

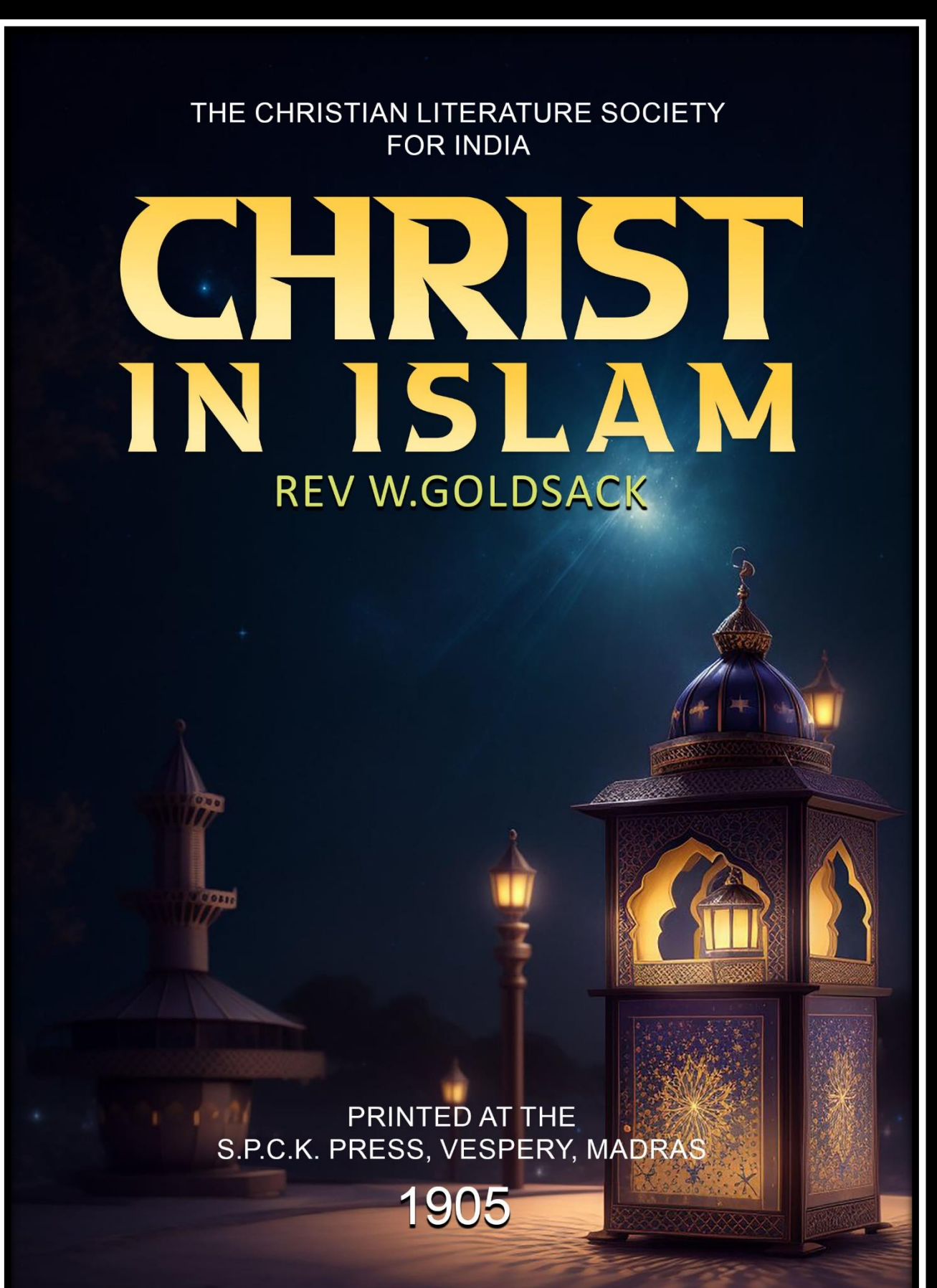
THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY
FOR INDIA

CHRIST IN ISLAM

REV W.GOLDSACK

PRINTED AT THE
S.P.C.K. PRESS, VESPERY, MADRAS

1905



CHRIST IN ISLAM

THE TESTIMONY OF THE QUR'AN TO CHRIST

إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ

The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah,
and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him.

*Qur'anic references were edited to reflect the verse numbers used in modern
translations of the Qur'an.*

Also, some footnotes were edited to give additional support for the text.



BY THE
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1871–1957

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LONDON, MADRAS AND COLOMBO

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¹ _Qur'an an-Nisa' 4:171.

CHRIST IN ISLAM

INTRODUCTION

ENDLESS praise be to the one only God, the Great and the Merciful. Who through His messengers the Prophets has revealed His will to man, and in his word pointed the way of eternal life.

In this little book we purpose to select one from amongst all the prophets, namely, Jesus Christ, and show from the Qur'an and the Traditions the position which the Prophet of Nazareth occupies in Islam. Our Muslim brethren often speak of 'Isa Ruh Ullah,' yet but few of them have any idea of the high position which is accorded Him in both the Qur'an and the Traditions. For this reason, we purpose here to show from the authorities of Islam itself the high testimony, which is borne to Christ by these books, and to point out the duty of all true Muslims with respect to the same. The various high titles given to Christ in the Qur'an, no less than the works there ascribed to Him, have been predicated of no other prophet, and they place Him high above all others. Thus, Jesus Christ is called in the Qur'an, 'The Word of God,' 'A Spirit from Him (God),' 'The Messiah,' etc., titles which have been given to no other, and which constitute a claim on our attention to this important subject. Let us then, freeing our minds from all prejudice and preconceived notions, examine the testimony of the Qur'an and the Traditions upon this important matter.

CHAPTER I

CHRIST THE ISRAELITE

In the first place we notice that *the Jewish race in which Jesus Christ was born was, according to the Qur'an, exalted above all the other nations of the Earth.*

Thus in Sura Baqarah (2), verse 47, it is written:

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

"O, Children of Israel, remember the favour wherewith we have favoured thee, and preferred thee above all the nations." From this verse it is clear that whoever may be given the proud title 'Prince of the Prophets' must be born in the line of Israel, for Imam Razi says that the word الْعَالَمِينَ means 'every existing being besides the Creator.' Who, then, so worthy of the title as the Israelite Jesus, Son of Mary, whom the Qur'an calls "The Word of God' and 'A Spirit from Him?"

Again in Sura Ankabut (29), verse 27, we read:—

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ

"We gave him (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and we placed among his descendants the gift of prophecy and the Scriptures." It is well known that the long line of prophets referred to in the Qur'an were mostly descended from Isaac and not from Ishmael, and the reason is not far to seek, for Isaac, according to both Bible and Qur'an, was the 'Son of Promise,' a 'Gift' from God. Ishmael, on the other hand, as we learn from the Tourat, was the son of the bond-maid Hagar, and is, consequently, nowhere in the Qur'an spoken of as a 'Gift' from God. On the contrary, the verse quoted above abundantly proves that in the line of Isaac God placed prophecy and the Scriptures. The Qur'an thus agrees with the Tourat which clearly states that God said to Isaac, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 26:4). Where, we would ask our Muslim friends, is it stated either in the Qur'an or the Bible *in connection with Ishmael* that God

would place in the descendants of Abraham the gift of prophecy? Does not the verse of the Qur'an quoted above show at the very outset of our study that it is in the Bani Israel, that is, the line of Isaac, that the world would be blessed, and is it not abundantly clear that Jesus Christ, Son of Mary, was born in that line? Thus the very nationality of Jesus places him far above Muhammad and every other descendant of Ishmael; and when, in conjunction with this fact, we remember the high titles given to the Messiah in other places of the Qur'an, we see how vastly His dignity exceeds that of all other prophets.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

In the next place we remark that one of the commonest names given to the Messiah in the Qur'an is 'Jesus, Son of Mary' Thus in Sura Ali 'Imran (3), verse 45, we read: —

اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ

“His name, the Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary.” Now a careful study of the Qur'an will show that, not only does it place the Bani Israel, the tribe in which Christ was born, above all the nations of the earth, but it further states that *God has chosen Mary the mother of Jesus above all other women*. Thus, in Sura Imran (3), verse 42, we read: —

يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ

“O, Mary, verily God hath chosen thee and purified thee, and hath chosen thee above all the women of the earth.” Does this passage not clearly signify that her son Jesus was to be the greatest prophet? How beautifully it harmonizes with God's promise to Isaac, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed!” If, as our Muslim friends sometimes say, Muhammad is the last and greatest prophet, would not such language as “God hath chosen thee above all the women of the world” be addressed, not to Mary, but to Amina, the mother of Muhammad? What, then, we proceed to ask, is the meaning of the name 'Jesus' given to Christ in the Qur'an? The answer to this question may be found in the Injil for there (Matthew 1:21) it is stated that the meaning of the word 'Jesus' is 'Saviour': “Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.” “We Muslims also believe in Jesus,” is a reply which we often hear from our Muhammadan brethren when we press upon them the claims of Christ; but do they ever stop to consider the meaning of this name which they themselves apply to Him? And does the Muhammadan reader of this little book, when he reads his Qur'an and finds there the wonderful account of the

miraculous birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary, never stop to think what is involved in that miraculous birth? Thus in Sura Mariyam (19), verses 19-22, it is written: —

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي
بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّئْ وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ
أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا فَمَحَلَّتْهُ

“He (Gabriel) answered, Verily, I am the messenger of thy Lord to give thee a holy son. She (Mary) said, How shall I have a son, seeing a man hath not touched me, and I am no harlot? (Gabriel) replied, so (shall it be): Thy Lord saith, this is easy with me; and that we may ordain him for a sign unto men and a mercy from us; for it is a thing which is decreed. Wherefore she conceived him.”

No other prophet has been thus miraculously born into the world. Adam, it is true, was created without father or mother. Such an act of creation was necessary in the beginning of the world; but here we see (in the case of Jesus) God interrupting the course of nature, and over-riding the very laws of procreation which He had Himself established, in order that Christ might thus have a virgin birth. Surely such an act could not have been meaningless; rather we know that it points to the great fact that Jesus Christ held a special relationship to the Deity which is shared by no other prophet. In the Injil the nature of this relationship is clearly seen in the account of the birth of Jesus given there. Thus we read that the angel Gabriel came to Mary and said, “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:31-32). Here, then, we see that because of His miraculous birth, Jesus is given the high title ‘Son of God.’ This is manifestly a philosophical term used to describe a special relationship, even as is the term ‘Word of God’ used of Jesus in the Qur’an. Neither term can be taken in its bare literal sense. The idea of a carnal sonship is out of the question; yet it is here that both Muhammad himself and most of those who call themselves his followers fall into grave error. A careful study of the Qur’an will show that Muhammad thought the Christian doctrine of

the Divine Sonship of Christ involved a carnal relationship. Thus, in Sura Anam (6), verse 101, we read: —

بَدِيعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَتَى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ

“He is the Maker of heaven and earth. How should He have issue, since he hath no wife.” And again, in Sura Al-Mu’minun (23), verse 91, it is written:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ

“God hath not begotten issue.” Of like kind is a book which we have seen, written by a Bengali Muhammadan, in which the writer labours through many pages to prove that ‘Christ is not the carnal Son of God.’ But no Christian says He is; for the doctrine of a carnal sonship is as abhorrent to Christians as to the followers of Islam. Doubtless Muhammad’s great objection to the sonship of Christ was based upon the belief that it detracted from the unity of God. Yet, rightly understood, it does not do so; and Christians believe that God is one quite as strongly as do Muhammadans. The belief that God can have sons and daughters is a heathen one, and is referred to in the Qur’an, where it is said that some of the Arabs attributed daughters to God.

It is a striking fact that, in describing the sonship of Christ, Christian writers never use the term ‘ولد’ (*walad*), which always denotes a physical relationship; but the term ‘ابن’ (*ibn*), which is often used in Arabic in a spiritual and metaphysical sense, is invariably used. Muhammad, in the verses quoted above, denies that God can have a son (*walad*); yet when he sets himself to define the Christian belief, he, with exceptional honesty, uses the word ‘*ibn*’. Thus, in Sura At-Taubah (9), verse 30, we read: —

وَقَالَتِ الْنَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ

“The Christians call Christ the son (*ibn*) of God.” The followers of Jesus justly ask, If it be not sin to call Him ‘Ruh Ullah’ (the Spirit of God), why should it be counted sin to call him ‘Ibn Ullah’ (the Son of God)?

Not only does the Qur’an describe *Christ’s birth as miraculous*, but it further states that *He is made a "sign to all creatures."* Thus in Sura Al-Anbiyah' (21), verse 91, we read:—

وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَا آيَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“We ordained her (Mary) and her son for a sign unto all creatures.” If our Muslim brethren would rid their minds of the idea of a carnal sonship as applied to Christ, much of their difficulty with regard to the term ‘Son of God’ would disappear. Every candid reader of the Qur’an and the Traditions must admit that these books at least hint at a special relationship between Christ and God the Father such as exists between no other prophet and the Supreme. Thus, for example, in the *Mishkat al Masabih* it is related that, "Every child of Adam is touched by Satan the day his mother is delivered of him with the exception of Mary and her son." ² Does not this tradition raise Christ high above all others; and does it not, if true, explain why Mary and her son were made a "sign unto all creatures"?

Some Muslims admit the Divine sonship of Christ but contend that “all holy persons are sons of God.” This is, in a sense, true; but it is not the whole truth; for the Bible distinctly declares that the sonship of Christ is different from the sonship of other believers. Thus, Jesus is called in the Gospel the ‘only begotten Son’ of God, to indicate that He stands in a special relation to God the Father such as can be predicated of no other person. Any careful perusal of the Gospel will convince the unprejudiced reader of this fact. Thus, when Jesus Christ asked His disciples, “Whom say ye that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ the son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven’” (Matthew 16:15-17). Where, we ask, would be the point of Christ’s reply if He were the son only in the sense in which all believers are sons of God? Moreover, we know from the Gospel that the Jews sought to kill Jesus for the very reason that, “He called Himself the Son of God, thus making Himself equal with God” (John 5:11). Manifestly, then, the sonship of Jesus, expressed by the term, ‘only begotten Son’ is different from and superior to the sonship of other believers. It is strange that, with the clear testimony of the Gospel before them, so many Muslim writers should have been at pains to try and prove that the sonship of Christ is precisely the same as that

² See also, *Al-Hadis*, An English Translation and Commentary of *Mishkat-ul-Masabih* With Arabic Text, Al-Haj Maulana Fazul Karim, Vol 4, Chapter 43, Sec 2415-Prophets, No 25, page 220, “Same reported that the Messenger of Allah said: As for every son of Adam, the devil attacks with his two fingers his two sides except Jesus, son of Mary. He went to attack him, but he attacked the membrane covering him.”. See also, *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter on the Virtues, [Book 43, Hadith 191](#), and [Book 43, Hadith No 5838](#). See also, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, [Book 60, Hadith No. 3431](#).

of other believers. But does not the miraculous birth of Christ, as recorded in the Qur'an, suggest the existence of some special relation between Christ and God the Father such as can be predicated of no other? This truth, dimly hinted at in the Qur'an, is clearly taught in the Gospel where Jesus is called 'the only begotten Son' of God. The Qur'an records no such miraculous birth of any other prophet, and thus, in this respect—the birth of Christ—agrees with the Gospel in exalting Him high above the other prophets of God.

