

Vol. V.

No. 12.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

DECEMBER 1906.

CONTENTS.

PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY	...	...	...	443
THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST	...	...	...	448
SOME SUPERSTITIONS AND EVILS SWEEPED OFF BY ISLAM	...	...	...	469
JESUS THE PROPHET	...	...	...	476
CONQUESTS OF CHRISTIANITY	...	...	...	478
THE BRAHMAVADIN	...	...	...	480

QADIAN,

DISTRICT GURDASPUR, PUNJAB, INDIA.

Annual Subscription ... Rs. 4. | Single Copy As. 6.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS.

VOL. V.]

DECEMBER, 1906.

[No. 12.]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Practical Theosophy.



I do not intend to discuss in this brief article the purely metaphysical questions of Theosophy which would be but dry and uninteresting reading for most readers. My object is only to discuss the relation in which what is called "Practical Theosophy" stands to other religions, and this I have been asked to do by a gentleman who sends me a leaflet describing the effect of Practical Theosophy upon the life of man. The four short paragraphs of this leaflet run as follows:—

1. "Practical Theosophy makes one tolerant of the views of others and the student therefore ceases to hate any person or religion or to consider himself superior to others. It has brought peace of mind to many who have sought and followed its light and will not fail to confer the same boon on others who may like to enter within its arena. The most prominent feature of its beneficent works is the wonderfully quick purification of the thought, speech and action of its followers.

2. "The more one studies Theosophical teachings, the more he appreciates the truths taught by his own religion as the former are illuminative; and none need leave his own religion for attaining the Highest Goal, as the path thereto has been described in every religion by those who have trodden it.

3. "Peace, happiness and prosperity would reign in this world

if its citizens tried to know and follow, in practice, the Laws of Nature, and if, while assiduously expounding to others the beauties and sublimities of their own beliefs and doctrines, they refrained from uttering any disparaging words about the beliefs and doctrines held sacred by others. Comparisons could, if necessary at all, be made in a reverential spirit and loving tone, only with the view of removing ignorance and of leading from darkness unto light.

4. "Practical Theosophy tries to replace hatred, suspicion, and self-aggrandizement by mutual love, confidence and self-abnegation, and the true Theosophist is ever ready to serve humanity to the best of his power and ability, sacrificing his personal comforts, without looking for any reward here or hereafter. He never deviates from the path of rectitude under any pressure or other untoward circumstance whatever. He is not the slave of circumstances, but moulds them to suit his ends and is ever intent on doing the right and on faithfully following Truth, Justice and other Eternal Laws so helpful to the true progress of Humanity at large. Though his immediate surroundings may claim and receive a larger share of his services, his helping hand is unfailingly stretched to *any one* who may stand in need of the same and desire to receive its succour. In fact he is a desireless and passionless beneficent force whose thoughts and actions are a voluntary sacrifice to the Universe and its Lord, and whose only object of life is to know that Great and Good Law. Para Brahma, God or Allah—and to completely identify himself with that law."

These four paragraphs may be briefly summed up in the few words that Practical Theosophy makes all men happy and replaces mutual hatred by love and, the most important of all, that through it they may attain the Highest Goal by following their own religions. I would not enter into any discussion on the first two assertions because the avowed object of every religion is to make men happy and love their fellow-beings, but in the third point Theosophy makes a departure from the teachings of other religions. Theosophical teachings, it is alleged, are illuminative, and hence their study makes one appreciate in a greater degree "the truths taught by his own religion," and "none need leave his own religion for attaining the Highest Goal." These conclusions are so attractive in their outward appearance that very few will tarry to reflect on the meaning conveyed by them and the r

absurdity would, therefore, escape the notice of most men. The reconciliation which Theosophy or its vctaries claim to bring about among the various contending religion, is really only a sham, but the idea of sticking to one's own religion, without having any fault found with one, finds favour with many men on account of the easy-going fashion of the day in all religious matters. It is really indifference to truth and the true religion or a misconception of it that gives rise to the idea that the highest goal may be attained by following the religion in which one is born. It apparently looks like an important step in the progress of religion, but the fact is that it puts an end to all progress. Moreover, if it is considered to be harmful to question a man's religious views and show their errors, it must be equally harmful to question his political, moral or social views. The contention and struggle of religions must lead ultimately to the prevalence of truth, but their alleged reconciliation according to a Theosophist's views is sure to result in the prevalence of errors.

Now let us consider more closely the allegation of the Practical Theosophists. It is asserted that the truths taught by one's own religion are better appreciated by the aid of the Theosophical teachings. What these teachings are the leaflet does not mention, but according to another writer* Theosophy teaches:—

“(a) Karma—the law which promotes brotherhood by means of the joy inherent in brotherly thought and act, and by the pain that follows unbrotherly thought and act. It is the law that needs no administration by any person or thing, for it is the law of the inherent effect of right or wrong thoughts and acts. (b). Reincarnation, the repeated birth on earth of us all, till we have attained so rich a store of life and so great a knowledge that death is no more possible. (c). The Divine and the animal in each of us; and our power to choose which we will be; and the consequences of our choice. Each man can be his saviour, can apportion joy or pain to himself, can at any moment turn to the Divine light within himself, and begin, little by little, in spite of any number of failings and failures, to grow nearer to it and to the day on which he shall feel the joy of becoming it and thus learning his immortality. (d). That there is no power in the univers, outside of ourselves, from which

*Vide “The Purpose of Universal brotherhood and the Theosophical Society.”

we have anything to fear, either as punishment or hurt."

The absolute denial of God is further emphasized in the following words concerning these principles of Theosophy :--

"Speaking of no God of changing decrees they show in operation throughout the universe a majestic and unchanging law, a law administered by man unto himself with perfect justice even though he comprehends it not."

With these teachings Theosophy far from illuminating the truth in other religions darkens it. The fundamental principle of every religion that is based on revelation is the existence of God and the retribution by Him of good and evil deeds, but according to Theosophy man is all-sufficient, and there is no higher power from which he has to fear any thing. How a man can be a Theosophist and at the same time follow his own religion must be made clear. A religion that rejects the doctrines of Theosophy cannot be followed by a Theosophist. Again, if one religion condemns a doctrine of another religion as false, one of the two must be in error. Similarly two religions teaching contradictory doctrines cannot be both in the right. Hence if the "Highest Goal" can be attained by following one religion, it cannot be attained by following another which condemns or contradicts any of the fundamental doctrines of the former. The Theosophist tells us that the path to the highest goal has been described in every religion by those who have trodden it. But the founder of every faith, the first man who trod that path, has described all the other paths existing at his time to be erroneous. Thus when Jesus appeared among the Jews, he condemned the paths they were walking in as erroneous and leading not to, but away from, the goal. According to a Theosophist, both Jesus and the Jews must be right, but that is impossible. Again when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, made his appearance in Arabia, he condemned alike the idolaters, the Jews and the Christians because of the erroneous doctrines which they inculcated. In fact to attain to truth, it is necessary that evil and error should be hated and condemned, and we cannot love both good and evil, or truth and error. Love of the one means the hatred of the other, and to hate error is as necessary to attain to the goal as to love the truth.

There are two extreme views with regard to religion which are both wrong. The one is the view of the Theosophist or the Vedantist who tries to please everybody by proclaiming that salvation or the highest goal can be attained by following the religion which one professes by birth. This view which is outwardly so attractive is really the greatest enemy to truth. According to it the prophets of God who invited people to accept the religion they taught were the greatest of sinners, for they condemned the prevailing religions on account of the errors which they found in them. Even if Theosophy did not teach the doctrine of the denial of God, no one who followed any religion could be a Theosophist, for Theosophy attributes the greatest of errors to the founder of a religion. The absurdity of this view is further clear from the circumstance that it treats on a par the basest of superstitions and the highest and most intellectual of religions. Theosophy tells the idolater to remain contented with his idolatry and not to seek a higher form of religion. Had its principles been acted upon by men, the world would have remained sunk in the worst of superstitions. The opposite view which goes to the other extreme is promulgated by the Christian religion which considers that the plan of salvation had not been revealed to mankind for thousands of years before Jesus Christ and that it is even now limited to the worshippers of Jesus. This view is too narrow to be accepted by any reasonable person. It supposes that hundreds of thousands of the righteous servants of God who passed away before Jesus Christ did not tread the path of salvation and could not attain to the highest goal.

