

**THE VIRGIN BIRTH  
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

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**Chapter Two**

**THE FACTS OF THIS GREAT DOCTRINE**

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**I. THE REAL REASON FOR NOT BELIEVING IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH**

1. Those Who Reject Belief in the Virgin Birth are Disciples of a Natural Theology Which has Eliminated All the Supernatural in the Christian Religion

The Virgin Birth is not just one isolated theoretical miracle that they hang up and disbelieve, and then go on believing in all the other supernatural miraculous elements in the Christian faith.

That is not the story. The Virgin Birth is merely a wedge they used to drive division and to push from the New Testament record every hint of any kind of supernaturalism.

We are discussing the Virgin Birth here, it is true. But it is also necessary to point out that this is only a fragment of a much larger controversy and a much larger question. The great bulk of opposition to the Virgin Birth comes from those who do not recognize a supernatural element in CHRIST's life at all.

It is not a question of the Virgin Birth alone, but a question of the whole view we are to take of JESUS in his person and work.

It is not a question of a single miracle, but a question of all of his miracles, including his miraculous life.

We are sometimes told that even if belief and faith in the Virgin Birth is given up, there is still enough evidence left in the Gospels to furnish hope and faith in his Divinity. But the point

simply is that these other evidences are not allowed to stand.

They proceed directly from throwing out the Virgin Birth to the next logical point of attacking every supernatural element connected with his life throughout the Gospels.

## 2. The Same Teachers and Preachers Who Reject the Doctrine of the Virgin Birth also Reject All Other Supernatural Teachings

The same teachers and preachers who reject the Virgin Birth also reject all the other supernatural teachings of the New Testament, such as:

- (1) The Inspiration of the Scriptures
- (2) The Miracles of JESUS
- (3) The Vicarious Blood Atonement
- (4) The Reality of the New Birth
- (5) The Resurrection of CHRIST
- (6) The Second Coming of CHRIST
- (7) The Resurrection of the Believers
- (8) The Judgment
- (9) Heaven and Hell

You are beginning to ask now, "What do we have left as we follow these liberals in throwing out the supernatural?"

No better answer could be given than to let one of the foremost of their company speak for himself.

One American preacher who denies the Deity of JESUS, the Virgin Birth of JESUS and all the miraculous elements connected with his life is Dr. Karl M. Chworosky, pastor of the First Unitarian Church, Westport, Connecticut. Dr. Chworosky is a graduate of Wartburg Theological Seminary of Iowa and of the University of Wisconsin.

In his own words, I quote, "If by Heaven you mean an abode of eternal light where the saved and redeemed enjoy everlasting bliss, and if by hell you mean the devil's eternal darkness where the wicked suffer unending torment and punishment, then Unitarians emphatically repudiate such beliefs."

"Unitarians believe that evil defeats itself and that virtue is the reward of those who obey the laws of man and GOD."

"The idea that a GOD of love and mercy would want to consign a human being because of wrongdoing during a relatively brief spell of moral existence to eternal damnation or that GOD will reward the mortal doers of good with everlasting happiness, appears to most Unitarians absurd, entirely inconsistent with any moral concept of Deity."

The minister continues, "Hell is man's failure to be and live up to his best."

"Hell is injustice, violence, tyranny, hatred, war and everything that fits these satanic categories.

Let us fight these evil forces here and now to help create that paradise of which the poet speaks."

## II. THE TRAGIC RESULTS WHEN THE SUPERNATURAL IS ELIMINATED

Historic New Testament Christianity has believed through the ages that the Bible was a supernatural book written by men laboring under supernatural inspiration.

They have believed that CHRIST was the result of a miraculous, supernatural conception on the part of the HOLY SPIRIT in the womb of Mary.

They have believed that CHRIST was a supernatural man being GOD and man at the same time, that He lived a supernatural life, performed supernatural miracles, and brought to us a supernatural salvation that can save us in a supernatural manner.

They have believed that He died a supernatural death, rose from the grave supernaturally and ascended in a supernatural way back to the right hand of the Father to be the Advocate for the sins of the world, and that one day, He is coming in a supernatural manner to take over the reins of the earth and rule as a supernatural King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Those who reject this supernatural concept become disciples of a "Natural Theology."

