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THE DOCTRINE OF VIRGIN BIRTH

Is the sole doctrine on which all the divided sects and denominations of Christendom are agreed. It is the great lie of a pagan religion masquerading as Christianity.

THE DOCTRINE OF VIRGIN BIRTH:

1. Imposes a barrier between Jesus and the rest of humanity,
2. Misrepresents the values Jesus stood for,
3. Falsifies the issues which brought him into collision with the priests,
4. Conceals the motives of those who caused him to be crucified.

But, most of all, the doctrine conceals the fact that the same issues and the same principles are just as much alive today as they were at the time of Jesus of Nazareth.

By means of this doctrine the leaders of organisational Christendom have achieved, on an intellectual level, what their predecessor priests in Jerusalem had hoped to achieve on the physical level, that is:

THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE MAN JESUS OF NAZARETH AND THE PRINCIPLES HE STOOD FOR.

The churches pretend to have obtained this doctrine from the Bible. As their evidence they quote:

1. The prophet Isaiah (740 BCE),
2. The gospel of Matthew, chapter 1,
3. The gospel of Luke, chapter 1.

The facts are that none of the authorities quoted by the churches makes any reference to virgin birth at all. The church scholars have been careful not to popularise the facts, though they are well aware of them, and to keep the people in ignorance.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to place before you the facts, which will show that the doctrine of virgin birth is a lie. The actions of Jesus and the priests will then be seen in correct perspective.

Jesus was a normal man, chosen from among his fellows by God. This was the whole issue. He did not meet with the approval of the priestly establishment of his time. To them he was a malcontent, a man who stirred up the people. The priests desired a messiah made in their own image and likeness. They did

not want God's messiah; they wanted their own - fashioned according to their own delusions of grandeur. It was only natural that they should accuse Jesus of being deluded.

The evidence will be presented and the factors summarised, in the following order:

1. An introduction: A summary of the misrepresentations of the churches.
2. A summary of the actual facts given in the biblical accounts concerning the birth of Jesus.
3. The evidence it self, consisting of a comparative coverage of the statements of scholars, in corroboration of (2).

This section analyses the arguments, including "traditions" by which church scholars try to destroy the significance of the facts they have been forced to admit.

The real issues in the collision between Jesus and the priests. The crucifixion was a further stage in the eternal war between truth and falsehood.

1: INTRODUCTION

The position, as it has been commonly misrepresented, is this:

- That Isaiah predicted, in or about 740 BCE that a "virgin" would conceive.
- That the Jewish people therefore expected a virgin-born messiah.
- That young Hebrew maidens, after the time of Isaiah, grew up hoping that they would be selected by God as the 'virgin' mother.
- That Jesus' claims to messiahship hinged on 'virgin' birth.
- That the disciple Matthew recorded that Jesus had been born in this particular manner, and
- That Luke, in writing his gospel, gave a detailed description of how Mary received a message from God that she had been chosen to be the 'virgin' mother of the messiah.

2: THE FACTS ARE

- The prophet Isaiah did not predict that a 'virgin' would conceive.
- The word *virgin* is a mistranslation of the word used by Isaiah.
- The churches knew 1800 years ago that *virgin* was not a correct translation.
- The prophecy of Isaiah referred to a span of time, not to a particular type of conception. The span of time was to be measured by the growth of a child named Emanuel. The child was to be a visible sign to King Ahaz. The mother of the child was referred to in the prophecy by a word, which means sexually mature, not sexually chaste.
- The Jewish people did not expect a virgin-born messiah.
- The disciples did not record that a prophecy of a 'virgin' birth was fulfilled in Jesus. No such prophecy existed.

- The Hebrew title *messiah* (Greek = Christ) does not imply a claim to be virgin-born. There are many messiahs (christs) in the Bible. The word is left untranslated only where it refers to Jesus.

None of the following terms imply virgin birth:

- *Son of God...* refers to ethical sonship, not biological sonship. As used of Jesus the term implies normal parentage.
- *Only-begotten son* - refers to resurrection; the only begotten from the dead.
- *First-born son* - refers to resurrection; the first-born from the dead.
- *(Born) of the spirit* - refers to the person born, not to the manner of conception.