The truth lies between the extreme views of the Theosophist and the Christian, and that truth is to be met with in the holy religion of Islam only. Islam does not hold either of the extreme views. It teaches that the path which leads to the highest goal was revealed to different people in different ages, but the teachings of the prophets of God were mixed up by their followers with a great deal of errors, and thus the truth in them was hidden under a thick mass of errors. When the religions of the world became thus corrupt, the holy religion of Islam was revealed to the world. The mission of Islam was to sift the truth from error in these religions, to preach the truth and condemn the errors. This is the only reasonable view which is consistent with the justice of God. Islam recognises that

prophets were raised in every country to point out the way to salvation to their people and that they all taught the principles of the Unity of God and the necessity of doing righteous deeds, but with the lapse of time many errors found their way into these religions. The founders of the great religions of the world were, therefore, according to Islam, true prophets of God who not only themselves trod the path of salvation, but they also pointed out to their people that path which could lead them to the highest goal. The differences of revealed religions are due to the errors which found their way into them afterwards. Thus Islam avoids the absurdity of the Theosophical view which holds that the different religions with all the contradictions in their fundamental principles and with every error in them can lead a man to the highest goal which is salvation, without falling into the error of the Christian doctrine which makes salvation depend upon certain circumstances in the life of a man, born some nineteen hundred years ago, and denies the germs of truth in any religion except that preached by the Israelite prophets. The Holy Quran tells us in plain words that to every people a warner was sent, and hence a Muslim believes that as the Jews and the Christians had their revealed religions, even so the Indians, the Persians, the Chinese and other people had their revealed religions and inspired leaders. But as in the case of so recent a religion as Christianity, we see that the true teachings of Jesus Christ were suppressed and numerous errors were introduced into its fundamental doctrines, so did it happen in the case of more ancient religions. Thus the right view with respect to the truth or falsehood of religions is that they all started with truth as their basis, but grave errors found way into them with the lapse of time. They once led their followers to the highest goal, but in their present form error greatly predominates over the truth in them, and hence their incapability to lead to the highest goal. Islam is the only religion which can lead to salvation now, for it contains the whole truth and is free from every error. Though the Muslims too have gone astray in certain points, yet the true and pure religion of Islam is accessible to us in the Holy Quran which has been preserved to us exactly as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, and Almighty God has raised His messenger, the Promised Messiah, in these last ages, in accordance with His promises made of old, to preach again the

true and pure religion of Islam and purify it of every error.

It may still be asked, Is salvation limited to Islam? Is not a thing so essential for man's eternal happiness obtainable everywhere? These questions arise only out of an ignorance of the true nature of salvation or the highest goal. Had the Theosophists realized what salvation meant, they could never have made the assertion that a man can attain to the highest goal even by worshipping idols or human beings. Nor is even the worship of God synonymous with salvation. What is necessary to attain to the goal is the true knowledge of God which alone can lead a man to union with Him. The followers of Theosophy and Vedantism think that different people are worshipping the same God under different names. If God were simply a name without a connotation, we need not have questioned this assertion. But the fact is that the different names under which God is worshipped by different people carry different conceptions. It is only a true knowledge of God, a knowledge of the Divine attributes, that can lead a man to salvation and make him attain the highest goal, and that knowledge is met with only in the religion of Islam. The Jews had lost the true knowledge of God before the time when Jesus made his appearance, and this was the reason that Jesus condemned them though they were a monotheistic people. They worshipped one God but they had lost the true knowledge of Him. Hence Almighty God raised His prophet Jesus to bring them back to salvation and a true knowledge of God. At the time when the Holy Prophet Muḥammad made his appearance, the Christians had fallen into the most serious errors and the knowledge of God which had been brought to them by Jesus was entirely lost. As the Holy Quran says there was no people on the face of the earth at that time who preserved the true knowledge of God and the whole earth had, therefore, become corrupt. Hence Almighty God raised His messenger in Arabia to bring to the world a true knowledge of God and thus lead them to salvation. The purest teachings with regard to the attributes of God are those of Islam, and there are errors in every other religion. The Christian religion which is the foremost of all religions at present in making attempts to convert the whole world is as blameable in this respect as the worst of superstitions. It has corrupted even the Jewish doctrine of pure monotheism. Instead of Unity it preaches a trinity and

takes the man Jesus for its God. Certainly none can attain to the highest goal with such an erroneous knowledge of the Divine Being.

The Second Coming of Christ.

By M. SHER ALI, B.A.

The Editor of the *Examiner* (Bombay), while commenting on the letter of a Muslim correspondent in his issue of August 1906, makes some curious observations regarding the second coming of Christ. I have carefully read his comments, but am disappointed to find that they are calculated only to puzzle a seeker after truth rather than guide him. The following are the conclusions which one arrives at by perusing his remarks :—

Firstly, that, according to him, the prophecy of Jesus concerning earthquakes, pestilences, famines and wars is ambiguous. Referring to these signs of the second coming of Jesus, he says “These, however, are ambiguous indications. There has never been any age in which these phenomena have been wanting There has been never a century in which some people were not fully persuaded that all the signs of Christ’s coming were being or had been realized.”

Secondly, that even a false prophet can work the miracles which are wrought by a true prophet. A person, for instance, may make true prophecies and still be no more than a false prophet. He remarks : “Supposing Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has made some successful prophecies, this is only what our Lord foretold by saying that ‘False prophets should arise and work great signs and wonders which would, if possible, deceive even the elect’.”

Again, “signs in the air, earth, and sea are too ambiguous to give us much guidance. Prophecies are questionable for in those days, there will be false prophets as well as true ones, and a false prophet does not necessarily mean a person who foretells things which fail to happen.”

Thirdly, that the prophecy of the second advent of Jesus must be interpreted in a strictly literal way and that the interpretation

which was put on the prophecy of the second coming of Elijah is not applicable to the case of Jesus for the one was man and the other God, the Judge and the Redeemer.

These are the three conclusions which one arrives at by the perusal of the *Examiner's* comments. I will try to show below how they are calculated only to bewilder a seeker after truth rather than guide him.

As to the prophecy of Jesus relating to earthquakes, pestilences, etc., the prediction as stated in the Gospels is indeed a little ambiguous, for the degree of the severity of these disasters is not clearly stated. But it is the narrator whom we should blame for the ambiguity and not Jesus. The writers of the Gospels do not seem to have faithfully reproduced the words of Jesus. Jesus evidently did not refer to these events in their ordinary form, for such events in their ordinary form are of daily occurrence and cannot serve as signs. If we have to treat these words as a prophecy, we must presume that it was to some extraordinary forms of these disasters that Jesus referred when he predicted these events as signs of his second advent. To say that an occurrence of these events in their ordinary form may fulfil this prophecy is to charge Jesus with making a prophecy that hardly deserves the name. The editor of the *Examiner* practically brings this charge against his master when he calls this prophecy ambiguous. If the Christian Missionaries wish to exonerate Jesus of the charge of making an ambiguous prophecy, they must hold that it was not an extraordinary manifestation of these events that Jesus spoke.

Reading the prophecy in this light, we see that it is in this age that the prophecy is fulfilled. We find that this prophecy has been fulfilled in a very remarkable manner in these days. Referring to the disasters which took place in the first quarter of the present year, the learned editor of the *Pioneer* observes that "it would be hard to parallel such general havoc since the first century A.D." (*Pioneer* 22nd April 1905). This remark shows that it is for the first time that the prophecy of Jesus regarding earthquakes, etc., is fulfilled and that it is impossible to find a parallel to these disasters in the two thousand years that have elapsed since the death of Jesus. But

it is not only the extraordinarily perilous character of these disasters which constrains us to believe that these disasters clearly fulfil the prophecy of Jesus. There are other considerations which make it certain that the present is the time for the appearance of Jesus, and that the prophecy of the second advent of Jesus is fulfilled in the advent of Mirza GHULAM AHMAD.

(a). The words of Jesus are exactly applicable to the state of things now prevailing. For instance, Jesus said "For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places." Do not these words contain a true portrait of these days when the world is being afflicted with famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places? Can any one point out any period of history when all these calamities simultaneously afflicted the human race and when the prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled in so remarkable a manner. These disasters have visited the world all at once and all within a short space of time. Again Jesus said "Except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." Is not this description true of the plague that is raging in India? The virulence with which the plague breaks out every year makes every man exclaim 'except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.' Again, is not this description true of what the editor calls the epidemic of earthquakes? But he should remember that this is only a small beginning of the epidemic. The terrible havoc which has been recently wrought by the earthquakes is nothing compared with what is yet in store for the world. The time is not far when every soul shall cry out 'except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.' For the Promised Messiah prophesies a tribulation that never was nor shall ever be. For among many terrible earthquakes he has predicted a great earthquake such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor even shall be. The Holy Quran also predicts an earthquake. It says:—

"O men, fear your Lord, verily the earthquake of the hour will be a tremendous thing! On the day when ye shall behold it, every suckling woman shall forget her sucking babe, and every woman that hath a burden in her womb, shall cast her burden; and thou

shalt see men drunken, yet are they not drunken; but it is the mighty chastisement of God.'

This is not the only verse of the Holy Quran which refers to the terrible earthquake which is to come, but there are other verses also which speak of it. From the Word of God revealed to the Promised Messiah we learn that the terrible day when this prophecy of the Holy Quran shall be fulfilled has drawn nigh, and that the Promised Messiah, who is now about 70 years old, will witness the terrible earthquake. It was certainly to this coming earthquake that Jesus referred when he said: "And woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days," for these words of Jesus exactly correspond with the description of the coming earthquake contained in the Quran.