### 1. A Natural Theology

By a "Natural Theology," we mean a natural philosophical concept of man that tries to weave some vague belief of GOD into a natural theology and philosophy that eliminates all of the eminent present workings of GOD, such as miracles or supernatural evidences in the natural course of the affairs of the world today.

### 2. Christianity is Robbed of its Distinctiveness and its Vitality When This Course of Natural Theology is Pursued and Accepted.

One of the chief characteristics of the Christian life is that it gives its followers an incentive and a joy that is not found in any other philosophical concept of natural science or religion anywhere in the world.

The story we have just been relating begins with joy. "**Fear not... I bring you good tidings of great joy,**" is the very opening of the Gospel story, and it closes with a great joyful note, "**Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!**"

To study the beliefs, dogmas, rituals and ceremonies of the followers of all other great religions, is to see them toil in the darkness, and hope, wait and wish; and then to turn to that body of Christians who had a joy, joy, joy that was indescribable and to see their joyous certainty and faith as they are evidenced, is to witness something which takes more than modern man to explain.

### 3. A Religion Which Does Not Lift the Morals of the People

A natural theology or Christianity that does not lift the morals of the people is not the true religion of GOD as revealed by the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

We are witnessing in our present day evidences of just what I am talking about.

From my sermon "*IS THE WORLD GETTING BETTER OR WORSE?*" under the point, The Report From Religion, you will find the following:

The total membership in all U. S. churches as of September, 1955, is 97,482,611. This figures six out of every ten or sixty percent of the population. One hundred years ago, only sixteen percent of the population were church members. Church membership in various bodies is as follows:

Protestant - 57,124,144 in 273,508 churches  
Roman Catholic - 32,403,333 in 20,794 churches  
Jews - 5,500,000 in 400,079 temples  
Eastern Orthodox - 2,024,219 in 13,041 churches  
Buddhist - 63,000 in 49 organizations

There are about 250 different protestant denominations in the United States; but eighty per cent of all church members belong to one of the five larger groups, namely:

Baptist, 18,488,821;  
Methodist, 11,688,002;  
Lutheran, 6,818,283;  
Presbyterian, 3,703,021;  
Protestant Episcopal, 2,600,699.

There is, at present, a great boom in religion. The President opens his cabinet with prayer. Special prayer rooms are set aside in the Capitol. Religious books are our best sellers. Drive-in theaters are being turned into churches. Churches are burning mortgages. New church buildings are going up like mushrooms. Church pews are packed on Sunday morning. Sunday School attendance is at an-all time high. Regardless of the denomination or the report, they all point upward. Going to church has become the thing to do. Religion has become a juke box hit. The words "under GOD" have been added to the pledge to our flag. The post office has just issued a stamp carrying the words, "In GOD we trust." Revivals are sweeping the world.

### **III. THE PROPER APPROACH FOR OUR INVESTIGATION**

A good start and a proper start is necessary to any true conclusions we might reach in any investigation, and so, we begin with a proper place.

#### **1. We Begin With a Historical Personality, Not an Isolated Theoretical Miracle**

- (1) We are not beginning with scientific findings, theories and hypotheses.
- (2) We are not beginning with the philosophical concept of Jewish Monotheism.
- (3) We are not beginning with the theology of Unitarianism.

But we are beginning with a man, a historical man, an actual man who lived on the plane of

history.

## 2. This Is Where the Early Followers Began

The early followers of JESUS did not begin their study and investigation by reading an isolated account of a man who had a birth as a result of a miraculous conception and born of a virgin without a human father. That is not where they began. They began by being introduced to the man.

They met the man.

They saw the man.

They heard the man.

They observed the man.

They talked to the man.

They followed the man.

He did something to their lives that no other being could do.

They saw His miracles.

They saw His mighty deeds.

They saw His signs and wonders and they forsook all and followed Him, not because of an emotional false rumor, not because of mob psychology; but because their hands had handled and their eyes had seen the things whereof they believed and testified.

