

PROFESSOR GARY MILLER: A Concise Reply to Christians

If I was to announce my conversion to Christianity, no Christian would complain that my speech is too blunt. So if I must reject an aspect of Christianity in a brief form let me also not be accused of bluntness. A Muslim believes in a religion of Jesus but sees mainline Christianity as a religion constructed *about* Jesus. Our protest is against two particular aspects, the *apotheosis* of Jesus, -that is *the deification of a man*; and the most frequent missionary tactics which has been directed towards Muslims. To deal with the first item and much later on the second, Christians and Muslims who learn something of one another's religion find that a crucial issue is the nature of Jesus. The majority of Christians make Jesus divine while Muslims say that he was no more than a prophet of God, a faultless human being. The doctrine of the Trinity avows that three distinct co-equals are God. In particular Jesus is said to be God the Son or the Son of God and equal to God. As the Muslim questions details of this arrangement the Christian usually forms a common explanation for our differences.

He complains that Muslims do not really understand the Trinity that all our complaints are actually accusing Christians of trithiesm and other heresies, things that Christians don't really believe. So the Muslims seek clarification of the teaching and as it is explained to him and he asks that how can that be so. For example, we (Muslims) insist that the term Son of God cannot have a literal interpretation. Sonship and divine nature would be necessary attributes of such an individual. But these are incompatible. The first - sonship describes someone who has received life, while the second divine nature describes someone who received his life from no-one. These are mutually exclusive requirements. *To be a son is to be less than divine and to be divine is to be no-one's son*. As the discussion proceeds it is the Christian who will eventually take refuge in the response: these are things that we cannot understand.

That is his assessment of the Muslims' problem becomes something he admits to himself. He started by saying Muslims don't understand the Trinity and finishes by saying nobody can. So he changes his tactics. Now he complains that Muslims refuse to accept what cannot be understood. But the modified approach is a diversion. Now the concepts of verification and understanding are confused. To illustrate, chemical reactions may be verified but the atom is not understood. I can verify that hydrogen and oxygen combine to make water but that doesn't mean I understand the atom. This distinction between verifying and understanding is the key to our concise reply. It is the Muslim who must re-direct the discussion. Our primary issue is more basic than resolving the difficulties of Trinitarian doctrine. Rather than ask how the Trinity can be so, *we should ask why it must be so*. We ask why must Jesus be divine.

A few centuries ago European philosophers used to feel that a conjecture was proven if it could be shown that the conjecture was similar to something already stated by Aristotle. Unfortunately that approach stopped short of challenging Aristotle and discovering truth. In the same way if we rest the Trinitarian case on what people have said *about* Jesus, we stop short in establishing the truth of the matter. And our purpose here is no more than the illustration that belief in the Trinity can only be based on Church authority. Many Christians admit that this is the case but there are others who insist that the teaching was explained by Jesus himself. ***Let them produce their proof***, is the repeated phrase in the Qur'an: that is, provide the documentation that Jesus himself claimed unqualified deity. Unless this evidence can be produced, authorities are subject to challenge and then the Christian may not evade the Muslims' questions concerning understanding. The Christian will have no justification for maintaining an illogical position unless he is contented to rely on the opinions of men. Now for Christians the only documents accepted as report the words of Jesus are the accounts given in the Bible. Now we leave the Muslim attitude towards the Bible for later in this talk. Right now our motivation comes from the Qur'anic verse which says: ***...Say O people of the book you have no ground to stand upon unless you stand fast by the law, the gospel and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord.***" In this place Christians are advised to support their claims by sighting their books. Thus Muslims believe that no saying of Jesus can be produced which shows him grasping at a quality with God. The primary issue is not whether Jesus was God, but the most important question is whether he said that he was equal to God. The Bible record of sayings credited to Jesus is quite small after allowing for duplication in the four gospel accounts.

These things could be printed in two columns of a newspaper and none of this handful of texts is an explicit claim of deity. All quotations are implicit that is they require interpretation. An explicit statement is a statement like a sign on a store window that says "CLOSED". An implicit statement is a statement where the meaning is hidden beneath the words that require an interpretation. These are the statements that are quoted by Jesus. In other words we are told what Jesus said and then told what he meant, and so our methods take an obvious form. It is not our intention or our obligation to re-interpret the Bible. We are satisfied to merely verify that Christian interpretations are insufficient, ambiguous or impossible. That is, we're meant to argue three things - that in some places where the meaning of a quotation is clear, it is still insufficient to prove that Jesus claimed the quality with God, or that in other places quotations sighted are open to different interpretations; they are ambiguous or still other quotations of Jesus have been given interpretations which are impossible. In these three cases it means the evidence is either inadequate, inconclusive or unacceptable.

