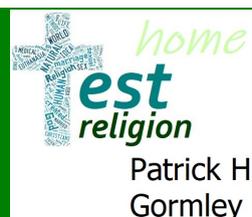




Does challenging superstition or faith protect people?
 Is it mistaken to support organised religion in membership or donations?

If people do good because they are human, not because God prompts them,
 is it right to risk giving God any credit when they alone own their good?



MARY WAS BARREN WHEN SHE CONCEIVED, WAS HER "BARRENNESS" BECAUSE SHE WAS A MERE CHILD?

Christianity is famous for saying that Mary the mother of Jesus got pregnant without having sex. This is mixed up with the claim that Jesus was the son of God. But son of God meant a man close to God and the Church holds that Jesus and his Father and the Holy Spirit are three persons in one God. So Jesus was God the Son anyway. Who knows? Maybe the original teaching was that God raped Mary or had sex with her and that is what son of God meant in his case.

St Justin Martyr in the second century stated that in relation to the virgin birth of Jesus and his crucifixion and death and his resurrection and ascension the Christians said nothing that the sons of the pagan divinity Jove were not saying.

Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit. So Matthew says. It does indicate that a miracle was involved but what exactly? Did it refer to her being too young to get pregnant, barren or getting pregnant at the wrong time of the month? It may indicate some kind of creation was involved. That is all it says. It tells us nothing about whether God found a way to simulate sex with her pagan style and leave her a virgin.

This girl was pregnant months perhaps even a year before any other girl would be expected to be pregnant. She had not had her final wedding ceremony yet. She was only betrothed.

Today, scholars remark that nobody can be found in the early Church who did not speak of the virgin conception as anything than something that really happened. It was not seen as a myth, symbol or optional belief. Theologoumenon means a non-binding theological opinion, that may not be historically relevant. The Catholic idea that Mary had no pain in giving birth is an example of that. Some make out that the virgin birth is a theologoumenon. This is a mere assumption. The evidence is that the doctrine is binding on believers. It is part of Christian faith.

John Paul II stated that the "uniform testimony of the Gospels attest that faith in the virginal conception of Jesus is firmly rooted in various circles of the early Church." He then went on to argue that this shows we should dismiss attempts to see the doctrine "in a non physical or biological, but only symbolic or metaphorical" way. General Audience, July 10, 1996.

Joseph Ratzinger in his Introduction to Christianity, page 210 summarises the virgin birth doctrine as saying Jesus was of God but not fathered by God in any physical sense. The Mormon doctrine that God gave a sperm to Mary from his body is out. The gospels themselves show no hint of any symbolic non-literal meaning. NT Wright states how the first one to affirm something biological had happened, a real conception without a man, was Joseph Mary's husband to be. He decided to put her away without a fuss. That is all the gospel of Matthew says. That could mean he suspected rape. I deny he thought it was adultery or fornication for that would make it hard to avoid a fuss. Plus her reputation would be ruined anyway.

Another point is that Luke the writer of the Gospel of Luke does write like a doctor and he says Mary conceived without sex. Traditionally, Mary was a moral virgin and a physical one when she had her baby, Jesus. Liberal Christians are not Christians so much as liars for trying to make out the story is not literally meant. They have an anti-miracle or anti-supernatural bias and protect it by lying that the New Testament miracles are not meant to be taken seriously.

Interestingly nobody considers the possibility that if Mary only had Jesus and it was not a natural conception that she might have been barren. This would put her in line with the Bible fondness for stories of barren women having babies. Mary links herself with Hannah the mother of Samuel who could not have a baby. She makes this link in her psalm borrowed from Hanna, the magnificent which celebrates the baby in her womb.

Could Matthew's expression, "she conceived, became with child by the Holy Spirit" be referring to a barren girl having a baby? A young enough girl is barren in a sense by the way. It is easy to understand how a girl getting a baby with a barren womb would be seen as needing the miracle of the Holy Spirit to get pregnant even if there was a sperm involved? Virgins

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can be pregnant through sexual abuse.

There is an interesting parallel between the virgin conception and the resurrection of Jesus. Life appears in the womb where there is no life and life appears in the tomb where there is no life. This hints that to reject the virgin conception is to open the door for doubting the resurrection as well.