## 3. The Written Records of the Miracles of JESUS Came Much Later

CHRIST had already lived His life, done His work, died, was buried, was resurrected and ascended back to the Father, and had been back with the Father for at least twenty-five to thirty years before one line of any book of the New Testament was ever written.

We must keep in mind that GOD works according to the fulness of time. Each book of the New Testament has a definite aim.

Each book grew out of a historical circumstance, and each book has a distinctive message for its own time and people.

If we can keep this message clearly in mind, we shall be able to grasp the clear meaning of GOD's Word much better for our time.

In all the revelation of the Bible, there is an absolute element. GOD speaks. That is absolute. Only thus is there real, true revelation. While there is this absolute element, there is also a relative element. The relative element is, GOD speaks through men.

If it were not related to some specific need or opportunity, there would be no hearing for divine message.

GOD creates history. He also works within the history He is making.

The HOLY SPIRIT, through chosen men, interpreted GOD at work in history, and especially GOD at work in history to redeem the human race.

Every revelation, therefore has a historical context which is its occasion and which it interprets in terms of GOD's purpose.

#### 4. Why Did They Write the New Testament?

Why was the New Testament written at the time it was written?

Why was the New Testament written at the place it was written?

Why was the New Testament written about the subjects of which it speaks?

Let us approach these questions from the standpoint of human consciousness as these men who discovered themselves caught up in the current of GOD's revelation of history and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Just how did they write?

Did the Spirit one day call Peter aside and say, "Now, Peter, it is important that all generations shall have such a record of your Master's doings and sayings as only you can give."

Did He say to Mark, "Mark, you are a good writer. Go off in a private and destitute place as I shall call you and guide you. I want you to write a Gospel which shall be for all time, the authentic introduction to GOD's good news as it is embodied in JESUS."

Was this the way the writers were summoned to write the New Testament?

Did the HOLY SPIRIT come to Paul in Corinth and command him to turn over to his helpers for a month his missionary work while he took Silas or Timothy to some secluded room and give himself to writing the Epistle to the Romans?

Most of us will have to confess that at least there was a time in our lives when we thought just about that way as to how the Scriptures were written. But that is only to confess that we had really not thought at all.

Now let us see the real background as to when and why the New Testament was written.

Without the Old Testament, the New Testament could never have been.

Given the Old Testament, if its apparent source and claim is true and genuine, then the New Testament had to be. They supplement each other. The Old Testament anticipates the New, and the New pre-supposes the Old. Each part explains and interprets the other.

So far as the records go, JESUS never wrote anything and He never commanded any of His disciples to write anything.

It is doubtful whether the disciples, while JESUS was with them, ever dreamed that they would be the instruments through which GOD would use to write an addition to the Holy Scriptures.

None of the Holy Scriptures were ever written as a primary and direct creation of GOD. They are always an interpretation of some activity of GOD that has eternal significance.

When JESUS left His followers in the world, He gave them what we call the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach His message to every nation and every creature.

They took that commission seriously and went out and did just that.

In obedience to the spirit and commission of JESUS and the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, these men soon became an amazing new factor in the life of the world which required an explanation.

In their rapid growth, they met and created problems which required solution by more than human wisdom.

It was out of such situations of progress and problems that the need for writing an addition to the Holy Scriptures came.

As these early disciples went into the world discharging their divine obligation, they soon created a demand for a literature of this extended Gospel.

Thus, their preaching the Gospel produced an occasion and a situation that demanded Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to be an authoritative source of their new message to the world.

The extended preaching of the Gospel which brought forth Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts - we pass from that stage then into a growing and thriving church.

It wasn't long until this growing church demanded a literature of explanation and guidance. That brought the Epistles of Paul and others written to the churches.

Soon following that, the church produced a theology. Therefore, it was necessary for some of our great doctrinal books, such as Romans, to be the answer to the new theology.

Following the extended Gospel and the growing church and the new theology, next in order would be a controverted faith. Thus, we have the writings of a controverted faith, such as the Epistles of John and Hebrews.

That finally led to the persecution of the people, and we have the writing of a persecuted people which is the book of Revelation.

Consequently, every book of the New Testament was written out of a specific need and a need at that particular time.

