

meaning that may be given to the Hebrew word *Ngalmah*, which is the term applied to the mother of the child. That word means a young woman; and it is a term that can be applied to any young woman, whether married or unmarried; and, according to the different interpretation and application that may be given to the word, the birth of the child would be either a miraculous event or an ordinary one. Our Christian brethren take the view that it must have been the intention of the prophet to predict a miraculous birth, because they claim that if it were otherwise, then the birth of the child could not be a sign. In other words, our Christian friends claim that a sign must be a miracle, and that only a miracle can be a sign; and they say that the allusion was to the birth of Jesus, which they claim to have been a miraculous one.

But our Christian brethren are in error in assuming that a sign must necessarily be a miracle, or something of a miraculous character; for the most ordinary event, or any specified succession of ordinary events, may be in every respect a sign, that is, an evidence or assurance of the happening of a certain other event. Thus, when Abraham's servant sought for a sign from the Almighty, by which he might be guided in his selection of a wife for Isaac, he did not ask for a miracle as a sign, but, simply, that the maiden who was destined to be Isaac's wife should, when he would ask her for a drink of water, not only give him a drink, but also offer to draw water for his camels.<sup>1</sup> Again, when Gideon asked for a sign from the Lord, by which he might know

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxiv. 12-20, 42-46.