CHAPTER III

JESUS THE PROMISED MESSIAH

In the third place we notice that Jesus, Son of Mary, is further called in the Qur'an 'The Messiah' Thus in Sura Ali 'Imran (3), verse 45, it is written:

اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ

“His name, the Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary.” Again we would ask the Muhammadan reader, who so often repeats this sentence, What does it mean? How is it that of Jesus alone these weighty words are used in the Qur'an; that He alone is called 'The Messiah'? 'Messiah' means 'anointed,' and we have already shown that 'Jesus' means, 'Savior;' thus the title 'Jesus Christ' means 'Anointed Savior.' Not even of Muhammad himself are such high terms used in the Qur'an; on the contrary, he says of himself, "I am no more than a preacher" (Sura Al-Ankabut 29:50). If the reader of this little book will take the trouble to study carefully the Tourat and the Zabur, he will find that in these books there are many prophecies referring to the Messiah—the Savior of the world. Many of these prophecies indicate that the Messiah would be far exalted above all other prophets: in other words that He would be divine. Thus, for example, in the Zabur (Psalms 110:1), the prophet David in prophesying of the Messiah says, "The Lord saith unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Here we find the prophet David in the Zabur calling the Messiah his Lord, thus clearly indicating that the Messiah was super-human and divine. It is worthy of notice here that Jesus Himself applied this passage to the Messiah and used it in order to prove His own divinity. Thus, in Matthew 22: 41-45, we read, "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question saying, what think ye of the Messiah? Whose son, is he? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, how then doth David in the spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord saith unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he, his son?" Again, in the book of the prophet Isaiah (7:14) it is written concerning the Messiah, "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign, Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" *i.e.*, 'God with us.' Many passages in the Zahur and the books of the prophets clearly indicate

that the Messiah would be Prophet, Priest and King, and that he would, in some mysterious way, die for the sins of the people. Thus, for example, in Isaiah 53:5-6 it is written, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Now, these prophecies relating to the Messiah are found in the *Jewish* scriptures, in spite of the fact that the Jews did not acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah who was promised. Thus, we have strong proof that these passages which prove his divinity could not have been inserted by Christians, whilst they would certainly not be inserted by Jews. They must, therefore, be accepted, as indeed they are, as the words of God, which He revealed to His servants the prophets. As a matter of fact, the Jews themselves, from a perusal of these and similar passages in their scriptures, formed very high conceptions of the supreme dignity and superiority of the Messiah over all other prophets. Thus, in the Talmud and other Jewish traditional works, the Messiah is spoken of as the "King sent from heaven," "Superior to Moses and higher than the angels." Whilst in the Book of Enoch the Messiah is even described as the "Son of God." The Psalms of Solomon describe Him as "Free from sin," and give Him such high titles as "Lord," "Righteous King," etc.³ These apocryphal works of the Jews spoke further of the pre-mundane existence of the Messiah and looked forward to His final advent as the Judge of mankind. Thus, we see that the Jews themselves rightly understood their scriptures to point to the supreme greatness of Him who was to come as the Messiah. The Qur'an again and again speaks of Jesus as the 'Messiah,' and thus tacitly admits his superiority over all other prophets. It gives Him the title but fails to give any reason for the honor thus put upon Jesus; but in the Bible we learn more fully who this great one was who was thus honored by God.

Even Muhammadan commentators of the Qur'an have to admit that this high title has been given to none other, and they try in various ways to escape from the natural inference which the words suggest. Thus one, quoted by Razi, says Jesus was given the title 'Messiah,' because "He was kept clear from the taint of sin." (As none others have been given the title, does it not follow that they are

³ *Septuagint, Psalms of Solomon 17:36.*

sinner?) Another, Abu Amr ihn Al Ala, says that the word 'Messiah' means 'King,' whilst Baizawi says he was called the Messiah as "possessed of a spirit proceeding from the Almighty not mediately, but direct, both as to origin and essence." Thus we see that candid Muhammadan expositors admit the great excellence of Jesus and point to Him as the one prophet to be given the high title 'Messiah. 'The high place which the Qur'an thus gives to Jesus, is fully borne testimony to by the Gospel, for there it is written, "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him (Messiah), and gave Him the name which is above every name."

CHAPTER IV

CHRIST THE WORD OF GOD

In the fourth place we notice that Jesus the Messiah is called in the Qur'an the 'Word of God.' Thus, in Sura An-Nisa' (4:171), we read: —

إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ

“Verily the Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary, is the Apostle of God and His Word which He conveyed into Mary.” Muhammadan commentators are at a loss to explain this significant passage which so clearly places Jesus Christ far above all other prophets; but we have only to compare this title of Christ with the titles which have been given by Muslims to other prophets in order to understand how high He stands above them. Thus, Adam is called Safi Ullah, the chosen of God: Noah Nabi Ullah, the Prophet of God: Abraham Khalil Ullah, the Friend of God: Moses Kalim Ullah, the Speaker with God; and Muhammad Rasul Ullah, the Messenger of God. All these titles can be applied to weak erring men like ourselves, but Christ is called in the Qur'an the 'Word of God,' a title which clearly hints at some special relationship between Him and the Father.

Muslim writers have tried in various ways to evade the clear inference which these words suggest, namely, that Jesus is divine. Thus Imam Razi, followed by some modern writers, would have us believe that the term 'Word of God' means no more than that, 'Jesus was created by the command or word of God.' But Adam was created by the command of God, yet what Muslim would dare to call Adam the 'Word of God'? Moreover, in the verse from the Qur'an, which we have quoted above, it is distinctly stated that Jesus was the word of God “which He conveyed into Mary.” This verse alone is sufficient to refute the fanciful and ungrounded interpretation which is suggested by Imam Razi: for it distinctly shows that the 'Word' was something which existed previous to its entrance into Mary. The fact is that this title of the Lord Jesus can only be understood by a reference to the Gospel wherein it is clearly stated that Jesus the Word of God is divine and existed with God before His birth into the world. Thus, in John 1:1 it is written, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we

beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Muhammadan tradition also furnishes its quota of testimony, for in the Mishkat Al Masabih, Book I, Chap. IV, part 3, we read, “He (Jesus) was amongst the spirits; we sent Him into Mary.”⁴ A tradition by Ahmad in the same book even tells us that the spirit of Christ entered Mary by her mouth! We may well afford to dispense with the evidence of such traditions; but they, at least, show us that *Muhammadan belief has pictured Christ an existing previous to His incarnation*. Both the Bible and the Qur’an speak of Jesus as the ‘Word of God’ and thus clearly differentiate Him from all other prophets and point to a special relationship which exists between Him and God the Father.

It is further worthy of notice in this connection that the Arabic word used in the Qur’an to denote the ‘Word’ of God as applied to the Bible, is quite a different one from that used of Jesus Christ. Thus, in Sura Al-Baqarah (2), verse 75, we read: —

كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ

“A part of them heard the word (Kalam) of God.” Here the word ‘Kalam’ is used of the scriptures of God; but the Qur’anic word for the ‘Word’ of God as applied to Christ is ‘Kalimat’ never Kalam. Thus, for example, in Ali 'Imran (3), verse 45, we read: —

يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ

“O Mary, verily God sendeth thee good tidings of the word (Kalimat) from Himself.” Yet these commentators would ask us to believe that the high title ‘Word of God’ simply means that ‘Christ was created by the command or word of God. ‘Further, in the verse from the Qur’an which we have quoted, Christ is called ‘His Word,’ that is ‘God’s word.’ The Arabic shows that it means ‘The Word of God’ not merely ‘a Word of God.’ (كَلِمَةٌ مِّنْ كَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ not كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ) Thus we see that Jesus is *the* word or expression of God, so that by Him alone can we

⁴ See also, *Al-Hadis*, An English Translation and Commentary of Mishkat-Ul-Masabih With Arabic Text, Al-Haj Maulana Fazul Karim, Vol 3, Chapter 32, Sec 1542 - Pre-Destination, No 457w, page 120. “Obai-b-Ka’ab reported ... Jesus, son of Mary who was among those souls. He sent him to Mary (peace be upon her). It has also been narrated from Obai that he entered by her mouth.” See also, *Mishkat-ul-Masabeeh*, translated by Capt. A. N. Matthews, Book I, Chapter 4 (Destiny), p. 48 “UBAI BIN K’AB said in exposition of the word of God, ... We made a covenant with the prophets, and with thee, and with Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary. Jesus son of Mary was among those spirits; so God sent him to Mary, peace be on her.” Ubai said, he entered her by her mouth.

understand the mind and will of God. No other prophet has been given this title, because none other is, in this sense, *the* special revelation of God's mind and will. Hence Jesus says in the Injil, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me;" and again, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." (Luke 10:22).

