

ESSENCE OF ISLAM

Selections from the Writings of
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The Teachings of Islam as compared to other religions

First of all I thank God who has placed us under the benign rule of a peaceful Government which allows us to preach and propagate our religious beliefs, and by its principles of justice, fair-mindedness and religious neutrality has removed every obstacle from our way. After this brief prefatory note, I wish to say something about the different religious beliefs entertained by the people of this country, and assure the gentlemen present that so far as it lies in my power, I will try to express myself in words least offensive to the feelings of those of whose creeds I will speak. Let me at the same time candidly say that truth has always a certain bitterness in it, and some men are from their very nature prone to be offended even when a just criticism is passed on their religious beliefs. The effect of this natural inclination it is beyond my power to remove; and I beg to be excused if any word of mine happens to wound the religious susceptibilities of any listener, for it is impossible for any man

to deal with what he sincerely believes and knows to be false and injurious doctrines, still be able to please those who own such doctrines. This is a difficulty the solution of which has not been found yet, nor, if human nature remains unchanged, is such a solution possible.

After deep deliberation and successive revelations from Almighty God, I have come to know that the great religious excitement which is maddening the people in this country and the ever-increasing diversity of religious sects which is witnessed here, is really due to the cause that the hold of spiritual power over the hearts of men is quite loosened and the fear of God has utterly vanished away. The heavenly light by which a man can distinguish between truth and falsehood is almost extinguished in most hearts and notwithstanding the outward religious fervour, atheism is gaining ground day by day. The tongue, no doubt, utters the name of God but agnosticism has taken a deep root in the heart. The inner life of the people bears testimony to this fact. Every profession is made with the lips but not one of these is carried out in practice. I am speaking generally and do not mean to attack any person who may be really leading a righteous life. In general, however,

it is perfectly true that the real object of religion is lost sight of altogether. Actual holiness of the heart, true love for God, real sympathy with man, meekness, mercy, justice, lowliness, and all other noble moral qualities, piety, purity and righteousness which is in fact the soul of religion, are most of all neglected, and the hearts of men are generally dead to those. What a sad picture of religion that while religious quarrels and controversies are becoming more and more frequent day by day, and great fuss is made about the name of religion, the real worth of it is not cared for and spirituality is becoming a thing of the past!

The aim of Religion

The aim and end of religion is to know the true and living God Who created the world, to attain to that stage of perfection in His love at which the love of others besides Him is completely consumed, to have full sympathy with His creatures and to lead a life of true and perfect purity. But I see that this aim is utterly neglected and the majority of religious creeds is in fact some one or other form of atheism. Almighty God is not known and recognised, and hence the increasing boldness upon the commission of sin. For, it is plain that unless we have knowledge of a thing,

there is no love or fear of it on our part. The prevalence of sin in the world is, therefore, due to an absence of true knowledge concerning the Divine Being. The chief criterion of a true religion is that it should point out the means to a true knowledge of God, so that through knowledge men may be kept back from sins, and realizing the Divine beauty and glory, they may so love God as to deem even a momentary estrangement from Him more painful than the severest tortures of hell. The truth is that freedom from sin and the love of God are the highest aims of man's life, and in these lies in fact the true bliss which is known as the heavenly life. Every desire which goes against the pleasure of God, is really a flame of hell-fire, and to indulge in such desires is to lead a hellish life. The question hence arises, how can a man be saved from this hellish life? I answer this question with the knowledge which I have received from God, that no one is saved from this fire except by a true and perfect knowledge of God. The flood of passions and desires rages high and nothing but the embankment of a perfect knowledge of God can withstand it. Salvation which means a freedom from the control of passions and desires, cannot, therefore, be attained unless our faith is based on the impregnable fortress of perfect knowledge

which no flood can destroy. The fact that our appraisal of a thing or our love or fear of it, depends only upon our correct knowledge of it, needs no argument. Give a diamond worth a million pounds to a young child and he would not set upon it a higher value than a mere plaything. If honey mixed with poison is given to a person who is ignorant of the fact, he would take it for honey and eat it with pleasure, not knowing that the effect would be fatal. But you cannot thrust your hand into a hole which you know to be the hole of a serpent, for you know that such an act might bring about your destruction. Similarly no one would dare take poison with a knowledge of it, for he knows that it must cause his death. What is the reason then that you do not fear the death which the transgression of Divine commandments must certainly bring down upon you? Only that you have not such knowledge of the effect of your transgressions as of the biting of a snake or of poison. It is certain then that the knowledge of loss or injury deters a man from doing the deed which involves such loss or injury, and no belief in redemption can act as such deterrent. Is it not true that even the most daring and habitual burglar would not break into a house where he is sure to be caught and

punished? Are not the most violent passions subdued when their effect is known to be sure and certain destruction? A robber would not in broad daylight dare to lay his hand upon a bag of money lying in a shop when he knows that there is a sufficient guard of armed police watching the shop. Are criminals restrained from theft and extortion because of their firm faith in the redemption of sins, or because their hearts feel the awe of execution? Or is it more true that the police and the fear of punishment are the real deterrents? This is a principle the truth of which is witnessed not only in the case of men, but also of animals. Even a lion in fury would not throw himself into burning fire though he sees his prey on the other side of it. A wolf would not fall upon a sheep at whose head is standing a watcher with a drawn sword and a loaded gun.

Sure knowledge of God a pre-requisite to righteous life

It is a most true and sound principle that to be saved from sins, man requires a certain knowledge of God and not any redemption. I say to you truly that if the people of Noah had the perfect knowledge which generates the fear of God, they would not have been drowned, and if the people of Lot had fully recognised their Lord, they would not have been stoned to death. And if the people

of this country had been granted the true knowledge of God which makes one tremble at the idea of a transgression of His Commandments, it would not have been thus destroyed with the plague. But a deficient knowledge cannot avail in the least, for vain is the love which is not perfect, and vain is the fear which is not perfect, and vain is the faith which is not perfect, and vain is the knowledge which is not perfect. If you do not take food in a sufficient quantity, it would not sustain you, and if the full dose of medicine is not administered, it would not do any good. One grain cannot satisfy your hunger, nor one drop of water quench your thirst. How can you then, O ye of little courage and slow in the search of truth, hope to be the recipients of the vast blessings and unmeasured grace of God by a little knowledge and a little love and a little fear? It is His to purify you from sins and to fill your hearts with His love and awe, and He has established the law that all this is granted after a man has attained to certainty in His knowledge, for knowledge is the root from which love and fear spring. He who is given a perfect knowledge is also granted perfect love and perfect fear, and he who is granted these, has got salvation, because he is purified

from sin. For this salvation, therefore, we do not stand in need of the shedding of blood, or of crucifixion or of atonement. What we require for its attainment is only a sacrifice, and that a sacrifice of our ownself. This is a requirement of our very nature and this is the true significance of Islam. Islam means the laying down of head for being slaughtered and to bow down with entire submission at the Divine threshold. The beloved name of Islam is the soul of the whole of Law and the essence of all the commandments. To lay down one's self willingly and with a joyful heart for being slaughtered which is the true significance of Islam, means a perfect love, while perfect love indicates perfect knowledge. The word Islam therefore, clearly signifies that true sacrifice, which is necessary for the salvation of man, requires perfect love and perfect knowledge and not anything else. Referring to this Almighty God says in the Holy Qur'an :

لن ينال الله لحومها ولا دماءها ولكن ينال الله التقوى منكم

“The flesh of these, (*i. e.* the animals slaughtered) does not reach God, nor yet their blood, but the sacrifice that God accepts from you is that you should fear Him and walk in righteousness for His sake”.

Truth underlying the Principles of Islam

It should be borne in mind that the truth

which underlies all the principles of Islam is that indicated by the word Islam itself, and the aim of all its commandments is that a man should attain to the stage of perfection signified by Islam. Hence the Holy Qur'an emphatically teaches that Almighty God should be made the sole object of one's desires and love. It shows now His beauty and goodness and calls attention then to His countless gifts and favours, for beauty and favours are the two incentives to love. According to the Holy Qur'an, Almighty God is one and without any partner in His excellences, and He is eternally free from every defect. In Him are found all the perfect attributes and by him are displayed all the mighty powers. From Him the whole creation comes into existence and to Him all the affairs return. He is the fountain-source of all blessings and the Judge of retribution. Being remote, He is very near, and being near, He is still far off. He is above all but still it cannot be said that beneath Him there is anything else, and He is the most hidden of all things, but it cannot be said that anything is more manifest than He. He is Himself living and everything has its life from Him. He is His own support and everything finds support from Him. He bears everything and there is nothing that

bears Him. Nothing has come into existence independently of Him and nothing can exist without Him. He comprehends all, but the manner in which He does so, cannot be described. He is the light of everything that is in earth and heavens, and every light has shone forth from His hand and is a shadow of His person. He is the Lord of all the worlds and there is no soul which has not been brought forth by Him and has come into existence by itself. Nor is there any faculty of a soul which has not been brought into existence by Him. His manifold blessings are of two kinds. Firstly, such as are not given as a reward for any previous deed of a doer and which exist from the beginning, as earth, heavens, sun, moon and stars, fire, water, air and all other things which have been created for our comfort. Everything that was necessary to sustain us, was created for us by Almighty God long before we came into existence or any deed was done by us. Who can say that the sun was created because of any meritorious deed done by him, or that the earth was brought into existence because he had done a highly virtuous deed? In short, these blessings of God were created by His mercy displayed long before the existence of man and they are not the result of any deed done by him. The

other kind of Divine blessings is the outcome of His mercy displayed on the good deeds of men, and this does not stand in need of explanation.

The Holy Quran further teaches us that the person of God is free from every fault and defect and that He wishes that human beings should also by following His injunctions become free from every defect and be purified of every impurity. Thus He says : *من كان فى هذه اعمى فهو فى الاخرة اعمى* "Whoever remains blind in this world, and does not see God, shall remain blind after death and his darkness will not be dispelled." (xvii. 72)

For, the truth is that the eyes to see God are granted in this world, and any one who leaves this world without getting the eyes to see God, shall not see God in the next life. In this verse Almighty God has given us clearly to understand to what height of spiritual advancement He wants man to reach, and what stage of perfection a man can attain to by following His commandments. How Almighty God can be seen in this very world, is then stated in the Holy Qur'an. Thus it says : *فمن كان يرجو لقاء ربه فليعمل عملا صالحا ولا يشرك بعبادة ربه احدا* "Who wishes that he should see in this world the God Who is the true Lord and the Creator, should do the deeds of virtue which are free from

every sort of corruption and in worshipping his Lord he should not be guilty of any *shirk*." (xviii. 110)

The first portion of this verse requires a man to do عمل صالح *i.e.*, deeds of virtue which are free from impurity and every contamination, by which are meant deeds which are neither done that they may be seen of others nor do they generate vanity in the heart of a man that he is the doer of such great and excellent deeds, nor are they incomplete or defective, nor do they savour of aught but sincere personal love entertained towards God and are saturated with true faithfulness and perseverance. The second portion of the verse requires a man to abstain from *shirk i.e.*, setting up with God such false deities as the sun, the moon, the stars of heaven, the physical forces of nature, the elements or anything else that is upon earth or the heavens, or setting too high a value upon the physical means and placing so much reliance on them as to consider them actually effective without any reservation like God himself or giving an importance to one's own resources and efforts, for this too is a sort of *shirk*. On the other hand, when a man has done everything that lies in his power and exercised his abilities to his best, he should still be conscious of his utter weakness and ignorance, and ascribe everything

to the mighty power and deep knowledge of God and not to his own power or learning. Our soul should constantly be in a state of perfect submission and prostration at the Divine threshold, and thus draw His favours and blessings. Unless we make our condition like the helpless cripple who lying in a desert parched with thirst, suddenly sees a spring of sweet and clear water and halting and limping takes himself to it, and applies his burning lips to cool water, not parting them until he is satiated—I say, unless we fully realize our own utter weakness and inability and the mighty power and beneficent grace of God which we constantly draw upon, we are not free from *shirk* and do not deserve to be called Unitarians.

Attributes of Allah

With respect to His own attributes of excellence and perfection, Almighty God says in the Holy Qur'an : *قل هو الله احد الله الصمد لم يلد و لم يولد و لم يكن له كفوا احد* “Your God is the God Who is one in His person and without any participator in His attributes. He is God alone, for there is no being which is like Him eternal and everlasting, nor has any being its attributes like His attributes.” The knowledge of man is acquired and limited, but the knowledge

of God is neither acquired nor limited. The power of hearing in man depends upon the transmission of sound by air and is moreover a limited power, but the power of hearing in God is an inherent power and is unlimited. The power of seeing things in man depends upon the light of the sun or some other light and is limited, but Almighty God sees things without the assistance of any light and His power of sight is an unlimited one. The power of man to make things depends upon the existence of material and is a limited power while the act of making must occupy some time, but the creating power of God does not stand in need of any existing material, is unlimited and does not depend upon time in its exercise. As there is nothing that is like Him, so there is nothing whose attributes are like His attributes. For if there is any defect in one of His attributes all His attributes must be defective, and if one of his attributes can be possessed by any one else, then all His attributes can be so possessed. Therefore His unity cannot be established unless He is regarded one and without any partner in His person as well as His attributes. The remaining portion of the chapter above

quoted says that God is neither a father nor a son, for He stands in need of none, not even of a father or a son. This is the doctrine of Unity taught by the Holy Qur'an which is necessary for a perfect faith.