Let's begin with insufficient evidence.

The virgin birth of Jesus and the miracles he demonstrated are sighted by some as proof of his divinity. The insufficiency of the premises is obvious. We only read the Biblical account of Adam's creation without father or mother and the accounts of miracles associated with the prophet Elisha. In the case of these two men, no Christian asserts their divinity, yet each has a qualification in common with Jesus. Some maintain that Jesus was God because the Hebrews scriptures predicted this comment. The inadequacy here is only slightly less apparent because the ancient Hebrew Scriptures predicted his coming. The inadequacies here are only slightly less apparent. Because in ancient Hebrew Scriptures are also sighted as predicting the role of John the Baptist.

These three arguments are mentioned to show that the ready claims of Christians betray a selective or forgetful recall of scripture. They know the fact of the virgin birth as well as they know the account of Adams' origins, yet they interpret the first and overlook the second.

Now to pursue our case directly, does the Bible quote of Jesus as claiming equality with God. Bible texts are produced to show that Jesus used the terms: 'Son of man, Son of God, Messiah and Saviour'. But each of these terms is applied to other individuals in the Bible. Ezekiel was addressed as son of man. Jesus himself spoke of the peacemakers as sons of God. Cyrus the Persian is called messiah, and in this case, the deceit of translators is apparent. For they inevitably render only the meaning of the word Messiah in this passage of Isaiah chapter 45 and verse 1. The meaning of Messiah is anointed, somebody who was specially chosen and put in charge of a particular duty. Where there are other Bible verses that seem to refer to Jesus they write Messiah instead of translating the word as anointed or they put the Greek word which is equivalent to Messiah, i.e. Christ. In this way they hope to give the impression that there is only one Messiah. As for Saviour, the word is applied to other than Jesus, at 2nd Kings, chapter 13 and verse 5 for example. But Christians choose to sight the 43rd chapter of Isaiah as proof that there is only one Saviour. Again translators have tried to obscure the fact that God is the only Saviour in the same ultimate sense and that He is our only Nourisher and our only Protector. Though men also have these assigned tasks. But over-specifying the statement in Isaiah about God being the only Saviour they hope to have us believe that God equals Saviour and Jesus equals Saviour, therefore Jesus equals God. The conspiracy of modern translation is easily demonstrated. The King James Bible of 1611 is available everywhere. Compare it to a more recent translation, say the New American Bible of this century. In the earlier version we find at 2nd Kings 13 and 5 the word Saviour, but in the newer version the word *deliverer* had been substituted. The two words mean the same thing, but by substituting 'deliverer' in this case they hide the fact that other people besides Jesus were called by the title Saviour. In fact Saviours the plural will be found in Obadiah verse 21 and Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 27. Here again by substituting a different word in the modern translations the connotation of divinity which is tied to this word Saviour has been guarded in modern versions by less than honest translation. Once more we have shown the insufficient wants of arguments which have been offered. Those terms which are said to imply divinity are used of individuals other than Jesus.

There is a quotation that should be mentioned here also: i.e. John 8 and 58, it is reported that Jesus said: before Abraham was, I am. Even if Jesus meant to claim by these words that he was alive before Abraham was, is this sufficient ground to say that he is divine. If Jesus lived in heaven, then came to earth it might mean something remarkable, but it would not be enough to establish him as God in the flesh. In addition it should also

be noted that these words are open to other interpretation. Christians do not imagine that the prophet Jeremiah had a pre-human existence, but this is one way of interpreting the words in the book of Jeremiah, Chapter 1 and verse 5, that portray a pre-human existence for Jeremiah literally, but Christians find another explanation. Why not a similar understanding in the case of John 8 and 58 ?

Now to ambiguous evidence

Some scholars have insisted that in this statement just discussed Jesus appropriated for himself a divine title, because in Exodus chapter 3 it is reported that God told Moses I AM what I AM, as most English Bibles translate the Hebrew text. At John 8 and 58 Jesus says, before Abraham was I AM as most English Bibles translate the Greek text; but here is the key to another deception. The original of the first text is in *Hebrew* while the original of the second is in *Greek*. *All but a few of the words of Jesus were recorded in Greek*. For 200 years before the time of Jesus the Jews used the Greek translation of their Hebrew scriptures. The Septuagint. This work translated that the key phrase - *I am* -of Exodus -*ho-on-*

