowed where the benefits as well as the risks are shared. There should be cooperation without exploitation.

4. The hoarding of essential commodities for profit is prohibited.

5. Beyond a certain minimum determined by legislation the rest of wealth shall be considered as a surplus and must be taxed to be spent on the less fortunate individuals.

6. Private charity is good but the essential needs of the poor must be looked after by the state which must work as a welfare state.

7. There must be promulgated an equitable law of inheritance; men as well as women shall inherit in accordance with a prescribed system.

8. Although in his lifetime, a man is an absolute owner of his property, he cannot will it away entirely to the benefit of some and to the detriment of others. He can will away his property only to the extent of one-third. Lawful heirs must not be deprived.

9. All ostentations and luxurious living shall be prohibited by law. Gold should not be used except as currency or in a limited measure for women's ornaments. The wearing of silk was also prohibited for men.

10. Living on unearned income is a disgrace for the wealthy as well as the poor. Begging is a disgrace for man. Instead of offering charity it is much better to help the beggar to earn his living. The Prophet [PBUH] said: "On the Day of

Judgment, the beggars shall be seen without any flesh on their face; begging makes a man 'lose face'."

11. As all estates must be divided on the death of the owner, according to the law of inheritance, the law of primogeniture shall not be valid for upholding the feudal system.

One should easily see from the main items of this Islamic program of economic reconstruction that it is a via media between extremes. To give away your coat also to whosoever asks you for your shirt may be the ideal of love and goodwill. Similarly is non-resistance to evil, but it is not a practicable precept for common humanity nor could any state be organized on that basis. While looking up to heaven, the Prophet of Islam had always his feet on earth. Islam is not earth-rooted but it never ignores the fact that man's physical frame was fashioned out of clay and he cannot ascend to heaven without first planting his feet firmly on earth.

Muhammad [PBUH] was the father of Welfare State. Without agreeing with Marx that man's economic life is coextensive with his entire existence and all other values are derived from it, the Prophet was fully conscious of the fact that economic life reacts very intimately on the advancement or retardation of spiritual or non-economic values. He realized that the dignity of human life cannot be preserved without economic security, and social justice is, to a very large extent, based on economic justice. He devised a system that could prevent society from splitting up into classes of haves and have nots. All the measures that could prevent the concentration of wealth in individual hands were adopted.

The Prophet was dealing with the economic system of his own times but the broad principles on which his measures were based are basic for all future applications. The spirit of the whole system is so manifest that anyone who cares can appreciate it. There are numerous sayings of the Prophet [PBUH] that throw further light on his fundamental outlook about economic justice. Fixed Zakat is not the only tax on surplus income and capital; he is reported to have said that, if the need arises, much more could be taken from the wealthy and spent on the relief of the distressed.

All other religions also preached the virtue of private charity without any conception of remolding the economic order in such a manner that exploitation should become difficult if not impossible. Belief in Islamic value can form the basis of the ideology

which all Muslims must be anxious to promote and foster in the New Nigeria. We are convinced that these values furnish the most beneficent standards for healthy, prosperous and progressive life in all spheres of life.

Furthermore, one of the unique features of Islam is that it establishes a balance between individualism and collectivism. Islam believes in the individual personality of man and holds everyone personally responsible and accountable to God. It guarantees anyone to tamper with them. It makes the proper development of the personality of a man one of the prime objectives of its educational policy. It does not subscribe to the view that man must lose his individuality in the collective social life or in the state.

It also awakens a sense of social responsibility in man, organizes human beings in a society and a state and enjoins the individual and the entire social organism to subscribe to the social good of all. Prayer, in Islam, is offered in congregation which inculcates social discipline among its followers. In short, Islam neither neglects the individual nor the society; it established harmony and balance between the two and assigns to each its proper role.

PERMANENCE AND CHANGE

Islam meets the needs for Permanence and Change. Mr. Justice Cardoza of the United States of America has emphatically and rightly declared:

“The greater need of our time is a philosophy that will mediate between conflicting claims of stability and progress and supply a principle of growth”. [Justice Cardoza, 37, HLR. P. 279]

Islam bestows upon mankind the ideology that satisfies the demands both of stability and change.

Islam is a simple, rational and practical religion. It is a religion without any mythology. Its teachings are simple, intelligible and appealing to human reason. It is free from superstitions and irrational beliefs and dogmas. The Unity of God, Prophethood of Muhammad [PBUH] and the concept of Life-after-Death are the basic articles of its faith. They are based on reason and sound logic. All the teachings of

Islam follow from these basic beliefs and are simple to comprehend and straightforward to follow. There is in Islam no hierarchy of priests, no far-fetched abstractions, no complicated rites and rituals. Every one is to approach the Book of God directly and live his life according to its directives.

Islam awakens in man the faculty of reason, inculcates the spirit of inquisitiveness and exhorts him to use his intellect. It enjoins him to see things in the light of reality. The Qur'an advises man to pray:

"O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge." [Qur'an 20:114]

It asserts that those without knowledge are not equal to those who have it:

"Say, Are those who know equal to those who know not?" [Qur'an 39:9]

That those who do not observe and understand are worse than cattle:

"They are like cattle; nay they are even more astray.

They are indeed altogether heedless." [Qur'an 7:179]

That the meaning of revelation becomes manifest to those who have knowledge and who have understanding:

"We have explained the Signs in detail for a people who possess knowledge." [Qur'an 6:97]

"We have explained the Signs in detail for a people who understand." [Qur'an 6:98]

"That whosoever has been given knowledge has indeed been given abundant good." [Qur'an 2:269]

“Allah is the Friend of those who believe; He brings them out of all kinds of darkness into light.” [Qur’an 2:257]

Of all things, it is knowledge by virtue of which man is superior to angels and has been made the vicegerent to God on the earth.

“And when thy Lord said to the angels, I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth, they said, Wilt Thou place therein such as will cause disorder in it, and shed blood?- and we glorify thee with thy praise and extol thy holiness. He answered, I know what you know not.” [Qur’an 2:30]

Islam takes man out of the world of superstition and darkness and initiates him into the world of knowledge and light. The Holy Prophet says:

“To seek knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim”.

No prophet however eminent can claim godhead. Jesus strongly disclaimed godhead or divinity when he says:

‘Why callestthou me good? There is none good but One, that is God”. [Mark 10:18]

He spoke of God as “My Father and your Father and my God and your God”, (John 20:17) showing that he stood in the same relation to God as any other man-he was a creature of God.