Jesus did not preach that he was born of a virgin.

The disciples did not preach that Jesus was born of a virgin. **NB.*****

The disciples believed Jesus to be the 'messiah' and 'son of God' at the same time, as they believed him to be the son of Joseph, that is, of human parentage.

But though commonly supposed to be, Jesus was not in fact, the son of Joseph. The reason for this, and the alternative solution, are discussed below.

The 'messiah' had to be a physical descendant of David in the tribe of Judah. The messiah could spring from any line of David's descendants with one solitary line excepted - the line to which Joseph belonged, the line of Coniah (Jeconiah). God debars descendants of Coniah from kingship. And kingship was a necessary attribute of messiahship.

The churches were aware, at least 1500 years ago, of the significance of the name Coniah which appears in Joseph's genealogy; that the messiah could not be Joseph's son.

By showing that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, Matthew kept intact his claim to messiahship. But he did not say Mary was a 'virgin' conceiving. There is another and more obvious alternative.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a member of the tribe of Levi.

If Mary conceived as a virgin, then Jesus, as her physical descendant, was a Levite. As a Levite he could not be the messiah.

The churches have been aware of this fact for many hundreds of years.

A woman called "Mary of Levi" could not conceive a son entitled to be called, by physical descent, "Jesus of Judah", except by normal processes of procreation. This implies that a man of Judah was responsible for the conception of Jesus.

There was such a man. Luke names Heli, a descendant of the kingly line of David, as the physical father of Jesus.

The above facts are clearly evident in the Bible. Each fact provides those who teach virgin birth with a difficulty that has to be explained away. To overcome the difficulties the churches concocted a number of traditions. Each tradition is supposed to be true; yet taken collectively the traditions are conflicting and

mutually contradictory. Some of the ludicrous results, which follow from the amalgamation of these 'true' traditions, may be seen in later pages of this pamphlet.

Adoration of virginity and virgin-mothers was a feature of the pagan gentile world. Witness the Parthenon of Athens and the Vestal Virgins of Rome. The New Testament says Jesus was born in a normal fashion. The idea that he was born of a 'virgin' first appeared, not in the New Testament, but in the writings of Ignatius between 110 CE and 117 CE, that is some 120 years or more after he was born.

NB*** Footnote to 9: The New Testament records the activities of the disciples up to about 63 CE. It does not quote one single instance of a disciple preaching virgin birth. The birth of Jesus is referred to in writing in but two places:

Matthew 1

Luke 1.

The significance of these references is discussed in points 11-19 above.

No other New Testament writer evinced any interest in Jesus' birth.

3: THE EVIDENCE

Points 1-4: Isaiah Did Not Make A Prophecy Of Virgin Birth.

During the reign of King Ahaz (741-725 BC) the kingdom of Judah was attacked by the confederate powers, Syria and Ephraim. The prophet Isaiah told Ahaz that within a short time the countries threatening Judah would themselves be broken. "God is with" Judah in the struggle, said the prophet.

A child, soon to be born, was to be the symbol of the prophecy. At his birth this child was to receive the name Immanuel (im-manu-el, a combination of Hebrew words meaning "God is with us"). Thus symbolically identified, the child would be a visible 'sign' to Ahaz, a living chronometer by which the king could measure off the years which would see the prophecy brought to complete fulfilment.

But this is how the relevant texts were translated in the King James Version of the Bible:

"Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass... Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good,

For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." (Isaiah 7:7-16).

The Revised Standard Version (1952), somewhat belatedly to be sure, gave a different translation of verse 14 and added an interesting footnote:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

The footnote indicated that the text could even be rendered with the Hebrew verb "conceive" in the past tense:

"...a young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

That the young woman was already pregnant when Isaiah spoke to the king is clearly consistent, not only with the words of Isaiah used, but also with the part the 'sign' was to play in the prophecy.