Treatment with others

So far as to belief. I will now consider the course pointed by the Holy Quran for observance in practice. The summary of its teachings regarding our treatment with others is contained in the verse : ان الله يامر بالعدل و الاحسان و ايتاي ذى القربى و ينهى عن الفحشاء و المنكر و البغى
 "Almighty God commands you to be just and fair to others, *i. e.*, to do to them as they do to you, and (if you wish to attain to higher stage of perfection) to do good to those who have done no good to you, and (to rise higher still) to do good to others not to lay an obligation upon them or to receive thanks in return, but with the natural inclination of a mother for her child ; and He forbids you to do any violence, or remind others of any obligation you have placed them under or do any evil to one who has done good or shown sympathy to you." (xvi. 90) As an explanation of this verse, the Holy Quran says on another occasion و يطعمون الطعام على حبه مسكينا و يتيما و اسيرا انا نطعمكم لوجه الله
 "The righteous feed the

poor and the orphans and the prisoners, simply for the sake of, and out of their love for, God, and do not wish from you any reward or thanks in return for this service.”

(lxxvi. 9) Again with reference to the requital of an evil, the Holy Qur'an says : جزاؤا سيئة سيئة
 “The retribution of an evil is an evil like it, but if a person forgives and his forgiveness is conducive to any good and does not lead to further evil (for instance, the evil-doer is likely to reform his conduct and refrain from evil in future), forgiveness under these circumstances will be better than requital and the person so forgiving shall find his reward from God.” (xlii. 40) Thus the Holy Qur'an does not teach us to turn always the other cheek, whether in place or out of place, for this is against true wisdom, and a good done to an evil-doer is something equivalent to the doing of an evil to a good man. The Holy Quran further teaches us : ادفع بالتي هي احسن فاذا الذي بينك وبينه عداوة كانه ولي حميم
 “If any one does good to thee, return thou his good with a greater good, and the result would be that even if there is an enmity between you, it will turn into sincere friendship and he would be to thee like a friend and a near relative.” (lxi. 34) Other verses containing

و لا يغتب بعضكم بعضا teachings on this point are
 يحب احدكم ان ياكل لحم اخيه ميتا فكرهتموه -
 لا يسخر قوم من قوم عسى ان يكونوا خيرا منهم - ان اكرمكم عند
 الله اتقكم - ولا تنابزوا بالالقب بئس الاسم الفسوق بعد الايان
 ناجتنبوا الرجس من الاوتان و اجتنبوا قول الزور - و قولوا قولا
 سديدا - و اعتصموا بحبل الله جميعا

“One of you should not backbite another :
 does one of you like that he should
 eat the flesh of his brother who is
 dead ? Nor should one class of people
 laugh at another that it belongs to
 a higher class and the other to a
 lower : haply those who are laughed
 at might be better than the others.
 Verily the more honored near God is
 he who is greater in virtue and
 righteousness, and the distinction
 of nationality is nothing with Him.
 Do not call others with contemptuous
 names which they regard as offensive
 or insulting, otherwise you will be
 counted wicked near God. (xlix. 11-13)
 Keep away from idols and from false-
 hood, for they are both impurities.
 And when you speak, speak with reason
 and wisdom and refrain from absurd
 talk. (iv. 9) And you should all in one
 body and with all your faculties and
 powers devote yourselves to the
 obedience of God.”

Again, the Holy Quran says : *المهكم التكاثر - حقى زرقم - المقابر كلا سوف تعلمون - ثم كلا سوف تعلمون - كلا لو تعلمون علم اليقين لترون الجحيم ثم لترونها عين اليقين ثم لستسئلن يومئذ عن النعيم*

“The manifold occupations of the world divert your mind from God and you remain in this state of remissness from Him until you visit the graves. This is an error and you will soon know it. I tell you again that this is an error which you will soon discover. Had you the knowledge of certainty, you would have soon seen by its application your hell, and would have known that this your life in sin is a hellish life. And if your certainty becomes greater, you would see with the eye of certainty that your life led in sin and disobedience to God is a hellish life. A time will then come when you will be thrown into hell and there you will be questioned of your excesses in the dainties that were given you, (*i.e.*, being made to suffer actually the punishment you will realize that certainty).” (Ch. cii) These verses show that certainty is of three kinds : firstly, that which is obtained through reasoning and deduction, as to give a homely illustration, the existence of fire in a place is inferred from the presence of smoke ; secondly, the certainty which is gained when the thing itself is seen, as fire in the above case ; thirdly, the highest degree of certainty is attained when

the existence of a thing is fully realized as that of fire by casting one's hand into it. These are the three degrees of certainty which are termed respectively علم اليقين عين and حق اليقين. In these verses Almighty God has taught man that his true happiness lies in the nearness and love of God, and in breaking connection with Him a man leads a hellish life which ultimately becomes clear to him, though it be at the time when he is about to depart from this world and leave all his property behind him.

Referring to man's heavenly life, the Holy Qur'an says : *و لمن خاف مقام ربه جنتن* which means that whoever out of respect for the honour and majesty of his Lord, and fearing that he shall have to stand one day in His presence, forsake sin, shall be granted two paradises ; viz., a paradise in this world and a paradise in the next. (lv. 46) The paradise in this world means a heavenly life which begins with a pure transformation in this life when Almighty God becomes the sole administrator of one's affairs, and the paradise in the next means the eternal bliss and enjoyments of after-life which shall be granted to the righteous. Elsewhere the Holy Qur'an says : *انا اعتدنا للكافرين سلسلا و اغللا و سعيرا ان الابرار يشربون من كاس كان مزا جها كافورا - عينا يشرب*

بها عباد الله يفجرونها تفجيرا ويسقون فيها

Verily We “*كا سا كان مزاجها زنجبيل* عينا فيها تسمى *مسليلا* have prepared chains and collars and that which burns the heart for those who do not believe in God, and hence do not entertain love for God and are bent low upon earth. (Their feet are enchained with the love of this world and in their necks are collars of estrangement from God which keep their heads bent down upon the world and do not allow them to raise them up towards heaven, and their hearts burn with the unsatisfied desires of this world). But the righteous are made to drink in this very world of a cup which is mixed with camphor which cools the love of this world and quenches the thirst of seeking the world. It is a spring of camphor which is granted them and they divide it into running streams and thus place its refrigerent waters within the reach of the thirsty near and far. (When the standing water of the spring is made to run into a stream and the power of faith is strengthened) they are then made to drink of another cup with which is mixed ginger. (For when the camphorated cup has benumbed the love of this world, another syrup is needed which should generate in the heart the warmth of Divine love. This is what

is meant by the syrup mixed with ginger because the quality of ginger is hot, and it is, therefore, a symbolic expression for the warmth of love). It is a spring which is called *salsabeel*, (lit., ask the way from God) meaning that when the wayfarer has reached the spiritual eminence indicated in the preceding verse, he is entirely in the hands of God and asks his way from no other than God" (lxxvi. 4) Again, the Holy Qur'an says : *قدا فليح من زكها وقد خاب من دسها* "Verily he who has purified his soul is released from the constraint of sensual passions and is granted a heavenly life, but whoever remains bent down upon earth and does not turn to heaven, shall end his days in grief and despair." (xcii : 10)

Divine help in spiritual advancement

As the high stages of man's advancement described in the verses quoted above, cannot be attained by a man's own efforts, the Holy Quran repeatedly invites us to pray to God and to extend ourselves to our utmost in His path. Thus it says : *اد عوني استجب لكم* "Pray to Me and I will accept your prayer," and again : *واذا سالك عبادي عني* فاني قريب اجيب دعوة الداع اذا دعان فليستجيبوا لي وليؤمنوا بي : *لعلهم يرشدون* And if my servants question thee as to the proof of My existence, as to how

they should know that God exists, say to them that I am very near: I answer him who calls upon Me, and I hear his voice when he invokes Me and I speak to him. They should, therefore, make themselves fit to receive My word and have a perfect faith in Me so that they may find My way.” (ii. 186) And on another occasion, the Word of God says: *والذين جاهدوا فينا لنهدينهم سبلنا* “Those who try hard and exert themselves to their utmost to find Us—We surely guide them into our paths.” (xxix. 69) And again: *وكونوا مع الصادقين* “Besides prayers and exertions in the way of God, you should also live in the company of the truthful and righteous ones, for this is also necessary in order that you may see God.”

These are the commandments by walking in which a man realizes the true nature of Islam, for as I have already said the true significance of Islam is to lay oneself before God like the sheep that is to be slaughtered; to lose all one's desires, passions and intentions and to be completely lost in the will and pleasure of God, to subject oneself to death, to love Him so entirely as to obey all His commandments out of love and not any other motive, to get

eyes which see God, ears which hear God, a heart which is wholly inclined to Him and a tongue which does not move to utter a word until moved by Him. This is the stage at which all the labours of the spiritual wayfarer end, and all the passions and desires of man undergo a death. Then does the mercy of God with His living word and brilliant lights grant him a new life. Then he is honoured with the sweet Word of God, and that most subtle Light which no reason can discover, nor I can see, itself comes near to the heart of man, as He says : نحن اقرب اليه من حبل الوريد "We are nearer to him than his life vein." With such nearness does Almighty God honour a mortal man. Then comes the time that every blindness and darkness is removed and a man sees his God and hears His voice, and finds himself completely enwrapped in His mantle of light. Then is the reality of religion reached, and seeing his God a man throws off the dirty clothing of worldly life and wears the magnificent robes of Divine light. The promises of paradise and of seeing God are not then simply prospective promises to him, but he actually tastes of the delights of paradise in this very life and sees God and speaks to Him, and thus realizes even here

all those promises. The Almighty God says :
 ان الذين قالوا ربنا الله ثم استقاموا تتنزل عليهم الملكة الا
 تخافوا و لا تحزنوا و ابشروا بالجنة التي كنتم توعدون

“Those who say that our Lord is the God Who possesses all the perfect attributes and who has no partner in His person and attributes and remain faithful to their word, their faith not being shaken by any trial or adversity, however hard it may be—the angels of God descend upon them and Almighty God Himself speaks to them and says to them ‘Do not fear the enemies that stand against you and the trials that befall you, nor be grieved for the bitter adversities which befall you in the past, for I am with you, and be joyful that I grant you in this very world the paradise which was promised to you.’” (xli. 30)

It should be borne in mind that these are facts supported by the strongest testimony. Within the sphere of Islam there have been thousands of the righteous people who have actually tasted the fruits of the spiritual paradise in this life. In fact Islam is the blessed religion whose true followers have been made by Almighty God the inheritors of all the righteous servants of God who have passed before them and the heavenly

blessings that were granted to them variously granted all to the Muslims. He has accepted the prayer which He Himself taught in the Holy Quran in the following words : اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين

“O Lord! show us the right path, the path of the righteous whom Thou hast favoured and honoured in every way and who have received from Thee all sorts of blessings, (who have received the honour of being spoken to by Thee, of having their prayers accepted by Thee and of having been granted victory, assistance and guidance from Thee); and keep us away from the path of those upon whom Thy wrath has descended and of those who having forsaken Thy path have betaken to erroneous path.” This is the prayer which is addressed to Almighty God by every Muslim five times daily in his prayers. It shows clearly that a person who passes his days in blindness from God; lives and dies in hell, and that he only really obeys God and attains true salvation who recognises God and has a perfect faith in His existence, for only such a one is granted power to forsake sin and to love God with his whole heart. The religion, therefore, in which there is no yearning for a certain Divine revelation, which is one of the highest Divine blessings,

is not from God, nor is that prophet true who has not taught people to seek the path of certain Divine revelation and perfect Divine knowledge. For, the highest aim of man's life, and the only way in which he can be released from the bondage of sin, is that he should attain a certain knowledge regarding the existence of God and His retribution. But certainty regarding the Divine Being who is the most hidden of all things, is impossible unless from Him is heard the voice 'I AM,' and unless a man witnesses the clear and manifest signs of His existence. Such certainty can never be obtained from the source of reason, for the deductions of reason lead us no further than that there should be a God, for this is the only conclusion with regard to the existence of a Creator that a man can arrive at by deep reflection over the consummate order and perfect skill displayed in the universe. But it can be easily seen that such a conclusion is only an inference suggested by certain facts, while the statement that God actually exists requires a sound and conclusive proof about which there should not be the slightest doubt. The necessity of the existence of a thing and its actual existence are two quite different things. In short, in the midst of the great religious excitement of the present day, the seeker after truth should

not forget the great truth that only that religion is from God which can show God with perfect certainty.