In his agony on the cross, according to New Testament, Jesus cried out: “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani”? translated this means “My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me”? (Mark 15:34). Can anyone imagine these words coming out of the mouth of God? Here we have the cry of a helpless man to his Creator and Lord. The fact is that Jesus claimed to be only a prophet of God. He was a man to whom God had revealed His message for the guidance of other men. Many passages from the Holy Bible support this view:

“Jesus saith unto them, ‘If ye are Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard from God’.” [John 8:39-40]

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” [John 17:3]

Today Islam and Christianity are two great religions. These two world religions are looking for converts and the contact between these two religions increases day by day.

I believe that the adherents of each should come together with open minds and hearts and search for the inner intention of their faith.

I would like any Christian to write a critical book on Islam, basing his arguments on the Holy Qur’an because I believe that this type of study will be mutually beneficial. The only way in which harmony can be achieved is a comparative study of religion; thus appreciating the good that lies in what is professed or practiced by others. I am sure that it is not knowledge about religion itself that breeds enmity, rather it is ignorance of it.

Ever since the creation of the world, God’s invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity have been dearly perceived in the things that have been made. When the Yorubas speak of Olodumare, the Ibos speak of Chukwu, the Nupes speak of Soko, the Jews speak of Jehovah, the Hindus speak of Brahma and the English speak of God, they are speaking of ALLAH. The names make no difference. They all have glimpsed the one true God, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe.

Islam believes in the divine origin of all religions of the world and insists that the variety of forms and rituals of the different religions proceeded from the mercy of God who gave to each people in each particular time a form of religion suited to its needs and susceptible of development along with the progress of the human mind. Therefore, the mere fact that different people have followed different laws and customs and adopted different modes of worship at different times is not fundamental. What is fundamental is the belief in one God, The Qur’an says that religion is concerned with Universal truth and there is only one religion Al-Islam.

But as a Muslim, I must admit although it may be an error of judgement, yet I find it difficult to accept African Traditional Religion as a true religion. Some may argue that I am contradicting myself. Probably sometimes in the past, God might have raised a prophet in Africa who advocated the concept of the Unity of God. Nevertheless, as a Muslim, I cannot accept African Traditional Religion as one of the world religions for the following reasons:

(a) The pagans or believers in African Traditional religion are polytheist. Islam criticizes and opposes polytheism. It makes it clear by stating unequivocally that in order to attain spiritual advancement, emancipation and a dignified rule over the entire creation in the name of the Creator, man shall not worship any man, creature or object however great or mysterious it may be. He must reserve his worship for the Unseen God. In advocating complete self surrender to the Unseen God, Islam is not anxious to protect God's interest but to protect the dignity of man.

(b) The rites of African traditional religion vary from place to place and are rich with different myths as a general rule. The adherents, seems to me, base their faith on fear, magic and superstitions; and

(c) Finally, as far as modern Nigeria is concerned, Paganism or Traditional Religion, is rapidly losing grounds since it is merely being treated by many Nigerians as an ordinary culture and not as a religion.

In view of the findings of professor Bolaji Idowu in respect of African Traditional Religion, the Nigerian Christian should attempt to scrutinize objectively the nature of Modern Christian doctrines and not argue like Mr. Tunde Olatunji who writing recently in the Nigerian Daily Sketch, 1971 declares:

“To hold that Jesus did not die on the cross would destroy the whole infrastructure of Christian faith, that would mean that the Biblical predictions to this effect were false, that the theory of Jesus dying for our sins would be void of meaning, that the belief in the conquest of death, resurrection and therefore day of judgment would be unreasonable”.

Yet, many western scholars have admitted that the Bible cannot be called an exact true copy of the original teachings of Christ as well as representing the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Let the Christians study the Holy Qur'an as it has now been translated into many languages. However, the Christian must not measure Islam merely by the practice of many of the so-called Muslims. Islam is not a creed which originated with the Holy Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]. Muhammad [PBUH] held that from Adam downwards, all genuine theoretic religious teachers are commissioned by God to preach and practise the truth for which the Arabic word is "Islam". Islam in this sense means, "surrender to the will of God". The Holy Qur'an says that Abraham was not a Jew. Similarly Christ was not a Christian. Their religion was the same primeval and eternal Islam, which is the teaching of the Unity and Oneness of God.

Muhammad [PBUH] proclaimed that religion at all times and by the mouths of all the prophets been simply one. It has taught, in essence, the same thing always, that is to hold God alone in His Sovereignty, to submit to His Will and obey His commandments as well as practicing good and keeping away from evil. The Holy Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] had neither come to establish a novel religion nor to abolish all the teachings of the older prophets; but Muhammad [PBUH] like Jesus before him had been sent by God to restore the religion of all prophets from Adam to Moses which was already corrupted by the Pharisees. Jesus said:

"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." [Matthew 5:17-19]

In this book, I have tried to prove beyond doubt that the modern Christian doctrines are absurdities. Viewed from the standpoint of reason, these old scriptures and doctrines present a very grotesque aspect. The Old Testament lends them no support and the sayings of Christ give lies to them. One hopes the Nigerian Christians will rethink the stand of their faith in the light of modern research and the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

Chapter XIII

CHRISTIANITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE QUR'AN

Belief in the Prophets

Belief in the Books of God

Crucifixion on the Cross

Christianity as understood and believed by the Christians of both the Roman Catholics and the Protestant persuasions comprises three creeds, namely, the Apostles, the Nicene and the Athanasian. The fundamental doctrines of modern Christianity are:

1. The Trinity
2. The Divinity of Jesus Christ
3. The Divine-Sonship of Jesus
4. The Original Sin, and
5. The Atonement

These basic doctrines of Christianity have for centuries kept the intellect of man in a state of perplexity. They are subjects on which much intellectual blood has been shed. These doctrines developed into a full-fledged religion which not only dealt a death blow to the true teachings of Jesus but also caused great harm to humanity.

According to the Holy Qur'an, Jesus was sent to his people to preach Belief in God. This implies recognizing God as only One, associating no partner with Him. He has power to do all things and He is only One who deserves to be worshipped. This is the fundamental principle of the teachings of Jesus.