(b). It should be remembered that it is not only the Gospels which contain the prophecy of the second advent of Jesus. The prophecy is also contained in the Holy Quran and in the traditions of the Holy Prophet, and in these the prophecy is far clearer than in the Gospels. Not only the signs given vaguely and incoherently in the Gospels were stated by the Holy Prophet in a more clear and definite form, but he gave also many more and unmistakeable signs of the second advent of Jesus which are clearly fulfilled. In fact the obscure utterances of Jesus relating to his second advent pale into insignificance before the clear and definite prophecy of our Holy Prophet referring to the advent of Jesus. Now when a prophecy is clearly fulfilled, it must be accepted by all, no matter who may be the utterer of the prophecy. For instance, if a prophecy of Jesus is clearly fulfilled in these days, its truth should be accepted even by the Arya Samajists and the Buddhists, even though they may not have before looked upon him as a true prophet. Similarly, if a prophecy of our Holy Prophet uttered 1,300 years hence is clearly fulfilled in these days, the Christians cannot reject its truth merely for the reason that it was uttered by Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, who is the Prophet of the Musalmans. The prophecies of the Holy Prophet relating to the advent of the Promised Messiah are being fulfilled in these days and their fulfilment proves two things. Firstly, that he was a true prophet, because only a true prophet can utter true prophecies, and secondly, that

the Promised Messiah is true in his claims, for with his advent the signs and the prophecies which related to the second coming of Messiah are clearly fulfilled. But want of space does not allow me to mention all the prophecies of the Holy Prophet relating to the Promised Messiah that have been clearly fulfilled. I will mention here only the prophecy to which reference is also made in the Gospels and referring to which the editor of the *Examiner* remarks that he cannot accept the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad unless a sign is shown for him on the heavens. The Holy Prophet said that in the days of the Promised Messiah or Mahdi the moon will be eclipsed in the month of Ramazan on the first of its eclipse nights and that the sun would be eclipsed in the middle of its eclipse days in the same month. This sign was witnessed in the Ramazan of 1311 A.H. or 1893 C. E., and it was this sign which was shown for the son of man on the heavens and to which reference is made in Matt. 24 : 30. That this was the sign which was to appear in the heavens in favour of the son of man for all the world to see is further corroborated by the verse of the Gospel which says that in those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light. That the lunar and the solar eclipses which took place on the heavens in the Ramazan of 1311 A.H., constituted a sign for the Promised Messiah cannot be denied by the Christians for they took place in exact accordance with a prophecy which was uttered 1300 years ago, and as this sign appeared on the heavens where all the world could see it, we cannot deny that it is to this sign that reference is made in Matt. 24 : 30.

(c.) That the present is the time for the appearance of the Promised Messiah, is further apparent from the fact that the Millennium, the 7th thousand from Adam, in which Christ had to appear, has already set in. God created the world in six days and rested on the 7th. But a day of God is equal to a thousand years (Ps. 90 : 4 and the Holy Quran). Thus the world was to last for six thousand years of labour and toil and there was to come the seventh thousand of Sabbath rest for the people of God in the kingdom of the Messiah. This seventh thousand has already dawned, and if the Messiah has not yet appeared, he should never appear again.

(d.) Christian calculations based on Biblical prophecies also

point to the present as the time of the coming of Messiah. Pamphlets have been issued and books have been written by Christians in which it is declared with certainty that according to Biblical prophecies the present is the time for the appearance of the Messiah. I refer here only to one of the many books published on this subject, called the *Millennial Dawn*. This book was published in 1889 and in it the learned author after a careful examination of the prophecies showed that 1873 was the year of the coming of the Messiah, and that from that year up to 1914 he would gather his saints and that then his kingdom would be firmly established so as to be seen by all men, but that until that time he was not to be recognised but by the chosen few.

(e.) From the concluding verses of Daniel xii, it appears that the Promised Messiah would appear in the year 1290 of the Muhammadan era and that his ministry would last for about 45 years. The words which have been translated as 'the abomination that maketh desolate shall be set up' really mean 'and the idols shall be broken.' They run as follows in Hebrew: "*Wa latet shiqoos*" (and the idols shall be broken). This refers to the time of the Holy Prophet for it was then that the idols were broken and it is in exact accordance with this prophecy that the Promised Messiah has made his appearance for it was approximately in 1290 that he first laid claim to apostleship. He also prophesied that his ministry would last for about 40 years. This interpretation of the verse in question is also supported by the fact that Christian calculations based on other verses of the Bible also point to the present as the time of the appearance of the Messiah.

I now proceed to see what weight can be attached to the words 'false prophets should arise and work great signs and wonders which would, if possible, deceive even the elect.' The *Examiner* refuses to accept the claims of the Promised Messiah simply on the ground of the aforesaid prophecy of Jesus. But what does this prophecy mean? Does it mean that we should accept no prophet, no matter what signs he may show? Should we reject even a prophet who works the miracles which can be wrought by none but a true prophet? Can those very signs by which we recognised the former prophets be also

shown by false prophets? If so, wherein then does distinction between a true and a false prophet lie? What proof is there, then, that the prophets who were formerly recognised as true, were really true? When those very signs which were shown by the former prophets, and by which they were recognised as true prophets, can also be shown by false prophets, why should we believe the former as true prophets? They might have been likewise false prophets, for according to the Christian Editor, we have no criterion to know a true from a false prophet, and the signs which were formerly shown by true prophets, may also be shown by the false prophets of the twentieth century. If the words of Jesus mean that we have to reject every prophet, however great and convincing may be the signs which are shown in his support, they are the most pernicious words that were ever uttered by the mouth of man, for they give one reason to suspect the truth of former prophets also. They confound the righteous with the unrighteous and the true with the false. If there is no criterion to test the truth of a prophet, if the signs which are shown by true prophets can also be shown by false prophets, why should we not believe that Jesus was himself an impostor and that the Jews were right in their opinion of him? The *Examiner* cannot refer to his miracles, for in the first place, there is no historical evidence that the miracles which are attributed to him were actually wrought by him, but even if we suppose that Jesus did work those miracles, they can not constitute a proof of his truth, for according to his own words, in the sense in which the *Examiner* interprets them, such miracles could also be wrought by an impostor. Christians are in the habit of saying that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is a false prophet, because Jesus said there should arise false prophets and work great signs and wonders. This is the most provoking assertion that one hears from the Christian missionaries. We ask them to state plainly if there is no criterion to know a true from a false prophet. Does not the whole Bible furnish one with any touchstone to test the truth of a claimant? Should we reject every claimant merely because Jesus said there should arise false prophets and work great signs and wonders? Have you not sense enough to weigh the arguments which a claimant advances in support of his claims and see for yourselves whether he is true or false? Is this the only legacy which the Master left for you, viz., the indiscriminate rejection of every

claimant without giving the slightest consideration to his arguments? Are there no signs to distinguish a true prophet from an impostor? If there are none, how do you believe that Jesus was not an impostor? If there are any, why do you not stop to consider whether these signs are to be witnessed in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad? If he is an impostor, show that he is such and convince the world of his falsehood by referring to the signs by which a false prophet is to be known from a true one. The mere saying that he is a false prophet will not do.

The *Examiner* remarks "Supposing Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has made some successful prophecies, this is only what our lord foretold by saying 'False prophets should arise and work great signs and wonders.'" Again, he says "Prophecies are questionable because in those days there will be false prophets as well as true ones and a false prophet does not necessarily mean one who foretells things which fail to happen." Both these remarks contradict the Bible, and if the words of Jesus are to be interpreted in the way in which the *Examiner* interprets them, we must reject his words as misleading for they contradict what God said to Moses and other prophets. According to this paper, there is no criterion to distinguish a true prophet from a false one, so much so, that even if a claimant makes true prophecies, that is no argument of his being a true prophet, for true prophecies can also be made by an impostor. It is a pity that Christian Missionaries should be so ignorant of the Bible. The Bible plainly tells us how to know a true prophet from a false one. It also tells us that the miracle of true prophecy can not be wrought by a false prophet. But the twentieth century missionaries, in spite of their pretensions to be acquainted with the contents of the Bible and the history of the old prophets, tell us that there is no criterion to know a true prophet from a false one, that prophecies are ambiguous and give no guidance, that even false prophets can work the miracle of true prophecy. They do not pause to consider what proof there is of the truth of the former prophets, of Jesus for instance, if there is no criterion to distinguish between false and true prophets. In order to show that the Bible furnishes us with a very plain criterion to know a false prophet from a true one, and that a false prophet necessarily means one who foretells things which do not happen, I refer the readers to Deuteronomy : xviii, 20-22, wherein the Lord says to Moses : "But the prophet which shall presume to

speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken ; when a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." In these verses a plain criterion is given to know a false from a true prophet, for it is plainly stated that a false prophet shall be brought to naught for his presumptuousness. We are also told in clear words that when a false prophet makes a prophecy in the name of the Lord, that prophecy must fail. This clearly shows that a true prophecy is surely the sign of a true prophet. If we turn to the New Testament, there too we find the same criterion given in plain words. In chapter vii of Matthew, we find Jesus saying that we can know false prophets by their fruits. There Jesus likens them to a corrupt tree and says 'every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.' Thus Jesus does not leave us in darkness as to how to know a false prophet, but plainly tells us that false prophets shall be hewn down and cast into the fire like a corrupt tree. Thus he gives the same criterion that the Lord gave to Moses, *viz.*, that false prophets are soon brought to naught and that they are not allowed to prosper like true prophets, for if they had prospered like true prophets, there would have been no distinction between false and true prophets. Having seen that both the New and the Old Testament give plain criteria to know false from true prophets, I now proceed to see whether Mirza Ghulam Ahmad should be regarded as a true or a false prophet according to these criteria. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has been publishing his prophecies for the past 30 years. There are about 200 prophecies which he published beforehand and which turned out to be true. There are thousands of men who are eye-witnesses to the fulfilment of his prophecies. I quote here a few by way of specimen :—