We do not pretend to fully understand the divinity of Christ, involving, as it does, the great mystery of the trinity; but we can clearly see that the 'Word' of God must be of the nature of God, and that that divine nature can alone explain the miraculous birth of Jesus. From the Injil we learn that the eternal Word of God assumed the perfect nature of a man, without, however, giving up His divine nature. These two natures, a human and a divine, thus existed in Him side by side, just as a new scion when grafted on to a tree exists, distinct, side by side, with the branches of the original tree, and yet one tree. Thus the Injil says, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us," and the Qur'an says, "God put His word into Mary," so that in the person of Jesus the Messiah He moved amongst men. It is no answer to say, "We cannot understand the incarnation or the divinity of Christ, and therefore will not believe it:" for neither do we understand the resurrection—yet we believe it. He who is wise will be content to accept the clear teaching of the Holy Bible on this solemn subject. No doubt the subject of the trinity is a great mystery, and yet, although it may be above reason, it is certainly not contrary to reason. Our Muslim brethren themselves admit a plurality in the attributes of God, such as His mercy, justice, power, etc., and they rightly call Him "مجموع الصفات الحسنة" "The Union of all good attributes." If there can be a plurality in the attributes of God, why not in His nature? In neither case is His unity affected.

There is a traditional saying of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib,

"مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ"

"Whoso knoweth himself, knoweth his Lord." The Tourat tells us that God created man in His own image. Now you speak of your spirit 'روح' as I; of your

mind 'عقل' as I; and of your soul 'نفس' as I. These are distinct, and yet your personality is one. If you cannot fully understand this, how can you expect to understand the nature of the Infinite God?

Further, in the Qur'an God is called 'الودود'—the Lover. Now this term implies in the divine nature the existence of the attribute of love 'الوداد' and, as the nature of God cannot change, this attribute must have existed from eternity. But 'love' must have an object. What, we ask, was the object of God's love before the creation of the world and of the angels? Do not these thoughts suggest that it is necessary that there should exist some kind of plurality of existences within the unity of God—the one loving the other? Does not the Muslim reader see that the very attributes of God, ascribed to Him by the Qur'an itself, suggest some plurality in the Godhead corresponding to the Christian doctrine of the trinity?

The Bible teaches that there is a trinity within the divine unity, and that Jesus, the Word of God, is one of this trinity. Many of our Muhammadan brethren today, following the example of the Qur'an, denounce the doctrine of the trinity as being opposed to the unity of God; yet a careful study of the Qur'an will show that what Muhammad denounced so strongly was polytheism: a doctrine of a plurality of gods. Thus, for example, in Sura An-Nisa' (4), verse 171, we read: —

وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةً انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ

"Say not (there are) three (gods): forbear this; it will be better for you. God is but one God." The famous commentators Jalalain understood this verse to refer to polytheism. Their comment is, "O people of the Gospel, follow not heresy in your religion; and speak not of God other than the words of truth, free from polytheism or attributing a son to the Almighty." ⁵ Thus, we see that what the Qur'an denies is polytheism: a belief in a plurality of gods, which Christians neither hold nor teach. As if to expressly guard against such a misconception, we find Jesus Christ clearly stating the divine unity in the words, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). That Muhammad failed utterly to understand the trinity is evident from Sura Al-Ma'idah (5), verse 116, where it is written:

⁵ *Tafsir al-Jalalayn, An-Nisa' 4:171 - English, Tafsir al-Jalalayn, An-Nisa' 4:171 - Arabic.*

يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَّ إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

“O Jesus, son of Mary, hast thou said unto men, take me and my mother for two gods beside God?” Whilst in another place (Sura Al-Ma'idah) Muhammad labors to prove that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is not a god, by the argument that she ate food! Yet Baizawi and other candid Muhammadan writers freely admit that the Christian trinity consists of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Muhammad's mistaken idea of the trinity as consisting of three gods is unfortunately shared by many of his followers to-day; and this misapprehension on their part prevents any sympathetic inquiry into the doctrine as held by orthodox Christians. Yet some Muslims have known better, and Dr. Imad-ud-din, in his famous 'Hidayat al Muslimin,' tells us that the Muhammadan sect known as Salihaya acknowledge that it is not blasphemy to teach the doctrine of a trinity within the divine essence. Rightly understood, the doctrine of the trinity does not conflict with the unity of God, but, on the other hand, it does serve to explain the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God and throws much light upon the difficult expressions 'Word of God' and 'Spirit of God' which Muslims apply to Christ. The Word of God is the expression of God, and must be as old as God Himself, *i.e.*, eternal. That Word became incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary and took to itself a perfect human nature. Thus, we read that Jesus of Nazareth ate and drank, mourned, and was wearied as other men: for as man He was subject to like passions as we are—yet without sin. This is the doctrine of the Word of God, which He caused to enter Mary, and which every true Muslim ought to believe on the authority of God's holy word. To disbelieve that testimony, and to pry into the nature of God is as vain as it is impious. Thus, Muhammad is reported to have said, “Think of God's gifts, not of His nature, certainly you have no power for that,” and again, “We did not know the reality of Thee;” whilst in another tradition we find these startling words: —

البحث عن ذات الله كفر

“Argument about the nature of God is blasphemy.” No true doctrine can be contrary to reason, but all that concerns the nature of the Infinite may well be superior to our weak human intellects. Muslims themselves admit that there are certain sentences of the Qur'an also which are 'Mutashabih': the exact meaning

of which is hidden from man and will continue to be so until the day of resurrection. Such are the letters *alif, lam, mim*, and the expressions in the Qur'an concerning God's hands, face, etc. Why, then, should our Muslim brethren deny to Christians the liberty which they themselves claim? We may well call the doctrines of the divinity of Christ and the trinity 'Mutashabih'; thus, it is inconsistent for Muslims to deny those doctrines simply because they cannot fully understand them.

When Christians believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, they do so on the authority of the Holy Bible, and in doing so they are in good company, for the prophets and apostles also believed in it. We have already indicated that several of the prophecies concerning the Messiah point to a majesty not less than divine. We here give one or two more references to the same effect. In Isaiah 9:6, we find, concerning the Messiah, these words, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end." Again, the prophet David addressing the Messiah in prophecy says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." That the apostles of Christ, whom the Qur'an honor's with the title 'Helpers of God,' believed in the divinity of Jesus is clear from many passages of the Injil. Thus, we read that one of the apostles of Christ named Thomas did not at first believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; but later, when brought face to face with the risen Christ, he addressed Him in the joy of a new born faith and devotion, "My Lord and my God." Jesus replied, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). How much better then, my Muslim reader, for you also to believe in this divine Son of God, that you may have eternal life through His name, for it is written, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved."

CHAPTER V

CHRIST THE SPIRIT OF GOD

We observe in the next place that another high title given to Jesus by Muslims is 'Ruh Ullah' the Spirit of God. Thus, in Sura An-Nisa' (4), verse 171, it is written:

إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ

“Verily the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is the Apostle of God, and His Word which He conveyed into Mary, and a Spirit (proceeding) from Him.” This high title, like the title ‘Word of God,’ has sorely perplexed Muslim commentators who have tried in various ways to avoid the natural inference which it suggests, viz., that Jesus is divine. The titles given to other prophets, such as ‘Friend of God,’ ‘Chosen of God,’ ‘Prophet of God’ may be applied to frail beings like ourselves, but the name ‘Spirit of God’ given to Christ by Muslims clearly hints at a higher station and a nobler dignity, and witnesses with no uncertain sound to His superiority over all other prophets. Such a person may well be called the ‘Son of God,’ and Christians often wonder why their Muhammadan brethren so object to the latter title, when they themselves have given Jesus a title not less high. Candid Muhammadan writers freely admit that this title ‘Spirit of God’ carries with it some specialty such as can be predicated of no other prophet: thus Imam Razi says that He is the Spirit of God because He is “The Giver of life to the world in their religions,” whilst Baizawi says He is “Possessed of a spirit proceeding (صدر) from God, not mediately, but direct, both as to origin and essence,” and again, “Because He giveth life to the dead, and to the hearts of men.” Yes, this Spirit of God, just because He is divine, is still the “Giver of life to the world and to the hearts of men,” and to-day, as never before, men from the North, South, East and West are being born again into the new life which is in Jesus. The Imam must surely have been reading the words of Jesus in the Injil when he wrote those words, for there we read that Christ said, “I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). Again in the Injil it is written, “The first Adam became a living soul. The last Adam (Christ) became a life-giving spirit.” Observe, too, how Baizawi's remarkable interpretation agrees with the words of the Injil. For, what real difference is there

between his words, and the words of Jesus Himself, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”? Some modern Muslims, we are glad to learn, admit the heavenly origin of Christ: thus in the Bengali Muhammadan paper ‘Pracharak’ for Posh 1307 we read, “Jesus was not merely an earthly person; He was not born of carnal desire. He is a Spirit from heaven Jesus came from the great throne of heaven, and, bringing to the world the commands of God, has shown the way of salvation.”