However the words of Jesus I AM have been given to us in Greek as -*ego ami-* If the gospel writer of this passage wanted to tell his Greek speaking audience that Jesus has imitated God he would have used the familiar words of the Septuagint otherwise the point would be lost. The evidence of this verse is far from conclusive. There is another Greek word to consider which betrays suppression or neglect of evidence, of John 10 and 30. Jesus is quoted as saying: 'I and the Father are one'- the Greek word 'one' is translated as '*hen.*' Certain scholars have insisted that the only possible understanding of this word is 'one' in essence or nature. Now a person does not have to be a Greek scholar to refute this claim. A counter example is sufficient. We find this same word '*hen,*' used by Jesus in John chapter 17 verses 11, 21, 22 and 23, and in these places he *includes* his disciples in this oneness with God, whatever its meaning.

The most widely translated sentence on earth is said to be Jesus' statement of John 3: 16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son", now Christians wish to say that the word 'only begotten' gives Jesus special status among all the sons of God, but again there is a problem of ambiguity. The same word translated as 'only begotten' is found at Hebrews 11 and 17. In this verse, the word refers to Isaac. Now the Bible itself shows that Isaac's older brother, Ishmael, outlived his father. *Therefore at no time was Isaac strictly speaking the only begotten son of Abraham*. Because Christian scholars recognize this fact, they qualify the meaning of the word 'only begotten' in this case. They give it a less than literal interpretation. But if the meaning of that word is subject to interpretation here then why not also in the passage of John 3:16 ? Once more the possibility of ambiguity means that John 3: 16 is inconclusive. Whether or not Jesus really used the term Father, when speaking of God is another controversy. But our point here is again that such use is inconclusive evidence that God was literally Father to Jesus. All Christians use the term when addressing God. The Jews themselves use the term. Jesus told them the Devil was their father, and of course he was not speaking literally.

Certain scholars have stressed the verse of Mark 14 and 36 where Jesus speaks the Aramaic word for father, 'Abba'. They insist that this implies a very unique relationship between Jesus and God. But this shows forgetfulness on their part because some of the favorite verses of the Bible are Romans 8 and 14, and Colossians chapter 4 and verse 6, where every Christian is said to use this term of address for God. Every Christian is said to call God Abba.

As to impossible evidence

An episode is recorded in the 20th chapter of John and a certain Thomas is quoted as saying, "My Lord and My God". In interpreting this, Christians maintain that Thomas was addressing Jesus by both of these titles. Now Muslims would have no objections to the term 'Lord' as the Bible explains the word means master. And Sarah is said to have called her husband Abraham by this title. 1st Peter 3 and 6 tells us this. The suggestion that Thomas addressed Jesus as literally being God is a different matter. Jesus had already pointed out that the Hebrew Scriptures themselves address men as gods. This will allow for Thomas' use of the term. However, Christians prefer to use the explanation given by Paul in 1st Corinthians chapter 8. In this place Paul said that there are many lords and many gods in his words - yet for us there is but One God, the Father and One Lord, Jesus Christ. But the difficulty with applying this verse to what Thomas said should be obvious. ***We are left with an***

unorthodox doctrine namely that Jesus is the Father. Paul has said there is for us but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, and yet the Christian wants to insist when Thomas said that my Lord and God, he spoken both directly to Jesus. This is an ancient heresy, the church calls this *patropassionism or manarchomism or sebeliaism*.

The distinction between Father and son is essential to the doctrine of the Trinity. This distinction is blurred again when John chapter 14 verses 9 is pressed into service. Here Jesus replied to a man named Phillip who said to Jesus, show us God. Jesus said, -he who has seen me, has seen the Father. Now if you take that strictly literally, it would mean an unacceptable doctrine even to Christians that Jesus is the Father. So interpreters say that - no, in this place Father is equivalent to God. And Jesus was saying if you've seen me, you've seen God because I am God and you're looking at Him. However, we cannot possibly be obliged to understand that Jesus meant to say that, and the reason is found just a few pages earlier in John chapter 5 and verse 37. Here Jesus told a crowd of people about the Father or God saying, 'you have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form'. Surprisingly enough it is often conceded that individual verses are insufficient, inconclusive or even unusable in the case made for the divinity of Jesus. However, there are those who will insist that while any given verse maybe insufficient but it is the total collection of all such verses that proves the case. This betrays a misunderstanding of the reasoning process. Each verse must prove something or it is dispensable. When we're given a verse we must demand to know exactly what it does prove and why. The traditional explanation of scripture has been exposed within the church itself as being uncertain. In many cases the premises and the conclusions are not clearly stated. Even to this date there is still debate about what is meant by the term the 'redemption of man'. Whether we probe the roots or the outgrowth of this system, the structure of Christian doctrine becomes vague.