(a). When he lived a solitary life in his village and was quite unknown, he published a work called the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, in which, among other revelations, he published the following words of God : "The time is nigh when thou shalt be aided and become known among the people." Again, "people shall come to thee from every

distant path, presents shall come to thee from every distant path." Again, "Do not turn thy face from the servants of God that shall flock to thee in large numbers, and do not be tired of the people." These revelations gave the promise of Divine assistance and foretold a time when he was to attain a world-wide renown and was to be visited by the people of all countries. They were published at a time when no mortal could foresee these things. He lived a life of a recluse in his own village and was quite an unknown person. But now, about a quarter of a century after the publication of these revelations, those very things are coming to pass which he foretold in his work the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*.

(b). He foretold the death of Dayanand to the Arya Samajists at Qadian, and Dayanand died soon after the prophecy. The followers of Dayanand whom he informed beforehand of the death of their leader are still alive and admit the truth of this prediction.

(c). Regarding another Arya Samaj leader, Pandit Lekh Ram, he published a prophecy to the effect that the said Pandit would be killed in six years and that the day of his murder would be next to the 'Id festival of the Muslims. This came to pass exactly as foretold, for the said Pandit was stabbed for five years after the publication of the prophecy, the day of murder happening to be the day next to the 'Id festival of the Muhammadans.

(d). In his work the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, we also find a revelation which predicts the appearance of plague in India. It is also foretold that the plague will not disappear until the people turn to him and beseech him to pray for the removal of this terrible calamity. The revelation runs as follows:—"O Messiah of the people, pray for our deliverance from this epidemic." Again, shortly before the plague began to work havoc among the people of the Punjab, he published that this province was about to be visited by a most virulent form of the plague. These things came to pass exactly as foretold.

(e). Long before the memorable shock of April 4th, he prophesied that a large number of buildings in a large tract of this country would be razed to the ground by a severe shock of earthquake.

(f). He was involved in about seven serious cases through the

intrigues of his opponents. Each of these cases was predicted by him before it came into existence. Not only this, but he also prophesied in each instance that he would come off victorious. And according to prophecies published beforehand, he was the victorious party in each case, without even a single exception.

(g). He has four sons, and each of them was born according to a prophecy published long before his birth.

(h). His work, the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, contains a revelation which predicted that two of his followers would be murdered for their faith in him. The revelation runs thus :—"Two sheep will be slaughtered." This prophecy of his was fulfilled not long ago, in the murder of two of his followers at Kabul. They were promised not only acquittal but also great honours if they renounced their faith in the Promised Messiah, but they preferred to die rather than renounce their faith in him. What a remarkable contrast they make with the apostles of Jesus who not only deserted their master in the hour of danger, but also cursed and betrayed him.

These are only a few out of a very large number of prophecies which were published beforehand and which turned out to be true. If he had been a false prophet, the prophecies which he had uttered in the name of God ought to have failed, for Deut., xviii, 20, says that the prophecy which is uttered in the name of God and which is not really the Word of God must fail. But as the prophecies of the Promised Messiah always come out true, the only conclusion at which we arrive is that he is a true prophet. The Christians have no reason to deny his truth, for the criterion given in the Bible to know a true prophet from a false one establishes his truth. If the Bible is true, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is also a true prophet and the Christians believing in the Bible are bound to class him among true prophets. A detailed account of his prophecies is to be found in his most recent work, the *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy*, and a study of these prophecies will show that they are not conjectures, but that they are stated in very clear and plain words and that they were published at a time when it was decidedly beyond human power to foresee the events which they predicted. Another very important feature of his prophecies is that they refer to his own triumph and to the discomfiture of his enemies which conclusively proves that he is backed by God. His prophecies

not only foretell future events, but also show that the powerful Hand of God is working in his support.

Another circumstance also makes his truth apparent to every observer. I have already quoted both the Old and the New Testament to show that a false prophet, far from receiving any aid from God, is soon brought to naught. This criterion also establishes the truth of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. He has been claiming to receive inspirations from God for the past thirty years, and far from being brought to naught, his cause has always been making a steady progress. His enemies have spared no pains to annihilate him, but the Hand of God has always been his supporter. The seed which he sowed has been steadily growing and no storm of opposition has been able to do it the least injury. It has grown into a big and fruitful tree and is now past all danger. His mission has been firmly established and his career is all triumph and victory. God, instead of blighting him, has blessed his efforts with a marvellous success. If he was a false prophet, why did He vouchsafe to him the same triumphant and successful career that He used to vouchsafe only to His righteous servants? Why did He not visit him with His anger and consume him with the lightning of His wrath? Know the tree by its fruit, as Jesus said. God promised to annihilate a false prophet so that the false might not be confounded with the true. But in the case of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, we find that God, far from annihilating him, has been granting him victory after victory. In the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, his first work, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad being inspired by God, prophesied that he would live to a good old age and that opposition would rage fiercely against him and that many would seek to murder him, but that God would protect him against every foe, and would cause him to die a natural death, and that he would not die until he had finished his work and firmly established his propaganda in the world and that God would show his truth by mighty signs. What is still more wonderful, he has often challenged his opponents to a prayer duel. He has announced, as a sign of his truth, that whoever would pray for his death would himself fall a prey to a speedy and painful death and that such a person would die before he dies. He has very often invited the world to test his truth by this criterion. Even if a host of men pray against him, they are sure, he says, to be consumed with the wrath of God in

his lifetime, for the mighty Hand of God is in his support and every one who rises against him is sure to be knocked down. And there have been actually men who made a response to his call and prayed to God against him, but they all died, as he prophesied, and thus furnished a proof of his truth. The names of those who wielded the sword of prayer against him, but cut their own throats with it, are as follows. —

1. Maulvi Ghulam Dastagir of Qasur, District Lahore.
2. Maulvi Muhammad Ismail of Aligarh.
3. Pandit Lekh Ram, the well-known Arya leader.
4. Maulvi Muhammad Hasan of Bhin, District Jhelum.
5. Faqir Mirza of Dulmiyal, District Jhelum.
6. Chiragh Din of Jammu.

The last named deserves particular mention. He only recently announced himself as an apostle of God raised to bring about a reconciliation between the Christians and the Muhammadans. He published a work called the *Minarat-ul-Masih* wherein he declared that the second advent of Jesus meant his appearance and that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who claimed to be the Promised Messiah and sought to deal a deathblow to Christianity instead of bringing about a reconciliation between Islam and Christianity was the anti-Christ and that he would die in his life time. He also addressed a prayer to God that He would annihilate the Mirza of Qadian in his life time. A few days after he addressed the above prayer to God, God's wrath overtook him and he died in pain and grief having witnessed with his own eyes the death of his seed, his two sons, all dying of plague. Before his death he cried in despair 'Alas God has deserted me.' It is curious to note that in the prayer above referred to he asked God to protect the opponents of Mirza Sahib from plague, but the wonder is that it was in the form of plague, the very disease from which he prayed for protection, that God's vengeance descended on him.

The impostor of Jammu has been followed by another impostor who calls himself Abdul Hakim Khan. He also, following in the footsteps of Chiragh Din, has announced himself as an apostle and recipient of divine revelation and prophesied the death of Ahmad, whom he calls the anti-Christ, in three years. God has raised these impostors in

the country of the Punjab so that the people by comparing their fate with the uniform triumph of the Promised Messiah may be able to know the true prophet from the false ones. The criterion that a false prophet claiming to be a recipient of Divine revelation must be consumed with the wrath of God, while a true prophet is aided by God and is made to triumph over his foes is an unmistakeable test to know a true prophet from a false one, but I wonder why the Christians do not apply it to the case of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Ahmad has also repeatedly challenged the Christians that he and they might grapple in a prayer duel, but none has ever ventured to accept his challenge. If Jesus is really a God and hears their prayers, why do they not address their prayers to him and pray for the annihilation of Ahmad, who must have already provoked him to uncontrollable anger by claiming to be his rival? Why is it that every man who prays against Ahmad is brought to naught? If some incredulous Christian Missionaries are not inclined to believe it, they may make a trial. When two or three missionaries have repeated the experiment, the matter will be settled. Christian Missionaries are reputed to be very courageous. They do not, it is said, hesitate to lay even their lives for the sake of their religion. But they have proved very chicken-hearted before Ahmad. None ventures to engage with Ahmad in a prayer contest. Jesus said, a false prophet should be cut like a corrupt tree. If they believe Ahmad to be an impostor, these words of Jesus ought to encourage them for a prayer duel. Are they not sure that Jesus would side with them and would support them against an impostor? The fact is that the God of Ahmad is a mighty God and they know it. Jesus, they know, is powerless against Ahmad. It is a strange thing that the Bible predicts a speedy destruction for an impostor, but Mirza Ghulam Ahmad predicts a speedy destruction for every one who engages with him in a prayer duel. In short if the criterion given by both Jesus and Moses is true, there is no doubt that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is a true prophet, and the mere assertion that he is a false prophet, because Jesus predicted the appearance of false prophets, is an assertion of which the Christian missionaries should feel ashamed, for it only shows that they cannot disprove the claims of Ahmad and resort to this meaningless prophecy of Jesus as their last resource.