The Spirit of God must be, like God Himself, eternal; and when we read in the Qur’an that this Spirit was “breathed into Mary,” (Sura Al-Anbiyah' 21, verse 91), and that, as Baizawi tells us, it ‘proceeded (روح) from God, the conclusion is irresistible that this great person is nothing less than divine, and existed before His entrance into Mary. All this perfectly agrees with what we learn of Jesus in the Qur’an as the eternal ‘Word of God.’ Such terms can be used of no mere human prophet, and they point us unmistakably to the fuller teaching of the Holy Bible where Jesus Himself speaks of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Thus, we read that Jesus prayed and said, “O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). But not only does the Injil thus bear witness to the pre-existence of Jesus, but in the Books of the Prophets also we have testimony to the same effect. Thus, the prophet Micah writing of the Messiah who was to come says, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). Thus, it is seen that the eternity of the Messiah is witnessed to by the Scriptures of the Jews themselves who, as a nation, have obstinately refused to recognize even the prophetship of Jesus.

In seeking to deny the divinity of Christ as deduced from the title ‘Spirit of God,’ which Muslims themselves have given Him, some Muhammadan writers have resorted to curious arguments in support of their contention. Thus, a recent Bengali Muslim tells us that “Christ is called the Spirit of God because he was created by God”! Such reasoning will scarcely satisfy any intelligent reader, and most people will be constrained to ask whether we are not all created by God; yet who would dare to take to himself the title ‘Spirit of God’? Besides, if the words, ‘Spirit of God,’ mean a ‘spirit created by God,’ then the expression, ‘the spirit of

a man,' must mean 'the spirit created by a man'—a manifest absurdity. When we see that to Jesus alone Muslims give this high title 'Spirit of God,' then it is evident that He is the Spirit of God in a special sense, and it is only a step from this to the fuller teaching of the Injil that He is the eternal Son of God.

Again, it is said that "If the term 'Spirit of God' as applied to Jesus suggests His divinity, then we must likewise admit that the Qur'an teaches that Adam and other prophets are divine, for it is written in the Qur'an, 'God said to the angels concerning Adam, When I shall have completely formed him, and shall have breathed my Spirit into him, do ye fall down and worship him.'" We are at a loss to see how this verse of the Qur'an requires us to believe that Adam is divine; for Adam is not here called 'the Spirit of God,' but is spoken of as a man into whom God breathed His Spirit: a very different thing. Such language is nowhere in the Qur'an used of Jesus; but is used of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Thus, in Sura Al-Anbiyah' (21), verse 91, it is written, "And remember her who preserved her virginity, and into whom we breathed of our Spirit." If Christians, because of the language of this verse, had said that Mary was divine, then our Muhammadan friends could legitimately retort that, as the same language is used of Adam, therefore Christians should further admit that Adam was divine; but Christians do not look upon Mary as divine; neither does the Qur'an simply state that God breathed His Spirit into Christ; on the contrary, Muslims call Christ Himself 'the Spirit of God,' which is a very different thing. In the same manner it is stated in the Holy Bible that God *gave* His Spirit to certain persons; but that does not make them divine; on the contrary, it proves that they were something distinct from the Spirit of God. If we say that such a person gave five rupees to a beggar, would any sane person argue from that that the beggar was five rupees?

Thus, we re-affirm that the term 'Spirit of God,' applied to Christ by Muslims, places Him high above all other prophets, and *hints* at the great doctrine of His divinity which is so clearly taught in the Injil.

CHAPTER VI

CHRIST THE ONLY INTERCESSOR

We have seen that the testimony borne to Christ by Islam is very striking and can only be understood by a reference to the fuller teaching of the Injil, where He stands revealed in His full majesty as the eternal Son of God. Another high title given to Jesus in the Qur'an is that of one '*Honorable in this world and in the world to come*'. Thus in Sura Ali 'Imran (3), verse 45, it is written:

يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ

"O Mary, verily God sendeth thee good tidings of the Word (proceeding) from Himself: His name the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honorable in this world and in the world to come." Such high terms have been applied in the Qur'an to no other prophet, and they evidently point to some distinction which God shares with no other. That this is so, is clear from the comments of the leading Muhammadan commentators of the Qur'an, who see in this verse proof that Jesus Christ will intercede for sinners. Thus, the famous commentator Baizawi, in his comments on this verse, says,

الوجاهة في الدنيا النبوة وفي الآخرة الشفاعة

"The illustriousness in this world is the office of a prophet, and that in the next world the office of intercessor." Another commentator, Zamakshari, in his Al Kashshaf, says the same: "The office of prophet and supremacy over men (التقدم) in this world; and in the next world, the office of intercessor and loftiness of rank in paradise." The supremacy of Christ over other prophets is also taught in the Holy Bible, thus in Hebrews 3:3,5-6, we read, "For he (Jesus) hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he that built the house hath more honour than the house . . . and Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken;

but Christ as a son, over his house.” Baizawi and Zamakshari tell us that the Qur’an teaches that in the world to come Christ will be the intercessor for sinners. Can the reader point to one verse of the Qur’an where it is clearly stated that, at the judgment day, Muhammad or any other prophet will be able to exercise that high office? In Sura Bani Israel (17), verse 79, it is true some Muslims profess to see a promise that Muhammad will intercede. It is there written, “Peradventure thy Lord will raise thee to an honourable station.” The language of this verse is very vague, however, and we do not wonder that many candid Muslims admit that it has no reference to intercession. Thus, we learn that the Hanbalites contended that all that is here meant is that Muhammad was promised a place near the throne in heaven. All doubts, however, are set at rest by the Qur’an itself, which distinctly says that Muhammad cannot intercede for sinners. Thus in Sura At-Taubah (9), verse 80, we read: —

اسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ

“Ask forgiveness for them, or do not ask forgiveness for them (it will be equal). If thou (O Muhammad) ask forgiveness for them seventy times, God will by no means forgive them.” And again, when some of the Arabs refused to go forth to war with Muhammad, it is recorded in the Qur’an that they afterwards came to him saying, “Ask pardon for us.” But Muhammad, according to the Qur’an, was told to answer,

فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئاً إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرّاً أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعاً

“Who shall be able to obtain for you anything from God, if he pleased to afflict you, or be pleased to be gracious unto you?” (Sura Al-Fath (48), verse 11). In the first of the verses quoted above the hypocrites are referred to, and in the second Muslims are addressed; thus, it is clear that Muhammad disclaimed the power to intercede for any class of people whether believers or not. Many Muslims admit this. For example, the Muhammadan sect known as Kharijiyah deny all intercession on the part of Muhammad; whilst the Mutazilahs admitted that Muhammad would not be able to intercede for mortal sins. (See ‘Hidayat al Muslimin,’ page 209, etc). Thus, it is clear that Muslims can hope for no intercession from Muhammad. The teaching of the Qur’an, on the other hand,

that Jesus will intercede, is fully borne out by the Injil, which distinctly states that Jesus is the great Intercessor for sinners.

Further, from the Qur'an it is clear that *intercession is needed now*: that at the Judgment Day it will be too late. Thus, in Sura Maryam (19), verse 87, we read: —

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا

“None shall obtain (in the day of Judgment) intercession, save he who hath entered into covenant with the God of Mercy.”

Again, in Sura An-Nisa', (4), verse 18, it is further written, “No repentance shall be accepted from those who do evil until (the time) when death presenteth itself unto one of them, (and he) saith, Verily I repent now; nor unto those who die unbelievers; for them have we prepared a grievous punishment.”

And again, in Sura Az-Zumar (39:19) we read, “Him, therefore, on whom the sentence of punishment shall be justly pronounced, canst thou, (O Muhammad), deliver him who (is destined to dwell) in the fire (of hell)?”