“And when Jesus perceived their disbelief, he said, ‘Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah?’ The disciples answered, ‘We are the helpers of Allah. We have believed in Allah. And bear thou witness that we are obedient; Our Lord, we believe in that which Thou hast sent down and we follow this Messenger. So write us down among those who bear witness’.” [Qur'an 3:52-53]

“Indeed, they are disbelievers who say, ‘Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary,’ whereas the Messiah himself said, ‘O Children of Israel, worship Allah Who is my Lord and your Lord.’ Surely, whoso associates partners with Allah, him has Allah forbidden Heaven, and the Fire will be his resort. And the wrongdoers shall have no helpers.” [Qur'an 5:72]

Qur'an, therefore, rejects the doctrine of the Trinity.

“They surely disbelieve who say, ‘Allah is the third of three;’ there is no god but the One God, And if they do not desist from what they say, a grievous punishment shall surely befall those of them that disbelieve.” [Qur’an 5:73]

“Will they not then turn to Allah and ask His forgiveness, while Allah is Most Forgiving and Merciful? The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger; surely Messengers (like unto him) had passed away before him. And his mother was a truthful woman. They both used to eat food. See how We explain the Signs for their good, and see how they are turned away.” [Qur’an 5:74-75] “This grace is from Allah, and Allah suffices as One Who is All-Knowing.” [Qur’an 4:70]

“Surely, Allah will not forgive that a partner be associated with Him; but He will forgive whatever is short of that to whomsoever He pleases. And whoso associates partners with Allah has indeed devised a great sin.” [Qur’an 4:48]

“Allah shall not forgive that anything be associated with Him as partner, but He will forgive what is short of that to whomsoever He pleases. And whoso associates anything with Allah has indeed strayed faraway.” [Qur’an 4:116]

“And they say, ‘The Gracious God has taken unto Himself a son’.

Assuredly, you have indeed uttered a most hideous thing.

The heavens might well nigh burst thereat, and the earth cleaves asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces.

Because they ascribe a son to the Gracious God. It becomes not the Gracious God that He should take unto Himself a son.” [Qur’an 19:88-92]

Islam believes in the uncompromising doctrine of monotheism - Belief in One and only One God.

The New Testament also supports this Islamic view that Jesus was raised to prophethood by God for the Israelites, who had ceased to act upon the teachings of the Torah, had become spiritually dead.

The Muslims believe that Jesus was one of the prophets who was sent to his own people alone and whose message was not meant for others in other parts of the world.

“Verily, We have sent thee with the Truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and as a Warner; and there is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent.” [Qur’an 35:24]

This view is confirmed by the New Testament:

“But he answered and said, ‘I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel’.” [Matthew 15:24]

“And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.” [Matthew 1:21]

“And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, are not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” [Matthew 2:6]

The Muslims love, respect and believe in Jesus as a prophet of God as they love, respect and believe in other prophets of God.

Belief in the Prophets

Belief in Prophets is the natural sequence of faith in divine revelation since revelation must be communicated through human beings.

The Prophet is not the bearer of Divine message only but he also shows how the message is to be interpreted in practical life. Therefore, he is the model or example to be followed. It is the Prophet's examples that inspire a living faith in the hearts of his followers and brings about a real transformation in their lives. This is why the Holy Qur'an lays special stress on the fact that the Prophet must be a man. The reformation or transformation of man can only be accomplished through a prophet. Hence, the Holy Qur'an rejects the doctrine of incarnation because God incarnate would serve no purpose in the reformation of man, seeing that man has to face temptation at every step but there is no temptation for God.

A Muslim must believe in all the prophets; Hud and Salih raised up in Arabia, Luqman in Ethiopia, a contemporary of Moses. The Holy Qur'an says:

"And who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee and they have firm faith in the Hereafter." [Qur'an 2:4]

Thus, the Holy Qur'an lays the foundation of a world-wide religion by making a belief in the Prophet of every nation the basic principle of his faith.

In order to teach men how to live in this life; how to behave with each other; with friends; enemies; parents and children and how to give each man his right and dues, God sent a number of prophets. To every nation God has sent a messenger, in order to bring them out of darkness into light; to teach them how to live a happy life. But each prophet was opposed and ill-treated by those persons of his own nation who had wealth and power and who did not like to change their evil ways. They did not want to give up their injustices to the poorer people. The prophets were abused, beaten, killed or driven out by their people. But these prophets went on doing their work and suffered everything patiently until they succeeded in bringing a large number of followers around them. They gave the message of God to their followers, taught them how to live and treat other people justly. They further asked them to obey God and fear His punishment for doing evil.

All these prophets were born in different times and among different peoples. Therefore, they could not adopt the same methods, because their people had different customs, habits, languages and manners. But they had one thing in common, that is, all of them asked people to believe in God and in the Life after Death and to lead a life of virtue, truth and honesty.

The number of these apostles of God is said to be more than a hundred thousand but 25 of them are more important than the others and these are distinctly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an (see Surahs 7, 10, 11, 19, 21, 26 and 38). The following are the names mentioned in the Qur'an, Those names in brackets are the Bible version of the names mentioned in the Holy Qur'an;

Adam-(Adam) Musa-(Moses)

Nuh-(Noah) Dawud-(David)

Hud-(Heber) Sulaiman-(Solomon)

Salih-(Saleh or Methusela) Yonus-(Jonah)

Lut-(Lot) Ayyub-(Job)

Idris-(Enoch) Dhul-Kifl-(Isaiah or Ezekiel)

Ibrahim-(Abraham) Ilyas-(Elijah)

Ismail-(Ishmael) Alyasa-(Elisha)

Ishaq-(Isaac) Zakariyyah-(Zacharias)

Yusuf-(Joseph) Yahya-(John the Baptist)

Yaqub-(Jacob) Harun-(Aaron)

Shu'aib-(Jethro) Isa-(Jesus)

Muhammad

A Muslim must believe in all the prophets of God. To believe in some prophets and reject others is regarded as disbelief, The Holy Qur'an says:

"Surely, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and seek to make a distinction between Allah and His Messengers, and say 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others,' and seek to take a way in between;

These really are the disbelievers, and We have prepared for the disbelievers an humiliating punishment." [Qur'an 4:150-151]

Faith is in all the prophets of God and in the finality of the prophethood of [PBUH] as the last prophet.

By belief in all the Prophets of Allah, one means that at different stages of the history of mankind, Allah sent prophets as His Messengers for their guidance. One must believe in all of them in general, and in those whose names are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in particular. One cannot personify anyone as a prophet if his name is not so mentioned in the Divine Book, nor can one deny the prophethood of any one whose name is so mentioned in the Divine Book.