It is well to emphasize here that the writings of the New Testament did not produce JESUS. It is the other way around. The life and teachings of JESUS produced the New Testament.

May we repeat that the Gospels were written at a time when there was a specific historical need for a factual interpretation of the life and teachings of JESUS.

## IV. THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS

We call attention here to the fact that there existed in the New Testament times a being known as JESUS CHRIST.

This has never been questioned with sufficient seriousness to justify our devoting any space to answer the question.

The New Testament tells the story of the earthly life of JESUS, how He was born, that He had family connections, lived in His home at Nazareth, was subject to His parents, rejoiced, was tempted, craved human sympathy, prayed, was obedient to GOD, had a body, mind and soul. He suffered, died and arose again.

### 1. The World Into Which JESUS Came

(Quoted from *THE NEW TESTAMENT WORLD*, by Dana.)

"The three greatest historical movements of the past centuries converged in New Testament life.

"The most sublime spectacle which human annals present is the way which GOD converged these three currents of history at the immortal manger of Bethlehem, where a Jewish maiden, who was there under the requirements of Roman law, gave birth to a babe, the wonderful story of whose life was to be told in the Greek language.

"Ere those sages of the distant Orient had come from afar to render their homage to the new-born king, a scene far more entrancing had transpired when Jew, Greek, and Roman stood unseen about that little Bethlehem home, gathered there by the silent urge of an irresistible providence, that each might contribute from his own resplendent heritage to the preparation of the historical stage of action for the ministry of the world's redeemer. That group who first assembled at the holy house brought not their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, but laid at the feet of the Bethlehem babe offerings far richer and more enduring than the glittering material wealth of the Orient could ever hope to provide. The Jew laid out gifts from the wealth of his religious history and consciousness, the Greek brought an expressive language and a trained intellect, and the Roman presented an organized world."

### 2. His Influence Upon the World

"Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village, and that a despised one. He worked in a carpenter shop for thirty years, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a really big city. He never travelled, except in His infancy, more than two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He had no credentials but Himself.

"While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them betrayed Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of

a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His executors gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth, His seamless robe. When He was dead, He was taken down from the cross and laid in a borrowed grave through the courtesy of a friend. Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today JESUS is the centerpiece of the human race, and the leader of all human progress.

"I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that have ever sat, and all the kings that have ever ruled put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth like this one solitary personality.

"All time dates from His birth, and it is impossible to understand or interpret the progress of human civilization in any nation on earth apart from His influence. Slowly through the ages man is coming to realize that the greatest necessity in the world is not water, iron, gold, food and clothing, or even nitrate in the soil: but rather CHRIST enshrined in human hearts, thoughts and motives."

- *Author unknown*

## V. THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE OF JESUS

### 1. The Supernatural is the Occasion for Controversy

The supernatural life of JESUS is the occasion for all the controversy around the person, CHRIST.

Quoted from "*A READER'S NOTEBOOK*, by Kennedy.

"Dr. H. H. Farmer of Cambridge says that in Britain the three most serious charges entered against the Christian religion are first, that it seems irrelevant; second, that it seems inconceivable; and third, that it calls no longer for any costly, heroic devotion. *What if it should turn out that man himself is irrelevant apart from the Christian faith; that apart from the Christian faith, it is life that verges steadily toward the inconceivable; and that apart from our heroic surrender to that faith, the surrender of what we have and what we are, there will be no world we want!*"

### 2. His Sinless Life

The entire body of New Testament writings present JESUS as a man who never knew sin. He challenged His enemies to convict Him of sin (John 8:46). He forgave sins (Mark 2:5; Luke 7:48).

He said that His blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28).

He had a consciousness of undimmed fellowship with GOD (Matthew 11:27; John 11:42; John 14:6-11).

JESUS taught that all men should confess their sins and pray for forgiveness (Matthew 6:12;

Luke 11:4).

He denounces those who claimed to be more righteous than others, yet He, Himself, never confessed a sin, never prayed for forgiveness, never manifested the least consciousness of sin.

Paul, Peter, the book of Hebrews and John all manifest a belief in the sinless life of JESUS.