This teaching of the Qur'an will commend itself to every thinking man; because it is clear to any man who thinks at all that, if a man remains in sin until the day of his death—in other words, refuses to enter into covenant with his Lord—then at the Judgment Day no intercession will avail to save him from the righteous punishment of his sins. Consequently, we see that what man needs is a living Intercessor *now*, one through whose help and intercession he may obtain grace and strength to walk in the paths of virtue now. Who, then, we ask, is that present, living Intercessor, through whose help we may be kept from sin and enabled to live a life pleasing to God? Muhammad still lies in his grave, and will remain there till the last great day, when the trumpet shall sound and the dead be raised; consequently, even granting that he would have the power to intercede then, *it will be too late*. How different is the testimony of the Injil and the Qur'an to Jesus the one 'honorable in the world to come.' Of Him the Qur'an in An-Nisa' 4:158 says,

بَلِّغُوا إِلَيْهِ

“God took Him up unto Himself,” so that it is the belief of all Muslims that Christ is now alive in heaven. Thus, in this particular also, we see that the Qur’an exalts Christ high above Muhammad, in that it declares He is now alive in heaven.

The great commentators of the Qur’an have also borne testimony to the fact that Christ is now in heaven making intercession for His people. Thus with regard to Habib the carpenter,⁶ whose story is found in Sura Ya-Sin (36), Baizawi tells us that Peter raised a boy to life who had been dead for seven days. Upon being questioned as to what he saw in heaven, the boy replied that he had seen Jesus Christ in heaven, and that He had interceded for the three disciples, Peter and his companions, who were in prison.

The teaching of the Injil on this important subject is very clear and leaves no room for doubt that Jesus is now in heaven making intercession for all who will put their trust in Him. Thus in Romans 8:34, we read, “Jesus . . . who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Again, in Hebrews 7:25, we read, “He (Jesus) ever liveth to make intercession for them,” whilst in chapter 9 verse 24, of the same book, it is written, “Christ entered . . . into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us.” Thus, we see that Jesus is the one hope for sinners now: that He is the present, living Intercessor, who is able to help us now in our time of need. O, why, my Muslim brother, will you continue to rest your hopes upon a dead man, and upon intercession which you hope will take effect in the day of Judgment? Your destiny will have been fixed then, and no amount of intercession will avail. We need intercession *now*; and when both Bible and Qur’an point to Jesus as the one able to help us now, wisdom bids us to put our trust in Him.

One more thing remains to be said with regard to intercession; it is this, *an intercessor must be sinless*; for no sinner can intercede for another sinner. Now we shall prove in our next Chapter that, according to both Bible and Qur’an, Jesus Christ was perfectly sinless, and is thus further qualified for the great office of Intercessor. Thus, in the Injil we read, “If any man sin, we have an advocate

⁶ *Habib the Carpenter*, Sura Ya-Sin 36:13-29. See also, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, Sura Ya-Sin 36:20.

with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). In this verse the two great facts upon which all true and efficacious intercession must depend are clearly brought out, *viz.*, that in Christ we have a *present living* advocate to plead for us, and He is perfectly *righteous*. On the other hand, according to the authorities of Islam itself—the Qur’an and the Traditions—Muhammad again and again asked pardon for his sins. Thus, we see how worthy Jesus is to be addressed as, ‘Honorable in this world, and in the world to come.’ Is it not abundantly clear that, in this respect also, Jesus stands far above all other prophets: that He is the living, sinless Intercessor, now in heaven to make intercession for all who will put their trust in Him!

CHAPTER VII

THE SINLESS PROPHET OF ISLAM

In yet another, as we have already indicated, Jesus Christ is represented in the authorities of Islam as far exalted above Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and other prophets, namely, that *He alone is represented as sinless*. Verily, Islam has crowned all the honor's which it has bestowed upon the son of Mary by a name exalted and glorious, in that it describes Him as the sinless prophet. In the Qur'an we read that the angel Gabriel came to Mary and said: —

إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا

“Verily I am the messenger of thy Lord to give thee a holy son.” (Sura Maryam (19), verse 19). Again, in Sura Ali 'Imran (3), verse 36, it is written:

وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

“I have named her Mary, and I commend her and her offspring to thy protection from Satan the stoned.” In accordance with these passages, we find that Jesus Christ is everywhere in the writings of Islam represented as perfectly sinless, and in neither Qur'an nor Traditions is a single sin ever imputed to Him. On the other hand, both the Bible and the Qur'an abound in allusions to the sins of other prophets and their prayers for pardon; and in the latter book we find Muhammad himself again and again commanded to ask pardon for his sins.

We give below, by way of example, one or two verses from the Qur'an. Thus, in Sura Al-A'raf (7), verses 22-23, we have a mention of Adam's sin and his prayer for pardon. Thus, we read,

فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ..... قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

“And he (Satan) caused them to fall through deceit and they said, O Lord, we have dealt unjustly with our souls; if thou forgive us not and be not merciful unto us, we shall be of those who perish.” In like manner the sin of Abraham is recorded in Sura Al-Anbiya' (21). It is there stated that Abraham broke many of the idols of the idolaters but left the largest of them intact. Afterwards, when the

idolaters accused Abraham of the act, he flatly denied any complicity in the crime, and replied that “The large (idol) did it.”⁷ In other places also, his prayers for pardon are mentioned.⁸ Moses is also represented in the Qur’an as a sinner. Thus, in Sura Al-Qasas (28), verse 15-16, etc., we read that Moses, after killing an Egyptian, prayed thus:

رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَرَ لَهُ

“O Lord, verily I have injured my own soul, wherefore forgive me. And He (God) forgave him.” David sinned and asked pardon for his sin, as is recorded in Sura Saad (38), verses 24-25. It is there written:

وَوَظَنَّ دَاوُودُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ

And David perceived that we had tried him, and he asked pardon of his Lord; and he fell down and bowed himself and repented. Wherefore we forgave him this (fault).”

In the Qur’an Muhammad also is repeatedly told to ask pardon for his sins. Thus we read: —

وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِدَنبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

“Ask pardon for thy sins (O Muhammad), and for the believers both men and women.” (Sura Muhammad (47), verse 19). Again, in Sura Al-Fath (48), verses 2,

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ

“That God may forgive thee thy former and thy latter sin.” Again, in Sura Al-Ahzab (33), verse 37, a specific sin of Muhammad is distinctly mentioned:

وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَاهُ فَلَبَّا

⁷ Al-Anbiya' 21:63. See also, Al-An'am 6:76-78 Where Abraham takes a star, the moon, and the sun as Lords. In An-Nisa' 4:116 “Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with Him,...”. See also, *Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 6, Book 60, Number 236* where it states that Abraham said, “I have told three lies”

⁸ Sura Ibrahim 14:41

“And thou (O Muhammad) didst conceal that in thy mind which God had (determined) to discover, and didst fear men, whereas it was more just that thou shouldst fear God.”

We have shown above that, according to the Qur’an, Adam, Abraham, Moses, David and Muhammad were all sinners; and further investigation would reveal the fact that their sins were committed after their call to the prophetic office. But it is a most striking fact that nowhere, either in Bible or Qur’an, is a single sin ever imputed to Jesus the Word of God. Surely, in this respect also, the unique supremacy of Jesus over all other prophets is clearly seen. The witness of the Traditions is the same; for although in them it is again and again recorded that Muhammad used to ask pardon for his sins, yet such language is never used of the sinless Jesus. On the other hand, the traditions concerning His birth, preserved in the Mishkat and other books, clearly show that He was held to be sinless from His birth. The immaculate conception of Christ is referred to in the following Tradition of Muslim. “Every child of Adam is touched by Satan the day of his birth, with the exception of Mary and her son.”⁹ Whilst in the Tradition, as given by al-Ghazali, it is said that “When Jesus, son of Mary, on whom be blessing and peace, was born, the devils came to Satan, saying that in the morning the idols were found all hanging down their heads. Satan could not understand this, till, in his rounds, he discovered that Jesus had just been born, and that the angels were around Him rejoicing thereat. So he returned to the devils, and told them that the day before a prophet had been born; and that never had a mortal been born before at whose birth he had not been present, but only this.”¹⁰

This testimony of the Qur’an and Traditions to the sinlessness of Jesus is fully supported by the Injil, which, in even clearer language, witnesses to His perfect freedom from sin. Thus, concerning Jesus, the Injil says that “In Him was no sin” (1 John 3: 5) and “Him who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). “He did no sin” (1 Peter 2:22); whilst Christ Himself challenged His enemies to point a single flaw in His spotless character, in these words, “Which of you convicteth me of sin?” (John 8:46)

⁹ *Sahih Muslim, Book 43 Hadith 5838*

¹⁰ Al-Ghazali, *The Sayings of Jesus* (search on the word, devils), [another web site link](#).