A final argument has been offered based on the understanding of the Jews. Christians have said that any rebuttal which a Muslim might give is unimportant because the fact remains that the Jews understood Jesus to claim that he was equal to God. For example they sight John chapter 5 and verse 18. In this place the gospel writer reports that the Jews were upset with Jesus quote, *'because he was calling God his own Father making himself equal to God'*, unquote. They pass over the verses which follow immediately after this verse where Jesus subjected himself to God and he proceeded to name all those things which God gave him. They cite the 10th chapter of John - here the Jews tried to stone Jesus for blasphemy. They miss the point of the reply Jesus made to them as they picked up their rocks. He demonstrated to those Jews by quoting their own scripture that they had no grounds for their accusation.

Curiously enough, in their hurry to put claims on the lips of Jesus part of the Christian church has constructed a very confused story. The Hebrew Scriptures made reference to a Messiah. And the church says this can only mean an incarnate God, God in the flesh. And so when Jesus spoke of himself as the Messiah he was blaspheming because no man can be God according to the Hebrew Scriptures or so the reasoning all seems to flow together in confusion. Once more, there are saying, look how angry the Jews were with Jesus when he said that he was the Messiah, they said he was blaspheming. That must mean that Messiah equals God and that's why the Jews were upset with him.

While there is a legal point to be made that here, if the Jews understood that the Messiah was supposed to be a man who was equal to God then a man who claimed to be the Messiah could only be condemned as a false Messiah. He could not be condemned on the grounds that he said something which in itself is a blasphemy.

Because at some future time the true Messiah would have to speak the very same words -he would have to say 'I am the Messiah,' and no one would condemn him. *When certain Jews said that Jesus was blaspheming they could only have meant to say that Jesus was a false Messiah.* Their anger would be over the fact that he claimed to be the Messiah when he was not. Any connection between the word Messiah and the attribute of divinity has no bearing on this matter. The fact is the Jews have never believed that the promised Messiah would be a man that is equal to God. In the 2nd chapter of Mark Jesus told a man *'your sins are forgiven'*. The usual interpretation takes the side of the Jews who were present then who asked themselves, - 'who can forgive sins except God'. But the verse in John 12 and 49 among others explains very well how a man could make such a statement. In this verse Jesus denies any personal initiative, he said 'I only spoke what God told me to say'. The argument which is based on the Jewish understanding makes the assumption that the Jews understood Jesus. A better

hypothesis is simply that the enemies of Jesus misunderstood him. In fact Jesus repeatedly used to mention that problem. For example, in the 4th chapter of Mark. It is interesting to note that today Jewish scholars find virtually no objections to anything Jesus said. Now to conclude the first matter that is the deification of Jesus, we have not merely used the Bible to suit ourselves. Verses have been sighted from the Bible without any commitment as to whether or not they are accurate. It has been our intention only to show the defects in the Christian stand which says Jesus used to walk around claiming to be equal to God. If we analyze the mixture of things said to establish that position we find inferior ingredients. We find weak evidence and empty reasoning. Our position has been narrowed enough to make almost any Christian response a step towards the Muslims religion. We have sighted the most quoted and clear scriptures. So if any others are brought forward the Christian admits the deficiency of his previous arguments, and thus makes a short list even shorter. The list of quotations which was said to prove his case, or if a Christian builds his case on something other than is accredited to Jesus he repeats exactly what we've first protested.

Mainland Christianity is based on what people have said about Jesus. We've asked earlier why must Jesus be divine? By this we meant to ask why does a Christian believe it must be so. If this question is asked without reference to what we've been discussing - a Christian will answer -Jesus must be divine if his death is to be sufficient redemption for the sins of mankind. In the Christian scheme of redeeming man it is believed that a sacrificial death was necessary that men could be saved. Now if we ask why the death of any man would not satisfy the requirements, - the Christian would reply that all men are imperfect. If we ask why men are imperfect, we are told that this is something we inherit from our father. Jesus had no father, by their own scheme he would have been a perfect sacrificial victim. Nevertheless, they still require that he be *divine* in order to suit the world of redeemer, and so we ask, - 'did God die'? And he quickly replies: no, only the man Jesus died. Jesus is said to be a God- man, and it was the human component that died. But now, the Christian has said that the death of a *man* has saved us from our sins. The infinite is required for this ritual of sacrifice but at the last moment the infinite is not actually sacrificed.

