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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

(FEBRUARY 1904.)

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[No. 2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

The Nature of Prayer and its Blessings.

(BY THE PROMISED MESSIAH.)

It is commonly thought, and often urged as an argument against the efficacy of prayer, that a prayer to God and the seeking of means are two opposite lines, and that since the latter course is sufficient for the attainment of an end, a man need not resort to the former. This objection against prayer is not only directed from the atheistical camp, but wonderful as it may appear, even within the circle of Islam there are men, by no means few in numbers, who entertain this mistaken view. When we cast a glance at the Divine laws manifested in external nature, it becomes quite clear that there is a necessary and indissoluble connection between means and prayer. Any one who sets before himself the attainment of an object, at first looks for the means and endeavours to his utmost to find out the agencies by which he can possibly attain that end. In this search for means he has to apply all his faculties to the object before him and give his whole attention to the finding of those means. When we are sick, for instance, we seek for the proper remedy, or if we have not the skill which can enable us to find the true remedy, we call in a physician who reflects on the causes and nature of our disease, and whose genius is sometimes guided to a remedy which removes our illness to some extent. The method

thus suggested is the result of a deep reflection and of the consideration given to the question, which, in other words, may be called a prayer. For when we strive hard in search of what is hidden from us and unknown to us, we really seek for guidance from a Higher power from whom nothing is hidden, in a language which is expressed by our very condition. In fact it cannot be doubted that when, in search of a thing, the soul stretches out its hands in true zeal and ardour to the Giver of all gifts, and finding itself weak and unable to attain the end by itself seeks for light from some other source, it is plunged in a prayerful meditation, and its condition then is truly of one who prays to God. It is thus prayer which is the key to all treasures of knowledge and which has brought about the discovery of so many sciences. Our meditations and reflections and our search for that which is hidden from us, are all a sort of prayer. The difference is only this that the truly wise, the holy men of God, pray with due respect to Him whom they recognise to be the Source of all blessings and their supplications are based upon a clear knowledge, while the prayer of those upon whose eyes a veil is cast, is like wandering in darkness and it takes the form of meditation and reflection. Both have the same object in view, *viz.*, the opening of hidden ways and deep paths and the discovery of means which would make them successful in the attainment of an end. The person who has not a true knowledge of God and a certain faith in His existence, is ignorant of the Giver from whom he must seek, but still when in distress he seeks for assistance from some other source which he does not know. He walks in darkness and does not know that the way opened to him upon reflection and consideration is also opened by God. But Almighty God sees the heart and looking upon its meditations as prayer, guides the man, who is thus engaged, in the attainment of his object. In short, it is God who breathes into the hearts of men new points of wisdom and knowledge, for Almighty God knows that it is He from whom the assistance is sought though the seeker may be unaware of it. If, as stated above, the search is made and assistance sought with a certain knowledge of the true Guide and a certain belief in His existence, it is a devout prayer as required by the holy Word of God. But if the search for true light degene-

rates only into a search of means by deep consideration and reflection, and the source from which that light comes is not recognised, it is a prayer over which the veil of ignorance is drawn.

It is, therefore, clear that prayer has precedence of means and that it is an essential step for every person who sets any object before himself. Every one who seeks to gain an end must pass over this bridge. To set prayer in opposition to means is the height of absurdity. When we pray to God we only supplicate the Almighty Being, who has superior knowledge of the subtlest and most hidden means, to infuse into our minds some suitable and proper plan or by His creative power to bring into existence some plan which can bring about the object that is before us. Means, therefore, are not opposed to prayer but a result of them. Moreover as this close connection between means and prayer is established by the laws of nature, human nature also bears witness to it. It is not only to means and remedies that the nature of man turns in distress and disease, but it also seeks a relief in alms and prayer. A glance at the different nations of the world establishes the universality of this rule. Resorting to prayer is, therefore, as well a requirement of human nature as the seeking of means, and both these methods for the attainment of an end are, like twin brothers, the benefactors of human nature. Prayer opens the way to means, and the search of means calls for prayer. The true success and prosperity of a man lie in this that before adverting to means he should resort to prayer and seek assistance from the true Giver of all gifts, so that being fed from that source of light, he may find the best and most suitable plans.

The necessity of prayer is evident from another point of view. We cannot say with certainty that a particular measure would lead to a particular end or that a particular remedy would cure a particular disease. Under these circumstances no greater misfortune can befall a man than that trusting in probabilities, he should omit to seek the grace and mercy of God by means of prayer. For what is it that we seek in prayer? The whole object of our prayer to God is that He may either protect us from a disease for instance and thus save us the trouble of resorting to medicines, or going to physicians, or if we are suffering from a disease that He, the Knower of all secrets, should enable us to diagnose

the disease rightly and discover the proper remedy. Can it be doubted that there is a Higher Being who holds all power in His hands and to Whose will and order our lives are wholly subject? When He wills a certain thing, the whole system of earth and heavens obeys His order and turns in the direction in which He wishes to turn it. If it is His will that the health of a country should be good at a particular moment, He brings about means which are necessary for that end. On the other hand, when it is His will that any country should be infected with a pestilence, He brings into existence the causes which would bring about the desired object. The dominion of earth and heavens is in His hands and every particle of the universe hears His voice and obeys it. His power has not ended with the creation of the world. Even now He creates and exercises His dominion as He did before. Our own bodies bear witness to His new creation. The old particles of the body are momentarily dying away while new ones take their place. Almighty God is continually creating and continually annihilating. One world perishes every moment while another is brought into existence. Almighty God is also the supporter of what He has created and everything has an existence on account of His support. It is a great error to suppose that He did not create matter and soul, or that having created them once, He has now nothing more to do with them. He is the soul of every soul, and everything owes its existence and the continuance of its existence to Him only. As we have not come into existence without His act, so we cannot live without His support. If He is then the God in whose hands is our life and death, and in obedience to whom the particles of our body unite and disunite, what a grievous error to think that we can do aught or live prosperously by our own machinations and independently of Him! Such is not the case. Our plans also come from Him. Our intellect is without a light unless He enlightens it. The elements are not under our control, and we have no power over the laws of nature. There are numerous causes which have their effect on our health and they are not controlled by us but by God who is their author. It is in reference to this that Almighty God says in the Holy Quran: *وَتَصْرِيفَ الرِّيحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِينَ* "And the change of winds and clouds (is the work of God), and herein are signs of the exis-

tence of God and of His power for the wise." The change here spoken of is a two-fold change, *i.e.*, an apparent change of winds and clouds or their turning from one direction to another direction and from one place to another place, and a change in their qualities or making the air and water morbidiferous or salubrious in their effects, producing plagues and pestilences in the one case and promoting health in the other. Man has no control in bringing about these changes. Moreover there are numerous other causes, so subtle, obscure and hidden that the human eye cannot discover them, which exert a beneficial or injurious effect upon our health, and no one can by his own exertions make them subservient to his own cause. There is not the least doubt then that man stands in urgent need of turning for assistance to Him who has supreme control over all primary as well as the remotest causes.

The Word of God has kept a clear distinction between the two men, one of whom looking upon Almighty God as the fountain-head of all blessings, seeks His assistance and support by prayers, expressed by his condition or uttered with the tongue, while the other relying upon his own strength and plans considers prayer as mere trash and a thing to be laughed at and walks in vanity as if he were independent of God. The difference between the two is the difference between the good and the bad man. The person who in distress or difficulty resorts to prayer and seeks from God the solution or removal of his difficulties, is blessed with tranquility of mind and true happiness, provided that his prayer has all the requisites of a true prayer in it. Even if he does not attain the object for which he prays, he is granted peace and security of mind from God and does not meet disappointment or dissatisfaction. Besides success, his faith is thus strengthened and his belief in God attains a higher degree of certainty. But the person who does not turn to God with prayers, lives and dies a blind man. It may be thought by a superficial observer that sometimes the man who prays witnesses failure while another man who neither prays nor believes in God is successful in his undertakings, and seems to have triumphed for a while over the supplicator. This is not actually the case. As pointed out above, the true object of prayer is the attainment of true felicity and of the peace and security of mind. It is by no means true that our real happiness consists only in the attainment of the object prayed for. The Omniscient God

only knows what constitutes our real happiness and therefore our devout prayers are accepted by Him by the bestowal on us of true happiness which is the real object of our prayers. It is impossible that the man who prays with devoutness and sincerity of soul, should meet with disappointment and sorrow. The supreme felicity which neither wealth nor dominion, nor even health, can bring to us, and which is solely in the hands of God, who grants it to whom He will in the way He chooses, that perfect bliss is granted after devout and sincere prayers. When God wills it, a righteous servant of His in the greatest distress finds himself after prayer in a state of blissfulness which the greatest monarch has never experienced in the height of his power. He who finds this state of bliss attains the real object and his griefs and anxieties end in joy.