Now when Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is in every respect a true prophet, there is no reason why we should not accept his claims to

Promised Messiahship. It is foolish to assert that he is not the very Jesus that was born in the land of Judea about 19 centuries ago, for the second advent of a person does not mean the coming back of the selfsame person. It always means in the language of prophecy the appearance of one in his spirit and character. If the second advent of a person means the coming back of that very person, why did Jesus announce that the prophecy of the second advent of Elijah was fulfilled in John the Baptist? The Jews refused to accept Jesus unless the very Elijah who was said to have ascended to heavens should come back, but Jesus said his second advent meant the appearance of one in his spirit and character. Which of the two parties, I would ask the missionary gentlemen, was right? Those who insisted on the actual advent of Elijah according to the literal sense of the prophecy, or Jesus who said the second advent of Elijah did not mean his actual advent, but the appearance of one in his spirit. If the Jews were right, Jesus must be rejected as a false prophet, inasmuch as the sign of the second advent of Elijah was not fulfilled. We must wait for the time when Elijah himself should come back to this world. But if Jesus was right, the Christians are bound to admit that the second advent of a person does not mean his actual advent, but the appearance of another man in his character. Alas! the Christians are to-day rejecting the Promised Messiah for indently the same reasons for which the Jews rejected Jesus. They follow the course which hurled the Jews headlong into hell and do not follow the right course pointed out by Jesus. The only reason which has been advanced in favour of his personal re-advent is that he was a God and that hence no second is possible. But this is no argument. His Godhead is not a proved fact and hence it can not serve as a basis for reasoning. There is no proof whatever that he was a God. He showed no Divine power. He did not show even as much power as many other mortals have shown. If his career had been even half as triumphant and successful as was that of our Holy Prophet, if he had breathed into his disciples half as much spirit as our Holy Prophet breathed into his followers, if he had vanquished his enemies as our Holy Prophet did, there would have been some ground for taking him for a God. But his career according to the Gospels was the most unsuccessful of careers. He failed to breathe any spirit into his followers, and instead of vanquishing his enemies, he was himself vanquished by them. In short, if his career had been even half

as glorious as our Holy Prophet's was, the Christians would have had some ground for including him in their trio of Gods. But he did not exhibit any divine glory. It is foolish to take that person as a God who was seized by a handful of Jews, dragged to the law-courts and hung on the cross. The helpless mortal who was spit on by the Jews could not be Almighty God. It is blasphemy to assert that Almighty God permitted himself to suffer such a shameful humiliation at the hands of the Jews. A God, and to be beaten, thrashed, and spit on by the Jews! A God, and to be murdered by the Jews! Human reason revolts at such thoughts. Did these very Jews who are to-day the most helpless of nations on earth, the Jews whom every Christian to-day treats like a dog, murder the Christian God? Are not the Christians ashamed of having such a God?

In short, no Divine power was witnessed in Jesus and he cannot be taken for a God. Christians sometimes refer to his supposed miracles as a proof of his divinity. In the first place there is no historical evidence to show that he actually worked these miracles. But even if it be supposed that he did work these miracles, these constitute no proof of his divinity, for even earlier prophets worked similar miracles.

The Editor of the *Examiner* says Jesus must come down from heavens with great glory, with a host of angles and with trumpets ~~sounding. The world has advanced intellectually, but the light of~~ true knowledge does not seem to have found its way into the brains of some Gospel preachers yet. To think that Jesus would come down from heavens, borne on the wings of clouds, with a host of angels and with a flourish of trumpets! Why did he not ascend into the heavens in a similar manner? Why did he allow his ascent into heavens to be so secret that it was not witnessed even by his disciples? Did he fear that if he made a public ascent to heaven, the Jews would drag him down even from the gates of heavens and nail him to the cross a second time? What need had he, when on the cross, to cry 'Eli Eli lama Sabachthani'? Why did he not ascend directly into heavens before the eyes of all the spectators. That there are some Christians in this twentieth century who still raise their eyes towards heavens to see Jesus coming on the wings of a

cloud at the head of a large force of spirits and with trumpets blowing is indeed astounding.

The Christians are not only superstitious, but they are also credulous. There is no ground to believe that the Gospel writers have reproduced the actual words of Jesus, exactly as they emanated from him, without the slightest variation. They were committed to writing long after they were uttered by Jesus and no sensible man can take them for the actual words of Jesus. But even if it be supposed that the prophecy of the second advent as given in the Gospels is a faithful reproduction of the words of Jesus, Christians are mistaken in expecting a strictly literal fulfilment of every word of the prophecy. Why did the Jews reject Jesus? They took the prophecies referring to the second advent of the Messiah strictly in their literal sense. They expected a king, and a restorer of the throne of David, but as Jesus who laid claim to Messiahship appeared in a humble garb, they rejected him with scorn.

Similarly they took the prophecy regarding the second advent of Elijah in its apparent sense and when Jesus pointed out that the advent of Elijah meant the appearance of one in the spirit and character of Elijah, they refused to accept the interpretation of Jesus as true, seeing that it did not accord with the apparent sense of the words of the prophecy. Thus it was their strict adherence to the literal interpretation of every word of the prophecy that led them to reject Jesus. The Christians ought to have learnt a lesson from Jews and not committed the same error that the Jews committed before them. But they would not profit by their example. They too, like the Jews, would not accept the Promised Messiah, simply because he has not come down from heavens, borne on clouds with a flourish of trumpets and accompanied by a host of angels. These are spiritual phenomena and it is a serious error to wait for their fulfilment in a palpable manner. That the second advent of the Messiah shall not be as the Christians expect it, that he shall not descend from heavens on the wings of the clouds, that there shall be no visible host of angels with him and no audible sounding of trumpets, is apparent from other parts of the prophecy. Jesus likens his advent to the coming of a thief in the dead of night (Matt. 24-43). This clearly shows that he shall not come in broad day-light with sound-

ing trumpets and with singing bands of angels ; but that he shall come in disguise like a thief and that only the watchful shall recognise him. His second advent must take place in as unexpected a manner as his first advent did. We thank thee, O Lord, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. The Messiah has made his appearance but the Scribes and the Pharisees have not seen him and those who are looked upon as babes have recognised him and are rejoicing because they are with the bridegroom.

The Gospels not only show that the second advent of Christ was to take place in an unexpected manner, but that he was to appear in a land in the East. In Matt. 24 : 27, we have :—"For as lightning cometh out of the East and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the son of man be, for wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered." In these words we are told in plain words that the appearance of Christ shall take place in an eastern land. By referring to the carcass and the eagles, Jesus tells us the reason of his appearance in the eastern land. We are told that the great evil to remedy which he has to make his appearance would afflict an eastern land in particular, and it would be in that eastern land that he would make his appearance, for wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. The carcass is the anti-Christ to annihilate whom the Messiah was to be raised, and I have shown in my article on anti-Christ (*Review of Religions*, Vol. IV, No. 10) that it is the Christian Missionaries who represent the anti-Christ. The Promised Messiah has appeared in an eastern land and as lightning shineth from the East to the West, so have the glad tidings of his appearance been conveyed from the East to the West through the modern mediums of speedy communication. It is from the East that the West has heard the voice of the Promised Messiah. That the Messiah had to make his appearance in an eastern land is further corroborated by Isaiah 41 : 2. The words "Who raised up the righteous man from the East?" support the words of Jesus, for they plainly tell us that the promised righteous man shall be raised in the East. When would the Christians undeceive themselves? They need not look to the clouds to see Jesus, for Jesus never rose to heavens. He did not die on the cross. He prophesied that he would show that