A Prophet is a servant and a Messenger of Allah who receives Divine revelation. He is a model for human being and teaches and practices the Commands of Allah. One does not worship any of the prophets, but only love and revere them and consider them as models of conduct for themselves as well as humanity at large. The prophets worshipped Allah and taught us to do the same. But we cannot call any of the prophets God; for they were all created by Allah Who is Self-Existing and has no partner.

Besides being Messengers and Servants of Allah, none of the prophets claimed Divinity for they themselves were human beings.

Belief in the Books of God

Muslims also believe in all the Books of God.

“This Messenger of Ours believes in that which has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers; all of them believe in Allah, and in His Books, and in His Messengers, saying, ‘We make no distinction between any of His Messengers’; and they say, ‘We have heard and we are obedient. Our Lord, we implore Thy forgiveness, and to Thee is the returning’.” [Qur’an 2:285]

It is obligatory to believe in all the Books of Allah, i.e. Books which He has sent down through His Prophets for the guidance of mankind from time to time at different stages of history. God revealed His Books to His Prophets before Muhammad [PBUH] and these Books were sent down in the same way as He sent down the Qur’an to Muhammad [PBUH].

There are five books of Allah (or code of religion) mentioned in the Qur’an, namely:

- (a) Suhuf revealed to Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim).
- (b) Torah (Old Testament) revealed to Prophet Musa (Moses).
- (c) Zabur (Psalms) revealed to Prophet Dawud (David).
- (d) Injil (New Testament) revealed to Prophet Isa (Jesus).
- (e) The Holy Qur’an revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) the last of the prophets.

The older revealed books; Torah, Zabur and Injil do not exist in their original forms except the Holy Qur’an. Their present day editions are only interpretations by their respective followers of later ages. Thus the original teachings of the Torah, Zabur and Injil have been tampered with and the word of God is no longer preserved in them in its original unalloyed and unadulterated form.

All these books have many things in common and they have the same purpose, i.e., to reform mankind. Furthermore, all these books originated from the same geographical area. They are all Divine revelations as well as written scriptures and all alike are to be believed and accepted.

Each of these books have come to confirm and clarify the earlier scriptures. As far as the Qur'an is concerned, it not only confirms earlier scriptures, but as the final revelation, clears up all uncertainties and is the repository of perfect truth.

The Qur'an, the Holy Book of the Muslims, makes mention of the great prophets and messengers to whom the Holy Books were given with great reverence and respect. It places Moses as a great reformer, a great guide of mankind, holy man, a prophet and so on. Similarly, it tells about David and his Zabur. The Holy Qur'an describes Jesus (unlike the Jews who accused him and depict him and his mother as immoral characters) as one of the greatest of the messengers and his mother as a chaste lady. It says he suffered great pains at the hands of oppressors or tyrants but he did not move from his primary mission to reform mankind.

About the Injil (Gospels), the Qur'an speaks very highly. The Holy Qur'an refers to the Christians and Jews as the "people of the Book" (Ahl al-Kitab) and a Muslim can live peacefully in a Christian or Jewish society. Also, a Muslim can eat and drink with them and marry the Jewish and Christian ladies without any difficulty.

In Islam, Muslims do not believe that any prophet has ever claimed to be a God or Son of God or a partner in the Godhead. Thus, the basic doctrine of Islam is the Concept of the Unity of God. The humble writer somewhere had stated:

"Wahdahoo La Sharika Lahoo" meaning, "He is One, He has no partner"

Chapter XIV

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

“Say, ‘O People of the Book! Come to a word equal between us and you-that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partner with Him, and that some of us take not others for Lords beside Allah.’ But if they turn away, then say, ‘Bear witness that we have submitted to God’.” [Qur’an 3:64]

This verse means that there are many things that both Islam and Christianity have in common. Both of them advocate monotheistic religion, belief in the Unity of God and the brotherhood of mankind. Belief in God, according to both of them implies recognizing Him as only One, associating no partner with Him, His being able to do all things and being the only one who deserves to be worshipped. These form the fundamental principles of both faiths.

Next to these fundamentals, is the belief in the Messengers of God and in the messages they carried, the message of good will which culminated in the scriptures. Islam and Christianity recognize Jesus Christ as a Messiah or a Messenger of God sent by God to deliver His message of good will to mankind. Islam recognizes Jesus Christ as one of the highly honored Prophets who performed unusual miracles with the permission of God but not further than that. Modern Christianity recognizes Christ much more than that. They regard him as the “son” of God, one of the three persons in the Trinity; God, and one who died on the cross so that he may redeem the sins of mankind. Islam denies the divinity of Jesus Christ and other doctrines based on it.

The initial Gospels had nothing to say about the deity of Jesus. It had everything to say about his Messiahship and what this meant for humanity. The doctrine of the deity of Jesus is not supported by the Old Testament or any other revealed book of God.

I do not know any modern Christian writer of repute who now emphasizes the deity of Jesus. As a matter of fact, many modern Christian divines have made some efforts at rethinking over the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ and have come to a conclusion along the lines of the statements in the Qur'an.

Modern knowledge is now beginning to lead the Christian laity to reconsider their teachings especially in those matters which have estranged them with the Muslims and put enmity between them. Today, it is misunderstandings and fallacies which is keeping their followers hostile to each other and one hopes that the relationship between the two will be improved. For today, any belief which readily inclines towards an assumption that magic and miracles was the only true explanation of the unusual and unexpected insists that there must be appropriate phenomena to mark the inclusion of divine into human affairs. Where such patterns of belief are still indulged by religious conservatism, they are bound to influence its interpretation and such religion will come into conflict with modern thought and development of science.

Such a religion will lose its hold over the living world and will become a dead weight of obsolete rites. Its rituals and ceremonies and even its prayers will not be better than a repetition of meaningless incantations and such a religion in modern times is bound to meet with decay and death. Such religion will fall into the hands of priest who will interpret it out of its social context and reduce it to a mere set of dogmas, observances, festivals, ceremonies and symbols. With great respect, the writer believes Christianity has been reduced to this level because it is this grotesque presentation of Christianity which justifies the Communist charge that religion is an opiate of the masses. Islam stands alone among religions which discountenance the reliance on tradition without argument. It demands that its votaries should undertake the investigation of the great works of their faith from epoch to epoch.