But true satisfaction and real happiness are obtained only by devout and sincere prayers, and hence the man who follows his own plans cannot taste of true delight even though he may attain the object which he wished for. His very success is a failure for beneath it is all suffering. He does not look to the end, but judges matters from an apparent and temporary success or failure. The truth is that a good end is reserved only for such as fear God and pray to Him. Theirs is the true success for they find supreme delight and perfect felicity.

It is unjust to deny the grace which flows exclusively from prayer, and to scorn the teachings of the holy prophets of God whose lives were illustrations of the marvellous efficacy of prayer. Is it not true that it was by the prayers of those holy ones that their arrogant and contumacious enemies who opposed and persecuted them, were brought to disgrace or destruction? Consider the efficacy of Noah's prayer which washed away his enemies by a deluge; reflect upon the power of Moses' prayer which swept off Pharaoh with all his hosts; look at the efficaciousness of the curse which Jesus pronounced against the Jews and which became the means of their destruction at the hands of the Romans; and think about the prayers of our own Lord and Master against his cruel persecutors and torturers how they brought the wicked mischief-makers to a sad end. Is it not a satisfactory proof that according to a spiritual law which can be traced to the earliest times of the prophets, the

kindness of the Divine Being especially comes into motion on devout and humble prayers, and the favours of security and satisfaction of mind and of true bliss are only then granted in full abundance? If we pray for the right object, it is granted to us, and if on account of our ignorance we are guilty of an error like the silly child who asks his mother to let him handle a burning coal or a serpent, Almighty God who has supreme knowledge of the means of our welfare, bestows upon us some other gift which is conducive to our good and happiness. And whether our prayers are accepted by granting us the very object prayed for or otherwise, our faith is greatly strengthened, for from the answers to our prayers we know beforehand of their acceptance and consequently we, as it were, see God.

It should be borne in mind that we cannot bring about the acceptance of our prayers by our own efforts. When it is the will of God that a certain object should be performed, the Divine law is that some one of His righteous servants is moved to pray for it, his condition expressing utter helplessness and disquietude for the attainment of that object, and his whole attention and care being occupied with its performance. The devout and humble prayers of such a one who loses himself entirely in the contemplation of Divine Majesty and Glory, draw the grace of God from heaven, and Almighty God brings into existence such means and agencies as are necessary for bringing about the attainment of that object. Though the petitioner in such a case is evidently a man, yet he is so far annihilated in God and at the time of prayer walks in such utter annihilation of his self, that his hand at that time is not his own hand, but the hand of God. Such is the prayer by which God is recognised and the existence of that Glorious Being discovered, Who is hidden behind thousands of screens. For those who pray in this manner, heaven is brought nearer to earth, and the prayer being accepted, unknown ways of the solution of their difficulties are revealed. This is often revealed to the supplicants before the occurrence of the events, or at least the certainty of the acceptance of their prayers is driven like a nail of iron into the core of their hearts. The truth is that if the efficacy of prayer had not been a reality, no human being could ever have realized the certainty of the truth of Divine existence. It is prayer

that leads us to the fountain of inspiration and prayer which makes us talk with God. When a person prays with true sincerity, love, faithfulness and submission to God until his own self is completely annihilated, then the living God who is hidden from the eyes of the world, manifests Himself to him. Prayer is a necessity of our life not only on account of its usefulness in the attainment of our worldly objects, but also because without the manifestation of the heavenly signs which appear after true and sincere prayers, the face of the God of glory is not revealed to man in its full effulgence. An ignorant man thinks that prayer is a meaningless thing, but he is not aware that it is by prayer only that Almighty God shines in His glory upon the seekers and reveals to them His wonderful power and might. Let every one who thirsts for certainty, bear in mind that in this life prayer is the only means for a seeker after spiritual light which can bring about a certainty in the existence of God and dispel the darkness of all doubts and misgivings. The man who attains his objects without prayer, does not know from whom he has got them. The person who lays stress on the efficacy of means, and is indifferent to prayer, hardly ever entertains the idea that the objects he has attained have been of a certainty granted by Almighty God. On the other hand, the person who on his prayer is given the glad tidings of success in his undertaking, advances in Divine love and knowledge on the fulfilment of that object and witnesses a manifest heavenly sign upon the acceptance of his prayer. Being thus filled with certainty from time to time, he is purged of every sin and every sinful tendency and becomes so to say a spirit on account of his perfect freedom from every earthly desire. But the man who through prayer never witnesses the signs of the mercy of Almighty God is devoid of true certainty notwithstanding his successes in the attainment of his objects and the possession of means of comfort and treasures of wealth. His prosperity instead of exercising any healthy and beneficial influence over him gradually hardens his heart and only adds to his vanity and self-glory. His faith in God, if he has such faith, is a lifeless and vapid thing which cannot restrain him from yielding to the passions of flesh or bring about a pure transformation in his life.

It can scarcely be advanced as a serious objection to the efficacy

of prayer that the pre-ordained decrees of God are unchangeable, For, if their unchangeableness prevents the efficacy of prayer, it must also prevent the efficacy of medicines and in fact of all sorts of plans for the attainment of various objects. But as the properties of medicines are established by experience and their efficacy in healing diseases is frequently witnessed, so the acceptance of prayer and its powerful efficacy are facts based on the experience of wise and holy men. Whether this deep secret may or may not be plainly realized by the generality of men, it is a most certain fact whose truth has been borne witness to by the experience of millions of the righteous servants of God in all ages, and by the writer's own proved experience in this age. I have witnessed thousands of times with my own eyes this hidden truth that our prayers have a magnetic power which draws the grace and mercy of God. Prayer is also the true essence and spirit of our *Namaz*, i.e., daily prayers, and in the *Fatika* when we pray to God in the words *اهدنا الصراط المستقيم* we only wish to draw by means of this prayer the heavenly light which descends from God and fills the heart with love and certainty.

Some men think that prayer may be resorted to, but prayer means only the worship of God and it is a deed of merit which will be rewarded hereafter. This is a serious error. Every devotion which is devoid of true spirituality and every reward which is vainly looked for at some future moment, is a worthless thing or an idle hope. Sincere worship of God and true reward make their light and blessings felt in this very world. It is the sign of the acceptance of our devotions that when praying to God we witness with our spiritual eye that a panacean light descends from God, nullifying the effect of the poisonous matters in our heart, and falling upon us like a flame of fire burns away the carnal desires and fills the heart with certainty and with a holy feeling of love and joy, and opens the breast for receiving truths and heavenly wisdom. If the mind does not experience these things, our worship and devotions are nothing more than lifeless ceremonies. Every prayer, though it be for the removal of our worldly difficulties, casts a benignant influence on our minds. It first strengthens our faith and increases our Divine knowledge, and after granting a security, openness, and blissfulness to the mind, it then dispels the gloom of our distresses and banishes our cares and

sorrows in one way or another. The mere utterance of a few words does not, therefore, constitute a prayer. A true prayer is that which has actually a magnetic power, and after which a light descends from heaven which dissipates the clouds of our anxieties, and grants us a peace and security of mind. It is true that Divine assistance is vouchsafed to us in one of two ways after a true prayer, *viz.*, either the difficulty which would crush us under its weight is altogether removed, or we are granted a supernatural power to bear it and then we find a joy and a bliss in it, and being freed from all uneasiness our breast is opened for its reception. In both cases Divine assistance does certainly come to us after a devout and sincere prayer.