TWO FULFILMENTS

A great many Old Testament texts - including Isaiah 7:14 - were identified with different phases in the life of Jesus. In his messianic function Jesus recapitulated the history of Israel. The fact that Isaiah 7:14 was applied to the birth of Jesus as well as to the birth of a child named Immanuel - thus having two applications - places the theologians on the horns of a dilemma.

DILEMMA

For if the word used by Isaiah meant virgin then there have been 2 virgin births in Judah; the virgin birth claimed for Jesus would not be unique.

This raises a "profound theological problem."

And if the word in Isaiah did not mean virgin, then there was no prophecy to be fulfilled that a virgin would conceive.

From some of the quotations that follow you will see that the theologians try to escape the dilemma by having the best of both worlds.

Statements concerning the meaning of '*almah*'

The Hebrew word formerly translated '*virgin*' in the above texts is '*almah*'. Here is a representative selection of comments on this word.

Courier Mail: Brisbane, 25-11-1952. Front page.

"To burn Bible

New York. November 24 (Special) - Pastor Luther Hux of a breakaway Baptist Church in South Carolina, sought a fire department permit to burn a Bible in his church because he objected to the substitution of "young woman" for "virgin" in Isaiah VII:14.

A university expert said it was a correction of a mistake in translation in the old King James version of the Bible."

Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia:

"The Hebrew word for virgin is invariably bethulah; hence to translate Isaiah 7:14 as a "virgin will conceive" is definitely incorrect"

(Article: Virgin birth).

"The Christian doctrine of the virgin birth arose out of a mistranslation of the word ha'almah as virgin." (Article: Immanuel).

A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture: (Roman Catholic)

"The Hebrew here translated 'virgin' is not the technical term 'bethulah' but its practical equivalent, 'almah', which means an unmarried maiden of marriageable age, presumed to be a virgin by the strict moral code of the Hebrews." (Article: Isaiah.)

(Note: A presumption is here added to *almah* in order to equate it with virgin)

Monsignor Knox. Bible, 1949: (Roman Catholic)

"Sign you ask none, but sign the Lord will give you. Maid shall be brought to bed of a son, that shall be called Emmanuel."

A footnote reads: *"In the Hebrew text the word used should perhaps be translated 'maid' rather than 'virgin' since it refers rather to a time of life than a state of life; but in view of the event, we can not doubt this prophecy looks forward to the virgin-birth."*

(**Note:** Monsignor Knox could have said it much more plainly: 'The Hebrew word means young woman, not virgin.'

The next entry following is sufficient comment on his remarks about the prophecy looking forward to virgin-birth).

E.J. Kissane, DD,LSS, Dublin. The Book of Isaiah: (Roman Catholic)

"It does not necessarily mean "virgin", for which there was a special word bethulah. The prophet chose a word, which is so elastic in meaning that it can refer to a virgin and yet not exclude the notion of child bearing.... The word he chose is somewhat vague and further revelation was needed to unfold its true meaning."

(**Note:** The Catholic Commentary added a presumption to almah to equate it with virgin; E.J. Kissane achieves the same result by adding "a further revelation" instead of a "presumption").

Seventh Day Adventist Bible Commentary:

(To preserve the uniqueness of Jesus' birth, this commentary insists particularly that almah means young woman where it refers to Immanuel. The dilemma of the theologians is here plainly evident: Immanuel was born to a young woman; Jesus to a virgin. Yet the same prophecy and same words refer to both Jesus and Immanuel.)

The Commentary states:

*"According to the Hebrew, the almah of Isa. 7:14 may already have conceived... and if she were yet a virgin when Isaiah spoke we would then be confronted with another miraculous birth similar to that of Jesus, which would create **a profound theological problem.**"*

"Hebrew lexicographers are agreed that almah is from the root alam 'to be (sexually) mature,' and that the word almah denotes a young woman implying the ability to bear children."

*"Without a single exception, where moral integrity and virginity are clearly referred to, bachur and bethulah are used; elem and almah are **never** so used".*

"Isaiah uses bethulah altogether five times (chs. 23:4,12; 37:22; 47:1; 62:5) and had he intended the young woman of ch.7:14 to be understood as a virgin in the strict sense of the word, he might logically be expected to use bethulah here as well."