Imam Malik, a great Muslim scholar, has epitomized his view on the question in these fine words:

“I am a human being. I can be right and I can be wrong. Examine each one of my opinions, accept those which conform to Qur’an and Sunnah, reject those which do not conform to Qur’an and Sunnah.”

At a modern Churchman’s Congress held at Cambridge, August 1920, reported in the GRAPHIC LONDON, August 20, 1920, three highly placed Theologians, all avowed members of the Church of England denied the Godhead of Jesus. They are Dr. Rashdall, the Dean of Carlisle, Dr. Bethune-Baker, Lady Margaret, Professor of Divinity, the Rev. R. G. Persons of Rusholme.

“Christ was not divine but human” said Dr. Residual. “I do not for a moment suppose that Christ ever thought himself as God” said Dr, Bethune-Baker. “Jesus was a man, genuinely, utterly, completely, unreservedly human” said the Rev. Persons, “a Palestinian Jew who expressed himself through the conditions and limitations of life and though peculiar to his own time.”

Rev. H. D. A. Major, Principal of Ripon Hall, at one time said, “It should be clearly realized that Jesus did not claim in the Gospels to be the son of God in a physical sense such as the narratives of the Virgin birth suggest, nor did he claim to be the son of God in a metaphorical sense such as was required by the Nicene theology. He claimed to be the son of God in a moral sense in which all human beings are sons of God, as standing in a filial and moral relationship to God and capable of acting on those moral principles on which God acts”

The Dean of Carlisle, in one of his other lectures, also said, “The glory of Jesus naturally does not lie his being a God, because he cannot be a God, but his glory and whole triumph lies in being a man, a perfect man, a holy man in the words of the Holy Qur’an, a model for the people to whom he was sent.” It is worthy to note that these men are not people whose opinions can be disregarded, even by the most orthodox of all Christians. They are men of the highest intellectual attainment, men of brilliant achievements in the world of theology; all of them men who, as lecturers and fellows and professors, have instructed scores of Anglican divines before and since their ordination.

The Islamic notion of Jesus Christ is that he was a true servant and messenger of God, and one of His humble creatures; but never as a God or a Son. I cannot agree less with Rev. Robson when he says in his book Islamic Society and the West, “The doctrine of unity of God is so vital to Islam that anything which would seem to

weaken it is abhorred. The Qur'an does not tally with the New Testament. To a Muslim this simply means that the perversity of the Christians has led them to change their scriptures. So, Islam persists in giving a picture of Jesus very different from that which we find in the Gospels."

Jesus is not God and he has never claimed any divine partnership and it has been the Church identification of Jesus with God that has created many of the modern problems. The Christian leaders must accept that no Divine incarnation has ever taken place attended by angelic appearance and prodigies. The records of such demonstrations were largely human intensification and overstatement of realities in the age of ignorance and superstitions.

Today, there is a widespread desire for a realistic rather than an idealized representation of Jesus. The traditional portraiture no longer satisfies the modern mind. It is too baffling in its apparent contradictions in terms of our earthly existence. The God man of Christianity has become incredible to civilized man. Yet, it is not easy for the Christians to break with centuries of fallacious authoritative instructions and devote faith but for the sake of Jesus and humanity. The Christian leaders must take steps to reject the deity of Jesus, for better knowledge and understanding of the real Jesus and the significance of his Messianic message will restore the real Jesus to mankind as a great prophet as has not been seen for nearly two thousand years by the Christian world.

If this is done, then there can be unity between the Jewish faith, Islamic faith and the Christian faith and all members of these faiths can then unite together in establishing the unity of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Christians talk about the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, which is in fact, nothing more than the establishment of universal brotherhood of man.

I am sure the Muslims will welcome such a unity based on the principle of One God and the universal brotherhood of mankind.

Mr. Hugh J. Schonfield in his many works among which are, *The Passover Plot*, *Those Incredible Christians*, and *The Politics of God*, had not only demonstrated the fallacy of the deity of Jesus but has convincingly proved that Jesus Christ is not the founder of Modern Christianity and that the authors of the New Testament whose names are attached to them are not their authors and that the New Testament contains only forgery.

In his book, *Those Incredible Christians*, Dr. Schonfield aims to show that modern doctrines of Christianity is not identical with Jesus of Nazareth or his immediate followers had thought, but presents a deviation from their belief. Up to date, no Christian Theologian has challenged this contention. One hopes that the Christian leaders who now talk about Christian unity should read these books with an unbiased mind.

The Christian doctrine of deity of Jesus is inconsistent with the development in modern science. It is because of this that it has been predicted that religious belief will die out in Western Europe. Despite this, however, the majority of people in the Western world continue to express a feeling of need for religion without being able to identify themselves with Christianity. Admittedly, there is a great change in the thinking and approach of modern Christian scholars, but the earlier the Christian authorities reject the deity of Jesus, the better for humanity. The Christian leaders must accommodate themselves to the plain facts that Jesus was a man of his time. It in no way detracts from the greatness of Jesus nor from the Messianic part he played in the providence of God.

Islam believes in the certainty of the existence of God and this leads to the probability that He might send prophets bearing His guidance to mankind as well as to proclaim the unity of God as the basis of their messages. Islam contends that the unity of One God which was revealed long ago to man is the basis of human existence.

“Verily, We have sent thee with the Truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and as a Warner; and there is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent.” [Qur’an 35:24]

Therefore, Islam believes in the divine origin of all religions of the world and insists that the variety of forms and rituals which different religions presented, proceeded from the mercy of God, Who gave to each people in each particular time a form of religion suited to its needs and susceptible to development along with the progress of the human mind. Thus, the mere fact that different people have followed different laws and customs, and adopted different modes of worship at different times, is not fundamental but the belief in One God is their fundamental base.

Islam is not a creed which originated with Muhammad [PBUH]. Muhammad [PBUH] held that from Adam downwards, all genuine theistic religious teachers are commissioned by God to preach and practice the truth for which the Arabic word is 'Islam'. Islam in this sense means surrender to the will of God. The Qur'an says that Abraham was not a Jew. Similarly Christ was not a Christian. Their religion was the same primeval and eternal Islam, that is, the teaching of Unity and Oneness of God.

Muhammad [PBUH] proclaimed that religion had at all times and by the mouths of all the prophets been simply one. That in essence it has taught always the same thing, to hold God alone in His sovereignty, to submit to His will and obey His commandments as well as practicing good and keeping away from evil.

According to the Qur'an, living a virtuous life or doing good to others is the essential aim of religious belief.