To understand the acceptance of prayer, we must first know the nature of a true prayer. Between God and His righteous servant there is a mutual attraction. The mercy of God at first draws His servant to Him. Almighty God then comes nearer to His servant by the attraction of his faithfulness and sincerity. At the time of prayer this connection having reached a particular stage displays its wonderful characteristics. When the servant being involved in serious difficulties turns to God with perfect faith, absolute certainty, full hope, consummate love, complete faithfulness and undaunted resolution, and having rent asunder all veils of remissness, traverses the vast fields of annihilation, Divine glory is revealed to him in full lustre. His soul then lays itself down on the Divine threshold in complete submission and its magnetic power attracts the grace and favors of God. The Divine will then turns to perform the object prayed for and makes the prayer influence the causes which ultimately bring about the attainment of the desired end. It is, therefore, a fact established and proved by the experience of the righteous who are fed from the source of inspiration, that the prayers of a perfect man have a creating power in them; in other words, they influence with Divine permission the forces acting in the material and spiritual worlds and also act upon human thought and will, and thus make them all act concurrently to accomplish the object. Instances of this abound in all holy books and the miraculous owes its existence to a great extent to the acceptance of prayer. What was it that happened in the sandy deserts of Arabia? The dead were raised to life in

thousands, the blind were made to see, the dumb were made to utter words of heavenly wisdom, and the depraved of long generations were clothed in Divine morals. The whole peninsula underwent in a few days a transformation which no eye had seen and no ear heard. Ah! these were the midnight prayers and deep sighs of a perfect one which showed these wonderful works whose execution by a helpless unlearned orphan seemed an impossibility. Pour down Thy favours, blessings and peace upon him, O God, in as great an abundance as was his grief and anxiety for the welfare of Thy people, and cause the lights of Thine mercy to descend upon him to all eternity!

I have myself experienced upon thousands of occasions that no agency in the material world comes up to prayer in its powerful efficacy. If it be objected that there are cases in which prayer fails to bring about the desired end, I say that the same law prevails in the material world. Take medicine for instance. Has it shut the door to death? Is it an infallible cure for diseases? Or does it not fail to produce its effect in certain cases? And does any sane person in spite of this deny the efficacy of medicines? It is true that the decree of heaven prevails everywhere and for ever, but it does not void the sciences which are based on human experience or rob the means of their instrumentality. On a deeper reflection it appears that physical as well as spiritual means are subject to the decree of heaven. For instance, if health is ordained by heaven for a sick man, efficacious remedies are also obtained, and every condition is of service in promoting his health. So also with prayer. The conditions for its acceptance and the requisite means are not available unless it is the will of God that it should be accepted. But as such a contingency is no bar to us in resorting to medicines in case of sickness, and their actual benefit, though sometimes they do fail, cannot be disputed, so there is no valid objection to the use and benefits of prayer.

Moreover, when it is admitted that the happiness, felicities and blessings of the next world, which are expressed in the one word "Salvation," are obtained by means of prayers, the efficacy of prayers is also admitted; for, if our prayer can not help us in getting freed from adversities and in the at-

tainment of our objects in this life, there is no reason they should effect that purpose in the life to come. If prayer has no efficacy in this world, it is absurd to suppose that it will show its efficacy in the next. On the other hand, if we believe in its efficacy in the next, we cannot but admit its efficacy here, so that its manifestation in this very life may strengthen our faith and hope in the next, and we may pray with greater zeal for the blessings of the next life.

It must also be borne in mind that there are four reasons for which Almighty God has rendered prayer obligatory upon the Muslims. Firstly, that by turning to God at all times and in all states, we may acquire firmness in our faith in the Divine unity, for our entreaties to God are equivalent to our confession that He is the sole Giver of all gifts. Secondly, that on the acceptance of our prayer and the attainment of the object prayed for, our faith in God may be strengthened. Thirdly, that if Divine assistance comes in any other way, our knowledge and wisdom may be increased. Fourthly, that if the acceptance of our prayer is promised to us by means of inspiration or visions and it comes to pass exactly in the same manner, one may advance in Divine knowledge, and attain from knowledge to certainty, from certainty to love and from love to a total freedom from sin, and an entire dis severance of all connections besides our connection with God, and thus obtain the fruit of true salvation. But if our objects are attained independently of prayer and a veil hides the face of God from us, the fulfilment of our desires becomes ultimately a source of grief and anxiety for us, and every success which was deemed at first a pleasure becomes a sorrow. But the sight and knowledge which are granted through prayer and the blessings which are bestowed upon us from the heavenly treasure, never diminish or decline. On the other hand, advancing day by day in Divine love and knowledge, by ^{it} will ascend by this holy ladder of prayers to the pinnacle of bliss.

There are four prime attributes of the Divine Being and each of these calls for a particular state in man. The four attributes are *Rabûbiyyat* (sustenance) *Rahmâniyyat* (mercy,) *Rahîmiyyat* (compassion), and *Mâlîkiyyat* (Lordship of the day of Judgment). *Rabûbiyyat* requires for the exercise of its favors absolute nothingness or a state

resembling it, and all beings, organic as well as inorganic, owe their existence to this attribute. *Rahmāniyyat* requires also a state of nothingness, but it is exercised only in relation to living beings. *Rahimiyyat* has its sphere limited only to human beings, and requires a confession of utter insignificance and nothingness from man. *Madlikiyyat* requires a humbling of one's self and soliciting like a true suppliant. It relates only to men who as supplicants prostrate themselves on the Divine threshold and conscious of their poverty sincerely believe in the Lordship of God and implore Divine grace. These four attributes are always working in the world. Out of these the Divine attribute of *rahimiyyat* moves a man to prayer, while *madlikiyyat*, melting the soul with the fear of God, inspires into it the true spirit of humility, lowliness and submission, for it shows that salvation and Divine protection cannot be claimed as of right, but are granted only by Divine grace.

In brief, it appears from the Holy Quran, and reason supports the fact, that the four above-named attributes are the chief attributes of the Divine Being, and that the attribute of *rahimiyyat* requires a man to pray, so that Divine assistance and favours may come to him. Therefore to deny the efficacy of prayer, or its magnetism in drawing the favours of God, is, in fact, a denial of *rahimiyyat*, the third attribute of God, which is certainly a movement towards atheism. *Rahimiyyat* is the attribute through which a man's faith in the other attributes of the Divine Being, is strengthened and brought to perfection. For, when in obedience to the requirement of this attribute we receive the favours of God on our humble prayers and supplications and our difficulties are removed, our faith regarding the existence, power, mercy and other attributes of the Divine Being becomes a certainty, and we realize the truth of our obligation to thank and praise Him for His numerous blessings.

It is clear that the first and most important object of our lives is a true knowledge of God, and if there is defect or obscurity in it, our faith is devoid of light and certainty. Unless we recognise God by seeing Him through the manifestations of His attribute of *rahimiyyat* (i. e., the bestowal of His favours by acceptance of our prayers), we cannot drink of the pure and sweet fountain of Divine knowledge.

Unless we are self-deceived, we must see our inability to reach that source by any other way. The existence of God is not a certainty to us unless the Divine attributes of mercy, grace and power being fully realized by us through experience exert such a powerful influence on our mind as to free it from all carnal desires and evil insinuations, which arising from a weakness of faith and want of certainty quite overpower us. Is it not true that in this ephemeral life a man is involved in terrible darkness, because the rays of the light of Divine knowledge do not penetrate to his heart? The greater the love he entertains for this world and its attractions of wealth and power, the less the desire which he has for true happiness and eternal welfare. Now, the cause of all this indifference and apathy to the joys of heaven and bliss of the next world is nothing but the absence of a true faith concerning the power, mercy and promises of God. It is, therefore, necessary for the seeker after truth that he should try to obtain, in right earnest, such true faith. The mere fact that he is a Musalman, and hates *shirk* and says his prayers, is not sufficient to release him from the bondage of sin, or make him attain salvation. Only he will find true salvation and supreme delight and perfect bliss after death who has found in this very life the true and living light which turns a man with all his faculties, inclinations and desires, to God, and mortifying all earthly desires works a pure transformation in his soul. And what is this true and living light? It is nothing but a certainty of Divine existence, and a perfect Divine knowledge. It is the heavenly power which with its powerful hand draws a man out of the dangerous and dark pit of slavery to passion, and seats him in open space where there is light and safety. Before this light is obtained, a man's virtuous deeds are only formalities in obedience to custom, and the slightest trial is apt to stumble him. Without certainty a man's relation with God cannot be clear. But the man to whom certainty is given flows towards God like water, flies to Him faster than the wind, burns like fire everything foreign to God, and bears every suffering with patience and steadfastness like earth. It is a sweet syrup which, as soon as it is taken, sweetens the whole body. It is a delicious milk which makes a man indifferent to the dainties of the world. But it is found only by means of true and devout prayers in which a man completely annihilates himself. It is obtained

no doubt the task and narrow the path! Is there any one who would undertake this task and seek this path?