Paul says that GOD made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Peter says that He died the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18).

The book of Hebrews says that He was tempted in all points like as we yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

John says that when the Christian sins, he has an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous (1 John 2:1).

### 3. His Miracles

The water made wine

The Courtier's son

The first draught of fishes

The Capernaum demoniac

Simon's mother-in-law

A leper

The paralytic

The impotent man

The man with a withered hand

The woman with an issue of blood

Jairus' daughter

Two blind men

A dumb demoniac

The Centurion's servant

The widow's son

A blind and dumb man

The stilling of the storm

The Gadarene demoniacs

The five thousand fed

JESUS walking on the water

The Phoenician woman's daughter

The deaf and dumb man

The four thousand fed

The blind man healed

The demoniac boy

The shekel in the fish's mouth

The man born blind

The woman with an infirmity

The man with the dropsy

The raising of Lazarus  
The ten lepers  
Blind Bartimaeus and his companion  
The fig tree cursed  
Malchus' ear  
The second draught of fishes

If we take the miraculous element out of the Gospel records, the records will be so torn to shreds that we will have little or nothing reliable left.

The miraculous element is so deeply embedded in the Gospel narrative that it is impossible to remove this element and leave anything of value. The effort to get back to a miraculous CHRIST has signally failed.

The shadow of the old German radical school has fallen across the New Testament scholarship in the shape or form of criticism and claims that the miraculous JESUS of the Gospels must be surrendered.

We must wonder if any of these critics have ever sat down and attempted to try to form a concept and write a life of JESUS after he has taken the miraculous element out of the New Testament.

The fact that JESUS had refused to withdraw from the stage of history in spite of the influence of this rationalism, humanism, and scientific thought is one of the comforting and reassuring facts of our troubled times. The fact that the story of the JESUS of the Gospels has not died and will not die is evidence of the validity of His claim to be Lord of life.

#### 4. His Death

The life and death of JESUS are inseparable. What ever theory of the Atonement we might hold, the fact remains that CHRIST did something upon which our salvation depended.

Our salvation was His achievement in His death. CHRIST's death was a redemptive act.

One of the great facts in the preaching of Paul was that CHRIST died for our sins according to the scriptures (I Corinthians 15:3).

Paul was determined to know nothing among the Christians but JESUS and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2).

CHRIST did not die to win for men the love of GOD, but as an expression of that love. The love of CHRIST for sinners was the love of GOD.

The death of CHRIST was the love of GOD in action seeking to redeem men from sin.

It was love going to the limits of suffering and agony to redeem the lost from the ruins of their own sin.

The cross of CHRIST is the pledge of GOD's love for a sinful and ruined race.

As such, the cross represents an act of grace. It stands for God's gracious love going out to redeem man as sinful and unworthy.

## 5. His Resurrection

The Gospel accounts tell us that on the morning of the third day some women went to the tomb and found it empty. An angel announced to them that JESUS was risen (Matthew 28:1-8).

JESUS Himself, appeared to them (Matthew 28:9-10).

He appeared to Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5).

He also appeared to the two on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:14).

He appeared to the eleven except Thomas (Luke 24:36; John 20:19).

He appeared to the eleven, Thomas being present (John 20:26).

He appeared to the eleven in Galilee (Matthew 28:16).

Paul tells us that JESUS appeared to James, to Peter and to himself and to more than 500 at one time (I Corinthians 15:5).

It is evident from the Gospel accounts that the disciples did not even expect JESUS to rise from the dead (Luke 24:11; John 20:24; Matthew 28:17).

When JESUS was crucified, all their hopes were gone and they gave up in despair. They would not believe again until they had overwhelming evidence.

The fact and the evidence of the Resurrection transformed them from a band of discouraged, downcast men into a company of joyous, militant, aggressive preachers. And when they went forth to preach, they preached that JESUS had risen from the dead.

## **VI. HOW SHALL THESE FACTS BE ANSWERED?**

1. To Deny the Virgin Birth Is Not Giving the Answer
2. To Deny the Virgin Birth Is To Create a Larger Problem
3. When the Virgin Birth Is Denied, Another Answer Must Be Given.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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