"And everyone has a goal to which he turns his whole attention. Then vie with one another in good works. Wherever you be, Allah will bring you all together. Surely, Allah has the power to do all that He wills." [Qur'an 2:148]

Muhammad [PBUH], therefore, is always full of praise for other prophets and other scriptures, and whenever he mentions an essential element of religion, he says you will find it also in other scriptures. He calls other scriptures light and guidance in which the essentials of religion are given and enjoins on all Muslims to revere all prophets who have anywhere preached the doctrine of One God and social justice.

Islam accepts and responds to the demands of reality, that all reality is one, and therefore all truth should be one. Islam unites humanity to the fundamentals of one faith which has no sectarian element in it.

There is no doubt that Islam organizes society on a definite plan and creates its own conventions but it has the fullest appreciation of the lives of those who somehow have stood outside that system, but still have a hold on the essentials of the Unity of God.

Islam also believes in the unity of the human race. I have already said that the essential unity of all religions is a fundamental tenet of Islam and that this is the

natural consequence of the unity of God. Islam derives another corollary from the unity of God and that is the unity of humanity. The Qur'an has repeatedly asserted that all humanity is one and has been created from one being, and God breathed His soul into Adam.

Islam does not contemplate making humanity uniform in every respect. On the other hand, it asserts that linguistic and other differences in the modes of life in different nations are significant signs of God, but it is emphatic in the assertion that fundamentally all humanity is one and all nations should try to agree in fundamentals, the most essential of which is that there is only One God and all men and all creatures are His family. The brotherhood of man is a direct corollary from the unity of God. However, nations may differ in their customs and modes of living, there must be one objective morality for all. Double standards of morality, one for one's own nation and another for the foreigners, should not be tolerated. Nietzsche talked of master-morality and slave-morality and some people differentiate between the masculine and the feminine moral codes. Islam emphatically lays down that as all humanity is one, its moral code also must be one. The unity of morality follows from the unity of humanity, and the unity of humanity follows from the unity of God.

Thus, the Islamic concepts of liberty, fraternity and equality are unique. Islam, says, that all men are the creatures of One God, they are all equal. Divisions of color, class, race or territory are sheer illusions; and ideologies, which are based on such distinctions, are the greatest menace on earth. Humanity is one single family of God, there can be no sanction for these barriers. Men are one and not Bourgeois or Proletariat, White or Black, Aryan or Non-Aryan, Occidental or Oriental.

Islam gives the revolutionary concept of the unity of mankind and the equality of human beings. Therefore, Islam is based on the universal brotherhood of man and practices universal brotherhood of man.

Universal brotherhood of man in Islam has been a familiar thing about which so much has been written. But the importance of this concept is of a great value as it is the only solution to national and international problems. This is said to be an age of freedom and restoring unto every man his dignity. But despite all the phenomenal changes in the political stage of the world, our age is still unable to think in terms of human dignity and this is the dark specter of social concern of our time. For, despite man's conquest of space and mastery over the forces of nature; man has not been able to rid himself of the primeval prejudice of race and color. The stark reality of our time has brought in its trail a great desolation and frustration as we find

ourselves face to face with chaos, wars, the miserable conditions of living of masses of mankind and the exploitation of one nation by another. This leads to selfishness, fear, hatred; class, tribe and race discrimination and subsequently the division of man against man is the order of the day, even in the so-called Socialist countries.

All these hold a constant threat to the world peace. Islam's greatest contribution to mankind was the abolition and extinction of all those who held a constant threat to world peace. Islam's greatest contribution to mankind was the abolition and extinction of distinction based on race and color, The Holy Qur'an declared:

"Mankind were one community, then they differed among themselves, so Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners....." [Qur'an 2:213]

"O ye people! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul and of its kind created its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women;...". [Qur'an 4:1]

"O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and we have made you tribes and sub-tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All- Aware." [Qur'an 49:13]

From the above verses, it is clear that the whole of humanity from its diverse races, was originally one, deriving its existence from One Creator and that all barriers that separate humanity by race and color must vanish and the superiority of a person be judged by his conduct only.

As a matter of historical fact, Islam came into existence as a unifying force between peoples of diverse races, color and nationality. Islam transformed these people, steeped in ignorance and barbarity into noble souls par excellence and converted uneducated and uncultured people into masters of all sciences, temporal as well as spiritual.

Islam has laid down various principles for the formation of ideal societies and these rest on the principle that all men are equally sprung up from the same parents and are therefore brothers. A good Muslim considers himself a fusion of all races.

Anyone who enters into the fold of Islam becomes part and parcel of this fraternity, forgetting all pride and prejudice. On the basis of this principle, Islam seeks to build an intellectual, moral, ideological and international society, as against the existing tribal, racial linguistic and national societies, which have turned the world into a racio-color holocaust.

The Islamic idea that Allah created all men equal and free is the strongest foundation of the consciousness of social responsibility capable of building up a nation. The concept of unity and the spirit of universality form the core of Islam. Islam is one body, of which all Islamic peoples are part and parcel, wherever they may be. The welfare of every single Muslim individual and group is the vital concern of the whole body.

These leveling forces of Islam have demolished all barriers of caste, color and descent. Islam, thus, established a true universal brotherhood and delivered a deathblow to all ideas of aggressive nationalism, unjust color and caste prejudices, usury and blood-fed capitalism.

Islam is the religion of peace, brotherhood, toleration, sympathy for the unfortunate and the universal co-operation of all mankind for increasing the sum total of general human happiness. If there is any one religion in the world which has obviously liquidated racialism, that one religion is Islam. Thus, there is no distinction between man and man on account of mere accident of birth in a particular family, particular profession, particular race or particular country; and that men are equals in their capacity as human beings.

Muslims are distinguished from each other, not by reason of birth or any other factor not connected with their personalities, but only by their fear of God, their good deeds, their moral and intellectual qualities.

Islamic concept of liberty, fraternity and equality are far more real and progressive if properly understood and applied than anything the capitalist and the Communist world has ever produced. The social and political structures of the Capitalist and Communist worlds are crumbling. Shall we Muslims take the pattern of the house that we want to build for the new world from the structures that are sagging because they violated eternal laws, or shall we go back to the Qur'an-the book that does not wear out? My answer is that we shall go back to the Qur'an.