We have said enough on this subject to show the supreme importance of its further study; and we entreat the reader to spare no pains to arrive at a conclusion which will bring peace to his heart now, and a certain hope for the life beyond. If the reader be a Muslim, he will understand the need of a Mediator, and is, probably, looking forward to the intercession of Muhammad to save him from the penalty of his sins. But, my friend, can one sinner plead for another sinner? Never. Then is it not the act of wisdom to trust in Him who, the Bible, Qur'an and Traditions being witness, is perfectly sinless? We have further seen that intercession is needed *now*. Jesus, because He is alive in heaven, has the opportunity to intercede; and, because He is sinless, has the authority to intercede.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRIST THE WONDER-WORKER

Yet one more matter claims our attention before we bring this little book to a close. It is the high place—rather the supreme place—which is accorded to Jesus by the Qur'an with regard to His *miracles*. In several places of the Qur'an the miracles of Jesus are referred to. Thus in Sura Al-Ma'idah (5), verses 110, we read: —

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدتُّكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالشُّرَاةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخَلَّقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي

"When God said, O Jesus, son of Mary, remember my favor towards thee and towards thy mother, when I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit that thou shouldst speak unto men in the cradle, and when thou art of middle age; and when I taught thee scripture and wisdom and the Tourat and the Injil, and when thou didst create of clay as it were the figure of a bird by my permission, and didst breathe thereon and it became a bird by my permission, and thou didst heal one blind from his birth and the leper by my permission, and when thou didst bring forth the dead from their graves by my permission."

In this passage of the Qur'an, we have a very startling account of the miracles of Jesus Christ; for not only is it said that He cured various diseases and raised the dead, but it is also stated that he *created* a bird! Of no other prophet is it ever stated, either in the Bible or the Qur'an, that he performed an act of creation, though various miracles of many prophets are recorded in both books. Yet here we find the same word (خلق) used for this miracle of Jesus which the Qur'an uses when it describes the creation of the world by God. Surely, every candid reader of the Qur'an must be struck with this remarkable passage, witnessing, as it does, in such a striking manner to the infinite superiority of Jesus over all other prophets.

Someone may object that the passage of the Qur'an quoted above simply states that Jesus created a bird 'by the permission' of God, and that, therefore,

Christ's power to create was only a delegated power. Even granting this, however, it still remains true that such language is used of no other prophet. Jesus still stands high above all the rest. Moreover, in a certain sense, this witness of the Qur'an agrees with that of the Injil, which also invariably describes Jesus as doing everything in accordance with the will of God. Jesus Himself said, "I can do nothing of myself, but, as the Father taught me, I speak these things" (John 8:28). At the same time the Injil distinctly states that Jesus had power *in Himself* to work miracles; and in this respect He differs from all other prophets. Thus He says, "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."¹¹

The Injil records many of the miracles of Jesus, such as healing the sick, walking on the sea, raising the dead, etc.; and from it we also learn some of the reasons for which those miracles were wrought. Thus, Jesus tells us that one of the principal reasons for His miracles was that they might constitute the seal and witness of His divine mission. On one occasion we find Him pointing to His miracles and thus addressing the people, "The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works which I do bear witness of me" (John 5:36). Muhammad taught the same great truth. Thus, in a tradition of Huraira recorded by Muslim, we read that Muhammad said,

مَا مِنْ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا قَدْ أُعْطِيَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا مِثْلُهُ آمَنَ عَلَيْهِ الْبَشَرُ

"There has been no prophet but has been given miracles in order that people might believe on him."¹² Reason tells us that such testimony and witness is necessary for any prophet who comes into the world with a new revelation or a new law; and if Jesus Christ had not shown such credentials, people would naturally have doubted His claims. Moses, in like manner, when given the Tourat, worked many miracles, some of which are recorded in the Qur'an, in order to attest his prophetic office. Some prophets, it is true, such as John the Baptist, worked no miracles, and the reason is not far to seek; for John the Baptist did not come with a new law as did Moses and Christ. John was simply a herald to prepare the way for Christ, as is clear from a reference to the Injil. Thus

¹¹ John 10:17-18

¹² *Sahih Muslim*, Book 1 Hadith 283 and *In-Book 1 Hadith 292*. See also, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book 66, Hadith 3 No 4981.

we read that, when the Jews asked John, “Who art thou?” he replied, “I am not the Messiah . . . I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord . . . In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, even He, who cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose . . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:19-29). John brought no new law, consequently he needed not the witness of miracles; but when Christ came and preached the Gospel, he worked many wonderful miracles in order that people might believe Him “for the very works’ sake.”

Out of this matter arises another very important consideration, namely, If Muhammad was sent with a revelation from God, and was entrusted with a law, which, according to some Muslims, cancels all previous ones, then it was certainly most essential that he also should work miracles in order to afford proof of his divine mission. The Traditions, it is true, record many such miracles; but these Traditions were written many years after the death of Muhammad, and are conflicting and untrustworthy. There is a saying of Muhammad that, “Whosoever ye shall hear aught about me, then turn to the book which I have left with you; and if it conform thereto, and there be mention of the same in it, then it is true that I said or did what is related of me; but if there be no mention of it in the book, then I am free therefrom, and that which is related of me is a lie; I neither said nor did it.” Now let us, in accordance with this saying of Muhammad, examine the Qur’an as to its testimony upon the important question as to whether he worked miracles. That testimony is clear and shows that Muhammad consistently disclaimed the power to work miracles. From the many passages of the Qur’an to this effect, we cull two or three by way of illustration, which will not only conclusively show that in respect of miracles Muhammad was much inferior to Christ, but which throw grave doubt upon Muhammad’s claim to be a prophet of God entrusted with a new revelation and a final law. A slight acquaintance with the Qur’an will show that the Arabs again and again came to Muhammad and demanded from him some miracle as a proof of his divine mission; but his answer was invariably the same, namely, that he was only a preacher, and had not the power to do as they asked. Thus, in Sura Ar-Ra’d (13), verse 7, we find these significant words,

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ إِمَّا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ

“The unbelievers say, why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord? Thou art a preacher only.” Again, in Sura Al-Ankabut (29), verse 50, it is written,

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

“They said, Why is not a sign sent down unto him from his Lord? say, signs are in the power of God alone, and I am only a clear preacher.” Again, still more explicitly in Sura Al-Isra' (17), verse 59, we have the reason given why Muhammad did not work miracles.

وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأُولُونَ

“Nothing hindered us from sending thee with miracles, except that the former (nations) have charged them with imposture.”

These passages teach beyond a shadow of a doubt that Muhammad disclaimed all power to work miracles, his invariable reply being that the Qur'an itself was a sufficient miracle. Thus, in Sura Al-Ankabut (29), verse 51, it is written,

أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ

“Is it not sufficient for them that we have sent down unto thee the book?” The greatest commentators of the Qur'an such as Razi, Baizawi, etc., freely admit that this is the meaning of the text. Thus, commenting on the passage quoted above from Sura Al-Isra' Baizawi says, “That is to say, we have only abstained from sending thee with miracles as the Quraish demand, because the former peoples, those of Ad and Thamud gave them the lie, and so likewise would those of Mecca, and they would otherwise have been destroyed according to our wont (*i.e.*, if they had rejected the miracles), so we determined not to destroy them, seeing that there are amongst them those who believe or will have believing seed.” Does not Baizawi make it clear that the reason for not sending Muhammad with miracles is stated in the Qur'an to be, because God know that, even if sent, the people would not have believed, and as a result they would have been destroyed; so in mercy he abstained from sending miracles? Husein in his famous commentary says the same, “God says that, People of ancient times demanded miracles, and I by my prophets showed many, such as bringing out a she-camel from a stone

for the tribe of Thamud; in this way miracles were worked for others also, but they denounced them as false, and were consequently absolutely destroyed. Moreover, if I show the miracles which these people ask for, verily they also will fail to be satisfied, consequently it will be necessary by way of punishment to destroy them as well. But I have formerly determined that I will not destroy them, because many righteous persons will be born among their descendants.” Imam Razi says that God suited the miracles of His messengers to the time and circumstances of the various peoples to whom they were sent. Thus, magic or sorcery being in the ascendant in the days of Moses, the miracles shown by him were of that nature. In the time of Jesus, the science of medicine was much practiced, hence Jesus was sent to heal the sick and raise the dead. For the same reason, as beauty of composition was the distinguishing feature of Muhammad's time, the miracle given to him was the wondrous eloquence of the Qur'an. From these words of the Imam, it is clear that he also candidly admitted that Muhammad worked no miracle—the Qur'an was sufficient.