The Uniqueness of Jesus.

That the old Christian doctrine of mediation, to which the Christians have trusted for about nineteen hundred years, is no more believed in by the majority of sensible Christians, and is for all practical purposes a dead doctrine, is freely admitted by Christian speakers and in Christian papers. Writing under the heading of the "Christian Interpretation of Mediation, Mr. Hogg contributes an article to the Christian College Magazine for January, 1904, in which he says: "In the formulation of this estimate (*i. e.*, the estimate of Jesus as the one unique Mediator), preserved in the Creeds of Christendom, there is much that appears hopelessly foreign to Indian ways of thinking, and it may not be rash to conjecture that if Christianity had made its first abiding conquest in India instead of in Europe, its creeds would have been couched in a terminology singularly different..... And if it is safe to conjecture that even a Christianised India would have thought out its theology otherwise than the West has done, is it not equally safe to affirm that, were the past suddenly to be forgotten, and were Christians of the West to be called upon to formulate their faith anew, they too would be found speaking a language which the early Christian Fathers would have felt to be disconcertingly foreign?" And again: "From this standpoint the great historic creeds must be confessed to possess immense value as protests against heresies which misconstrued and obscured the real uniqueness of Jesus, but can never be regarded as perfect and final constructive formulæ. In fact it will be bounden duty of any who think that, for modern ears, the formulæ have lost their meaning and convincing power, to seek a more effective re-statement..... Some may consider that the idea of mediation acquires under this treatment so altered an aspect that the name becomes a misnomer. It may be so."

Up to this time the essence of the mediation of Jesus was supposed to be in the efficacy of his blood, but it is now discovered that it

was an error. What is the fate of the millions who lived and passed the dupes of the false belief, is not our concern. But if Paul is actually the writer of the letters included in the New Testament canon, there is no doubt that he also died the dupe of a false belief; for he says in Rom. v, 9: "Being now justified by his *blood* we shall be saved from wrath through *him*."

The language of the present-day theologian is simply a contradiction of the language of Paul, the real founder of Christianity. "How much more shall the *blood of Christ*, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, *purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God*" (Heb. ix, 14). "Whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in *his blood*" (Rom. iii, 25). "And to Jesus the *mediator* of the new covenant, and to the *blood* of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. xii, 24). And this was the doctrine which Paul preached his whole life if he really wrote the letters which are attributed to him. Be that as it may, the Christians are bent upon constructing new creeds on the decay of old ones. It is a life-and-death struggle, and the end will not be long in coming. The old creeds having been hopelessly shattered in the light of sound criticism, a desperate attempt is now made to keep the name of Jesus alive. The uniqueness of Jesus is now talked over as the central point of Christianity. The religion that goes after the name of Christ has no doubt one extraordinary faculty, and this is the faculty of changing its colour in accordance with its surroundings. It is eminently chameleonic in its character.

The new theory regarding the mediation is thus formulated as stated by Mr. Hogg: "According to the principle, the uniqueness of Jesus manifests itself through his power of impressing himself upon countless individuals as absolute Lord and Master, as a supreme personality, living and commanding still, though not now visible on earth." This is the sense in which mediation is to be understood by the new Christians. It may be a misnomer, as Mr. Hogg himself admits; but as it serves to keep the name of Christianity alive, it must be understood as a new interpretation, a "re-statement" of the old theory of "blood-bath." As a matter of fact, the two theories are so foreign to each other that Mr. Hogg himself has to admit that while the theory of the early Fathers gives "the perfected, and sole

sufficient, form of mediation," that propounded by the new theologians "may be regarded as giving the death-blow to the idea of mediation in the external, and most natural, sense of the term." But whether it is considered as a reconstruction of the old creeds of Christendom, or an altogether new theory which its advocates are bent upon representing as genuine Christian doctrine, from the standpoint of reason it shows little improvement; and if the old theory has taken nineteen hundred years in dissolution, the new one is, for apparent reasons, destined to perish within a generation or two. The foundations of the Christian religion having been pulled down, the superstructure has really fallen down; but as Jesus has been recognised and worshipped as a God for about two thousand years, the doctrine has been imbibed into Christian blood: and though the creeds may be openly forsaken, the spell of Jesus cannot be unloosened all of a sudden. The present generation, or the succeeding generation, may remain bound by this spell; but as time goes on and the artificial dignity of Jesus loses its hold on Christian mind, people will begin to see the light, and will laugh at the theory of the uniqueness of Jesus, as they do even now at that of his blood.

Mr. Hogg feels that Jesus makes an impression upon his mind. He says that the uniqueness of Jesus is manifested in the impression it makes "upon countless individuals," but this is highly misleading. He could have said upon "countless Christians," but perhaps even then he would not have been right. Is it not true that the pretended uniqueness has failed to make any impression at all upon countless Jews, who have always reviled and abused Jesus and denounced him as an heresiarch? And though Mr. Hogg even now finds "the same spirit of holiness" moving amid the "welter of human sin," the Jews who came in contact with that "spirit" never felt its holiness. Nay, they went further and called it the spirit of impurity. It, therefore, appears that countless Jews felt otherwise, and the uniqueness of Jesus never made an impression upon them. Nor did it impress countless Buddhists, countless fire-worshippers, countless Hindoos, countless idolators and countless other people. On the other hand, an idol makes a greater impression on the mind of a Hindoo than the spirit of Jesus upon a Christian of Mr. Hogg's type; nay, a cock or a serpent, or a stone or a shell, is believed by the negro

to possess the same unique power as is to be found in Mr. Hogg's Jesus. Just as Mr. Hogg finds it impossible to define the "spell" of Jesus, so do the worshippers of other things. The uniqueness of Jesus is, therefore, limited to Christianity, and the same kind of uniqueness may be witnessed in others. There is no line of distinction. The one which Mr. Hogg tries to draw is a hopeless failure. He makes the assumption that in other religions, Hinduism for instance, incarnation means that God "disguised his true nature under a fleshly garb;" but in Christianity it means that "instead of disguising his true nature God revealed it by becoming an *individual* man, an immortal human soul." So think the Christians, but the Hindoo thinks exactly the reverse of this. There are no external circumstances which should indicate that God was revealed in the one case and disguised in the other. The body of Krishna was not transparent, and if there was God within him, he might very likely have remained concealed; but we presume that Jesus had also an opaque body like other mortals. Mr. Hogg makes one assertion in favour of Jesus and another against the incarnate mediators of other religions, and the one is as impossible of proof as the other is impossible of refutation. He concludes by saying that the Christians "cannot acknowledge more than one incarnate mediator without destroying the distinctive message of Christianity;" and we may add that the Hindoos "cannot acknowledge that one incarnate mediator without destroying the distinctive message of Hinduism." And we leave it for the reader to consider whether Mr. Hogg has gained, or the Hindoo lost, anything by this strange reasoning.