Divine revelation in other Religions

I will now take some of the more important religions which are showing great missionary activity, and see whether they can take a man to the stage of perfect certainty regarding Divine existence, and whether their scriptures contain the noble promise that they can make their true followers the recipients of a certain Divine revelation, and whether if they do so this promise is borne out by actual facts at the present time. First of all I take the religion which is named after Christ. The answer to the questions proposed above for solution is very easy and simple in its case, for the Christians are all one in the belief that after the time of Christ the fountains of Divine revelation and inspiration are closed to all. The blessing of Divine revelation has according to them been left behind and it now remain closed to the day of judgment. The door of Divine grace by which alone salvation as shown above can be obtained being shut up, a new plan of salvation has been set up which is opposed to the established principles of the world, and which is contrary to human reason and Divine Justice and Mercy. It is said that Jesus Christ bore

the sins of the world and chose to die on the cross, that by his death others may be delivered, and that Almighty God killed His own innocent son to save the sinners. We are unable to understand how the pitiable death of one man can purify the hearts of others from the impure quality of sin, and how by the murder of one innocent man others can be absolved of the sins and crimes which they have committed. This course is, on the other hand, directly opposed to justice and mercy, for to punish the innocent in place of the offender is against justice, while causing the son to be murdered cruelly with no fault on his part is contrary to Divine mercy. and the whole affair is a meaningless transaction. I have already stated that true cause of the prevalance of sin is the absence of true Divine knowledge. If, therefore, the cause is not removed, the effect cannot be annulled, for the cause must bring about its effect. It is a strange philosophy that sin is supposed to be made non-existent while its cause which is due to want of Divine knowledge remains as strong as ever. Experience shows that without full knowledge of a thing we cannot know its true value, nor can we love or fear it; but love and fear are the only incentives to action and a man does not do or abstain from doing a deed except from the motive of

either love or fear. Therefore it is clear that unless the love or fear of the Divine Being is generated in the heart which depends upon a true and perfect knowledge of God, it is impossible that a man should be released from the bondage of sin. But so far as the Christians are concerned, I am bound to state and that for the sake of truth that their knowledge of God is very imperfect and ambiguous. The doors of Divine revelation are for ever closed and miracles ended with Jesus and his apostles. What is left then in our hands to judge the truth of the Christian religion except the authority of reason, but the defying of a man has already set reason at naught. If the old stories of miracles as narrated in the Gospels are adduced in support of Christianity, various objections may be put forth against this evidence by one who does not admit the truth of the Christian religion. In the first place, it is impossible to ascertain what amount of truth is contained in these narratives and what reality. For there seems to be no doubt that the evangelists were great exaggerators. For instance, in one of the Gospels it is written that if all the things which Jesus did had been written in books, the world could not have contained those books. This is a most extravagant statement. How could the world prove insufficient for the

record of deeds which were contained in it in an unrecorded state, deeds done by one man within the limited period of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years in a very small province. Secondly, the miracles stated to have been performed by Jesus were in no way superior to the miracles of Moses. Nay, even the miracles of Elijah display a greater power than those of Jesus. If therefore the performance of certain miracles can make a man God, many of the prophets shall be entitled to Divinity.

Alleged Divinity of Jesus

The alleged Divinity of Jesus is sometimes supported on the ground that Jesus called himself the son of God or that he is so designated in some book. This is an idea which deserves to be laughed at. In the Bible many men are designated as the sons of God and to some even the epithet God is applied. They all, therefore, belong to the same category and one of them cannot become a God to the exclusion of all others. Even if the title son of God had not been used for any one besides Jesus, it would have been absurd to interpret it literally and draw from it an argument for the divinity of Jesus, for such metaphors abound in the Word of God. But when the title on whose basis divinity is claimed for

Jesus is freely applied to others in the Bible, it ceases to have the slightest force as an argument for his divinity, and if it has, it at the same time proves the divinity of all those to whom it is applied. In short, the plan suggested by the Christian belief should not be depended upon for salvation, for it fails to provide the true remedy for sin. On the other hand, it is itself a sin that a man should commit suicide thinking that others would be saved thereby. I can say on oath that Jesus did not offer himself to be crucified, but he was in the hands of his enemies who subjected him to all sorts of cruelties. He prayed to God to save him from the accursed death on the cross and wept the whole night long. Then was he heard because of his righteousness and his prayer was accepted and he was saved from death upon the cross, as appears from the Gospels themselves. It is, therefore, a false accusation against Jesus that he committed suicide by designedly subjecting himself to death. Moreover reason itself condemns the theory that Peter should be cured of his headache by John's knocking out his brains. We do admit that Jesus was a servant of God and one of the perfect ones whom God purified with His own hands, but he or any other prophet cannot be made a God on

the strength of words spoken of him in any holy book. I have personal experience in this matter and in the Word of God revealed to me I find words of honour and dignity used of me which I have not met with in any Gospel as used concerning Jesus Christ. Can I then assert on the strength of such words that I am God or son of God? Far be it from me or any other prophet of God to make such a blasphemous assertion.

As to the teachings contained in the Gospels, I am of opinion that they are imperfect. A perfect code of ethics is that which is calculated to develop all the moral faculties of man and does not lay stress upon one side of human nature only. I assure the gentlemen present that such perfect teaching is contained only in the Holy Qur'an, for in every matter it adopts the mean path, which is the path of truth and wisdom. For instance, the Gospel says: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." But the Holy Qur'an does not teach us unconditional forgiveness on all occasions. It directs us to see the occasion first, whether it requires forbearance or revenge, forgiveness or punishment. It is evident

that the latter is the proper course for a man to follow, and its observance is necessary for the social life of man. No society can live on the principles taught by the Gospel nor can any Christian society be pointed out which should have ever acted on the turn-to-him-the-other-also text. Again the Gospel says that no one should look "on a woman to lust after her," but the Holy Qur'an tells us that a man should not unnecessarily look upon other women whether with lust or without lust, for this habit will after all make him stumble. On such occasions the Qur'an requires that a man's eyes should be half-closed, for this is the only way in which a man can remain pure in heart. Perhaps the advocates of a mis-named liberty would object to such a course, but experience shows that this is the only right course. Free intermingling of the two sexes and their freely casting looks at each other, are productive of great mischief and no good has resulted from them. To allow men and women whose hearts are not yet purified, and who are yet under the control of their sensual passions, to freely mingle with, and look at, each other, is to intentionally push them down into the pit. The Qur'anic teaching in this

respect is free from every harm, the same defect of Gospel teaching is brought to light in its directions regarding divorce. The Gospel says that no one should "put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication." But the Holy Qur'an permits divorce on other equally urgent occasions, for instance when the husband and wife become the deadly enemies of each other and the life of one is in danger from the other, or when the wife is guilty of having gone through the preliminaries of fornication, though she may not have actually committed fornication, or when she suffers from some such disease as would endanger the life of the husband in case the relations are continued, or when some other cause comes into existence which on account of its being a hindrance to the continuance of conjugal relations is a sufficient cause for divorce. In all such cases divorce is permitted, and the truth of this principle is practically admitted by the Christians themselves.

To revert to the main point of this lecture, the Christians, cannot point out the means which can lead a man to salvation and freedom from the bondage of sin. For, as stated above salvation means nothing but

the attainment of a condition in which a man does not venture upon transgression and his love of God becomes so great as to suppress his sensual desires, and the realization of such a state depends upon a perfect knowledge of God. The Holy Qur'an points out to us the clear ways which can make a man attain to a true knowledge of God and fill him with such fear of Him as keeps him away from sins. By following the Holy Qur'an a man becomes the recipient of Divine revelation, sees the heavenly signs, receives the knowledge of future from God, has a zeal in his heart for union with God which he prefers to every other connection, receives knowledge from God beforehand of the acceptance of his prayers and a mighty torrent of Divine knowledge flows in his heart which sweeps away all sinful tendencies before it. But when we go to the Gospel, it points out a method for release from the bondage of sin which is contrary to reason and does nothing to remove the causes of sin.

Arya Samajist view of Salvation Analysed

We will next take the Arya Samaj and consider the means which it proposes for release from the bondage of sin. Here again, as in the case of Christianity, we meet with

a plain denial of Divine revelation and heavenly signs, a denial which is based on the authority of Hindu sacred books, the Vedas. It is vain, therefore, to look in this direction for the complete satisfaction which the heart of man finds in the sweet Words of God, the acceptance of his prayers and the manifestation of heavenly signs which reveal to him the face of the living God. But if access cannot be had to all these sources of certainty, then a man shall have to depend upon reason only according to the Vedic doctrine. But reason, as shown above, is not a source of perfect certainty and cannot make a man attain the perfect Divine knowledge which is equivalent to seeing God, and which by generating true love and fear of God, burns the chaff of sin, mortifies the sensual passions and working a holy transformation in the life of man, cures all defects and washes away all the impurities of sin. But as most men do not care for the perfect purity of life which frees a man from every stain of sin, therefore they do not even aspire after a holy life, and their hearts are so dead to it that they do not ever feel its need. On the other hand they are ready to fight when the truth is told

because of their excessive bias towards a particular set of dogmas.

The position of the Arya Samaj is extremely deplorable. It denies revelation, heavenly signs and acceptance of prayers, the only means to a perfect knowledge of God, and bases the whole superstructure of its beliefs on the slender bases of reason. But its principles do not hold even when judged from the standpoint of reason. For, as shown above, the only argument for the existence of God that can be derived from the source of reason, is that this universe could not have come into existence of itself, and that it must have a creator. But the Arya Samaj teaches the doctrine that matter and soul are self-existent and eternal and that God has created nothing. Hence the only argument that reason could give for the existence of God fails in view of the principles inculcated by the Arya Samaj. This vital objection against the teachings of the Samajists is sometimes sought to remove by the assertion that though matter and soul are self-existent, yet the combination of the particles of matter and the union of matter and soul could not be effected without the power of God. But the absurdity

of this idea is clear on the face of it, for when it assumed that the particles of matter and the soul have in them the inherent quality which has made them self-existing and self-supporting from eternity, it is nothing but sheer folly to assert that some external power is needed for their union and combination. To assert first that every particle of matter existing in the universe is with all its qualities a self-existing thing, and that similarly every soul with all its attributes and power is self-existent, and to deny then that the power of combination in the particles of matter and the power of union in matter and soul belongs to them, is to contradict oneself and no sensible person can hold this position for a single minute. The holder of such a belief is an easy prey for atheism, and it needs very little effort on the part of an atheist to win over an Arya Samajist to his own side. It grieves me much to see that the Arya Samaj has in formulating its doctrines committed serious errors in both branches of Law. With regard to God the Aryas hold the belief that He is not the Author of the universe and the source from which all blessings flow, but that matter and soul with all their properties and attributes are self-existent and not in any way under

obligation to God. If this is true, it is meaningless to acknowledge the existence of God, and even if His existence is assumed, it does not appear why He deserves to be worshipped, on what grounds He is to be taken as the All-powerful Being, and how and by what methods He is to be recognised. Can any one answer these questions? Ah! that there were a heart capable of receiving this message of sympathy. Ah! that some one should sit in the corner of solitude and ponder over these words. Almighty God! Have Thou mercy on these people who are our old neighbours. Turn Thou the hearts of most of them to truth so that they should know it and accept it, for to Thee belongs all power. Amen!

Transmigration of Souls analysed

So far as to the error of the Arya Samaj in connection with the recognition of God and His powers, but the other part of Law is also full of errors. Firstly, there is the doctrine of transmigration according to which the soul assumes different bodies in different births. The point which strikes one most in this doctrine is that Almighty God is represented as a most cruel and hard-hearted being whose anger can never be appeased. In the Arya Samajic code of beliefs, God is first shorn of His glory

and divested of the power of creation, and then in strange contradiction with it, He is invested with an arbitrary and tyrannical power over the souls to punish them for billions of years for disobedience of commandments to which He has no right to exact obedience. For, if He has not created the souls, He has no absolute right to require them to obey Him. Or assuming that He has acquired such a right, it must at all events be very limited in its scope like the right acquired by a ruler over his subjects. But the interminable series of punishments which every soul has to undergo according to the doctrine of transmigration in one body after another, is absolutely inconsistent with such an acquired right and the principles of justice. According to the Muslim doctrine, not only are soul and matter with their attributes and properties created by the hand of God, but even the punishment which they must receive for disobedience to their Master, does not last for ever. Thus Almighty God says in the Holy Qur'an with regard to the eternity of the punishment of sinners : *الا ما شاء* "Except in so far as thy Lord willeth, for thy Lord doeth whatever He willeth." Here we are told that though the punishment of the sinners is spoken of as

lasting eternally, yet it is not without an end in the sense in which God is without an end, but only because of its length, and the mercy of God will then overtake them, for He is powerful and does what He wills. This verse is further explained by a tradition according to which the Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

يأتى على جهنم زمان ليس فيها احد و نسيم الصبا تحرك ابوابها

“A time will come over hell when there will be no one in it and a cold breeze (of the mercy of God) will blow upon its gates.” The Arya Samajic teaching represents the Divine Being as a peevish and revengeful master whose anger can never be appeased. The Christians also entertain the belief that a man shall be condemned to eternal hell for every sin and that his tortures will know no end. But the wonder is that while proposing endless torture for other men, the son of God is made to bear punishment for three days only. This unrelenting cruelty to others and improper leniency to His own son, is absolutely inconsistent with the mercy and justice of God. Instead of God being let off with such a slight torture the son should have been made to bear the heavier punishment, because being the son of God and as such possessing greater power than mortals, he was the only fit person to bear

up under a heavy and never-ending punishment. In short the Christian and the Arya Samajic doctrines are both open to the same objection, while some Muslims too are guilty of a departure from the reasonable teaching of the Qur'an on this point. But the Holy Qur'an has expressed itself in clear and unequivocal words the exposition of the doctrine of eternal hell, and hence the blame which attaches to some of its votaries, cannot be laid at its door. Another error of which the Muslims are guilty, because of going against the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, is relating to the death of Jesus. The Holy Qur'an speaks of his death in the clearest words but some Muslims still hold him to be alive and think that he would come back to this world.