Missionary tactics

The second part of this talk concerns missionary tactics and one in particular. There are many missionary tactics directed by the Christians towards Muslims. Most of these stand immediately condemned by the Bible itself, because the Bible talks about their masters' path being straight. Missionary strategies have included enticing Muslims with money, women, alcohol and social status. These methods may lead people but do they lead by a straight path? A complete exposure of such activities is a worthwhile investigation, but this is not our concern here. Christian authors who deal with the Qur'an and the Bible in order to win converts are the subject now.

Attacks on the Qur'an have been around since the book first appeared. In fact, in a remarkable verse the Qur'an invites examination in the 4th Surah, the 82nd ayah, it says, - *'have they not considered the Qur'an with care, - if it was from other than Allah surely they would find in it many inconsistencies therein'*. While many theories have been offered to explain where the Qur'an came from, - in the words of the new Catholic Encyclopedia, - 'today no sensible person believes these theories'. This leaves the Christian in some difficulty. We also want to mention that no theory has been suggested as to the origin of the Qur'an, that is not already commented on in the Qur'an itself. The book is very unusual as it replies to all its critics. When a verse of the Qur'an is said to be in error the Muslims' natural urge is to correct the inaccurate interpretation. But we perform more efficiently if we are realistic. There is a difference in attitude between those which study the Qur'an and those which assault the Qur'an. A sincere questioner has open mindedly accepted the challenge of this verse. Most often however the missionary both attacks and distorts the Qur'an, at the same time he pretends to be reasonable. This opponent is not interested in the proper understanding of any given verse. So we may thus proceed as outlined earlier in this talk. If someone comes to us to say this verse in the Qur'an is in error we have to only show that the so-called difficulty originates in the interpretation of theirs which has not considered sufficiency, ambiguity or acceptability - that is we only need to show that a given interpretation is inadequate to build their case or that the meaning of words has been overly restricted or it is not the only meaning possible or that a meaning has been given which is actually impossible. My own experience has often been that Christians who come forward with questions about the Qur'an will find the answers to those questions in the same place they've found the questions. What frequently happens is they have studied Muslim *commentaries* of the Qur'an, *tafseer*, and when they find an obscure point they bring it

forward Muslims, hoping that we are unaware of research and explanation that has already been done on the matter centuries ago.

Now what does the Qur'an say about the Bible? Certain missionary writers intend to tell not only Christians about the Qur'an, but they intend to tell Muslims about the Qur'an also, and they build a flimsy case in order to provoke controversy where there is none. They tell Muslims that the Qur'an says that the Bible is accurate. They tell us that the Qur'an accuses the Christians of changing the texts of the scriptures. The Qur'an does not make either of these assertions. By pointing to disagreements between the Qur'an and the Bible, they hope to make difficulty because they say - your book says our book is accurate, by arguing for the preservation of ancient biblical texts, they intend to cause still more confusion for Muslims because they say your book says our book has been changed.

However these tactics can only work if we admit the premises on which they stand and we do not. First, the Qur'an states the Christians have access to the truth in their scriptures. It does not catalogue the 66 small books called the Bible and label them as accurate. In fact, it condemns those who would claim divine inspiration by something that was actually composed by a man. Part of the Bible as we will see falls into this category. Second, the Qur'an does not accuse Christians of deliberately tampering with the original texts of their Scriptures; rather, it accuses them of manipulating the understanding of their scriptures. The deceptive translations that I mentioned earlier, illustrates this kind of practice. We discussed the translation of the words Messiah and Saviour. In short, the Muslim believes that the Bible contains the words of God and more words besides these. This is the Muslim position and it is actually the attitude of many Christians, most Christians. It is only a certain collection of Christians - the fundamentalists who maintain that all of the Bible is originated with God. Sticking to this belief is unjustified for at least four reasons. One, it is not claimed within the Bible itself that it is totally inspired. Two, it is an unworthy attitude. Three, it is not self-consistent and four, it is not logically possible. In the first place, the Bible nowhere names itself, the word Bible is not in the Bible. Sixty six books have been bound as one book, without any divine command to do so. Compare for example the opening of the book of Jonah quote, - "the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying and so on, unquote. Compare that with the opening remarks of the writer of the 3rd Gospel account, the Gospel according to Luke which begins by saying, "It seemed fitting for me to write it out" according to the New American Bible. You see the first book of Jonah at least claims divine inspiration while the second author makes no such claim. He says that it's a good idea to write it down. By trading on the vagueness of the words scripture and book the fundamentalists try to make a case for total inspiration of the Bible. For example, they quote 2nd Timothy 3 verse 16 where Paul wrote to Timothy quote, -"All scripture is inspired of God" unquote. In the first place it still remains to establish the authority of Paul, - did he speak for God in His place. But the real trickery is in the isolation of this verse. In the sentence before this, Paul indicated what he considered as scripture, namely that which Timothy studied as a child. When Timothy was a child, the last 27 books of the Bible had not been written. The last verses in today's Bible seem to have concluded the whole Bible. In these verses it warns against adding or subtracting contents in -quote, "this book" unquote. However this book can only refer to this last book of the Bible and not to the Bible itself. And the reason is clear, any Christian reference will acknowledge that other books of the Bible were written after this one. *That is the last book in today's Bible was not the last one written.* In fact, exactly which books should form the contents of the Bible were still being debated 300 years after Jesus. Secondly, we said that total inspiration of the Bible meant an unworthy attitude. The official position of the fundamentalist churches is really a modification of the blunt statement that the Bible is the perfect word of God. They consider the modification slight but actually it is ruinous.