adulterous generation no miracle save that of Jonah the prophet. As Jonah was alive in the belly of the whale, so Jesus was alive when in the sepulchre. God sent his angel to Pilate's wife, which shows that God's purpose was to save Jesus. Whenever God sends an angel for some purpose, that purpose is sure to be fulfilled. You will never be able to find out an instance in sacred history when the object for which God sent His angel was not realised. Jesus prayed for his deliverance with a sorrowful heart and we are told in Hebrews 5-7 that that prayer of his was heard. The prophecy in Psalms xx: 6; xxii: 20 also leads to the conclusion that his prayer was heard and he was delivered from the hands of the enemy. And there is sufficient evidence to show that he was actually delivered from the hands of his foes. What would you think of a man who is taken for dead, but who afterwards turns out to be alive? The only reasonable conclusion at which a sensible man would arrive is, not that he rose from the dead, but that he was never dead. But the case of Jesus is much clearer. There already existed a doubt that he was not dead. Pilate could not believe that he had died so soon. People suspected that he was alive. If such a man, whose death many men doubt, should turn out to be alive afterwards, what would you think of him? Would you think that he rose from the dead? No, certainly not. You will come to the conclusion that the doubt was well-founded and that he had not died. Again, Jesus, disguising himself as a gardener, travelled on foot from Jerusalem to Galilee, a distance of about a hundred miles, partook of food and showed his wounds to his disciples. All these circumstances leave no doubt as to the fact that Jesus had come down from the cross alive as his companions had done, and that three hours' suspension had not killed him, as in reason it could not have killed him. Not only the facts show that Jesus had not died on the cross, but there are other considerations also which lead to the same conclusion. If we suppose that he died on the cross, we must also believe that he was not a true prophet. What would you think of a claimant to prophecy who after 3 years' unsuccessful ministry is seized by his enemies and put to death. Whatever opinion you may hold of him, Deut., xviii: 22, says, as I have shown above, that he is a false prophet. The words of Jesus also confirm the conclusion, for he also taught that a false prophet is soon brought to naught. Again, death on the cross is according to the Bible a cursed death. If we believe that Jesus

died on the cross, we must also believe that Jesus was accursed. The Christians admit that he was accursed, but never pause to consider the significance of the word accursed. The word is easy on the lips, but the significance it carries with it is very terrible. If the Christians want to realize the signification of the word accursed, they may consider a concrete instance. Do they not know of one that was *accursed*? Satan was called the accursed one and by considering his case they may be able to realize what to be accursed means. To be accursed, in very plain words, means to become like Satan, to become the enemy of God, and to be subject to Divine wrath—ideas which it is the height of blasphemy to attribute even for a moment to Jesus. Christians would not allow that Jesus had really become like Satan. If he did not become like Satan, he was not subjected to curse—which means that he did not die on the cross.

A Christian might ask if Jesus did not die on the cross, if he did not ascend to heavens, where did he pass the remaining days of his life. To this question, I would reply, that even if it had not been known where he passed the remaining days of his life, it would have constituted no argument to make one believe that he ascended to heavens. There are many about whom it is not known where they lived and died, but no one ever thinks that they ascended into heavens. But in the case of Jesus, many new things have been only recently brought to light and his retreat after his flight from Galilee has been disclosed. God wished that the great falsehood that Jesus ascended to heavens should be exposed and the truth should be made known to the world, and therefore he has brought to light sure evidences of the fact that Jesus did not rise to heavens. There is a tomb at Srinagar, which is unanimously said to be the tomb of a *Nabi Sahib* (a prophet) who, it is said, was a foreigner, and had come to this land from the West about 1900 years ago. Historical works corroborate oral tradition and add that he had a book which he called *Bushra*. Now *Bushra* is common to both Arabic and Hebrew, and is the Hebrew name of the Gospel. Even his teachings are given which are in many respects identical with those of the current Gospels. This *Nabi*, who lies buried at Srinagar and who came from the West about 1900 years ago, also taught in parables and we find that many parables are identical with those given in the Gospels. He is also called a *Prince* like Jesus.

This *Shahzada Nabi* (Prince-Prophet) was certainly *Jesus*. The word *Nabi* shows that he was an Israelite prophet. The Hindoos do not call their Prophets *Nabis*. The Muhammadans have one *Nabi*, who lived and died in Arabia. The facts that he came from the West about 1900 years ago, that he called his book *Bushra*, that he taught in parables, some of which are exactly identical with the Gospel parables, that his teachings are identical with those given in the Gospels, that he called himself a Prince, leave no doubt as to the fact that this *Nabi* was *Jesus*, especially when we remember that *Jesus* left his native land to find refuge in some distant land which might be inaccessible to his enemies, the Jews. Another circumstance makes this matter still clearer. The people among whom he lies buried, the Kashmiris and the Afghans, are Israelites, the representatives of the ten lost tribes, (see articles on this subject in the *Review of Religions*). *Jesus* was a prophet for all the Israelites, not only for the two tribes that survived in Syria, but also for those that had migrated to the East, and it was his duty as a prophet of the Israelites to deliver his message even to those Israelites that had settled in the East, his lost sheep. So it is quite natural to believe that after having taught the Israelites of Syria for 3 years, he turned his steps to the East to teach the chosen people of God that lived in the East. If he had not done this, he could not be said to have performed his mission. This theory of his flight is also supported by Isaiah Ch. 53. There is also a prophecy in the Talmud that the Messiah will disappear for 90 days after his appearance (Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. 5, page 214). This tradition is supported by a saying of the Holy Prophet that *Jesus* lived for about 120 years, *i.e.*, about 30 years in Syria and 90 years in Cashmere. In short, *Jesus* does not live in the heavens, but lies buried in the Khan Yar Street of Srinagar. It is useless to look up to the clouds to see *Jesus* coming from the heavens with a band of heavenly musicians. ~~He is dead and cannot rise again. His second~~ appearance meant the appearance of another man in his spirit and character, as the second advent of *Elijah* meant the appearance of another person in the spirit of *Elijah*. That man has come. He is now among you. He has come in the proper time. He has come with his signs. He has the proof of his truth as the olden prophets had. If you believe in Abraham, if you believe in Moses, if you believe in *Jesus*, you are bound to believe in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

too for they all belong to the same class of people. Test him as you test true prophets. If you turn a deaf ear to his voice, you shall be called to account not only in the world to come but in this very world. Blessed are they that accept him.

Some Superstitions and Evils Swept off by Islam.

*Rasoom-i-Jahiliyyat, i.e., The Usages of the days
of Ignorance, by Najmud Din Seohari, (Lahore,
The Dar-ul-Kutub Agency 1906.)*

The *Rasoom-i-Jahiliyyat* is an important addition to the Muslim religious literature in the Urdu language. The learned author of this valuable work has taken great pains to collect in a condensed form the usages and superstitions prevailing in Arabia before the mighty reform brought over the peninsula by the advent of Islam. Nothing but a comparison of the Cymmerian darkness which overhung pre-Islamite Arabia with the wonderful transformation which the Holy Prophet wrought within a few years can give the reader a true idea of the miraculous nature of the reform which Islam brought about. The time and space at my disposal do not, however, allow me to dwell upon the different aspects of the social, political, moral and spiritual reformation with which Islam blessed Arabia and afterwards the whole world. I will barely mention a few examples of the superstitions and evils which were swept off by Islam.

Idolatry was a deep-rooted evil in Arabia, and the Jews and the Christians fought in vain against it for hundreds of years. Here and there, an individual or a tribe was won over, but the mass of people remained deeply steeped in ignorance and idolatry. In fact, idolatry played an important part in the minutest circumstances of their daily life. Not only had the Ka'aba within it its three hundred and

sixty idols affording the worshipper a new deity with every new sun, but each tribe had besides its own special idols. In addition of these, every house in Mecca had an idol which served the purpose of a family god, and so great was the reverence paid to these stone images that the last act of any one who went out on a journey and the first act of him who came back from a journey was to approach the idol reverentially. They prostrated themselves before idols, made circuit round them, made sacrifices in their name and gave them offerings. Mujahid says that his master related to him that on one occasion his elders gave him a cup of milk and butter to take it as an offering to the family-idol. He obeyed the orders though, if it not had been for fear, he would have himself taken the butter and milk for it was in his presence feasted upon by a dog which, to add insult to injury to the stone deity, made water upon it. Besides the images which were set aside for regular worship, the pre-Islamite Arabs worshipped every white and beautiful stone that they saw and where stones could not be found heap of sand were worshipped. When a person set out on a journey, he generally took four stones with him, three of which served the purpose of a hearth to cook food and the fourth that of a deity for worship. Those who did not take this precaution worshipped any stone they found or raised a heap of sand with their own hands and milked a she-camel upon it and then worshipped it so long as they stayed there. Consider the mighty and glorious transformation which within less than a quarter of a century cleared the whole peninsula of every trace of stone and idol-worship, and changed the superstitious people, who abjectly prostrated themselves before every stone or heap of sand, into preachers of the Unity of God! That mighty evil which centuries of Jewish and Christian efforts had battled with, without affecting it in the slightest degree, was swept off by a single stroke never to revive again in that land. If Almighty God raised His messengers to reform evils, which no sensible person can deny, the man who brought about this mighty transformation in Arabia was certainly the greatest of all Divine messengers, for such the greatness of his work clearly shows him to be.