It is to the Holy Book which has never been altered at the hands either of its friend or its enemies, by either the learned or the unlettered, the book that time does not wear out but which remains just as it was revealed by God to His Apostle, the last of all the Prophets. It is to this pure source that the Muslims will return. As they drink directly from this Holy Book, they will not fail to be re-invigorated for it possesses the quality of continuous life. It yields healthy and life sustaining fruit in all ages. What miraculous strength is hidden in this religion? What inner power of persuasion is blended in it? From what depths of the human soul its appeal evokes a stirring response? Indeed, Islam is a great believer in the continuity of human culture and the essential unity of its fundamentals.

In no previous century, of which man has records, have there been so many indications of a change; chiefly, it has signaled the beginning of the space age. Man has been able to take to the air as a new environment of his movement and activities both to travel around his planet with increasing speed and facility and to eject himself beyond its pull to start to explore the solar system. He has landed on the alien surface of the Moon several times and his controlled instruments have reached Venus and Mars. His devices are revealing more and more of the universe, while in his world he can transmit information about events so that they can be seen and heard almost instantaneously in any part of the world. His penetration is extending to the beds of the seas and deep into the crust of the earth. He is probing into the basic facts of life and into his own unconscious.

This has been a century of so many remarkable advances in science, technology and medicine, that the conditions of existence have been altering with extraordinary rapidity. But had there been an inner wisdom commensurate with these other achievements, this could have been one of the most fruitful centuries in promoting the general good of mankind.

In fact, much good has been done in many ways. There has been a substantial enrichment and improvement of the human lot. Colonialism is on the way out and many countries have development plans. Many countries know that they have responsibilities for economic changes. The task of the Government is not only that of proclaiming an ideal, it exercises its functions through democratic process in examining the reality and effectiveness of those policies which control the material life of man. Indeed, many governments have made a positive contribution to the welfare of their subjects. But the basic world problems appear to be beyond solution, namely, racial inequality-Jews in Europe, the state of Israel and the Arab world, the Black problem in the states, colonialism and poverty of the majority of mankind while few live in luxury and license.

In the political thought, there is a dearth of new imagination and enterprise. Those political doctrines that personified the state with its system to create group minds, took away correspondingly the desire for personal commitment and fostered an insidious and subtle invasion of human liberty. These doctrines consequently have led to increased doubt and uncertainty, frustrations and a sense of impotence of mankind and the worst of all in this age, great fear, fear of the third world war with the possibilities of using atomic weapons. Yet, fortunately the human spirit is not easily quelled and tyranny whether blatant or elaborately concealed, has never been able to have things all its own way. Revolt can be suppressed but not eliminated.

Many modern rulers must still be schooled in liberty and in the essentials of human dignity. These enduring needs of mankind can never be satisfied by a philosophy based on human inequality and asserting that a race of masters should organize a subservient world.

Individuals and minority groups have never ceased to be aware that the power-structure of society is contrary to their real interests and well-being and has given rise to a world order in which conflict predominates with the consequent threat that political folly may go too far and bring upon mankind such ruin and disaster that a substantial part of the population will be extinguished and the survivors reduced to almost insupportable misery. They protest and demonstrate and break out into violence, especially the young; but they are like sheep without a shepherd who can do little more than bleat their unhappiness in ineffective and superficial slogans. They still expect that their clamor will force the powers-that be to think and act differently. Thus, relieving themselves of the obligation to harness their own energies to the drudgery of methodical reconstruction.

The world leaders are fearful of what tomorrow will bring. This desperately critical and chaotic hour when the entire world is engulfed with a spirit of revolution, millions of men and women are looking for a faith to follow and a cause to which they can give themselves with total commitment.

It is the hour of opportunity for those who are seeking to bring peace and fulfillment to our fragmented and frustrated world. But an opportunity is only an opportunity, a chance is only a chance. What counts is what one is able to make of it.

This is a day of crime, urban violence, racial strife and destructive demonstrations. All values are unsettled; all norms are broken. Mental, moral, aesthetic and social anarchy reigns. Might is right and the law of jungle prevails everywhere. The facts are before us as we look about us and hear the reports. Newspaper headlines tell the story.

Man has become a lowly creature of discouragement and defeat. There is racial discord, corruption in government, dishonesty in business and labor, and moral problems. There are millions of alcoholics all over the world. Every year the number increases. Over half the hospital beds in developed nations are filled with the mentally ill. Abortions are the order of the day. Yet many abortions end in death. Suicide is the number two killer of teenagers in developed countries. These are all symptoms of a sick world.

There is a crisis on the university campus - the seat of learning. The campus machine has failed. It could not give students the personal relationship which make life meaningful.

There can only be pain and guilt and despair here in this world. The fear of death and the unknown is far less terrifying than the prospect of the unbearable frustration, futility and hopelessness of continued existence.

Man is a stick fly taking a dizzy ride on it. The basic fact about human experience is not that it is a tragedy, but that it is a bore. It is not that it is predominantly painful, but that it is lacking in any sense.

Recognizing the danger of universal chaos, many sincere leaders in government and social service are attempting to extinguish the fire through poverty programs and improved industrial conditions. But, the basic problems of racial inequality, social injustice, illiteracy, poverty and war seem to be beyond solution. There is the current misunderstanding and fear which pits man against man, nation against nation, race against race.

Individuals make up society, and society cannot be changed until individuals are changed. Selfishness, prejudice, hate, greed and lust are all individual problems which become the problems of collective man and society as a whole.

The utopian dreams of political thinkers are but a prophetic voicing of a longing for a change in individuals and to establish a nation where love and universal brotherhood of man will be the order of the day. The formation of the United Nations and other international agencies is aimed at bringing international understanding but man is desolated with insistent even graver world crises. All attempts at internationalism merely reflect the recognition of the need to have a united world and the need for man to have something which can command the allegiance of all humanity without distinction or discrimination. No political thinker can give effective solutions. It is only a monotheist religion based on universal brotherhood of man that can provide this human need.

The problem of our age at present is that, in the Western world, technological invention is far outstripping moral elevation. The soul has to soar as well as the rocket. Many without a religion cannot escape from this testing time, for religion not only converts the individual but changes society. It establishes standards of purity and hygiene, provides industry, elevates womanhood, restrains anti-social customs, abolishes cannibalism, human sacrifice and cruelty and organizes famine relief.

