In the general attack within the churches upon the fundamental doctrines of the historic Christian faith which has characterized the 20th century, the Virgin Birth of Christ has been singled out for direct general attack.

The modernists seem to take special delight in scoffing and ridiculing this fact of divine revelation and this truth to which God's people in every age have given God praise. It is the supernatural that is under assault, and the Virgin Birth is one clear, unmistakable point at which the supernatural can be seen and where it may be attacked.

In the famous Auburn Affirmation of 1923, 1293 Presbyterian ministers declared that the Virgin Birth, among other facts of Christianity was a theory and that it was not necessary to believe in this in order to be a minister in good standing.

Bishop James A. Pike of the Protestant Episcopal Church has taken special delight in declaring that he could not affirm his belief in the Virgin Birth and that there was nothing in his vows as an Episcopal bishop or clergyman that required him to assent to the teachings of the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke. In fact the Virgin Birth is quite generally referred to today simply as "a myth." It did not happen but it is a beautiful story which contributes to the image of Jesus Christ.

But the basic questions of honesty and also the acceptance of divine revelation are brushed aside, and this within the House of God.

I. The Confessions of the Church

For nearly two thousand years the Christians of every age have confessed that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of God and born of the Virgin Mary.

1. *The Apostles' Creed.* — The most familiar of these confessions is the Apostles' Creed which states, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary . . ."

2. *The Westminster Confession of Faith.* — The confession serving the reformed churches throughout the world is known as the Westminster Confession. In Article II of Chapter 8, "Of Christ the Mediator," paragraph 2 declares:

> The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ the only Mediator between God and man.

3. *The Anglican Confession.* — The Church of England, or the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, has always incorporated in its prayer book the historic 39 Articles.

Article 2, "Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very man," reads:

> The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

4. *The Methodist Articles of Religion.* — The Methodist Church accepted almost word for word the phraseology of the 39 Articles. Listed as paragraph 62 in the Discipline of the Methodist Church, it now reads:

> The Son, who was the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.

5. *The Lutheran Confession* (The Augsburg Confession) accepted in Lutheran churches throughout the world has a similar statement concerning Jesus Christ. Article 3, "Of the Son of God" reads:

> It is taught likewise, that God the Son became man, and was born of the blessed Virgin Mary; and that the two natures, human and divine, inseparably united in one person, are one Christ, who is true God and man, who was really born, who truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, that he might be a sacrifice, not only for original sin, but also for all other sins, and might appease the wrath of God. Further, that this same Christ descended into hell, and truly arose from the dead on the third day, ascended to heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, that he may perpetually reign over all creatures, and govern them; through the Holy Spirit sanctify, purify, strengthen, and console all those who believe in him, and give unto them life and various gifts and blessings, and protect and defead them against the devil and the power of sin.
>
> Also, that finally this same Christ will return visibly, to judge the living and the dead, &c., according to the Apostles Creed.

6. *The ICCC Doctrinal Statement.* — The International Council of Christian Churches, when it was formed in Amsterdam in 1948, summarized the common doctrines of the Protestant faith as a basis for Christian co-operation among churches remaining true to the Bible in the twentieth century. The doctrinal statement read:

> Among other equally Biblical truths, we believe and maintain the following:
>
> c) The essential, absolute, eternal Deity and the real and proper, but sinless, humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ;
> d) His birth of the virgin Mary;
> e) His substitutionary, expiatory death, in that He gave His life "a ransom for many";
> f) His resurrection from among the dead in the same body in which He was crucified and the second coming of this same Jesus in power and great glory.

In searching the other great confessions and testimonies of Christian churches one will find that it has been the universal belief of Christian people that Christ was born without human father and that the Virgin Mary was His mother.

II. The Teaching of the Bible

All that the great creed system says has come to the church by special revelation. The Bible has been the basis and the only basis for these statements of faith.

1. *Isaiah* 7:14. — The prophecies of Isaiah include a specific reference to the Virgin in the seventh chapter: "Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; . . . Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:10-14). Many efforts have been made, especially by Jewish scholars through the years to remove that word "virgin" and to discredit the Hebrew *alma,* but these have been unsuccessful. It was not until the Revised Standard Version of the Bible appeared, copyrighted and authorized and sponsored by the National Council of Churches, that the word "virgin" was removed and "a young woman" was used. This completely vitiated the prophecy, because there is no miracle or sign about the birth of a son to a young woman and calling His name Emmanuel.

2. *The Matthew Fulfillment.* — The Apostle Matthew, author of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, in the first chapter specifically declares that the prediction of a Virgin bearing a son, Emmanuel, had been fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ. Matthew wrote, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:22, 23). The attempt, therefore, to deny the Virgin Birth in Isaiah 7:14 contradicts and denies Matthew. But Matthew, as an Apostle of our Lord, is speaking with authority and assures us that it was the Lord who spoke by the prophet and gave the prediction to David.

Christians have always been willing to accept and to believe on the authority of the prophets and the apostles what God has testified concerning the birth of His Son. To believe otherwise is to deny God's Word, to repudiate the prophets, to reject the Apostles, in fact simply tear from out of the Scriptures one of the greatest of all miracles to which it testifies.

3. *The Luke Account.* — The Gospel of Luke, which was written by the physician, the companion of Paul, is most specific repeating the word "virgin."

> And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a