Another objection against the doctrine of transmigration is that it is against true purity. If the mother, sister or daughter of a person dies to-day, she may be reborn to-morrow and in a few years become the wife of the self-same person and thus relations may be contracted which are prohibited by the Vedas. This difficulty which vitiates the purity of the family life cannot be obviated unless the birth of every child is attended with a document containing

particulars as to the relations in which it stood to different persons in the previous birth. But since no such arrangement has been made, the upholders of this doctrine shall have to confess that Almighty God Himself is the cause of spreading an evil in this world. But leaving aside these objections, it is difficult to understand what good results from casting souls into the revolution of births, *Mukti* or salvation, as must be admitted by every sensible person, depends upon *gayan* i.e., Divine knowledge, and if the doctrine of transmigration had any truth in it, the Divine knowledge attained by a soul in a previous birth ought not to have been lost. On the other hand, every fragment of Divine knowledge attained in one birth, should have been a stepping stone for the acquirement of more knowledge, and the previous store ought to have been added to the newly acquired one, thus bringing a person nearer and nearer to the fountain of salvation. But it is clear that every child comes into the world utterly ignorant and the previous store of knowledge amassed with great labour during a whole life is utterly wasted like the fortune of a prodigal man. The revolution of successive births, therefore, in no way assists the attainment of salvation, for whatever store of Divine knowledge is accumulated in one birth is utterly

wasted in the transition to the next. This process of the gain and loss of knowledge at the beginning and end of each birth, makes the attainment of salvation almost an impossibility, and therefore metempsychosis does not afford the least assistance to such attainment. A really insurmountable difficulty in the way of souls for the attainment of salvation that they must lose everything they gain without any fault of theirs and simply because God has wished to cast them into the maze of transmigration. And in spite of these difficulties, the salvation obtained is temporary and not permanent, and thus after enjoying this hardlywon rest for a short time, the soul is again cast out from the abode of bliss to undergo similar revolutions of ceaseless tortures.

The second doctrine owned by the Arya Samaj which strikes at the very root of the true purity of life, is the doctrine of *Niyoga*. I do not ascribe this doctrine to the Vedas; nay, I tremble at the idea of making the Vedas responsible for such a hideous doctrine. I am sure that human nature repels the idea extremely disgusting that a man should tell his own chaste wife who belongs to a respectable and noble family to have connection with a

stranger simply for the chance of getting a son, in spite of the continuance of her conjugal relations with her own husband, or that the wife should herself desire to adopt such a shameful course of life. Even some animals are so jealous of their mates that they do not like their living with other males. It is not my object to enter into any discussion here. I humbly entreat the leaders of the Arya Samaj to renounce this doctrine, because in it lies their moral betterment. The people of this country have already much fallen off from true purity and if practices like the *Niyoga* remain in vogue, the moral degradation of the country would only grow deeper and deeper day by day.

Purity of Sex in Islam

Here I take occasion to express my views on another point of equal importance. Whatever the feeling of hatred which the Arya Samaj entertains towards Muslims and the principles of Islam, it should not make a total departure from the time-honoured custom of *purdah*, for such a course would be productive of immense evil and mischief, though it may appear to be attractive at the present moment. Every sensible person can easily understand that the majority of men and women in this age are walking only in obedience to their passions and

desires, and are so completely in their control that they do not care aught for the retribution of their deeds. Most young men cannot refrain from looking to lust after young and beautiful women if they get a chance to look at them at all, and so is also the case of most women. If in this state, when the hearts of both sexes are not free from corruption and evil and are unable to resist the temptations of flesh, a too free intercourse of men, and women is allowed, the result would be that the evil of adultery would poison the whole system of society, as is the case in many parts of Europe. But when these men actually grow pure in heart, when they are freed from the control of bestial passions and sensual desires, when the spirit of devil is utterly expelled from among them, when Divine majesty takes entire possession of their hearts and the awe of God controls their looks, in short when a pure transformation is effected in their lives and they don the garments of the fear of God, then, but not till then, they may do what they like, for they would be then as eunuchs made so by the Hand of God and their eyes would be shut against lustful looks and their hearts closed against evil ideas. But remember, my beloved countrymen,

may God Himself inspire this idea into your hearts, that this is the most dangerous time for doing away with the custom of *purdah*, and if you do it, you would sow the seed of poison in your people which would vitiate the whole society. This is a time when the custom of *purdah* ought to have been instituted even if it had never prevailed before, for this is the *kaljug* (the iron age). Evil rages in the world and the transgression of Divine commandments, corruption and drunkenness are at their highest. Atheism prevails in the hearts and the awe of Divine majesty and glory has utterly vanished away from them. Many things are uttered with the tongue with which the heart does not tally. Lectures are delivered which may claim great intellectual merits, but the hearts are dead and devoid of spirituality. It is not meet that at such a time the poor sheep should be let loose in forests where wolves abound.

My friends, the plague is still threatening us and I have received information from on high that many of its onslaughts are in store for us. These are dangerous days and no one can say who would become its morsel by the next year and who remain alive, what house

would be devastated and what saved. Arise then and repent, and please your Lord with good and virtuous deeds. Mind that though errors in belief would be punished in the life to come, and the fact of being a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian would be decided on the day of judgment, yet the person who exceeds all limits in his transgressions, evils and injustice to others, will be punished even here, and he cannot flee from the wrath of heaven. Rise then and please your Master and be at peace with Him before the terrible day comes, the day of the raging of plague, of which the prophets of God have prophesied. Reconcile yourselves with your Lord, for He is the most Merciful and if you repent truly and forsake the ways of evil, He will forgive you all your sins. A single moment's repentance with a true and fearful heart cancels the evil deeds of seventy years. Do not say that your repentance is not accepted by God. No ! you cannot be saved by your own deeds, it is the grace of God that takes you by the hand and not your own deeds. Merciful and Gracious God, shows mercy to us for we are Thy servants and bow ourselves at Thy threshold.

My Claim to Promised Messiahship

Gentlemen, I would now say something about my own claims which I have published in this country. Reason and history bear witness to the fact that when the darkness of sin overshadows the earth, when all sorts of transgressions prevail in the world and evil is supreme, when the spiritual sensibilities are deadened, when the earth growing impure with immoral practices and the love of God being numbed in the hearts of men, a poisonous wind begins to blow, the mercy of God then ordains that life should be breathed into dead hearts and the earth should be quickened afresh. As there are changes of seasons in the physical world, so there are revolutions in the spiritual world. In autumn trees lose their verdure and freshness, and are stripped of their leaves and branches, and look like a man who being in the last stage of consumption loses all his

flesh and blood, or like a leper whose face is disfigured by the effects of leprosy and whose limbs have dropped down. But they are not left in this state. Another period comes, and autumn is followed by spring when a new life is given to the dead plants and they sprout forth into fresh leaves. Similar to these changes in the physical world, there are changes and revolutions in the spiritual world and periods of light and darkness follow each other successively like day and night. At certain stages of the history of the world, men are stripped of spiritual excellences and the perfection of manhood like trees in the autumn, while at others a wind blows from heaven which breathes life afresh into their hearts. This our time is also the beginning of a spring. The deadness of autumn was witnessed in the Punjab during the days when this country was under the Sikh sway. Knowledge had then quite disappeared and ignorance had become prevalent. Religious books had become so rare that they could not be found except in some high family which remained intact from Sikh oppression. The night of the Sikh rule has been followed by the day of British dominion which has brought us the invaluable blessing of

peace. The truth is that if regard is had to the general peace and security prevailing in the country and the comforts which we can and do enjoy, it is unjust to compare the days of Sikh rule with even the nights of English Government. The time in which we live is a time of physical as well as spiritual blessings, and what has already appeared is a sign of the richness of the harvest that we may yet reap. It is true, however, that being the commencement of a new age, this period presents varying faces. Some faces are hideous because they go against righteousness and the true knowledge of God, while others present attractive features and there is a lustre of righteousness in them. There is no doubt, however, that the English Government has taken great pains to spread learning in the country and to advance the cause of science and knowledge. Printing presses have multiplied copies of books to an extent unknown in any previous age and placed them within the reach of all. This vast spread of knowledge has brought to light many hidden libraries and cast the light of publication upon many rare manuscripts and thus it has changed the whole appearance of society within a few years.

Side by side with the growth of learning and spread of knowledge spoken of here, there has been a continual falling off from the standard of purity in practice, and the plant of atheism has struck a deep root in most hearts. There is no doubt about the benefit and blessings which the English Rule has brought to us, nor can any one question the unparalleled peace and liberty which it has established in this country, but most people have not made a right use of this liberty and peace. Instead of being thankful to God for His great obligation in placing us under the benign rule of such a peaceful and kind Government, most people have become utterly neglectful of and stolidly indifferent to God and have wholly given themselves up to the pursuits and cares of this world, so wholly indeed as if this world were their permanent abode and they were not under the control of any Higher power or under any obligation to Him. As happens generally, with peace transgression has become more flagrant, and on account of daily increasing hard-heartedness and indifference, the country is now in a very dangerous condition. Ignorant people commit the most brutal

and heinous deeds like savages, and every grade of society is more or less involved in some sort of evil. Public houses are much more frequented than other shops, and professions involving open immorality are daily increasing, while places of worship are only used for the performance of ceremonials devoid of life and inner worth. In short a violent outburst of evil and iniquity has taken place, and as a flood destroys all embankments and sweeps away whole villages before it in a single night, so the flood of passions is sweeping away all barriers to sin before it. Cimmerian darkness has spread over the world, and it has reached the point at which it must either be regenerated and receive a light from heaven or be utterly destroyed and brought to naught. But the prophetic utterings give us to understand that the end is yet a thousand years off. Moreover, the new physical order of this world which has been brought about by the numerous discoveries and inventions of the last and the present century, is clearly indicative of a similar change for the better in the spiritual system of the world. There is pressing necessity for such spiritual reform, for spiritually the world stands

on the brink of destruction and is so deprayed that the wrath of heaven must be kindled against it. The force of passions is growing too strong while the spiritual tendencies have been utterly weakened and the light of faith has been extinguished. A light must, therefore, be kindled from heaven to shatter the clouds of darkness which overhang this world, for, as we see daily, the gloom of night is not dispelled until the heavenly light makes its appearance. As there is a heavenly light which lightens the corners of the earth, so there is also a heavenly light which illuminates the corners of the heart, and the truth of both these laws is manifest.

Since God created man, it has been His unchangeable law that He sheds His light upon mankind through one of their own number, so that there may be a unity and oneness among them. The person who is thus chosen, receives the light of perfect Divine knowledge from God, drinks deep at the fountain of His perfect love, is spoken to by Him, made to walk in the path of His perfect pleasure and granted a deep-seated zeal to draw others to the light, the knowledge and the love which have been granted to him. Thus drawn by him and sharing in

his knowledge because of their close connection with him, other people are also kept back from sins and guided to the path of piety and righteousness. In accordance with this time-honoured law, Almighty God prophesied by the mouth of His prophets that after nearly six thousand years from the time of Adam when great darkness would prevail upon earth and an irresistible flood of passions would make the love of God wane and iniquity predominate, God would, breathe into a man the soul of truth and love and knowledge spiritually after the likeness of Adam, and he would be called the Messiah, because God would Himself anoint his soul with the ointment of His love. This Messiah who on account of the promise of God concerning his appearance is called the Promised Messiah in sacred books, would, it is foretold, be made to stand against *Satan*, and between him and the evil-one there would be a mighty struggle, the final struggle between good and evil. For this spiritual fight *Satan* would bring all his hosts into the field and gather together all his power and make use of all his resources. Never shall a fight like this have occurred between good and evil before, for on that day the tricks of

Satan and the means by which he can mislead people, would all be exhausted. After a heavy fight, the Messiah of God would drive back the powers of darkness, and the glory, majesty, unity and holiness of God would be proclaimed upon earth and would continue to be so declared for a thousand years, the seventh day of the Holy Books of God. Then will be the end. I am that Messiah : let him who wills, accept me.