Let us now see if the assumed uniqueness of Jesus has performed the mediatorial function by establishing a relation between God and man; in other words, by working a pure transformation in the lives of those upon whose minds it has made, in the language of Mr. Hogg, "an impression of transcendent power and authority, as well as of transcendent moral excellence." This panegyric on Jesus is, it is to be sadly noticed, not supported by actual facts. The present condition of the countless flock of Jesus is deplored by all well-wishers of humanity, and is equally denounced from pulpit and platform. If the effect of the uniqueness of Jesus is to be seen from the condition of the majority, it is to be painfully remarked that it does not present a picture of anything approaching "transcendent moral excellence." As regards the

by a sacrifice of ourselves and not by the sacrifice of others. Difficult past of Christianity, the more we look at it, the more hateful the sight becomes. The horrors of the middle ages and the gross immoralities that prevailed, need not to be told. Going still further back, the horrors of the scene are hardly mitigated. The state of the church, even at so early a period as the second century after Christ, has hardly any attractive features. Nay, more than that. Casting a glance even at the apostles, at the twelve so carefully chosen by the master to carry his errand to the Jews, the redeeming features of the scene appear to be wonderfully few. Leaving apart their weakness of faith and the worldliness of some of them, of which we find the master complaining so frequently, one of the chosen few becomes a traitor and the remaining eleven act hardly less ignobly until not a single individual is left with him in the hour of his trial. Further, it does not appear from the Gospels that Jesus delivered his countrymen from great vices and breathed into them any transcendent moral excellence. All that is stated is, that he attracted some fishermen by the wonders he showed, such as exorcism, the turning of water into wine, therapeutics, etc. And yet this is the man who is extolled to the skies for the "impression which he makes." Mr. Hogg sees in him a "forgiveness which remained wholly pure," and the Jews saw in him a malice and vindictiveness on account of his unbecoming denunciations and extravagant railings against their leaders. This is perhaps, according to him, a "reserve" of moral excellence "not drawn upon," as he sees in his failures with a blind admirer's eye "a reserve of power not drawn upon." So it *seems* to him, but it never seemed so to the Jews. And yet Jesus did draw upon this "reserve of power" also sometimes, as, for instance, at the time of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem upon an ass or a colt, or both (the obscurity is in the Gospel statement), amid the wild cries of a fanatical mob, or at the time of his scourging the money-changers with a lash after the fashion of Don Quixote. So it appears that his "reserve" did not in any way differ from the reserve of other men, and that it was not always "not drawn upon."

What is then the criterion to test the uniqueness of a man who may claim it for himself, or whose votaries may claim it for him? The mere feeling of a person about a thing one way does not show that it is actually so. It is no argument but only a sentiment. Different men feel different ways, and there is no reason to take a Christian's feeling as

true and reject a Jew's feeling as false. If God did, in fact, "come down to man," and "Himself mediated the access to Him" in the person of Jesus, there must be some manifest sign indicative of such access to God. The matter cannot be decided upon claims only; for, as Mr. Hogg himself admits, there are other claimants also. The test of feeling Jesus' uniqueness, which he points out, is not a test at all. Jesus never taught that a man's access to God is to be judged by his feeling a thing one way or another; for he said: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matt. 17 : 20); and again: "For the tree is known by its fruit." (Matt. 12 : 33). Even Christians brag of God listening to their prayers and answering them as a sign of their access to Him, but this talk is limited to the family circle, or at the most to a believing audience. But outside the holy circle such an assertion is never dared; for if actually put to test, it must prove false. Experience is indeed fatal to the claims of these men. Now the only manner in which efficacy of a man's prayer can be tested is, that being informed by God he should be able to disclose the result beforehand. Is there a single Christian who deems that Jesus has mediated his access to God, who can prove the acceptance of his prayer to the whole world so clearly? No one dares, because no one has true access to God. Had these men a mind to arrive at a right conclusion as to the true mediator by this method, all controversies would have come to an end. But their object is not that truth should be manifested, but that their profession should be kept a-going, and for this end the real point at issue is always evaded. The uniqueness of this or that prophet can be easily tested by the access to God which his followers can prove to satisfaction to possess. We would not be guilty of condemning the unproved claims of others, while setting up similar claims for ourselves. Nor, do we wish to hide our meaning in clouds of words like the Christian exponents of the uniqueness of Jesus. We give facts and every one may test them for himself. The uniqueness of our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, as a mediator between God and man is established by facts, the truth of which cannot be questioned. So great was its impression upon his companions that they forsook every worldly comfort and sacrificed their lives for his sake. It was the

effect of the holy Prophet's mediation that the Arabs, who had been brought up in idolatry, polytheism, and all sorts of vices, became zealous advocates of the unity of God, and showed an unparalleled devotion to its cause. They rose from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest pinnacles of righteousness and civilization. The word of the Prophet acted like magic upon them. The scene at Medina, when intoxicating liquors were forbidden, is one of the numerous examples. Information being received that wine was forbidden, the wine-pots were immediately broken throughout the whole city, and wine flowed like water in the streets of Medina. Has the world ever witnessed magnetism like this in the voice of a man? But the blessings conferred by the mediation of the holy Prophet did not terminate with his life upon the earth. His mediation has conferred an everlasting benefit upon his followers, *viz.*, that God speaks to them and reveals to them His holy word, disclosing the deep secrets of the future. He also listens to their prayers and informs them beforehand of their acceptance. It is a blessing of the holy Prophet's mediation that the Promised Messiah has been raised by God among the Muslims, who has furnished proof of all these blessings on numerous occasions, and is ready to furnish such proof to every one who seeks earnestly after truth. Thousands of heavenly signs have been manifested in his support, and hundreds of thousands of his prayers have been accepted, of which fact he was often informed beforehand. There are hundreds of thousands of living witnesses to the truth of these; but if any one still entertains any doubt, he may see the fresh signs of God. Here we have a man who gives proof of his near access to God: is there any earnest seeker after truth among the Christians who would listen to his voice?

The Ranaghat Missionary.

This gentleman has a very zealous controversial spirit; but he does not know how to carry on a controversy, except by engaging in personalities which always run into virulence and abuse. Nor is this all. He makes insolent and abusive attacks upon gentlemen who take no part in the controversy, and thus shows that he does not care even for the threat contained in the Gospel-text which

he preaches: "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire" (Matt. 5: 22). In a letter to the *Epiphany*, Jan. 16th, 1904, he says: "The procedure which the Mirza follows is simple, but it is not the procedure of the fair-minded controversialist—it is only that of the tricky charlatan. It consists of two processes. The first is the somewhat ignoble pursuit of discovering mare's nests; the second is the still more discreditable device of perverting the obvious meaning of the text of the Quran or other authorities, in support of his fancied discoveries." He goes on in this strain of insolent invective, and adds to the abuses repeated mention of defeats sustained by "the Mirza" and victories won by himself and his supporters.

If we were to follow the same course, we should (God forbid) abuse Jesus Christ. For we, the Muslims of the Ahmadiyya sect, recognise Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be the Promised Messiah, as the Ranaghat Missionary considers Jesus Christ to be the Messiah. The articles appearing under the heading of "Monro on Sinlessness," in the *Review of Religions*, are not contributions from the pen of the Promised Messiah or any other gentleman, as is evident from the absence of signature. The Promised Messiah wrote an article for the *Review* on the subject of "Sinlessness" in May, 1902, and it was published under his signature. This article was *not* written in reply to any of Mr. Monro's writings, nor did it contain any reference to him. Of this he was informed in our issue for December, when we pointed out his use of abusive epithets for the Promised Messiah. It is, therefore, nothing but sheer impudence and impertinence on his part to continue to abuse the sacred leader of a community, even knowing that he takes no part in the controversy.

As to the contents of his letter. It affects to be a refutation of the articles appearing in the *Review of Religions*, being a review of Mr. Monro's pamphlets on the subject of "Sinlessness." A new plan has been devised by Mr. Monro for the refutation of the manifold arguments which he finds too strong to be refuted. It is given in the concluding paragraph of his letter, where he says: "The same system of invention or perversion, or both combined, is followed through-

out the articles in the *Review of Religions* in dealing with the charge of idolatry against Adam, with Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah, etc." An excellent device to get rid of difficulties! And the credit of this discovery belongs to the clever missionary of Ranaghat. It is sufficient for him that he thinks that he has proved the failure of one argument, for he is sure that the other arguments are all of the same kind and his dupes believe him.