T.H. Robinson. M.A. D.D.: The Gospel of Matthew

“The Hebrew has no thought of a miraculous birth, for the term rendered maiden simply means an adult woman, still young enough to become a mother, and is by no means confined to virgins. This has been recognised by Jewish scholars for centuries and is admitted by Christian students of the Old Testament.”

D.E. Lupton. A Guide to Reading the Bible: (Roman Catholic)

“It may well be that Isaiah was referring to some contemporary event, as this would seem to be necessary if the king was to have a “sign” in his own lifetime. But the light of faith shows us that this contemporary event was to be merely a first step to complete the definitive fulfilment in the virgin birth of Christ.”

(Note: Refer to A Catholic Commentary and E.J.Kissane, above. A third aspect is here added to almah to equate it with a second and different fulfilment:- *“the light of faith.”* To use the word *“faith”* in this sense is to abuse the meaning.)

A.W. Slotski English translation and commentary on Isaiah: Edited by Rev Dr A. Cohen.

“The wife of Isaiah, a wife of King Ahaz, a woman of the Royal Family, or any woman in Judah may have been the young woman of the text.”

Woman as a female of man

The statement that woman is female of man holds true in the present instance. Reference to an authoritative Hebrew dictionary will show that the word elem means young man, and that the word almah is simply the feminine gender formed quite regularly according to the rules of Hebrew grammar from the masculine stem.

Has any theologian ever presumed that the term young man implies virginity? Why then should they concern themselves with being so presumptuous about the feminine gender of the same?

4: IRRELEVANT ARGUMENTS

Despite the above admissions, the churches endeavour to create confusion by introducing irrelevant arguments such as the following:

- All young women are virgins (therefore almah means virgin).
- Some young women are virgins...(therefore almah means virgin).
- The context of the prophecy demands the interpretation virgin.
- Immanuel’s mother imposed his name, contrary to custom (therefore she was a virgin).
- Further revelation came after the prophecy had been given. The mistranslation virgin resulted from this revelation and is therefore correct.

One should hardly need to trouble with such irrelevancies; but they are introduced by scholars.

HOW LONG HAVE THE CHURCHES KNOWN?

The churches knew 1800 years ago that “virgin” was not a correct translation of the Hebrew. The small Hebrew sect of Nazarenes – the name given to the followers of Jesus – was soon outnumbered by the multitude of Greek speaking members of the “Christian” churches. The Greek majority had very soon corrupted the teachings of Jesus and the teachings about Jesus.

Isaiah 7:14 had been mistranslated in the Greek Septuagint as ‘virgin’ and new translations by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotian endeavoured to correct the Greek mistranslation. Here is what the church historian Eusebius (325CE) wrote concerning the attitude of the ecclesiastic Irenaeus who lived 1800 years ago:

“Hear also, word for word, what he writes about the interpretation of the Inspired Scriptures according to the Septuagint. ‘So God became man and the Lord himself saved us, giving us the sign of the virgin, but not as some say who at the present time venture to translate the Scriptures, ‘behold a young woman shall conceive and bear a son’ as Theodotion the Ephesian translated it, and Aquila from Pontus, both of them Jewish proselytes, whom the Ebionites follow and aver that he was begotten by Joseph.”

Church scholars through the ages have been as familiar with this statement in the history of Eusebius as most people are with the layout of their daily newspaper. Yet it was 1952 before the admission of mistranslation was made.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE DID NOT EXPECT A VIRGIN BORN MESSIAH

(Point 5, section 2 above.)

It is agreed on all sides that the Jewish people had no expectancy whatever that the messiah would be born of a virgin. Here are some representative comments:

A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture: (Roman Catholic)

“If it be objected that such a thing would be at complete variance with accepted Jewish thought, we answer first that the Incarnation and all its circumstances were also at variance with prevailing Jewish Messianism and thought.” (Article: Luke).

(The term incarnation refers to God becoming man through the virgin birth).

Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia:

“There is nothing in Jewish theology corresponding to this idea... The idea of a divine parenthood of human heroes was unknown in Judaism, but was common in the contemporary pagan world. Thus Hercules, Aeneas, Sarpedon, Alexander the Great and all the Roman emperors were proclaimed to be of divine origin.” (Article: Virgin Birth)

Encyclopaedia Biblicia:

“What, however, must never be lost sight of is that the notion of a supernatural birth never at any time attached to the idea of the Jewish Messiah. As late as in the Dialogue of Justin (circa 155AD) we still find Trypho the Jew saying ‘We all expect the Christ to be a man of men.’” (Article: Mary)

An Old Testament Commentary for English Readers: C.J. Elliott D.D.

This commentator who assumes incorrectly that Matthew and Luke recorded a virgin birth, draws a peculiar conclusion:

“It is indeed, as has been said in the New Testament portion of this Commentary, one of the strongest arguments for the historical, non-mythical character of the series of events in Matthew 1, Luke 1 and 2 that they were contrary to prevailing expectation.” (Article: Isaiah. By Rev E.H. Plumtre, D.D.)

THE DISCIPLES DID NOT RECORD THAT A PROPHECY OF VIRGIN BIRTH WAS FULFILLED; NO SUCH PROPHECY EXISTED.

(Point 6, section 2 above)

Matthew alone referred to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Did he change it from “young woman” to “virgin”?

(Note: Refer to Authorised Version. IMMANUEL)

The suggestion that Matthew recorded that Jesus fulfilled a prophecy that was never made is, on the face of it, ridiculous. The present manuscripts of Matthew’s Gospel are Greek manuscripts. But as Matthew quoted Isaiah 7:14, originally written by the prophet in Hebrew, it is interesting to make three inquiries:

Was Matthew’s original gospel in Hebrew? Did he quote from the Hebrew of Isaiah, and faithfully produce the actual words of the prophecy? Is the present Greek manuscript, where it quotes Isaiah, correct?

Edward Gibbon – Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire:

“It is probable enough that the first of the gospels for the use of the Jewish converts, was composed in the Hebrew or Syriac idiom: the fact is attested by a chain of fathers.... But this Hebrew gospel of St. Matthew is most unaccountably lost; and we may accuse the diligence or fidelity of the primitive churches, who have preferred the unauthorised version of some nameless Greek.” (Vol 2 page 284)

Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew:

From the German by J.P. Lange, D.D. By Rev A. Edersheim, PhD.

“The most ancient and trustworthy witnesses record that Matthew wrote his gospel originally in the Hebrew tongue. The testimonies to this effect commence with that of Papias of Hierapolis at the beginning of the second century, who evidently refers to the original gospel by Matthew. His statement is confirmed by almost all the older fathers, such as Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanius... Besides the above testimonies, the whole tenor of the this Gospel proves that it was in the first place destined for the Jewish Christians. Matthew evidently assumes that his readers are conversant with the Old Testament, with the sacred writings and with Palestine and its manners.”

New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures:

This is a translation by the Watch Tower Society, of the New Testament. In the introduction it contains a quotation from St. Jerome, the man responsible for producing the Latin Vulgate Bible in about 400AD.

“In recent years some have claimed that Matthew’s Gospel was at first written in Hebrew rather than its kindred language the Aramaic.... There is evidence that various recensions of the Hebrew and Aramaic versions of Matthew’s account persisted for centuries among the early Jewish Christian communities of Palestine and Syria.... Jerome of the 4th and 5th Centuries CE had this to say:-

‘Matthew, who is also Levi, and who from a publican came to be an apostle first of all the Evangelists, composed a gospel of Christ in Judaea in the Hebrew language and characters, for the benefit of those of the circumcision who had believed. Who translated it into Greek is not sufficiently ascertained. Furthermore, the Hebrew its self is preserved to this day in the library at Caesarea which the martyr Pamphilus so diligently collected. I also was allowed by the Nazarenes who use this volume in the Syrian city of Beroea to copy it. In which it is to be remarked that, wherever the evangelist makes use of the testimonies of the old scriptures, he does not follow the authority of the Seventy Translators, but of the Hebrew.’ ”

Jerome tells us:

- Matthew wrote in Hebrew,
- An unknown person translated it into Greek,
- The sect of Nazarenes had preserved the Hebrew,
- Jerome copies the Hebrew
- This copy showed that when Matthew cited the Old Testament, he did so from the Hebrew not from the Greek translation, the Seventy (Septuagint).