Evils affecting the sexual relations were equally great and deep-rooted. Polyandry was practised and prostitution was recognised as a necessary institution in the same manner as in any civilized country

to-day. The practice of keeping mistresses was also in vogue in the same manner as it is now in Christendom. A doctrine similar to the *Niyog* doctrine of the Arya Samaj had also an existence. As in the Arya Samaj, the husband himself allowed his wife to have illicit intercourse. It was called *istibza'* and is thus explained in Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon: "استبضا ع *istibza'* denotes a kind of matrimonial connection practised by people in the Time of Ignorance; *i.e.*, A woman's *desiring sexual intercourse with a man only to obtain offspring by him*: a man of them used to say to his female slave or his wife, ارسلنى الى فلان فا استبضعى منه (send thou to such a one, and demand of him sexual intercourse to obtain offspring); and he used to separate himself from her, and not touch her, until her pregnancy by that man became apparent: and this he did from a desire of obtaining generous offspring." The Arya Samaj in India still adheres to, and acts upon, this savage doctrine which it thinks to have been specially revealed through the Vedas. But that it is only a remnant of savage ideas is clear from the fact that it was practised even by ignorant Arabs before the light of Islam dawned upon them. In one respect only does the Arya Samaj doctrine of *Niyog* differ from the *istibza'* of the Arabs of the Time of Ignorance, *viz.*, that while the latter resorted to it only with a desire to raise good offspring, the Arya Samaj allows the practice even in cases when there are only sensual motives. But it must be borne in mind that this practice in Arabia was limited to the lower strata of society, and the nobility was quite free from this evil. Another evil existing in connection with matrimonial connections was the custom of the son inheriting along with other property the wives of his father and marrying them himself. All these evils were swept off by Islam. The allegation that Islam sanctioned an evil in the form of polygamy is based on a misconception. Islam permits polygamy only in exceptional cases and does not make polygamy a universal rule against monogamy. And the fact is that if polygamy is not allowed in the exceptional cases when it becomes absolutely necessary, the blackest of evils must find their way into society. All the nations that have prohibited polygamy have been obliged to sanction prostitution and other evils. So polygamy as permitted by Islam is not an evil, but the only remedy for an evil of which society can in no other way be freed.

The evil of drunkenness raged in Arabia in pre-Islamite days to such an extent that all classes of society prided themselves on the excess of drinking. Only women abstained from the evil. Large quantities of wine were kept in every house and the people had their drinking bouts several times during day and night. It is related that when the order of the prohibition of intoxicating liquors was first given by the Holy Prophet, so many jars of wine were broken that it flowed like rain-water in the streets of Medina. Gambling was another evil which like drunkenness affected almost every individual. The man who did not gamble was looked down upon in society as a niggard, and those who gambled most recklessly were looked upon as great and generous men. When a poet eulogised a man, he extolled his gambling habits in particular.

The most horrible of all the evils of the Time of Ignorance was the burying alive of daughters. The evil had prevailed in Arabia for centuries before the advent of Islam and every tribe was guilty of this inhuman practice. The origin of the evil was probably a high sense of jealousy, and the political unrest and unsettled state of government in Arabia favored the growth of this horrible practice, for the men of higher ranks in society were regardful lest in the struggles which ensued their women should fall into the hands of the enemy. Whatever the origin of this custom, it had grown to a fearful extent in Arabia, and young girls were entombed alive very frequently. Generally when the girl was five or six years old, she was adorned and embellished and her father conducted her to a pit dug in the desert. Standing on its brim, he would ask the innocent child to peep into it and on her doing so pushed her from behind so as to throw her into it, and the cries of the helpless creature were only stifled by the earth with which the pit was immediately afterwards filled. A touching incident of this nature was described in the presence of the Holy Prophet by one of his companions who had perpetrated a similar deed before his conversion to Islam. He related that he had a daughter whom he sought to kill when she had grown old enough to be able to talk well. She was loving, obedient and submissive, and when he called her to him, she always came to him running with great joy. One day he called her and told her to follow him which she did with pleasure. He then conducted her to a well and holding her hand threw her into it. "Father, father"

she cried piteously but he was not moved to compassion. When he had finished his story, tears began to flow from the eyes of the Prophet until his beard became wet with them. Then he told him to act righteously in the future. There was also a custom of making an agreement with the bride at the time of marriage that the girls which she should give birth to should be killed and spared alternately. In this case it was the mother who was required to perpetrate the cruel deed of burying alive her innocent and beloved daughter, and if she refused to do it, she was divorced. The horrible ceremony was performed publicly, all the women of the family being witnesses of the savage performance. Sometimes girls were drowned in water or thrown down from a hill. Islam swept off these horrible practices with a single word. Had this been the only reform brought about by the Holy Prophet, he would still have stood highest among the benefactors of mankind.

Some other superstitions of the pre-Islamite Arabs may only be briefly noticed. When a renowned or generous man died, a she-camel was left at his grave without any food or water until she died by wasting away. The she-camel was thrown into a pit, dug by the grave, wherein she was left, her foreshank bound to her arm and the head turned backwards, without food or water until she died. The name given to it was *baliyyah*, and the cruelty to her was the result of the belief that the man on whose tomb such a she-camel was left to perish would rise from the dead riding upon her, while the other dead in whose case the practice was not resorted to would rise walking. There was also a superstition that when the bones of the dead body became decayed, a bird like an owl came forth from the head which was called the *sudd* or the *hdma*.

In the Time of Ignorance whenever there was a drought, rain was sought in the following manner. Bundles of *Sala* and *Ushar*, two kinds of plants, were tied to the tails of bulls and cows, and fire was then kindled therein and the bulls were then sent up mountains with the fire burning on their back. The superstitious belief was that the burning fire resembled the gleaming of lightning and that rain water was thus made to descend. This inhuman practice is frequently mentioned in verses.

A rather harmless superstition existed in connection with the punishment of murder. Where the person slain belonged to a powerful

tribe and the murderer to one which was comparatively weak, retaliation, *i.e.*, death of the murderer, was insisted upon and all offers to pay the blood-money were rejected. But when the tribe which sought revenge had not sufficient power to enforce its will, a milder course was adopted. An arrow shot upwards was considered to reveal the Divine judgment and will as to whether peace or war should follow, that is to say, whether the blood-money should be accepted or whether revenge should be sought. If the arrow came back with blood on it, it was a sign that the latter course should be adopted and blood should be actually shed, and if the arrow came back free from all blood spots, it was an indication for a peaceful agreement and the blood-money was accepted. Of course the arrow was always clear and thus it never indicated that revenge should be taken, but notwithstanding this the superstition did not die out till the advent of Islam. The acceptance of blood-money, however attenuating the circumstances might be, was considered to be a disgraceful course for the heirs of the deceased, and nothing but the superstitious practice of shooting the arrow afforded an excuse for such a course.

The stinging which a man felt when he was hungry was attributed by the pre-Islamite Arabs to the bite of a serpent, called the *safar*, which was thought to stick to the ribs of a person.

Many of the diseases were attributed by the Arabs of the Time of Ignorance to demonical possession. In all such cases and in madness the most popular remedy was to make the sick person carry some kind of filth or rotten bones about his neck. The poets of the Time of Ignorance frequently refer to this practice. A woman whose son died notwithstanding her observation of the practice says: "I made him to carry filth but it did not benefit him, and lives cannot be saved from death." In chronic diseases especially the belief was that the person was only tormented by evil spirits because he had killed a snake or some other reptile. It was thought that the evil spirits which had been offended in this manner would not be pacified till compensation was made for the supposed guilt. The method of making compensation was this. Some camels of clay were made and loads of wheat, barley, and dates were placed on them. At sunset they were placed in a hole in the western direction. If on the following morning they were found in the same state in which they were left, the conclusion drawn was that the evil spirits considered the

compensation rendered to be insufficient. Their number was then increased until on some morning the artificial camels were found prostrate on earth and their loads upset. This was considered to be a sign that the evil spirits had accepted the compensation and had been pacified and hence it was taken to be a sure indication of recovery. It was owing to the same fear of evil spirits that when one of them killed a snake, he placed some cow-dung upon its head. This was considered to be a safeguard against the evil spirits wreaking vengeance on him.

The fidelity of a wife in the absence of her husband was also tested by means of an absurd superstition. When a man was about to make a journey, he went to a tree and fastened a string to it, or tied one branch of a tree to another. On his return home if he found the tie unbroken, it was an indication that his wife had been faithful to him in his absence; otherwise it was supposed that she had been unfaithful. It was called the *ratam* or *ratma*. The *ratam* was also fastened as a remedy for fever, the idea being that the fever of the person who tied the *ratam* was transferred to him that untied it. The unchastity of a woman was also inferred from the circumstance that a horse marked by branding should perspire under her husband.

Women whose children died in infancy considered the trampling of the dead body of a man murdered by deceit to be a charm against the disease. When a person was lost and no trace of him could be found, they used to go to some old well situated in an out of the way place and looking into the well called him aloud. If no voice was heard in response to their call, it was considered that the person whom they sought was dead. This was done in the dark and stillness of the night. When a man arrived at a town where there was pestilence, he brayed like an ass and wore a hare's bones as a charm against the evil spirits of the place and its pestilence. Causing a man to wear the ornaments of females was considered a remedy for snake-bite. The blood of the middle finger of a king was supposed to be a remedy for the bite of a mad dog.