Let us now take the contentions of Mr. Monro as regards Adam's act in eating of the forbidden tree. He assumes, in the first place, that we are giving some new meaning to the words of the Holy Quran not known to Muhammadan theologists and commentators, and therefore he presumptuously calls them "the Mirza's mare's nests." It is a pity that being utterly ignorant of the reality, he should thus impudently cast aspersions at others. He does not care in the least to keep up his character as an honest controversialist, but always ventures to make absolutely false statements in public papers. The belief in the sinlessness of the prophets has been the belief of the whole Muhammadan world from the earliest times with very few dissenting voices, and the Quranic text has always been understood in a sense compatible with this belief. It is nothing but the height of absurdity and ignorance to attribute to us perversions of the meaning of the sacred text for giving it the signification generally received by Muhammadans. This we state simply as a matter of fact. Mr. Monro ought further to know that perversion of the sacred text is the inheritance which he has received from his religious ancestors, for them the Holy Quran blames for it. In fact when he blames us for perversion, and makes the Muslims share with the Christians his imaginary victory, he panders to the religious prejudice of ignorant Muslims.

All that Mr. Monro has to say is simply this, that in the verse *ولقد عهدنا الى آدم من قبل فليسى ولم نجد له عزمًا* the word *عزمًا* does not mean an intention to break the commandment but a determination to keep it, and that the former meaning is our own invention, while the latter meaning is the only one given by all commentators. This is the substance of his letter, if the volleys of abuses to which he has recourse in every paragraph of his letter are omitted. Now whatever *عزمًا* means, our assertion regarding the sinlessness of Adam is sufficiently borne out by the word *فليسى*

"he forgot," used of him in this verse. The word clearly negatives his intention to break the commandment; because where there is forgetfulness, there is no intention. That intention is a necessary element in sin we have been asserting from the beginning, but now when Mr. Monro finds that according to this definition sin is not attributable to Adam, he calls it a "*dictum*" devoid of "authority save that of his own imagination." In his impatience to attribute sins to the prophets of God, he is blind to the most apparent facts, and like the drowning man catches at straws. Forgetfulness is a natural human weakness, and a thing done through forgetfulness is not a sin; for the very plain reason that Almighty God says that He does not burden any soul beyond its power, and not to forget is not within the power of man. Hence there are plain rules in Muslim Law that if a man forgets to perform his devotions at the appointed time, he may perform them when he remembers. So also in case of fasts; if a man eats or drinks through forgetfulness, the fast is not broken. These are simple rules upon which all Muhammadans act, and accordingly nothing has been supplied from imagination. But we are prepared to furnish a still more plain evidence of the truth of this assertion to Mr. Monro. The very first tradition in the *Saheeh Bukharee*, the most authoritative work on tradition, runs as follows: انما الاعمال بالنيات "Verily a deed is to be judged by the intention with which it is done, and every man will meet his reward according to what he intended." These are all Muhammadan authorities on the point that intention is a necessary element in sin, and that a deed done through forgetfulness does not constitute a sin. Even, according to Jesus, God looks to the intention with which a deed is done. We will quote the words if Mr. Monro denies it.

We will now consider the meaning of the words ولم نجد له عزمًا These words immediately follow the word نسي spoken concerning Adam. Mr. Monro does not object to our translation of the latter word, and the word unquestionably means "he forgot." Now ولم نجد له عزمًا literally means 'we did not find in him any determination' which might either signify 'a determination to break the commandment,' or 'a determination to abstain generally from what was prohibited to him.' But the previous word نسي clearly shows that the former signification is the one which fits in here. Almighty

God speaks of Adam's forgetting a commandment given to him and not intentionally breaking it, and therefore the absence of determination is the same absence of intention which is clearly indicated in the words "he forgot." Hitherto Adam had received only this commandment from God, and though he could not keep it, yet Almighty God himself excused him on this occasion by saying that it occurred only through forgetfulness. He had not broken any other commandment, and consequently it could not be said that Almighty God had not found in him "a determination generally to abstain from what was forbidden him." There was only one commandment, and consequently the absence of intention on the part of Adam relates to the same act of forgetfulness. Now we ask Mr. Monro to state honestly whether he had seen all the Muslim commentators and consulted all authorities at the time of his making the daring assertion, that this was a "discovery of a mare's nest" on our part, and that we were guilty of perverting the meaning of the sacred text? But as such a confession from an evangelist of the Gospel of truth—or the Gospel of error, as the Higher Critics would like to call it—is the very last thing, we proceed to show that he did not act like an honest controversialist. Commentary, we have already stated, is not taken as the Word of God by any Muhammadan, and therefore we do not quote commentaries but only to give the lie to the pious gentleman in his statement that it is our invention. Refuting arguments against the sinlessness of Adam, Fakhr-ud-Din Razi writes in his valuable work, the Tafsir-i-Kabir *ولم نجد له عزمًا* "And because Almighty God calls it an act of forgetfulness in the verse *ولم نجد له عزمًا* and this negatives his intention." Again, he translates these words by "And we did not find in him an intention to stand upon disobedience." Another commentator, Abu Sa'ud, also gives its translation in these words: *عزمًا على الذنب* "A determination upon the Zanb for he forgot and had no intention." The Lisanul-Arb writes under the meaning of *عزم* as follows: *عزم على الامر* (ان فعله) "He had an *عزم* upon a deed when he intended its doing." According to this signification of *عزم* the verse in question would mean: "We did not

find him having an intention to do the deed which he did." Of course we do not deny that the other meaning is also given in commentaries but this does not show that the meaning given by Mr. Monro is the true meaning, and that given by us wrong; or, as Mr. Monro would have it, an invention and a perversion on our part.

Regarding our quotation from the *Lisanul-Arab* in that article, he makes the same presumptuous remark that it is a perversion, but he does not point out in what manner. When charging us so seriously, it was his duty to produce the words of the book and give the reasons for which he charged us with perversion. Such of our readers as can have recourse to the *Lisanul-Arab*, may see Vol. XIX, page 378, lines 6 and 7, where we have the following غوى الرجل خاب غوى، . . . i.e., "غوى" (gawa), spoken with respect to a man means 'he was disappointed', or 'he failed,' and in the word of God عصى آدم ربه غوى the meaning is فسد عليه عيشه (i.e., there was disturbance in the life of peace which he enjoyed)." And we now support this statement from Lane's Arabic English Lexicon (see Book I, P. VI page 2304), which among the different significations of غوى gives "was disappointed; or, failed of attaining his desire;" and again "Z has mentioned the reading in the Qur. (XX. 119), وعصى آدم ربه غوى expl. as meaning (and Adam disobeyed his Lord, and suffered indigestion from much eating, but better than this is what Az and Er Raghib say; that it is غوى and that the meaning is, and his life became evil to him; or he was disappointed, or he acted ignorantly; or some other of the meanings mentioned by the expositors." We think Mr. Monro would be in a much better position if he digests this.

Mr. Monro never fears to be exposed, and without thinking what he is going to say, he runs out to his favourite *Epiphany*, by the "courtesy," of whose editor he has accomplished great things, and in which though controversies are for others sharply declared as closed, yet for the brags of Mr. Monro its columns can afford unlimited space. It is, therefore, no wonder to see a controversy which was closed on the 17th January, 1903, by the editor of the *Epiphany*, carried on, on one side only, by Mr. Monro in the same paper up to the 16th, and even 23rd, January, 1904. But that is not our

concern. Mr. Monro very politely calls our explanation of the word ظلم *sulm*, as given in the July number of the *Review* another instance of our "etymological juggling," previous instances being those relating to the signification of *Farqleet*, etc. There is no doubt that various significations are attached to the word ظلم and we plainly said so, when giving its signification, in the article in question. But the signification which we have ascribed to it is also given in Arabic Dictionaries. Lane's *Lexicon* will do for the present. In Book I, Pt. V, page 1920, we have: "According to some, it (ظلم) primarily signifies (لنقص) as meaning *the making to suffer loss or detriment*." And again: "ظلمه inf. n. ظلم also means, *he imposed upon him a thing that was above his power or ability*." We advise Mr. Monro to read again that article with this meaning in view, and he will find no difficulty. In fact his reference to the signification, given by us as a "fantastic invention," was simply the outcome of his ignorance of the Arabic language and he did not take the trouble to consult an authoritative work before rushing out to the *Epiphany*, although he had full six months to ponder over it.