This evidence shows conclusively that when Matthew recorded a second fulfilment of Isaiah 7:14 in the birth of Jesus, he used the same word that Isaiah used, that is young woman. It shows also quite conclusively, that in 400 CE the Hebrew Christian Sect of the Nazarenes had a gospel which said nothing about virgin birth.

Despite the above testimonies it is sometimes claimed that the present Greek manuscripts of Matthew represent the original language in which the gospel was written. These Greek texts mistranslate Isaiah in exactly the same way as the Greek Septuagint had done. This has caused commentators to remark on the Greek version of Matthew’s gospel:

Abingdon Bible Commentary:

“Matthew misunderstood Isaiah’s prophecy from which he quotes; in Isaiah there is no reference to a virgin.” (p.891).

“...there is no evidence that Isa. 7:14 was ever understood in the sense given to it by Matthew till it was so applied by Christians.” (p.957).

The Gospel of Matthew: Theodore H. Robinson, MA, DD.

“The verse which he quotes from Isaiah 7:14 is a familiar ‘proof text’ known and constantly used in the early church... It is cited from the LXX Greek Septuagint) and is, unfortunately, somewhat misleading in the Greek form. The Hebrew has no thought of a miraculous birth, for the term rendered maiden simply means an adult woman, still young enough to become a mother, and is by no means confined to virgins...”

5: THE DILEMMA

The above evidence could be proliferated, but you will notice that the theologians are again on the horns of a dilemma. For if Matthew wrote in Hebrew, as many ancients certified, then he did not say a ‘virgin’ conceived. And if the present Greek is his, then he misunderstood the original from which he quoted.

Despite the evidence that:

- The Jewish people had never heard of a virgin born messiah,
- Isaiah did not predict a virgin birth,
- Hebrew Christians were using a Hebrew version of Matthew that quoted the prophet Isaiah correctly,
- Many copies of this gospel circulated in ancient times,
- The ecclesiastics still prefer to base the whole of their doctrine upon one word – the word ‘*parthenos*’ –, which occurs in the Greek version of Matthew.

It requires nothing more than the discovery of one of the ancient Hebrew manuscripts of Matthew to drive the ecclesiastics from this, their last refuge.

DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS DO NOT IMPLY VIRGIN-BIRTH

(Point7, section 2 above)

Jesus is given the following titles in John chapter 1:

- *Lamb of God, Son of God,*
- *Rabbi, Messiah, Christ,*
- *“Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

Could anything be clearer? The disciples showed that human parentage was considered to be an integral part of messiahship. That they later discovered that Jesus could not be the messiah if he was Joseph’s son gives the question of human parentage greater emphasis. The disciples understood the above terms to involve human parentage.

For confirmation refer to the following:

- Catholic Encyclopaedia – Articles Jesus Christ, and Son of God.
- Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia – Article Fatherhood (p.254).
- Encyclopaedia Biblica – Article Mary (column 2956).

NEITHER JESUS NOR THE DISCIPLES PREACHED VIRGIN-BIRTH

(Points 8 & 9, section 2 above)

This fact is so obvious that it requires no comment. Preaching Jesus as the Christ does not imply preaching that he was born of a virgin.

There is no difference between the written accounts of the birth of Jesus given by Matthew and Luke, and the oral preaching conducted by the disciples. The book of Acts gives an account of the preaching by the disciples up to the year 63AD. Strangely (?) enough there is no mention of virgin-birth.

Theologians, assuming that Matthew and Luke said that Jesus was ‘miraculously incarnated’ through his mother, find a conflict between their attributes and those displayed by all the other writers of the New Testament – John, Mark, Paul and so on. But there really was no conflict: all the New Testament writers were in agreement.

The theologians have made a faulty assessment of what it was that Matthew and Luke recorded.