Doubts would, perhaps, be entertained here by some as to the existence of *Satan* and they would wonder at the mention of *Satan* and his hosts. Let them bear in mind that every man's heart has two attractions with it, the attraction of good and the attraction of evil. The first of these is attributed in Islamic law to the angel or the spirit of goodness, and the second to *Satan* or the spirit of evil. Man is inclined sometimes to evil and sometimes to goodness, and this is what is meant by the struggle between good and evil. I think there are many men in this gathering who will, simply on hearing my claim to Promised Messiahship and Divine revelation, call me a liar and look down upon my claim, but I do not condemn them, for so it has been from the beginning. Every Messenger of God had to hear words of abuse

and contempt from his people in the early stages of his mission, and it may be said truly that a prophet is not without honour but in the beginning of his career as a prophet. That Holy Prophet and Messenger of God to whom the Holy Qur'an was revealed, and who gave us a law which is the finisher of all laws, of being called whose followers we are all proud, was also received in the same manner by his people. For thirteen years he suffered persecution and tortures at the hands of his enemies alone and helpless, and received their scoffing, insults, affronts and outrages with the greatest patience and forbearance, all these cruelties of his enemies reaching their climax in that unkindest cut of all, his expulsion from Mecca. Who knew at that time that that helpless and forlorn man was destined to become the guide and leader of millions of beings? Such is the Divine law that the sent-ones of God are laughed at and despised at first. There are very few who recognise them in the beginning and hence they must suffer at the hands of the ignorant and bear all sorts of scurrilities, abuses and taunts until the time comes when God should open the hearts of men for their acceptance.

Such is my claim. But the work for which Almighty God has appointed me, my function

as the Promised Messiah, is that I should remove the estrangement which has taken place between God and man, and re-establish man's connection of purity and love with his Divine Master. I have been raised that I should put a stop to religious wars and lay the basis of peace, concord and fellow-feeling between men, that I should bring to light the religious truths which have long been hidden from the mortal eye, that I may show true spirituality by dispelling the darkness of passions from its face, that I may manifest the working of Divine powers within many by prayer or by concentration of attention, and important of all that I should re-establish the pure and glorious unity of God which is free from every mixture of *shirk*, and which has disappeared from the face of earth. All this will be effected not by my power, but by the mighty power of Him Who rules in heavens and earth. I see that on the one hand Almighty God having trained me in His deep knowledge and having made me the recipient of His revelation, has granted me a zeal for bringing about these reforms, and on the other, He has Himself prepared hearts which are ready to accept my words. I see that a mighty revolution has taken place in the world since I was appointed by Almighty God

to this heavenly office. While in Europe and America the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus is being rejected by all sensible thinkers, in India idol-worship is fast losing ground. Though these people are yet ignorant of true spirituality and are content with a few worlds in which is contained a formal expression of their beliefs, yet they have broken asunder many ties which held them to unbelief, and they are now as it were standing on the threshold of unity. I hope that in the near future the grace of God would take many of them by the hand and place them within the stronghold of unity where there is all peace and safety, and where a man is graced perfect love and perfect fear and perfect knowledge. This is a mere wish but Almighty God has given me the glad tidings which make me entertain this hope. The manifestation of this heavenly ordinance has been brought about in this country so that different people may be sooner seen gathering into one flock, and that the night of discord and enmity may sooner be changed into the bright morning of peace and concord.

That the different people will be ultimately made one nation is the universal hope of all

religious sects. The Christians think that time is coming when all the nations of the earth will accept the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus. The Jews entertain the fond hope that their Messiah will soon appear and make them the inheritors of the whole earth and bring the gentiles into the Jewish faith. The Islamic prophecies also give the hope of the advent of a Messiah who would make Islam the predominant and universal religion of the world, and the promised time of advent goes no further than the commencement of the 14th century of Hijrah. And at this very moment the Pundits of the Sanatan Dharm are anxiously waiting for the advent of an *avatar* who would spread the true faith in the whole world. The Aryas, though they do not believe in any prophecy, share in these universal views and are trying their best to spread the Arya religion in the East as well as in the West. Nor has the Buddhist religion remained behind in this movement, for it is also showing signs of activity and reform. But what is most wonderful of all, and may perhaps excite laughter, is that in this competition of religions for superiority, even the schedule caste is not quite indifferent but it also is awake to the serious necessity of protecting itself

from hostile religions. In short, the competition of religions has grown hot and every sect is inspired with the zeal to make acquisitions from other faiths. There is a commotion in the religious world more violent than the commotion which is caused in the sea by a storm, and as the billows roll down upon one another, so do at present the different religions.

The various movements described above lead one at least to this conclusion that the time has come at which Almighty God has willed to gather all men into one fold. Regarding this very time, He says in the Holy Qur'an *وَنفُخُ فِي الصُّورِ نَجْمَعُنَا لَهُمْ جَمْعًا* Reading this verse along with the preceding verses' its proper significance appears to be that when there will be a hot competition for victory among the various religions, and they will be in a tumult like the waves of the ocean, then will Almighty God bring into existence a new dispensation which will draw all capable hearts to itself. Then will they know what religion is to them, and a new life, the soul of true righteousness, will be breathed into and they will be made to drink at the fountain of true knowledge of God. It was necessary that this world should not have come to an end

until this prophecy was fulfilled which was announced by the Holy Qur'an 1300 years ago.

Signs of the Latter Age

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned many other signs of the last ages when all people would be gathered upon one religion; for instance, that the rivers would be generally split into canals, that the earth would bring out its hidden treasures of minerals, inventions and sciences, that such means would come into existence (referring to printing presses) as would cause books to be multiplied in large numbers, that a conveyance would be discovered which would render the camels useless and facilitate men's going to and fro, that the means of correspondence and the mixing together of different people would become easy, and that the sun and the moon would eclipse on specified dates in the month of Ramazan. All these signs of the mercy of God would be followed by another which is indicative of the wrath of heaven i. e. the raging of a destructive plague which would affect every town and village, utterly laying waste some and leaving others in a partially desolate condition. God would then be in great wrath because the signs which He manifested at the hands of His Messenger were belied, and the Apostle

whom He had sent was rejected and called an impostor.

All the signs enumerated above, which the Holy Qur'an has described as the signs of the appearance of the Promised one, have been fulfilled in this age. Thus there is a clear path for any one who exercises his judgment and understanding for my acceptance, because all the signs appointed for the appearance of the Promised Messiah have been manifested by God for me. Besides the signs mentioned above, the Holy Qur'an fixes the time of the appearance of the Promised Messiah in another manner too. In it we are told that one day with God is equivalent to a thousand years as is indicated in the verse : ان يوما عند ربك كالف سنة مما تعدون . Therefore the seven days mentioned in the Holy Qur'an indicated seven thousand years which represent the present age from Adam to the end spoken of in the holy books of God. I do not mean to say that seven thousand years is the whole time from the beginning to the end of the world, for from the Holy Qur'an it appears that the world existed before the Adam spoken of in the Holy Book. Of course we cannot say who the people were that lived upon earth then because we have no details in

our hand. But it appears that one cycle of this world lasts for seven thousand years and hence also the seven days, each day standing for a thousand years. We cannot say through how many such cycles the world has passed up to this time, and how many Adams have passed away before our own Adam. As God has ever been the creator, therefore we believe that His creation must have existed always in some one form or another though it is difficult for us to specify the particular form. Here too the Christian faith has made an error, for the Christians believe that the world was created and heaven and earth made only six thousand years ago, and that before that time the creating power of God had for ever remained unemployed. I do not think any sensible person can subscribe to such a belief which is absurd on the face of it. The Holy Qur'an on the other hand teaches us doctrines whose truth can never be questioned. It teaches us that God has always been a creator and will for ever be a creator, and if He wills He can destroy heavens and earth and make them anew millions of times. He has told us that from the Adam who is our ancestor to the end of this cycle, there is a period of seven thousand years, which are as seven days with God. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the

blessings of God be upon him, appeared in the fifth thousand after Adam or in the fifth day of this cycle. This is indicated in the chapter entitled the 'Asr (Afternoon) the letters of which, according to the mode of reckoning numbers from letters, represent the number of years which had elapsed from Adam to the time of the revelation of that chapter to the Holy Prophet. According to this calculation six thousand years have now elapsed from Adam, and a period of one thousand years more would complete this cycle.

The Holy Qur'an as well as the previous books give us to understand that the Messenger of God who would appear in the last ages in the likeness of Adam, and would be called the Messiah, would be born in the last days of the sixth thousand from Adam, as Adam was born at the end of the sixth day. These signs are sufficient to lead a thinking mind to the true conclusion. The seven thousand years of this cycle are further divided according to the prevalence of good or evil, every odd thousand being the time of the prevalence of virtue and true guidance, and the even thousand of the supremacy of *Satan*. Thus in the fifth thousand our Holy

Prophet was born for the regeneration of the world and *Satan* was then put into chains. Then followed the sixth thousand, from the beginning of the fourth to the fourteenth century after Islam, in which *Satan* was let loose and evil predominated. And now we are in the seventh thousand which is the time of God and His Messiah and of every goodness and virtue, of the true faith and regeneration of mankind, of righteousness and the proclamation of the Unity of God and Divine worship. With the entrance of the world upon the seventh thousand, the Millenium, no other Messiah can set his foot upon earth, for his time is now gone. The true Messiah is he who has appeared in time and made known his appearance to the world. All these prophecies are contained in the Holy Qur'an, and they were also uttered by the earlier prophets. In fact, no prophecy has been uttered with such frequency and force as the prophecy relating to the appearance of the Messiah in the last ages and to the evil of the Anti-Christ.

Some men think that the prophecy relating to the appearance of the Promised Messiah is contained only in the traditions and not in the Holy Qur'an, and accordingly they demand a proof of it from the Word of God.

A reflection upon the words of the Holy Book is sufficient to convince any reasonable man that this prophecy is contained in the plainest words in the Holy Qur'an. In the chapter entitled the *Tahrim*, it is indicated that some individuals from among the Muslims would be called *Ibn-i-Maryam* (the Son of Mary), for in that chapter at first the faithful are compared to Mary and afterwards the breathing of a soul into her (*i.e.*, the faithful like her) is mentioned. This indicates that the faithful who observe complete obedience to Divine commandments and make themselves like Mary, will be rewarded by God by being made Christ-like. It is in reference to the attainment of this stage that Almighty God says of me in a revelation published in the *Barahin-i-Ahmad-iyya* : يا مريم امكن انت وزوجك الجنة : "O Mary ! Enter thou and thy friends into paradise ;" and again : يا مريم نفخت فيك من روح بالصدق : "O Mary ! I have breathed into thee the soul of truth," (thus symbolically Mary was impregnated with truth) ; and last of all : يا عيسى الى متوفيك ورافعك الى : "O Jesus ! I will cause thee to die a natural death and would then raise thee to Myself," where I am addressed as Jesus Christ as if raised from the dignity of Mary to the dignity of Christ. Thus the promise contained in the

Tahrim has been fulfilled in me, and I am named by God as the son of Mary.

Again, in the chapter entitled the *Nur* (Light), Almighty God says that successors to the Holy Prophet would be raised from among the Muslims liken to all the successors that were raised to Moses as in the verse *ليستخلفنهم في الارض كما استخلف الذين من قبلهم* From the Holy Qur'an it also appears that the religion of Islam would witness two terrible disasters which would endanger its very life. One of these came upon Islam with the death of the Holy Prophet and was averted at the hands of Abu Bakr, the first caliph according to Divine promise. The second disaster according to the Holy Qur'an would be the evil that would be wrought by the Anti-Christ, to repel which the Promised Messiah would appear. It is to this great evil that the concluding words of the *Fatiha*, which every Muslim must repeat in his prayers, contain an allusion, and to this time of tribulation that the prophecy contained in the words : *وليمكن لهم دينهم الذي ارتضى لهم وليبدلنهم من بعد خوفهم امنا* refers which occur in the *Nur* immediately after the words in which successors to the Holy Prophet are promised. (xxiv. 55)

In these words Almighty God tells us that in the last ages when the faith of Islam would be severely shaken, so much so that there would be fear of its extinction and of its being swept off wholly, He would re-establish it with firmness upon the earth, and grant the Muslims a security after that great fear. To the same effect the Holy Quran says elsewhere : هو الذى ارسل رسوله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله “God is He Who sent His messenger with the guidance and the true faith so that He may ultimately (*i.e.*, in the time of the Promised Messiah) make it victorious over all other religions.” (ix. 33) Again, the verse انا نحن نزلنا الذكر وانا له لحافظون “Verily We sent down the Holy Qur’an, and verily We will be its guardians,” (xv. 9) also refers to the time of the Promised Messiah for as it speaks of the sending down of Revelation which was effected through the Holy Prophet, it also speaks of guarding the revealed word from its enemies when it would be in danger of being brought to extinction, which is the function of the Promised Messiah. Here I have briefly pointed out the verses in which the advent of the Promised Messiah is indicated, either in plain words or by way of allusion, as a detailed proof would not

have suited the limits of a lecture. This is a sufficient proof for any one who seeks an evidence of my claim in the Holy Qur'an in the same manner in which he seeks an evidence of the claim of the Holy Prophet or Jesus Christ in the previous books. So if these prophecies are not regarded as sufficient, it must also be admitted that there is no prophecy in the Torah concerning the appearance of Jesus or our Holy Prophet, for if the words of the former prophecies are not very definite, neither are they so in the case of the latter prophecies. It is exactly here that the Jews stumbled in the recognition of the two prophets, Jesus and Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon them. For instance, if it had been stated in plain and clear words in the prophecies foretelling the appearance of our Holy Prophet that he would be born at Mecca, that his name would be Muhammad, that his father and grand-father would be known respectively as Abdullah and Abdul Muttalib, that he would be of the Ishmaelite race, that being persecuted at Mecca he would fly to Medina, and that he would be born so many years after Moses, not a single Jew could have denied him. The difficulties in the case of

the prophecies relating to the appearance of Jesus Christ, are still greater, and it is on this ground that the Jews to this day consider themselves excusable in rejecting Jesus. In these prophecies it is clearly stated that Elijah would re-appear before the advent of the true Messiah and prophecies containing this condition are contained in the revealed books. But since Elijah did not re-appear, therefore the claim of Jesus to Messiahship could not be regarded as true by the Jews. When confronted with this difficulty, Jesus replied that by appearance of Elijah was meant the appearance of one like him, and not his own appearance. But this explanation was rejected by the Jews as directly opposed to the Word of God which spoke not of the advent of the like of Elijah, but of the advent of Elijah himself. These considerations show clearly that the prophecies relating to the appearance of the prophets of God are always deep so that they may serve to distinguish the righteous from the wicked.