It is interesting to note here the views of a modern champion of Islam of whom Indian Muslims are never tired of speaking. We refer to none other than the Liverpool solicitor Quilliam who has professed Islam, and, in consequence, been honored with more than one title from the Sultan of Turkey. What, then, does Mr. Quilliam teach concerning Muhammad's power to work miracles? We let the Liverpool solicitor speak for himself. In his book, the “Faith of Islam,” page 42, he says, "Muhammad's adversaries answered this by requesting him to work a miracle in proof of his divine mission; but he refused, saying that he was sent to spread the truth and not to perform miracles No proof, indeed, has ever been adduced that Muhammad at any time descended to any artifices or pseudo miracles to enforce his doctrines or to establish his claims to be one of the prophets of God. On the contrary, he relied entirely upon common sense, reason, and eloquence.”

Thus, it is certain that when, according to the clear teaching of the Qur'an, confirmed by the testimony of the leading Muslim commentators, Muhammad worked no miracle in proof of his claims, then every thinking man must reject the miracles recorded in the Traditions, which were written many years afterwards, as legendary, and unhistorical. There remains, then—the Qur'an.

That the Arabic Qur'an cannot be regarded as a miracle is clear from many considerations; indeed it is strange, with the evidence of that book before us, that it should be necessary for us to demonstrate this fact at all; for does not the fact, recorded in the Qur'an, that the Arabs again and again demanded a miracle from Muhammad, conclusively show that, in their opinion, the Arabic Qur'an was not a miracle; that, in fact, it differed little from the writings of many others of their poets such as Amr-al-Qays, Mutanabby, Hariry, Coss, Lokman, etc. Indeed, it is well known that, in the opinion of many Muslims, the Qur'an can be equalled as a literary production, and is not to be regarded as a miracle. Thus, for example, the sect of Muslims known as Mutazilahs say that,

إن الناس قادرون على مثل هذا القرآن فصاحةً ونظماً وبلاغةً

“Man has the power to compose a book equal to the Qur'an in poetic beauty and eloquence.” Again, Sharustani writes thus in his book concerning Majdar,

إبطاله إعجاز القرآن من جهة الفصاحة والبلاغة

“He used to consider as false the opinion that the poetic beauty and eloquence of the Qur'an constitutes a miracle.”

It is said in the 'Kitab-al-Muafiq' that certain of the companions of Muhammad doubted certain verses as being part of the Qur'an. Thus Ibn Masud, for example, held that the Al-Fatihah did not belong to it. But if the literary style of the Qur'an were so incomparably superior to all other writings as to constitute it a miracle, it would not have been possible for such differences of opinion to exist. The very fact that there existed such differences of opinion concerning certain portions of the Qur'an clearly shows that it in no way differed from other writings of the time.

The same remarks apply to the difficulties which arose at the time of the compilation of the Qur'an. It is said in the 'Kitab-al-Muafiq' that, when the various verses of the Qur'an were being collected, if a verse was presented to the collectors by someone unknown to them, it was only after thorough investigation—as to the time and circumstances under which it was delivered, etc.,—that it was accepted and incorporated into the Qur'an. Now, is it not clear to anyone, who will take the trouble to think, that, if the diction and eloquence

of the verses were evidence of the miraculous, then such examination would have been superfluous? A genuine verse would at once have been recognized as such by its own intrinsic excellence.

But even granting that the Qur'an is the most eloquent book in the Arabic language: that fact does not constitute it a miracle. It is an exhibition of intellectual power—nothing more; for poetic fancy and eloquence of speech is often found in the humblest walks of life. A miracle is something which, to our limited senses, is outside the ordinary laws of nature; but no book, however elegant its diction or exalted its thought, can be considered that. Kali Das stands unrivalled in India as a writer; will our Muhammadan brethren, then, admit that the writings of the infidel Kali Das are inspired?

It is certainly a striking fact that he who claimed to be the last great prophet, and whose law is said to supersede all others, confessed himself quite unable to work miracles. This fact serves to emphasize the contention of this little book that, according to the testimony of the Qur'an itself, Jesus Christ stands high above all other prophets. Let the impartial reader earnestly weigh these facts, and yield to the claims of Him whose name is above every name.

Much more might be written to prove the pre-eminence of the Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary, but we content ourselves with one more quotation.

In the traditions of Muhammad recorded by Muslims we find these startling words regarding Jesus the Messiah,

لِيُوشِكَنَّ أَنْ يَنْزِلَ فِيكُمْ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ حَكَمًا مُقْسِطًا

“There is no doubt that the Son of Mary, on whom be blessing and peace, shall descend in the midst of you as righteous judge.”¹³ We have read both the Bible and the Qur'an through from cover to cover, and we have read many of the Traditions of Muhammad; but we have never met such language as this used of any besides Jesus. These words of Muhammad find striking confirmation in the Injil where it is written, “But when the Son of man (Jesus) shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall he gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another,

¹³ *Sahih Muslim*, Book 1, Hadith 296, see also, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 3448, Book 60, Hadith 118

as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matthew 25:31-33).

Surely it is our highest wisdom to take refuge with such an one whom both the Injil and Muhammad describe as the Judge of men.

Thus, we have abundantly proved that the Qur’an, no less than the Bible, raises Jesus the Messiah high above all other prophets, and applies to Him titles such as can be claimed for no other. It is in His line—the line of Israel—that all the nations of the earth are to be blessed; His mother it is who was preferred above all the women of the earth, whilst she and her Son alone have been made a sign unto all creatures. Of Christ alone is it said that He was born miraculously from a virgin, being the very Word of God which became incarnate in Mary. To no one else but Jesus do Muslims give the exalted title, ‘Spirit of God’, and to none other does the Qur’an ascribe the honor of the Messiah. Jesus alone of all the prophets is represented in both Qur’an and Traditions as perfectly sinless, whilst of none other does the Qur’an say, ‘Honorable in this world and in the next.’ The miracles of Jesus stand unique and unequalled in the annals of Islam, and to none other has Muhammad given the divine title, Judge of men.

Thus, the Qur’an gives precious glimpses of the Messiah's greatness, but stops short of unveiling His glorious perfections and divine majesty. It leads to the portal but fails to open the door; it kindles the flame, but it leaves in the heart a longing and unsatisfied desire. Will you, then, my Muslim reader, be content to leave this important question, with which your eternal interests are bound up, to remain unsolved? God forbids! Rather wisdom bids us go to the Tourat and the Injil where the Messiah stands revealed in all His glorious perfections as the only begotten Son of God. Does not the pious Moslem pray day by day,

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

“Guide us in the right way; the way of those on whom Thou hast been gracious; not of those against whom Thou hast been angry, nor of those who have gone astray”? ¹⁴ Who are those to whom God has been gracious, but the servants of God: the Prophets of old, such as Abraham and Moses and David? These men looked forward in faith to the coming of the promised Messiah and beheld in

¹⁴ Sura Al-Fatiha 1: 6-7

Him the great hope of men. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”¹⁵ To them, then, we must go: to the Tourat, the Zabur and the Books of the Prophets, for thus shall we learn the way of faith in which these great ones trod, and find Him of whom they spoke. Moreover, it is in the Injil itself that we find the full revelation of that Christ of whom the Qur’an speaks in such high terms. The Injil also, then, we must read; for thus shall we learn of Him who is the fulfilment of prophecy, and find the way of eternal life. Let us not neglect the solemn words of the Messiah Himself revealed to us in the Injil, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Hebrews 11:13

¹⁶ John 14:6

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