A religious belief which readily inclines towards an assumption that magic and miracles was the true explanation of the unusual and unexpected, and even insisted that there must be appropriate phenomena to mark the intrusion of the Divine into human affairs are being rejected by the modern man. Yet, where such patterns of belief are still endorsed by religious conservatism, they are leads to the conflict between religion and science. Firmer convictions, values and beliefs are in the melting pot. They are being challenged and tested to determine their worth and validity. There is a growing unwillingness to take anything for granted, and things once regarded as fixed and settled are now being ruthlessly scrutinized and frequently rejected. Those who are sentient, whether intelligently or instinctively, realize that we have to adjust to every great change and therefore we have to free ourselves from hidebound positions and examine every proposition afresh.

However, the traditionalists are alarmed and denounce the liberties that are being taken with their cherished ideas. Those who throw-off the yoke will come to no good. Defiantly, they cry out against new ways and new thinking and raise the flag of rally to the forces of conservatism and conformity.

This led to a decline of faith, not only in politics but in the teachings and practice of some organized religions. Religion, especially Christianity, has seemed too much a part of the existing social order, whose policies it has so often supported or come to

terms with, that in its traditional formulation, it is now viewed with disenchantment. As a consequence, millions are now in a spiritual vacuum, many have received a fresh impulse towards soul-experiences, including the psychedelic, which they are trying to acquire outside the churches, chapels and temples.

Many people are questing for an earthly incarnation of the free spirit of man not only in individuals but also in groups. It is higher certainty, the wider comprehension, the fuller self-development and the consciousness of the fundamental oneness of all things at which they aim and by which they are invested with that dignity of which the enslaving spirit that now prevails would seek to deprive them.

In developed parts of the world, there has been a proliferation of community enterprises in the 20th Century because of unnatural character and conditions of modern life, its false values, its emphasis of the artificial, its estrangement and conflicts. The community group sees itself not only as a protest, but as a rectification, a return to the grass roots of living, a reassertion of the true basis on which a harmonious and peaceful world order must be erected. It is a condemnation of the states, recognizing that there is no possibility of any real world community or even national community, under predominant centralized governmental control. It stresses that where organization becomes too comprehensive and remote, essential fellowship, the sense of belonging, the self-fulfillment of personal participation is destroyed.

Only religion can bring about world unity of all races and climes. Peoples, tongues and nations will mingle their blood and manifest a common love of humanity. Religious unity rests upon the feelings of each member that they belong together. This is the type of union which exists between friends, and its original focus in human society is the family or the kinship group. Such groups cooperate, of course, but their cooperation is not based on a calculation of interest. It has a sacramental character because it expresses the sense of "fellowship or brotherhood", the consciousness of inner, emotional unity. Such a group is not unified because it cooperates, it cooperates because it is already unified.

The brotherhood of man might be realizable if all men sincerely believed that they were created by the same One God and acted accordingly.

How can we create an inner spiritual unity that is not exclusive and universal? Can there be found a comprehensive ideology to unite mankind, which permits and welcomes diversity within the kinship and does not have to act coercively? In my view, there is no such political idea, only religion can provide the answer. Monotheist religion is designed to foster and forward a universalist outlook by achieving an inner unity and community without which any outward unification cannot long endure. But some monotheist religions have been playing obsolete doctrines while our world is aflame. A world that is threatening to disintegrate before our eyes is in need of the hope of a spiritual revolution which only Allah Himself is able to lead. Deep down in man's hearts we know we have a glorious purpose to fulfil.

There are all kinds of moral detergents but all to no avail. Resolutions, reforms, social adjustment and therapeutic psychology all have failed to produce an improved man.

But, we can eliminate as out of the question that our world is on the brink of some overwhelming catastrophe. Looking back with informed judgment, it is very clear that much that was expected to happen did not materialize. Many of the prognostications were wildly fantastic. Some recognize the need for a religious revival but emphasize summoning Divine intervention to accomplish by supernatural happenings what it was the business of the designated human agency to achieve. This representation provided a self-satisfying excuse for inadequacy of commitment. God could do everything and therefore, he should do it all.

The Muslims and Christians still take comfort in leaving things to God. This leads to apathy, complacency and blocks creative initiative. Men inclined to opt out of responsibility, hug their chairs and generally accept subservience and reconcile to the inevitable.

The great errors of the previous eschatological age was that people were gazing up into the skies or seeking some abnormal leadership instead of enlisting the resources which would illuminate and fortify their own resolve.

It has now dawned on human minds that life is not so simple an affair as it used to be even in the recent past. Its complexities are so perplexing and its intricacies so puzzling, that it may well be described as "a riddle wrapped in mystery inside an enigma". Economics, politics, ethics and religion are not so many watertight

compartments but are the different facets of a social order. They act, interact and react upon one another and thus evolve a cultural pattern. Any maladjustment anywhere betrays itself in the birth of some evil or other.

The totalitarian doctrine of all hues and colors have been breathless endeavors to create cosmos out of chaos. But the paradise of social peace continues to elude the grasp of the political theorists. Fascism and Nazism offer a hectic career and have been eaten up by morsels of their own creation. They possessed great social dynamics. But they lacked the stabilizing force of religion which creates inward earnestness and an instinct for self-mastery and thus ensues a lasting vitality. Communism has no doubt, survived the war crisis with the skin of its teeth. This only establishes its superiority over the rival social gospels of the Italians and German brand. But its survival value is still highly problematical. Its vengeful denial of supernaturalism and its downright earth-rottedness are its fatal handicaps. All this merely shows its central imperfections as a complete and comprehensive program of life. Godless ideologies carry in them their own nemesis. They miss the inner life of man which is the fountain-head of his social activities. It means that life's golden tree is denied of its nourishing sap, consequently it decays and dies out.

Thus, the irreligious ideologies accomplish precious little beyond launching a psychic onslaught on frustrated humanity. They are sadly inadequate to actualize human ambition and emotion. They evoke no echo or a resonant note in our soul. They do not, because they cannot transmute a pure intellectual concept into a living vibrant idea. Their sanctions are not sanctities. They envisage just some advance, but no genuine progress. They flog the social instincts seated in human hearts into some convenient form to achieve certain sordid ends.

Therefore, only religion based on the unity of God and the universal brotherhood of man can meet the challenge of the modern age. Islam is such a religion. It does so by giving a working and workable code of conduct, a demonstrable way of thinking and a unique blue-print for the structure and growth of society. It satisfies the soul of saint as well as the spirit of a scholar.

I believe that if Christians return to history and not Jesus of mythology, the Christians can then work in harmony with the Muslims to save mankind from the present chaos.