This is not, however, all that I can say in support of my claim. A claim based on truth is not attended with only one sort of proof, but

like the genuine diamond it shines in full effulgence in all its phases. Such is my claim to Promised Messiahship. Its truth shines forth from whatever point of view it is considered. My claim to being sent by God and of being the recipient of Divine revelation, dates from a period of over 27 years, and it was published in my book entitled the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya* about twenty-four years ago. Such a long and continuous series of lies is inconceivable. However great a liar a person may be, he cannot be guilty of concocting a falsehood extending over such a lengthy period of time and effecting the whole world. Moreover Almighty God does not assist an impostor. Consider a person who with every new sun concocts a new falsehood and fabricates a new lie, forges words and prophecies and pretends that it is an inspiration which he has received from God, or the Word of God that has come down to him as a revelation from the Almighty, while God knows that he is a great liar and impostor in what he says every day, consider if God would grant assistance to such an accursed being, if he would make him and his followers flourish and increase for long years and frustrate the designs and plans of his enemies to bring him to naught. Yet for 27

years, I have been receiving the assistance of God without any intermission and the number of my followers has constantly increased notwithstanding the hardest opposition. Do not these facts point me out as the true one ?

There is another argument which settles conclusively the truth of my claim. Twenty-years previous to this at a time when I was quite unknown to the world and lived in the corner of solitude, Almighty God revealed to me certain prophecies concerning my future life which were at that very time and under those very circumstances published in the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya* which I was then writing. Addressing me Almighty God thus spoke to me : "O my Ahmad, thou art according to my wish and thou art with me. Thy secret is My secret. Thou art to Me as My Unity and Oneness. So the time has come when thou shouldst be assisted and made known among men. Thou hast in my presence a dignity which the world knows not. God will assist thee in all fields. Thou hast dignity in My presence and I have chosen thee for Myself. And I will make many people follow and obey thee and will make thee a guide to them. We will inspire people from heaven that they may assist thee. Assistance will come

to thee from deep and distant paths. People will flock to thee from distant corners of the world. It is, therefore, meet that thou shouldst not turn away from them or get tired of them, because of their vast numbers, but receive them with kindness and courtesy. And pray to God, 'O Lord, do not leave me alone and Thou art the best of inheritors.' God will procure for thee the companions of the *mat*, and what knowest thou who the companions of the *mat* are. Thou wilt see tears flowing from their eyes, and they will say, 'O Lord, we have heard the voice of one who invites people to faith in God,' Verily, I will make thee My vicegerent upon earth, and people will say of thee contemptuously, 'Wherefrom and how hast thou got this dignity and high rank?' Say to them, 'My God is a wonderful God and wonderful are His powers.' He is not questioned of what He doeth, but he will question every one as to what He said. They say, 'This is but a fabrication.' Say, 'It is God Who has established this dispensation, then leave them in their vain sports. God is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it victorious over all other religions. They will try to extinguish the light which God has kindled, but God will make that

light perfect and kindle it in hearts that are ready to receive it, though the unbelievers may not like it. God will protect thee against their mischiefs, though people may not be able to save thee. Thou art before My eyes ; I have named thee *Mutavakkil* (truster in God), and God will not leave thee until He has severed the virtuous from the wicked. Two sheep will be slaughtered, and every one who is upon earth, must taste of death. There may be a thing to which you may be averse, but haply it may be good for you ; and there may be a thing which you deem good but haply its attainment may be injurious to you. God knows what is good for you and what is injurious, but you do not know."

It will be seen that the revelations given above contain four grand prophecies. Firstly, at a time when I was alone and companionless about 24 years since, God gave me the glad tidings that I would not be left alone but would have numerous followers and that people will come to me from distant places and remote corners in such numbers that they should tire me. Secondly, that I would receive great assistance from these people. What I was when these prophecies were published, and what I am now when about

a quarter of century has elapsed since their publication, is known to the whole world. Alone I lived in the corner of solitude then in a small village, but now I have more than 200,000 followers. The third prophecy mentioned in the same connection is that people would do their utmost to bring this dispensation to naught and to extinguish this light, but all their efforts would be fruitless and all their designs would be frustrated. These three prophecies are shining like the meridian sun. No sensible person would hold that these wonderful disclosures of the deep secrets of the future, upon which no guess or surmise could shed the faintest light, could be announced beforehand except by a revelation from Almighty God, the knower of all secrets. There was no circumstance which could make the most intelligent person guess that the helpless and solitary man who had never stepped out from the corner of solitude, would one day become the leader and guide of hundreds of thousands of men. If it is within the power of man to reveal such secrets, let another such instance be cited. The grandeur of these prophecies is made more manifest and the heart of man bows with true submission before the mighty knowledge of God when

the third prophecy foretelling the attempts of the people to thwart the fulfilment of these prophecies, and God's promise to bring about their fulfilment in spite of every opposition, is borne in mind. Can a mere mortal challenge the world? No, he cannot even say that he would live for such a time. The fourth prophecy which particularly deserves the reader's attention is that relating to the slaughter of two sheep which was fulfilled by the martyrdom of two of my disciples in Afghanistan, viz., Sheikh Abdul Rahman and Sahibzada Maulvi Abdul Latif at the hands of Amir Abdul Rahman and Amir Habibullah respectively.

Besides these, there are hundreds of other prophecies which were fulfilled in their time. On one occasion, I informed Maulvi Hakim Nur-ud-Din that a son would be born to him who would have sores upon his body, and the prophecy was published in a book. Some time afterwards the promised son was born and he had the sores on his body as described in the prophecy. The Maulvi Sahib is present in this gathering, and every one can question him as to the truth of this statement. On another occasion, Abdul

Rahim Khan, one of the sons of Sardar Muhammad Ali Khan, Rais of Malerkotla, was attacked with a serious disease and all hope of his life was lost. When I prayed for him to God it was revealed to me that the boy would recover on my intercession. So like a kind and affectionate sympathiser, I prayed for him and the disease was gone. Abdullah Khan, the second son of the same gentleman, also fell ill and the attack was so serious that death seemed to be certain, I prayed for him and was informed of his recovery by God and he accordingly recovered. There are numerous other signs and if I were to relate them all, this lecture would not be finished even in ten days. Hundreds of thousands of men bear testimony to the truth of these signs because they were shown before their eyes. One hundred and fifty of these I have collected in a book called the "*Nazool-ul-Masih*" which will be published shortly. These signs are of various sorts. Some of them were manifested upon heaven others upon earth; some related to my friends, while others were in connection with my enemies; some effected myself and my children and others have been manifested by God through my enemies without any intervention on my part. To the last class

belongs a sign which was manifested through Maulvi Ghulam Dastgir of Qasur, who published in his book *Fateh Rahman* of his own accord a prayer against me to the effect that of us two God might destroy the liar first. A few days has passed when the Maulvi died and thus bore a testimony to my truth. Besides this, there are thousands of men who were informed of my truth through visions and who have thus accepted me.

There are other considerations of importance in determining the truth of a claim to prophethood. Whether the claimant has appeared in time of need, *i. e.*, at a time when the need of a guide was felt by the world, whether he has come exactly at the prophesied hour, whether he receives assistance from God, whether he has fully refuted the objections brought forward by his opponents against his claim, are points which go a long way to prove the truth or falsehood of his claim. If all these questions are satisfactorily answered, they would be evidence of his truth. Now it is clear that at the present moment, the need of a guide and Reformer is very strongly felt by the whole world. Islam needs the soothing hand of a Reformer who should bring about union and agreement among the contending sects and the

strong hand of one who should defend it against hostile attacks, while the world generally needs a spiritual guide who should restore to it the spirituality which it has lost, and re-establish the certainty which has vanished away from its face, and thus strengthening faith release people from the bondage of sin and turn them to paths of virtue and righteousness. These are facts which no one can deny unless he is blinded by prejudice, and therefore I clearly fulfil the first of the conditions enumerated above, viz., the condition of coming in time of need. In the second place, it requires to be seen whether I have come at the prophesied hour. In point of time the clearest prophecy is that relating to the appearance of the Promised Messiah at the end of the sixth and the commencement of the seventh thousand from Adam. Computing by the lunar year, the seventh thousand has begun and by the solar year the sixth is coming to a close. Besides this the Holy Prophet had said, as reported in an authentic tradition, that among the Muslims a Reformer would appear at the commencement of every century to give fresh life to the holy religion of Islam. But more than a fifth of the fourteenth century has passed away, and no other Reformer can be pointed out who has claimed an authority under the tradition re-

ferred to above. Thirdly, it is to be seen whether God has assisted the claimant or not. This condition is eminently fulfilled in me, for opponents stood up against me from among every community and left no stone unturned to bring me to naught and made all sorts of plots against me, but all their designs and plans were hopelessly shattered by Almighty God. There is no community which can say that it did not exert itself to destroy me. But against their wishes Almighty God gave me honour and made thousands of men my followers. What is it if not heavenly assistance, for upon earth no efforts were spared to blot me out. The stronger the opposition grew, the more I was made to flourish, until my following now exceeds two hundred thousand. Had not a hidden hand been in my support, and had my mission been based on human machinations, I would have been long before shot by one of the arrows of which I was made an aim, and being utterly destroyed no trace of mine would have been left to-day. For there is no doubt that an impostor does not prosper, but meets with destruction in one way or another, because God Himself is his enemy. But Almighty God guarded me from every evil that was designed against me in accordance with His promise which He had made twenty-four years before. What a wonder-

ful assistance from the Almighty that He first informed me in my loneliness and solitude that He would assist me and bring thousands of men to me and disappoint my enemies in their evil designs against me, and then brought all this to fulfilment as He had foretold. How manifest is His assistance and how clear this sign! Can it be within the power of man or devil that he should, when quite helpless, foretell his mighty success in the future, this should be fulfilled notwithstanding the efforts of numerous enemies who rise against him for his destruction. The fourth condition, viz, that the objections of the opponents should be fully refuted, has also been fulfilled by me. The greatest objection that has been put forward against my claim is that Jesus is alive and that he himself must come back into the world in fulfilment of the prophecy relating to the advent of the Promised Messiah in the last ages. It has been shown by me in refutation of this objection that Jesus is dead and he cannot come back. For the Muslims, the authority of the Holy Qur'an is conclusive which says : *فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتِنِي كُنْتُ أَفْتًا* الرقيب عليهم The occasion of this verse in the Holy Qur'an is that on the day of judgment, God would question Jesus if he had said to his people that they should

take him and his mother for Gods and worship them. In answer to this, Jesus would say that he had said to them only what God had commanded him to say, viz., that they should worship God alone and consider him as His apostle only, and that he knew what they did so long as he was among them, "but since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou didst witness their doings and I was quite ignorant of what happened after me." The reply of Jesus here is that his followers did not set up to the false belief of his divinity until after his death. If, therefore, it is held by a Muslim that Jesus is still alive, he shall also have to admit that the Christian doctrine is true. Moreover here Jesus displays an ignorance of the condition of his followers after his death, a fact which is inconsistent with the theory of his re-advent, because in the latter case he could not remain ignorant of the doctrines invented by the Christians after his death. The belief that Jesus would come back into the world, and joining with the Mahdi, slay the infidels, falsifies the Quranic verse quoted above, and must, therefore be rejected. Nor can it be held that Jesus would conceal before God the fact that he had gone into the world, lived there for forty years and slain the Christians,

for that is far from the dignity of a prophet, and besides nothing would remain concealed on the day of judgment. If any one has true faith in the Holy Qur'an, he can see that the whole plot of Mahdi's murderous deeds and Jesus' descent from heaven to assist him in that bloody task, is brought to naught by a single verse.