What they say officially is the Bible is quote 'inerrant in the original manuscript' unquote, - that is there are no mistakes in the original copies of the Bible, which we no longer have. If all the contradictions in the Bible could be explained as misunderstandings why do they keep this excuse? By taking this position they admit that there are errors in the Bible, and these are said to be only small copying errors made over the centuries as the Scriptures were re-copied. They have disregarded the advice of Jesus who said - 'that carelessness in the little things means carelessness in larger matters', - Luke chapter 16. The unworthy statement about today's Bible is really, the Bible contains small mistakes, but no big ones. Thirdly, they said the position of total inspiration for the Bible was not self-consistent. There are many copying errors in the Bible, - the conflicting statistics of Ezra chapter 2 verse 5 and Nehemiah chapter 7 verses 10 for example. On the one hand the fundamentalists have admits this to be the case and excuses it as a minor copying error. On the other hand he puts his trust in the statement of Isaiah 40 and 8 which says- "The word of our God

stands forever.” This verse does not go on to accept minor details, Isaiah 40 and 8 does not say “the word of our God stands forever”, except for some of the small details. According to this verse, if God says it, it does not get lost. But mistakes of re-copying mean something of the original has been lost. *It is inconsistent to excuse error and at the same time disallow error. The only solution is to drop the notion of total divine inspiration of the Bible.*

And fourthly, we say that total inspiration is illogical, because it is denied within the Bible and it is disproved within the Bible. At 1st Corinthians 7 verse 25 the Bible writer specifically says that he is about to make a statement which did not originate with God. *Inspiration is disallowed.* In the first chapter of Titus we have a counter example which disproves total divine inspiration. Paul in this place quoted the famous Epimenidys paradox. He specified that Epimenidys was a Cretan and he quoted him as saying- Cretans are always liars. He then says that the man spoke the truth. But when the statement is spoken by a Cretan it is definitely not true. If it was true then at least once a Cretan was not a liar in which case the statement is false, but the conclusion is the denial of the assumption and so the statement is not true. The writer Paul at least on this occasion was without divine guidance, for he did not discern the subtlety. The Christians who preach to the Muslims must first be prepared to allow us to clearly establish our own position otherwise he confronts a man of straw but misses the target of genuine Islam. These comparisons of the Bible and the Qur’an are most often seen to be shallow and misleading as with the matter discussed earlier, the deification of Jesus our most fruitful debates will be those that will consider why and not how. If the Christian wishes to prove his stand, he must justify it after explaining it. Conversely, if he would attack our stand, he must understand it correctly before he insists that we justify it.

Finally, this is not an attack on the Bible but it is an attack on an unjustified attitude held by some concerning the Bible. Remember, the Muslim believes the Bible to contain God’s words but he does not accept the entire contents as such. Well, our final suggestion, Christian belief reduces to this, they say, the Jews have always had an incorrect idea about the Messiah. That is, while the Jews expect someone who is only Son of God in a figurative sense Jesus told the Jews that the Messiah was literally, really the Son of God. This is what Christians say, and in this frame of mind, the Christian can point to every Biblical account of Jesus being hated by Jews, every episode where Jews were angry with Jesus and claim that it was this new truth that Jesus told them that made them so upset. But there are important facts to consider. The concept of the Messiah was gradually formed by the Jews and the opinions differed. While several men have already been called the Messiah, Son of man and Son of God in the Jewish scriptures, the Jews came to expect a most special, pre-eminent Messiah, a victorious leader through whom their whole nation would be a blessing to all worlds.