These are only a few examples of the superstitions and evils that prevailed in Arabia. The change that was brought about over the peninsula within a few years by the Holy Prophet, and the wonderful manner in which all these evils and superstitions were swept off from

the soil with a single stroke are sufficient to convince any sensible person that the man who wrought this mighty transformation had more than mortal power.

Jesus the Prophet.

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ

“The Messiah the son of Mary is only a prophet : prophets before him have passed away” (Alquran, v : 79).

Writing under the heading “Jesus the Prophet,” the Rev. Cannon R. H. Kennet, B. D., Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, gives a rather candid answer to the all-important question, ‘how did Christ impress the men of his own generation’? He remarks:—

“Some people said that he was John the Baptist, whom ‘all men held to be a prophet;’ some said that he was Elijah, some Jeremiah or one of the other great prophets of Israel; but there was a general concensus of opinion that a great prophet had arisen, and that, whether one of the old prophets had come to life again in the person of Jesus or not, Galilee of the Gentiles had seen a great light in that from Nazareth a prophet had been given to Israel.

“Now this opinion of the multitudes was confirmed by Jesus himself. He himself testified that the experience of his own life was the universal experience of prophets, *viz.*, that they are not without honor, save in their own country and among their own relatives. When he was urged to flee on the ground that Herod sought to kill him, he deprecated fears for his safety with the sad reflection that it could not be that a *prophet* should perish out of Jerusalem.

“Since, then, Jesus of Nazareth was acclaimed as a prophet, we are enabled to assign him a place in a definite class or order of men. He is not, as far as his work and teaching is concerned, an isolated phenomenon in the history of the world. Though his personality is unique, his earthly life is, from one point of view, normal. Leaving out of account his mighty works, every detail of his life is comparable

with similar details in the lives of other men. An Israelite by birth, an Israelite by sentiment, an Israelite by religion, he was attached to Israel, the nation of prophets, by this also that he was a prophet.

* * * * *

“ If then, we compare the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth with what we know of the prophets in the Old Testament, we cannot but be struck by the extraordinary similarity between them. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that whatsoever we learn from the Old Testament to be characteristic of the prophets is proved by a study of the Gospels to be characteristic of Jesus, and *vice versa*. The similarity is not confined merely to one or two points ; it is observable in the mode of life, in the method of teaching, in the response which that teaching evoked, and in the manner of its preservation.”

The details of these similarities need not be quoted here. One example will suffice :—

“ Thus, to take the above points in order, we may first consider briefly the purely external aspect of the lives of the prophets. With the exception of some apparently well-to-do men, such as Isaiah, and not improbably, Amos and Ezekiel, the prophets were supported by the voluntary offerings of those to whom they preached.

“ In like manner Jesus and his disciples, at any rate in the main, lived on the alms of those to whom they ministered. It is evident that the directions which our Lord gave his disciples in sending them forth to preach were in accordance with the custom of his time and his own practice. The nation which had ministered to prophets in the ninth century B. C. was still ready to entertain prophets in the first century of the Christian era. The widow of Zarephath and the rich couple of Shunem find their counterparts in the family at Bethany and in Zacchaeus and many others, who offered shelter and food to Jesus of Nazareth until his unswerving fidelity to his Gospel came into conflict with their nationalist hopes.”

These admissions leave no ground for the Divinity claimed for Jesus. The Professor refers to the “ mighty works ” of Jesus as if they had a unique character but this is not true. No mighty work was done by Jesus in the form of making converts from among the Jews. But if by “ mighty works ” are contemplated the miracles of

Jesus, even supposing the record to be true, we do not witness a single miracle of Jesus the like of which had not been performed before by an Israelite prophet. There remains only the uniqueness of personality, but even that does not entitle us to consider him more than a mortal because in that sense every prophet of God had a unique personality. It is indeed a happy sign of the times to find the Christians at last recognising the truth about Jesus which Islam preached thirteen hundred years ago. At the time when the Holy Prophet made his appearance, two extreme views with regard to Jesus prevailed in Arabia and elsewhere. The Christians considered him a God and the Jews condemned him as an impostor. Islam taught that the truth lay between these two views, and the Holy Quran preached in plain words: "The Messiah, the son of Mary, is only a prophet: prophets before him have passed away" (v: 79). For hundreds of years the Christians have contended the truth of these words, but truth must ultimately prevail and it has prevailed in fact. The number of the Christian zealots who worship Jesus as their God is daily diminishing, and the more sensible view advanced by the Holy Quran that he was only a man and a prophet of God is gaining ground.

Conquests of Christianity.

In the history of the conquests of Christianity which were not always effected without the help of the sword, the strangest of aspects are witnessed. Numerous conversions are marked by an utter absence of conviction as to the truth of Christianity. The conversion of Iceland affords an illustration of this remark, and the following facts relating to this subject are given in an article under that heading appearing in the *London Quarterly Review*.

The first Christian mission to Iceland was the result of the conversion of Thorwald, a native of Iceland, by a Saxon Bishop named Fredrick. The young convert then started with Fredrick to convert his family, and the father of Thorwald was converted in the following strange manner: "Kodran was slow to receive the new doctrines. He demanded a sign from the heaven. 'Here,' he said to Fredrick, 'is a stone which guards my house, consecrated by the rites of my ancestors. An *Armann*, or tutelary genius, resides within it. It would

take the sword of Sigurd to break that stone. Let us see what you can do with it.' Fredrick accepted the test. He signed the stone with the Cross, and pronounced over it the sacred names, while Kodran and his family, halting between two opinions, stood by to watch the result. Instantly the stone split asunder; the extravagant and erring spirit hied to his confine; and Kodran, perceiving that the bishop's spells were more powerful than those of his ancestors, accepted baptism upon the spot." In this way did one superstition overcome another. This first success of the missionaries induced them to follow the same methods and they made some converts.

The second and third missions were both unsuccessful. The third mission was sent by Olaf, King of Norway, under Thangbrand, the monarch himself having been originally converted by the missionary. But Thangbrand was not a man who could stick to one profession, and when preaching did not pay, he became a pirate. The fact was brought to Olaf's notice and he sent this remarkable missionary to convert the Icelanders. After some quarrels with the chiefs of Iceland he however came back unsuccessful. The stubbornness of the Icelanders enraged Olaf and he was going to convert them by "violent measures there and then," but two missionaries, Hjalhti and Gizur, urged him to try their conversion once more with mildness and persuasion, and accordingly these two men were sent to Iceland in the year 1000. The final scene of this drama is thus described:—

"Next day Thorgeirr arose, and summoned all men to the Hill of Laws. On that venerable Areopagus he made a speech which has come down to us in outline. 'Methinks,' said he, 'that things have come to a sore pass when men have not one law in the land. From such a division came wars and battles, even to the laying waste of the country. 'In my youth,' said he 'were two kings, Dag in Denmark and Tryggvi in Norway; and they strove long, but neither could conquer the other. At last the men of both countries compelled them to make peace against their will; and after no long time these two kings were as great friends as they had been enemies. Wherefore it seems to me best not to let those men have their will who are most violent on either side, but to follow the men who are less out and out, so that each side may gain somewhat and lose somewhat; but let us not divide the law. For it was a wise saying of our ancestors, He who divideth the law divideth peace.'

“To these words all agreed with acclamation; and Thorgeirr then went on to declare the simple first Toleration Act of our race. All men were to be baptized and believe in one God; but they might sacrifice in secret to the old gods if they chose. With regard to the exposure of the children and the eating of horse-flesh—two crimes regarded by the Christians as of equal atrocity—the old law should hold; men could do as they would. A few plain rules followed as to the keeping of Sundays and fast-days. Shortly afterwards the whole assembly was baptized: a few only waiting until they found a warm geyser in which the ceremony might be as comfortable as possible. The wise Snorri set the example; and a great calamity was averted.”

Thus did Iceland become a Christian country but we are told by the faithful narrator that the new religion brought no change for the good. It did not “put an end to private feuds, to the constant homicides which half depopulated Iceland, or the thousand other forms of crime which crowd the sagas.”

The Brahnavadin.

The *Brahnavadin* is printing a series of articles under the heading “Mahomet and the origins of Islamism” which is a translation of M. Renan’s work. The statements made in this article must wound the feelings of every true Muhammadan, and we are sorry to find that an organ of Vedantism, which aims at the reconciliation of all religions, should give circulation to such injudicious misrepresentations of the holy religion of Islam without any comment on them. Consider for instance the following remarks made in the November number.

“It would be a great injustice to judge in all rigor and with our moral ideas the acts of Mahomet which in our days would be called imposture. One cannot imagine to what extent among the Musalmans conviction and even nobility of character would ally itself with a certain degree of imposture.”

In spite of the plainest assertions contained in the earliest chapters of the Holy Quran that the Prophet’s message was to the whole world, the Brahnavadin gives credit to the remark that “it does not seem that Mahomet had any idea beyond the limits of Arabia nor did he ever dream that his religion could suit any other than the Arab.” We hope our contemporary would, in consistence with his principles, be more careful in allowing such remarks to pass without comment.