When the opponents are vanquished in every point, as a last resource they bring forward the slender objection, that one or two out of thousands of my prophecies have not been fulfilled, while as a matter of fact this is untrue. Besides this, it will be seen that the prophecies so objected to related to the punishment of certain individuals and the Divine law is, as appears from the Holy Books of God, that a prophecy relating to punishment is always conditional, whether the condition be or be not expressed in it, and the punishment can be averted upon repentance or deeds of charity or upon manifesting a fear of God. The prophecy of the prophet Jonah is an example of this. There was no express condition in that prophecy, but still the punishment was averted on the people's repentance. If, therefore, the law established above were not true, the prophethood of Jonah would be seriously in question. It cannot be questioned

that God's intention to punish a people is suspended or averted on their repentance, and what is prophecy but a manifestation of that intention through a prophet. If such intention can be suspended or averted when it is not disclosed to any person, there can be no objection to its being suspended or averted when it has been revealed through a prophet. Now the essence of the prophecy relating to the death of Atham which is objected to in my case, was that of the two, Atham and myself, the error would be brought to destruction before the eyes of the other. The truth of this prophecy has been sealed by the death of Atham, and it is quite unreasonable to object to it on the ground that he did not die within the stated time, for the limit of time had with it a condition in express words. Atham showed fearfulness and was granted a respite according to the express condition of the prophecy, but when he concealed the truth, he was soon seized by God and died in accordance with the prophecy. Even if the condition had not been expressly stated, he could have taken the benefit of it according to the Divine law with regard to the prophecies of punishment. Besides this, all the details are not always contained in prophecies, and such details are only manifested after their fulfilment. It also happens that an error occurs

sometimes in the interpretation of a prophecy, for after all prophets are mortals. For instance, Jesus had prophesied that his twelve apostles would sit on twelve thrones, whereas one of them became the devil's follower in his lifetime. He had also prophesied that the men of his time would be still living when he would come back. This also remained unfulfilled on account of error in the interpretation of the words of revelation. Some other prophecies of Jesus too met a similar fate. As to my prophecies, there are thousands of them that have been fulfilled in all their details and to ignore all of these, while selecting one or two for objection, is nothing but intentionally rejecting the truth. I fully hope and am certain that if any one were to live in my company for forty days consecutively, he would witness a heavenly sign. Here I finish this lecture and think that what I have said is sufficient for a seeker after truth. And peace be upon him who follows truth and guidance.

The Teachings of the Qur'an and Gospels compared

The Qur'an is a book in comparison with which all other guidance offered to mankind are of no account. The teachings of the Gospels were inspired by the spirit which descended like a dove, a feeble bird which can be seized and devoured even by an animal like cat, which is itself proverbial for its weakness. This is the reason why the Christians gradually fell into the pit of weakness and are now utterly devoid of spirituality. They placed their faith in a dove and are, therefore, undone. But the Spirit of God which brought the Holy Qur'an appeared in a majestic semblance and filled the whole space between earth and heavens. What a fine contrast between the two semblances of the Holy Ghost representing the Gospels and the Holy Qur'an respectively a poor dove on the one hand and a grand and awful semblance on the other. If there are no outward and inward obstacles, the Holy Qur'an can purify a man within a week. If you do not flee it, it can make you like the prophets. There is no other book on the face of the

earth which teaches its followers the excellent and hopeful prayer which the Holy Qur'an has taught in the very beginning. It tells them to pray for all the blessings which were granted before them to other people, to the prophets and messengers of God, to the faithful, the martyrs and the righteous. Let your enterprise be great, and do not reject that which the Holy Qur'an hold out to you, for it offers yet the rich blessings of God which were granted to the righteous before you. Has it not given you the kingdom of the Israelites and their holy temple? Do you doubt then, ye of little faith and low spirits, that He is not able to bestow upon you the spiritual benefits which were granted to the Israelites when it has made you the masters of all their temporal blessings? Nay, doubt not, for Almighty God has far higher blessings in store for you. He has made you inherit their spiritual and temporal kingdoms, but from your hands these shall not pass away into those of another people until the day of judgment comes. He shall never withhold from you the blessings of revelation and inspiration and of being spoken to by God, but shall confer on you all those Divine blessings which He bestowed upon any people before you. But if any one makes a daring fabrication against

God and says that he receives the Divine revelation when he does not receive it, or that God has spoken to him when He has not spoken, I call God and His angels to witness that he shall perish, for he has spoken a lie against God and been insolent and presumptuous towards Him. Be ye afraid, therefore, for the curse of God is upon those who fabricate visions and revelations. They think that there is no God, but the punishment of God shall overtake them and their evil day lies in wait for them. Let your footsteps be guided by truth and sincerity and by righteousness and love of God, and let this be the aim and object of your life. The Word of God shall then descend upon whomsoever of you He will. But do not make it the desire of your heart lest seeing your desire, the devil should tempt you and bring you to destruction. The service and worship of your master should be your sole concern, and you must be engaged with all your faculties in keeping His commandments. Let your desire be to rise higher in certainty, not that you may be called inspired ones, but that you may be saved.

The Holy Quran has prescribed many holy cammandments for you. one of which is that

you should not set up with God other gods, for those who set up gods with God, never find their way to the fountain of salvation. Do not speak a lie, for lying is also a *shirk* (setting up gods with God). It has been said in the Gospels that you should not look on a strange woman to lust after her, and that you may do so otherwise, but the Holy Qur'an says to you that you should not look at strange women at all, neither with a good intention nor with a bad intention, for on such occasions a man is apt to stumble. The Qur'an enjoins upon you that you should cast down your looks when you meet a woman, and that you should not see her features except in so far as is unavoidable and that with a dim sight.

It has been said in the Gospels that you should not drink to excess, but the Holy Qur'an says to you that you should not drink wine at all, for if you do, you shall not find the way of God, nor will He speak to you, nor purge your hearts of impurities. It tells you that sin is the innovation of Satan, and that therefore you should shun it.

It has been said in the Gospels that you should not be angry with your brother without a cause, but the Holy Qur'an says to you that you should not only suppress your own anger

but also act upon *تواصوا بالمرحمة* and advise others to suppress their anger, and that you should not only be merciful yourselves but should also advise your brethren to show mercy to others.

It has been said in the Gospels that you should not put away your wife saving for the cause of fornication and should suffer every other impurity to which she yields but the Holy Qur'an says to you: *الطيبات لطيبين* "Good women only are for good men." It tells you that the pure and the impure cannot live together. If, therefore, any one's wife is not guilty of actual fornication but looks to lust on other men or yields to their embraces and goes through the preliminaries of fornication, though she may not have committed fornication actually and discloses to others the parts of her body which should be concealed and is a mischievous woman, and hates the holy God Who is your Lord, he should divorce her if she persists in her evil ways and does not repent of wickedness. She separates herself from her husband and is not flesh of his flesh, therefore it is not permitted to him to live with her like a contended cuckold. She becomes like the flesh which is corrupt and rotten, and must be cut off, lest if allowed to remain, it should corrupt the whole body and cause death.

It has been said in the Gospels that you should not swear at all, but the Holy Qur'an prohibits you only from vain swearing, for in some cases it is necessary to administer an oath to come to a decision. Almighty God does not wish to annihilate the means of proof, for it is His wisdom that has brought them about. It is natural that when there is no witness in a case, Almighty God should be called to witness.

It has been said in the Gospels that you should not resist evil in any case, but the Holy Qur'an does not like the Gospels, teach you unconditional non-resistance of evil on every occasion. It says to you: جزاء سيئة سيئة مثلها فمن عفا و اصلح فاجره على الله "The recompense of evil is only evil proportionate thereto, but if a person forgives under circumstances when his forgiveness without causing any harm is likely to lead to a beneficial result and render matters better, God shall be pleased with him and shall give him his reward." The Holy Qur'an neither justifies strict vengeance nor does it commend unconditional forgiveness on all occasions. It requires us to consider and weigh the circumstances of each case and adopt the course which is conducive to good. We should not punish or forgive in obedience to our impulses, but must exercise our judgment and act according to the propriety of the occasion

It has been said in the Gospels that you should love your enemies, but the Holy Qur'an says to you that you should have no enemies in obedience to your own desires, and that your sympathy should extend to all. Your enemies are only such as are the enemies of your God, your Prophet and the Word of God, invite even these to the right path and pray for them. To the individuals you should bear no enmity, but hate their evil deeds. Let all your efforts be to reclaim these men and make them mend their ways. Thus it says.

ان الله يامر بالعدل و الاحسان و ايتاء ذى القربى

“Almighty God commands you to do justice, *i.e.*, good for good, and further, to do good even to those who have done no good to you, and last of all to sympathise with your fellow-beings with the kindness of kindred, with the kindness of a mother towards her child, for instance.” The person who does goodness to another is apt to remind him sometimes of the favour, and there sometimes lies hidden under it a sort of vanity. But when goodness proceeds out of a natural desire for sympathy, no such infirmity accompanies it. This is, therefore, the highest stage of goodness. This verse calls attention to our duties to the Creator. In connection with this

part of our duties *'adl* or justice is that as a recompense for the numerous blessings which He has bestowed upon us, we should obey His commandments; *ihsan* or goodness consists in believing in Him with such a certainty as if we were actually seeing Him; and *ita-t-zilqurba* or goodness out of a natural desire is that He should be worshipped and obeyed neither for love of paradise nor for fear of hell, but even if the abodes of bliss and torture were supposed to be non-existent, there should still be the same passionate love for Him, and the same complete submission to His will.

It has been said in the Gospels that you should bless them that curse you, but the Holy Qur'an says to you that you should not bless or curse anyone out of your own desire, but first consult your heart which is the habitation of the glorious manifestations of Divinity, as to the manner in which you should deal with such a person, and act according to the guidance of the voice of God that speaks within you. If you find that such a person is not cursed upon heaven, you must sympathise with him, lest in cursing him you oppose the will of God. But if the dictates of your conscience lead you to the conclusion that he is not excusable, you should not bless him, as no prophet of God has

ever blessed Satan or declared him to be free from curse. But you must not be rash in cursing any body, for many suspicions are false and many curses fall back on a man's own head. Look before you leap and take good care before you do a thing. Seek assistance from God for you are blind. Do not proceed to do a thing in obedience to your desires, lest you should charge the just with iniquity and a man of truth with lying, and thus offend your God and bring to naught the good that you have done.

It has been said in the Gospels that you should not do your good deeds before men to be seen by them, but the Holy Qur'an says to you that you should neither do all your good deeds in public nor all in secret. When you consider it profitable to your own-self to do a deed in secret, you must do it in secret. But when you consider it beneficial to do a deed in public, you must do it before men that they may see you, and be thus incited to follow your example and do good deeds like you. Your reward shall be double in such a case for in addition to the goodness you have done, you will thus enable those who are infirm and have not the courage to do a good deed,

to follow your example and the good which they have seen you doing. In short, Almighty God has Himself expressed the wisdom of the words سرا وعلانية (*i. e.* you must give your alms in secret as well as before men), and indicated plainly that you should incite people to good deeds not only by your words and preaching, but also by your practice and example, for example is far more efficacious than precept in most cases

It has been said in the Gospels that when you pray, you should go into your closet, but the Qur'an says to you that you should not always pray in secret, but occasionally you must pray openly before men and in the congregations of your brethren so that when your prayer is accepted, it may increase the faith of your brethren, and also that your example may lead others to pray to God.

The Gospels praise those who are poor, meek and lowly, as well as those who are persecuted and resist not the evil, but the Holy Qur'an says to you that humility, meekness and non-resistance of evil are no doubt commendable virtues, but if displayed on the wrong occasion, these are evils. Your good deeds, therefore, should be marked by the propriety of the occasion, for every

virtue degenerates into a vice if not shown on the proper occasion. Rain is beneficial if it comes in time, but untimely rain is productive of loss. Mildness and severity, forgiveness and retaliation, blessing and cursing, and all other moral actions must be resorted to as the occasion arises for them. Be meek and humble but show not meekness or humility out of place. The Holy Qur'an, moreover teaches you that truly excellent moral qualities, not leavened with the poison of selfish desires, are only the gift of the holy spirit from above. You cannot acquire by your endeavours until they are bestowed upon you from heaven. Anyone who claims morality independently of the heavenly gift granted through the holy ghost, puts forward a false claim. There is mud and dirt beneath the surface of his water, which come up upon the slightest agitation caused by selfish passions. Seek assistance from God every moment that your water may be cleansed from this mud and purified by means of the holy spirit. True and pure morality is miracle of the righteous, in which the evil-doers have no share, for those who are not devoted to God, were not granted power from on high, and it is impossible that they

should at any time acquire high moral qualities. Purify your connections with God. Give up vain mockery, derision, vengeance, obscene language, avarice, lying, wickedness, evil glances, worldly-mindedness, vanity, disdain, self-approbation and all other iniquities and you will get the assistance of heaven which will invest you with true morals. Unless you get the power from above which can draw you up, and unless the holy spirit enters into you which gives life, you are weak and groping in darkness. Upto that time you are dead and there is no life in you. In this state you can neither withstand any adversity, nor can you save yourselves from vanity and pride if you are in well-to-do circumstances, and are under the control of Satan and your carnal desires. Your deliverance cannot be effected except the holy spirit, which comes from your God, should turn your faces to virtue and righteousness. Make yourselves the sons of heaven, not the children of earth, and be the inheritors of light, not the lovers of darkness, that you may be safe from the ways of Satan, for Satan comes out in the night and cannot venture to make his appearance in the day. He is the old thief who walks in darkness. (*The Review of Religions* Vol I, 1902)

SOME CRITERIA of A DIVINE REVELATION

In stating the criteria of a Divine revelation, we quote the answer recently given by the Promised Messiah, the greatest living receptacle of such a revelation, to an opponent who refused to admit the Divine authority of his revelations and called them hallucinations and illusions :

My revelation is as free from all sorts of doubt, untruthfulness and untrustworthiness as the revelations of all the Messengers of God from Adam down to the seal of the prophets, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him. If to this statement it is objected that the supreme evidence of the Divine origin of the revelations of earlier prophets lay in the miraculous and prophetic elements, I say my revelations are attested by miracles and prophecies which in quality and number surpass those of most of the earlier prophets, and are immeasurably above

those of some of them. There is another important distinction which gives to my miracles and prophecies a far greater validity than those of the earlier prophets. Their miracles are now simply tales of the past, not properly provable, mostly incredible when looked at critically because it is impossible to prove their historical reality. But to the prophecies and signs shown by me, there are thousands of eye witnesses. They can be proved by an evidence of the soundest character because there are thousands of living witnesses to their truth whereas the miracles which constitute the basis of the truth of other revelations claiming to be Divine cannot claim a single living witness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is an exception, because to the truth of his miracles, I am a living witness and the Holy Qur'an is a living witness too. How can then the miracles pervading early prophetic history bear any comparison with mine, some of which have been witnessed by millions of human beings.