Our suggestion is this, - suppose that Jesus meant to tell the Jews that while he also deserved to be called the Messiah, Son of God, Son of man he was not about to fulfill their unrealistic and misunderstood expectations. Now several mysteries are clarified. Jesus could not have meant to claim status as the most special Messiah by his continual use of the term Son of man because he told his disciples not to tell anyone he is the Messiah, Luke chapter 9. Notice how in one place he talked the men out of following him, because the men may have had mistaken ideas, Matthew chapter 8. While many Jews believed that the Messiah would inherit his kingly rights from David, Jesus pointed out the difficulties of this interpretation, Matthew chapter 22. Look also that today’s Jewish scholars have indicated that Son of God is given its Christian meaning not by Jesus but by Paul. Meanwhile some Jewish aspects have been adopted. It was Paul who incited Christians to find symbolic meanings in scripture.

So we have impossible parallels of that in Matthew chapter 2 which quotes a fragment of Hosea chapter 11, and thus likens Jesus to an idolatress nation. We have the unprecedented case of a prophet who supposedly would die and then return to fulfill all things expected of him. At Acts chapter 3 the disciple gives a speech where he promises the return of Jesus. He says that Jesus cannot return until all prophecies given by God are fulfilled. And then he proceeds to quote one prophecy which was delivered through Moses. Now Christians understand the quotation of Moses to refer to Jesus himself, instead of being a promise of somebody who is yet to come in fulfillment of the prophecy before the return of Jesus can take place. The verse quoted by Peter in this place reports that God told Moses about a prophet quote “like you from among their brothers” unquote. That is the brothers of the Israelites. Where Jesus was unlike Moses in being leader of a nation, Christians believe that he will be victorious on his second visit. However, they do not usually expect him to acquire a human father, a wife and children and then die of old age like Moses.

Moreover, from among their brothers seems to indicate not an Israelite in the first place but someone who is a relative of that nation. There is another historical figure who fits better than Jesus as the prophet promised by Moses. He was not an Israelite but Jesus said that God's special favors would be taken from Israel and given to a nation which would become fruitful, Matthew chapter 21. It was Jacob or Israel the man himself who prophesied that 'the kingdom would be the possession of the family of his son Juda until the coming of the one who it belongs to', Genesis chapter 49. While Christians see this one who it belongs to as being Jesus, - look again at these words. When I've give a man something and tell him to keep it until the owner comes, do I mean to say that the item belongs to one of his descendants? This is hardly a natural interpretation. The many Qur'anic and Biblical references of the last prophet are a new subject. A satisfying discussion that unavoidably leads to the messenger who brought Islam to a nation and through them to all the nations. May Allah always guide us closer to the truth?

Prof. Gary Miller

Notes:

ARISTOTLE AND WESTERN CIVILISATION S. Ebrahim {email request for this book as well as the Aristotle book, free to email-sulaimane@yahoo.com / or ymoosa786@hotmail.com /or ymoosa786@telkomsa.net }

The Western World is proud of its roots in Greek Philosophy, and prides itself with persons of the calibre of 'Aristotle' and 'Plato.' Today, in the western world it has become a common belief that the writings of "Aristotle" ought to be quoted, as if one could derive from it some useful information. Yet, if "Aristotle" really existed, then he could not have been such a knowledgeable scholar / philosopher; as will be observed from the following statement made by a great scholar, an embryologist, by the name of Professor Keith Moore, who states the following:

"As far as we know, Aristotle wrote the first embryology book in the 4th century BC. In it he recorded some observations on comparative embryology, especially on the general progress of the developing chick. **He promoted, however, the incorrect idea that the human embryo developed from a formless mass that resulted from the union of semen with menstrual blood. Scientific knowledge of embryology did not progress significantly for nearly 2000 years.**" [Africa Events, May 1985, p. 16.] [Our emphases]

"I have to deplore the systematic manner in which the literature of Europe has contrived to put out of sight our scientific obligations to the Mohammedans. Surely they cannot be much longer hidden. Injustice founded on religious rancour and national conceit cannot be perpetuated forever. [J. W. Draper: The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe, page 356, 2nd Edition, 1864]

The alteration and corruption of the Bible, the Old as well as the New Testament, spoken of in v. 75 and repeated here, is now an established fact. That the alteration spoken of in v. 75 was an alteration of the words of the text is made manifest here: "They write the Book with their hands then say: This is from Allah". These alterations they effected for their own selfish ends. "That they may take for it a small price".