The meaning of the word *farqleet* was discussed in July, 1902, in the *Review of Religions*, and there is no use reproducing that article here. There we noted the etymology of the word and showed that it was a pure Arabic compound consisting of two parts فارق *fa.rq* and لبط *leet*, and meant 'one who destroyed falsehood,' or 'one who distinguished between truth and falsehood.' We then stated that the Greek form *paraclete* was only a corruption of the Arabic *farqleet* for the very plain reason that the speaker was a man of the Hebrew race who spoke a Semitic language very closely allied to Arabic. We further stated that the two words, *fariq* and *leet* were not only to be found in Arabic but also in the Hebrew language, and this conclusively settled that Jesus did not utter a word which was the equivalent of *farqleet* but the very word *farqleet* itself. It is these facts which Mr. Monro with his usual insolence terms as "etymological juggling." If this is honest criticism, then all dictionaries may be easily condemned as masses of "etymological juggling." *Farqleet* and *paraclete* have a close resemblance and since the two, while having two different meanings, have been applied

to the same person, there is not the least doubt that one of them is a corruption of the other. The originality of the Semitic form is placed beyond any doubt when it is considered that both the speaker and his audience were Semitic people, who spoke a Semitic language. In Hebrew *fariq* means to break, or to crush, and *lot* means a covering, a veil, sorcery, etc. If Mr. Monro wants authority, he must consult a dictionary of the Hebrew language. The word *lot* occurs in various forms in the Old Testament, Ex. 7, 22; 8, 3, 14; Is. 25, 7; Ruth 3, 7; I Sam. 18, 22; 24, 5, and in all these places it bears the significance indicated above. We have often shown that on account of his ignorance of the Arabic language, Mr. Monro makes assertions which would bring a blush to him if he had some knowledge. *Farqleet* is a pure Arabic word, and is given under the root ف ر ق in the Lisanul-Arab, Vol., XII page 182, where it says : وفي الحديث قى صفته عليه السلام : ان اسمه فى الكتب السالفة فارق ليطا اى يفرق بين الحق والباطل and so also in the Majma-i-Bihar-ul-Anwar, Vol. II, page 73, ن سما فى الكتب السالفة فارق ليطا اى يفرق بين الحق والباطل. Both are to the same effect and indicate that in traditions it is related that in the former books the Holy Prophet was called "*Farigleet* i.e., one who distinguishes between truth and falsehood." Two things are to be specially noted. In the first place the word is given under the root فرق *farq*, thus clearly signifying that the word is derived from this root, for, as a rule, only those words are given under a root which are derived from it. Secondly, the word *farigleet* is in both places written as فارق ليطا *fariq-o-litan*, and thus not only the component parts are indicated separately, but the construction itself shows that it is a purely Arabic form, and literally means a distinguisher between truth and falsehood, thus rejecting all ideas of its foreign derivation. It should also be borne in mind that the words of the prophecy relating to the *farqleet* also clearly show that the *farqleet* is none other than one who distinguishes truth from falsehood. This was fully discussed in our article on the "Paraclete." What happened was this, and it is not a strange process at all, that the Greek scribes of the Gospels found a Greek word *paraclete* closely resembling the Semitic *farqleet*, as contained in the prophecy, and either not understanding its exact signification, or thinking the signification of the two words to be nearly the same, wrote down *paraclete* for *farqleet*.

But we do not expect from Mr. Menre a fair consideration of these points, and therefore leave his abuses and scoffing to the indignation of honesty, and leave it for the reader to judge the merits of the controversy.

Notes and Comments.

That the late Henry Edward John Stanley, third Baron Stanley of Alderley, was a sincere and devout Muslim, was known to very few men. Readers of the *Safwat-ul Itbar* (Travels of Sheikh Muhammad Bairam Fifth of Tunis), however, knew very well that Lord Stanley had long been a sincere believer in the principles of Islam. But his faith was not limited to a profession by word of mouth. The author of the *Safwat-ul-Itbar* relates incidents which show how deeply Islam had entered into his heart. He found him not only regular in the five daily prayers, but also constant at *tahajjud* (the midnight prayers); and what is still more wonderful, he found him very humble in his prayers, and far above most born Muhammadans. When he talked of the Holy Prophet, it was with profound love and deep respect that he mentioned or named him. He found him also very well versed on the principles of Muslim theology, and in his conversation with him he found that the deep conviction of his mind was the result of a comprehensive knowledge of the principles of Islam. This was about the year 1880. Who could imagine that such a sincere and devout worshipper of the true God was living in the heart of Christendom?

Lord Stanley breathed his last on Friday, the 21st day of Ramazan (corresponding with 11th December 1903). It appears from the "Crescent" that his Muslim name was Abdul Rahman. The *Crescent* gives the following account of his interment: "On Tuesday, the 25th Ramazan (15th December) his mortal remains were laid silently to rest in a secluded plantation in Alderley Park, his late lordship's ancestral home. The interment took place at an early hour, and was conducted strictly according to Muslim usage, in which Holy and Imperishable Faith his lordship lived and died. (*Alhamdulillah*) The corpse was inclosed in a plain deal coffin,

and borne from the hall by workmen on the Alderley estate. Following it on foot were the successor to the title (the Hon'ble Lyulph Stanley), his wife, their two sons, and other relatives. By the late Lord Stanley's special direction there was also present as chief mourner his Excellency Hamid Bey, Premier *Secrétaire* to the Ottoman Embassy in London. The Islamic prayers were recited over the grave by the Imam to the Turkish Embassy. A *Janaza* service in memory of the deceased was held at the Liverpool Mosque, and was conducted by His Honour Abdulla Quilliam Effendi, Sheikh-ul Islam of the British Isles." So lived and passed a noble soul, and this must no doubt be a "terrible blow" to the orthodox Christians as the Freethinker says, which corroborates this account of Lord Stanley's death and burial. May God receive him into His mercy and open the eyes of other Christians to the shining lights of the true and living faith of Islam! *Amen!*

Prayer in Christ's name.

The truth of our remarks made elsewhere, concerning the supposed acceptance and answers of prayers in Christ's name, is illustrated in the *Epiphany* of 16th January. Syed Zia-ul-Haq from Joyrampur calls the attention of the editor of that paper to a claim made in a previous issue concerning the acceptance and answers of the Christians' prayers through Jesus Christ, and to the claims put forward by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Sect of Islam, that he is the Promised Messiah, that his prayers are most of all accepted in the world, and that in a "duel of prayer" to test his claim to the Promised Messiahship his prayers will certainly be accepted, while that of his opponent as certainly rejected. He cites the example of Dr. Dowie of Chicago, who was challenged to pray to God as against the Promised Messiah that the liar may die first, and how he has kept his silence, and then proposes that "a Christian missionary, in order to be true to your remarks," should "stand against Mirza Sahib in a duel of prayer." But as we have already stated, the Christians have not the courage to put their claims to the acceptance of prayer to test; for if they are certain of anything, they are certain of this that experience will deal a death-blow to their pretensions. Evading the proposal, therefore, the editor says: "As the Mirza claims to be the Messiah, we challenge him to verify his pretension (1) by

proving himself immortal, (2) by compelling the submission of Islam and Christianity, and (3) destroying all his opponents, including ourselves, by calling down fire from heaven. Meanwhile we will pray that his imposture may perish when he himself dies. And our correspondent will watch the result." Proofs of this nature have always been demanded of the prophets of God. Jesus had a capital opportunity to convert the devil himself if he could have cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and shown that the angels of God had charge over him. Had he performed this simple feat, the devil would have been conquered once for all, and Jesus would have been saved the hardships of crucifixion. The demand of "proving himself immortal" savors of a like nature. Two other proofs are demanded, *viz.*, compelling the submission of Islam and Christianity, and calling down fire from heaven to consume his opponents including the members of the Oxford Mission. Now the Rev. gentlemen carrying on the business of evangelization should know the Bible, and at least the Gospels, a little better. What did Jesus say when a sign was demanded? Matthew says, he said: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the Prophet Jonas" (Matt 12:39). Mark says, he sighed deeply and answered: "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, there shall no sign be given unto this generation" (Mark 8:12). Luke agrees with Matthew, only he is more polite and calls the people evil but not adulterous. John does not know whether such a thing ever happened. This is only to show how an earlier Messiah, who is now worshipped as a God fared at the hands of the Jews. As a matter of fact, the Promised Messiah is furnishing proof of every sort. But the editor of the *Epiphany* wants him to prove his immortality. This is simply an absurdity. The prophets of God are spiritually immortal, but immortality in the sense in which he wants it has not been granted to any man—nay, not to a Christian God according to his belief. Jesus also died. If we keep fairness as the rule, and truth as the object in religious discussions, much good can result from them. Had our Christian friends the slightest care for fairness and truth, such remarks could never have been made. Did Jesus show the signs demanded? Did he prove his immortality to the Jews? Did he compel the submission of Judaism alone? Did he destroy all his opponents by calling down fire from heaven? If he did not do any of these things,

being the Messiah, and even the very God according to Christian belief, do not the Christians feel ashamed to demand such proofs from the Promised Messiah?