I give below a few quotations from Rev. Dummelow, which prove the alteration of the Bible text beyond all doubt: "On close examination, however, it must be admitted that the Pentateuch reveals many features inconsistent with the traditional view that in its present form it is the work of Moses. For instance, it may be safely granted that Moses did not write the account of his own death in Dt. 34. The statement in Dt. 1:1 that Moses spoke these words beyond Jordan is evidently made from the standpoint of one living in Canaan, which Moses never did.... Other passages which can with difficulty be ascribed to him are Ex. 6:26, 27; 11:3; 16:35, 36; Lv. 18:24-28; Nu. 12:3; Dt. 2:12" (Bible Commentary, p. xxiv). And again: "A careful examination has led many scholars to the conviction that the writings of Moses formed only the rough material or purport of the material, and that in its present form it is not the work of one man, but a compilation made from previously existing documents" (p. xxvi). Still

again: “Similarly in the legislative portions of these books we find apparent contradictions and these not in minor or insignificant details, but in fundamental enactments” (p. xxvi). The text of the New Testament is still more unreliable. The same author says: “To begin with, the writers of the Gospels report in Greek ... the sayings of Jesus Christ, who for the most part probably spoke Aramaic ... Not even in later centuries, do we find that scrupulous regard for the sacred text which marked the transmission of the Old Testament. A copyist would sometimes put in not what was in the text, but what he thought out to be in it. He would trust a fickle memory, or he would even make the text accord with the views of the school to which he belonged” (p. xvi).

“Bible, Manuscripts of the. Copies of the Biblical text, written by hand. The text of the Bible has been handed down to us through handwritten and printed copies of the original writings and through translations into various ancient and modern languages. **None of the original manuscripts written by the inspired authors themselves (autographs) is known to exist**, but there are many ancient copies of the originals.”¹ (*Our emphases*)

“Since no autograph of any book of the Bible has survived, textual criticism plays an important part in Bible study. The material on which textual critics of the Bible work includes not only manuscript copies of the books of the Bible in their original languages but also ancient translations into other languages and quotations of biblical passages by ancient authors”.² [*Our emphases*]

The problem of the language that prophet Mûsâ (p.b.u.h) spoke is the secret why the Old Testament can never stand the test of authenticity. Those Who Claim To Believe That The Bible Is The Word Of God must also consider the following arguments: Let us assume that prophet Mûsâ (p.b.u.h) could have spoken Hebrew or even Aramaic, then, we must also agree that Pharaoh would never have spoken with him in Hebrew or Aramaic, which must have been the slave languages, as the Children of Israel were the slaves of Pharaoh at that time. Therefore, it stands to reason that prophet Mûsâ (p.b.u.h) and Pharaoh must have communicated in the Egyptian Arabic language or any other Egyptian language. This means that God’s revealed words were communicated to Pharaoh in one of the Egyptian languages so that he would have had no excuse to understand the message.

Never mind the Old Covenant’s problem, (as Christianity is not really based on it) we have the same problem with the New Testament. According to the Catholic Bible (1959), the language of Jesus is said to be Aramaic, which was the spoken language in Galilee at that time. Already, one can see that much confusion exists about the mother tongue (language) of Jesus, since: **“...no contemporary literary remains of this dialect, [Aramaic] remains we cannot determine precisely the dialect he (Jesus) spoke”**. (Catholic Bible. - J. P. O’Connell, et al. The Holy Family Bible Holy Family Edition of the Catholic Bible, from a Practical Dictionary of Biblical and General Catholic Information, Virtue and Company Limited: London, 1959, p. 30.)

Interesting information:

The prophet’s Mohammed (pbuh) name מוחמד appears in the Bible in Hebrew language

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xrDzlzVt4g&feature=related>

You can **copy** this word **מוחמד** and **paste** in the translation web sites from Hebrew to English

I did the text translation myself too to make sure its real and the word **מוחמד** is translated to **Muhammad**.

Subhana Allah

¹ J. P. O’Connell, et al. The Holy Family Bible Holy Family Edition of the Catholic Bible, from a Practical Dictionary of Biblical and General Catholic Information, Virtue and Company Limited: London, 1959, p. 30 - hereafter the following abbreviation will be used: C.B.

² : New Bible Dictionary First Edition, 1978, p. 151. And in the second edition 1988, it appears on page 140.

Use this site for translation- <http://www.freetranslation.com>

Please visit the following websites for more Information on Islam:

www.islamic-message.net; www.discoverislam.co.za; www.islam-guide.com