But look at the success of the Promised Messiah and contrast it with the failure of Jesus. So far as Christianity is concerned, its building has been demolished by the discovery of the tomb of Jesus and other powerful arguments against its doctrines. The Christians are already seeking for new theories, the old theory of *blood* having proved a signal failure. As for Islam, the Promised Messiah has come to establish it and give new life to its principles, and as the principles of Christianity are decaying, the faith of Islam is reviving. The Promised Messiah has about two hundred thousand followers; how many had Jesus? The fire in which the editor of the *Epiphany* desires to be consumed has come down from heaven already and is raging in the country. Is he not aware of the havoc made by the plague? Can he deny that all the prophets had foretold of the plague as a sign of the advent of the Promised Messiah? And as early as 1884, more than twelve years before its actual appearance, the Promised Messiah also foretold of its appearance in this country. For further information that this is the fire sent down by heaven, he should read the Noah's Ark.

And now having done with the demands of the editor of the *Epiphany*, we would ask him to accept the proposal in Syed Zia-ul-Haq's letter, and not to evade it by vain excuses. If he knows that God accepts his prayers and that God must reject the prayers of one whom he calls an "impostor" as against himself, why should he thus shun and have recourse to evasive answers? The struggle between the religious principles of Christianity and Islam will be decided once for all if he sums up a little courage.

So says the *Tablet*, which writes, in its issue of 3rd October, **The Bishops should 1903,** as follows:—
do something.

"Mirza Ghulam Ahmed has been reading the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and inasmuch as that notorious work is edited by an Anglican dignitary, perhaps pardonably feels entitled to quote it against Christians. In the *Indian Review of Religions* this gentleman says:

The most trustworthy book containing the views of Higher Critics and written by professed Christians is the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, in which it is stated in column 1,811 (Vol. II), that in all the Gospels there are only five absolutely credible passages about Jesus. Professor Schmiedel, Professor of the New Testament Exegesis, Zurich (for the author of these remarks is no less a Church dignitary than he), then goes on to say that these passages, which 'might be called the foundation-pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus,' conclusively prove 'that in the person of Jesus we have to do with a completely human being, and that the Divine is to be sought in Him only in the form in which it is capable of being found in a man.' We hope that the Christian missionaries will plainly avow these truths and condemn the false belief of the Divinity of Jesus.'

"A correspondent of *The Guardian* commenting on this passage says: 'That a Mohammadan should claim for the Quran a higher inspiration and authority than the Bible is not surprising. But that he should be able to support his contention by quotations from a book in part edited and written by a priest and dignitary of the English Church, and a professor of the University of Oxford, is a reproach to which we ought not to be exposed. As a private individual, Professor Cheyne is free to think and write as he pleases but when he uses his position and the influence it gives him in disseminating doctrines directly subversive of some of the fundamental articles of the Catholic faith, he implicates the whole Church of which he is a member, and strikes a deadly blow at the religion she is trying to propagate.'

"An appeal on this subject, in the shape of a protest, is understood to have been made to the Chancellors of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. But the correspondent who writes to *The Guardian* is of opinion that the Bishops should do something. He recalls the solemn question to which the Bishops and, indeed, the clergy have given assent: 'Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word?' He adds: 'The denial of the divinity of our Lord is not a strange doctrine, but at least we believe it to be erroneous, and it is certainly contrary to God's Word.' But if the Bishops were to censure every false doctrine, what would become of the comprehensiveness of Anglicanism?"

But what can the poor Bishops do with a book, which has falsely been assumed to be the Word of God. Still we must await the result of these appeals.

Under the above heading, the *Record* and the *Rock* both publish, in their issue of the 30th October, the following letter from the pen of Mr. Corfe, the gentleman who, some time ago, preferred an appeal to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge against the verdict of the Higher Criticism:—

"Sir,—The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts has now apparently thrown down the gauntlet by inserting the article in their Quarterly Magazine 'Higher Criticism an Aid to Missionary Work.' This, too, in the presence of the grave information from India that the Bible, as represented by the Higher critics, is publicly estimated now in India as being on a level with the Quran. The Principal of the Church Missionary Society's High School, Krishnagar, Bengal, writes to the *Record* that the *Punjab Review of Religions* 'lays hold of the most recent and advanced criticism, claims that this school teaches what the Quran has always taught, urges missionaries to give up teaching a Bible which has been proved false, and to recognize that the so-called Divinity of Christ is nothing more than every other man possesses.' 'Thus has the Bible been swept away as a straw before the mighty current of modern criticism, and such was the fate it deserved.'

"This position, so full of insult and menace to Christianity throughout the world, drew at once an appeal, in this country, to the Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Under such circumstances as these, therefore, this challenge of the S.P.G., unless quickly answered, would lead to the dislocation of missionary work in all foreign lands. It will be answered.

"Again, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge has recently published a book containing the following: 'The personality of Buddha must, I think, rank second to that of Jesus Christ in the whole history of the world; unless, indeed, we place him above the figure of Moses.' Thus Abraham, Elijah, David, Isaiah, the Evangelists, the Apostles, the Virgin Mary, St. Paul, are thus assigned an inferior place to Buddha in the above words written by Archdeacon Wilson, and printed bearing the imprimatur of the S.P.C.K.

"Moreover, at the Bristol Church Congress a Bishop—who has for many years shared with Canons Driver and Cheyne the distinction of being the ablest of the English Higher Critics—repeated the same theories on which the denials of the truth of the Bible in India, Australia and other parts of the world are based.

"The answers to all such challenges, by whomsoever given, are already at hand. For during the last few years a library has been forming, a library of expert works by English and German Professors, and experts in every branch of modern Biblical criticism, scientifically contradicting the theories of the Higher Critics and re-establishing the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

"The Bible Students' Union has been recently founded in England and Scotland especially for the purpose of diffusing at home and abroad this Bible-defence knowledge which has been accumulating, and thus placing, the materials and weapons of skilful Biblical defence within reach of all.

"Expert defence of the Bible has now become a necessary part of the national life of this country if it is to remain Christian; and this is seen to be more urgent in view of the strong efforts which are being made to secure the children for the Higher Criticism by teaching it in schools and Bible classes. A glance at the above effect of it in India ought to suffice.

"Finally, the very last refuge offered by the destructive critics as compensation for a wrecked Bible—namely, Christ Himself and His teaching—both are destroyed owing to the joint effects of the Kenosis school and *Encyclopædia Biblica* school, for Christ has been deposed by them to the rank of a fallible teacher and of an ordinary human man. Thus nothing is left—nothing but the powder produced by the falling of the corner-stone—exactly as it was foretold.

"The Bible Students' Union has been joined by some of the most distinguished scholars of the day.

"October 26.

ROBERT P. C. CORFE."

What the Bible Students' Union has practically done may be known to Mr. Corfe. Perhaps it is in its infancy, and when it begins to work, it will be too late, for Christians Missionaries and Ministers all over the world are giving up the position which Mr. Corfe has an earnest wish to keep.