Any one not blinded by prejudice must confess when fully informed of the details that the prophecies and miracles wrought

by me are the best-established facts and greater in number and stronger in validity of proof than the miracles related of most of the earlier prophets. To satisfy himself of the truth of statement, it is the duty of every seeker after truth to personally look into my claims and weigh their evidence, because he can have access to me and my witnesses. When, therefore, there is positive evidence of the greater validity and strength of my prophecies and miracles, it is nothing but absolute denial and utter rejection of the prophetic and miraculous, to say that my revelations are illusions or hallucinations. Now if there is anyone who entertains any doubt as to the truth of these assertions, it is his duty, if he is a God-fearing man, to convene a meeting in which my signs and prophecies shall be related and then the evidence which is procurable for them, shall be taken upon oath, and recorded at length. Everyone shall then be at liberty to produce against this collection, the miracles and prophecies of any prophet or saint (except our Holy Prophet) for which the requisite proof exists. Mere narratives of wonders and marvels without any eye-witnesses to support their truth, cannot avail, for such legendary tales which more often

have their basis in a mythmaking tendency than in any reality, abound in all people; and if mere tales are to be depended upon, the Hindu will not remain behind in producing the marvels wrought by ancient *Rishis*. The fact is that no credit can be given to the stories of marvels as against facts for which valid proof exists and the former are in comparison with the latter as dunghills against stores of musk and ambergris. But it should be borne in mind that it is impossible to produce any parallel to the prophecies and miracles which God has manifested through me, in their quantity, quality and validity of proof though anyone might waste his whole life in this vain search.

If any one does not consider my revelation which has been testified by heavenly signs as the Word of God, it would be better for him to go to the very root of the matter and deny the very existence of God and reject the whole system of prophecy, inspiration and revelation, for it is to repair the crumbling building of prophethood that Almighty God has established this new dispensation. With fresh miracles and prophecies, Almighty God is restoring the honour of the old ones. Stories of the miracles wrought by the holy prophet

of God in the past, once more rise from the grave and assume the shape of fact, and that which was hearsay ere now is actually witnessed. Almighty God has returned over a new leaf in the history of miracles and recalled them to life that those who are involved in doubts, may see the face of certainty. He who accepts me, accepts anew the prophets and their miracles, and he who rejects me shall lose even the tottering faith which he possessed before, for he has shadow and not the reality. It is I who am the looking-glass of Divine image. He who comes to me and accepts me, shall see afresh the God Who to others is only imperfectly known through their lifeless traditional beliefs. I believe in the true God Who is not known to those who reject me. I declare it in truth and sincerity that what they believe in, is not God, but an idol which is the creation of their own imagination. This is the reason why their idols cannot assist them, or strengthen them, or bring about any pure transformation in their lives or effect any miracle or show a heavenly sign in their support.

It should also be borne in mind that any doubt or incredulity regarding the revelation of God which is granted to me,

is absurd and fantastical. It is nonsensical to say that this may be no revelation at all but simply a delusion. Almighty God is not weak in the manifestations of His power. He adopts such supernatural methods to make the matter certain that a man recognises the Word of God as clearly as he sees the sun. Do the modern sceptics think that God had the power to take seekers after truth to the fountain of certainty through revelation from Adam down to our own Holy Prophet by the manifestations of His mighty hand but that now He is destitute of His power, or having that power has intentionally withheld this gracious gift from this unfortunate generation and forgotten the prayer which He had Himself taught in the *Fatiha* :—

اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين انعمت عليهم

“O God ! guide us in the right path, the path of those upon whom have been Thy favours and blessings, *thus making us their heirs.*”

To the question often put forward by sceptics “How are you certain that the words put in your mouth are really and actually the Words of God, and how do you know that they are not delusions or Satanic suggestions ?” I give the following answer :—

The word which is revealed to me comes with a majesty, affords a bliss to, and makes an impression upon my soul. It enters into my heart with the firmness of a nail of iron and dispels every darkness. With its entrance, I feel an unalloyed bliss; ah! that I had the power to describe it. But every enjoyment whether spiritual or physical cannot be adequately described in words and represented exactly as one feels it. A person sees a beloved object and is enchanted with its beauty but he cannot describe the pleasure which he derives from the sight. In like manner, there is an indescribable bliss which one enjoys in the sight as well as in the Word of God Who is the Author of all existence and the cause of all causes. His word transports a man into a paradise of bliss in exactly the same manner as His sight does. But if a person bears a voice, or certain words or put into his mouth, and he has doubt as to their Divine origin, the voice and the words are certainly a delusion or a Satanic suggestion. For, the power and majesty with which the Word of God enters the heart, the blessings that accompany it, the light which it sheds, the impression that it makes, the bliss that it affords, the Divine glory and the splendour that it imparts to the recep-

tacle of the revelation, determine it to a certainty that it is from God. It has not a single point of resemblance with the lifeless voices which proceed from Satanic suggestions or delusions. It has an animation, it has a power, it has a magnetism, it has the characteristic of producing a certainty, it has a light, it has a supernatural glory, it has with it angels that exercise a control over every particle of the body, and besides, it is accompanied with numerous extraordinary signs manifesting the power of God. It is impossible that the receptacle of such a revelation should ever have any misgiving as to its Divine origin. To him a doubt is as fatal as unbelief. Such a revelation with all its characteristics is with him the greatest of miracles, even if he could work no other miracles.

A complete transformation beyond merely human power is worked in the person who is favoured with the Word of God. His love for God is so extraordinary that he is mad after Him, and his constancy and faithfulness in His path know no bounds. The certainty that reigns in his heart makes him independent of all. He is an infallible guide and sits on the throne of sufficiency. Such is my condition, but the world knows nothing of it. Before I witnessed any

miracle or obtained any heavenly assistance, I was drawn to Him by the mighty magnetism of His word in a manner for which I cannot account. Keen words cannot cut the tie asunder and burning fire cannot frighten me. The magnetism which has worked upon my soul, is beyond comprehension, above every description, and outside the grasp of intellect. In the beginning was Word and the Word wrought the wonderful transformation that has been wrought in me. The invisible God first of all revealed Himself to me through His word, and opened the door through which I listened to His sweet voice. His word acted like a magnet on my soul and was the cause of my attraction to the one God. Ah! that I had words to describe and give a notion to others of the deep impression that the Word made upon my heart, the heights to which it made me soar, the transformation that it wrought in me, of what it took away from my heart and what it gave to me. *The extraordinary favour and grace with which He approached me, none knows but I, and the unique place on which I stand in His love and devotion, none knows but He.* But I say truly that the commence of this spiritual advancement and union with God lies only in His sweet word whose sudden attrac-

tion transported me to quite unknown regions. A mighty hand took me up with such an irresistible force as a whirlwind drives a straw before it and throws it in some distant place.

To speak to me of the possibility of my revelations being only a delusion, is no more exact than to tell a person that his seeing with the eyes, or hearing with the ears or speaking with the tongue, is not a fact but a delusion. Is it possible that the person who knows that the shutting of eyes or the stopping of ears or the cutting off of tongue, shall deprive him of the powers of seeing, hearing or speaking respectively, shall on a denial of these facts entertain the least doubt as to their actual existence? Such is my condition with regard to the Divine revelation. The Word of God with which I was and am favoured, is my spiritual mother from which I took my birth. It gave me a new life which I did not possess before, and it breathed into me a soul which I had not first. I grew up in its bosom like a child. It took a tender care of me; it supported me when I would have stumbled and held me up when my foot was about to slip. It went before me like a light until I reached the goal. My heart cannot conceive a greater villainy than that I should

entertain the least doubt as to the Divine origin of this revelation. I believe it to be the Word of God in the same manner as I believe that I speak with my tongue and hear with my ears. What! should I deny it and it showed me God, made me drink of the sweet fountain of knowledge, and refreshed me with a cool and fresh breeze in times of suffocation? It came upon me in languages quite unknown to me, as English, Sanskrit and Hebrew. It proved itself to be Word of God by majestic prophecies and grand heavenly signs. It laid open before me a treasure of fine truths and carried me to regions of knowledge which were *terra incognita* to me and my people. I flew on its wings until I reached the goal. It was revealed to me sometimes in words which were quite unknown to me whether belonging to the Arabic, English or any other language. Do these shining proofs still leave the matter in doubt? Is it fair to evade these important points?

The Word which has been revealed to me has shown the power of a miracle and proved its mighty magnetism. It has not kept back the unseen but revealed to me the deep secrets of the future thousands of times. With a secret noose it drew me to itself while it threw another noose on capable and obedient hearts and

brought them to me. It gave them eyes with which they began to see; and it gave them ears with which they began to hear; and it gave them a fearless constancy and faithfulness with which they became ready to sacrifice their lives in this path. Can all these things be the result of a Satanic suggestion or a delusion? Is Satan the equal of God in power and glory? Why is God then silent and why does He not assist you? Listen to me, for He Who revealed this word to me, addressed me in the following words:—"I shall reveal the light of My glory and raise thee with the manifestation of my power. A Warner came into the world, but the world did not accept him. God shall accept him, however, and manifest his truth with mighty attacks." It is, therefore, necessary that this age should not pass away nor I depart from this world, until all these promises of God are fulfilled.

The person who walks in darkness and is not even aware that Almighty God reveals His sure and certain Word to His servants, is really ignorant of the existence of God. He thinks that the whole world is involved in the darkness of doubt like himself. He adheres to the doctrine that inspired words are nothing but temptations of the devil, confused dreams or delusions,

or at the most, words of a doubtful and not certain Divine origin. But, as I have already stated, when the sun of Divine revelation shines upon a heart, the darkness of doubt and distrust is dispelled from it, for it is impossible that the darkness of doubt should remain in the heart which is illumined with the effulgent light of the Word of God. The reception of a certain Divine revelation even by others than prophets, is amply exemplified in religious history. It was on the strength of a Divine revelation that the mother of Moses trusted her infant son to the waves of the river and yet she was not guilty of an infanticide in the sight of God which she ought to have been if she looked upon the words revealed to her as of a doubtful origin. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also inspired with a certain Divine revelation, in obedience to which she did not care a bit for her people. Alas for the unfortunate Muslim nation, that it does not enjoy that favour in the sight of God which the woman of earlier nations did ! It is not then "the best nation" (as it has been described by the Holy Qur'an) but the worst and the most ignorant nation. *Khizr* was not a messenger of God and yet the Word of God revealed to him was not doubtful, for he

could not have proceeded to take the life of a child on its strength on a contrary supposition. The revelation of God to the companions of the Prophet to wash his holy body was also certain, for had it been doubtful they could not have proceeded to act upon it. Though a person may deny my revelation on account of his blindness, yet if he is a Muslim and not an Athiest in secret, he must adhere to the belief that the doers of a certain Divine revelation are open to Muslim. He must believe that as many men and women in the former nations enjoyed the favour of being receptacles of the sure Word of God though they were not prophets, the presence of a similar Divine revelation is necessary among the Muslims so that instead of being the most excellent nation they may not prove the most despised of all. Almighty God has, therefore, brought into existence this new dispensation in the last ages that it may be a perfect type of the Divine dealings with His servant in the former ages.

These are not matters to wonder at. No man can ever attain to true salvation unless he is either directly favoured with the Word of God, with clear and decisive Words of

Divine origin and authority precluding every possibility of doubt, or are closely connected with such a receptacle of Divine revelation by inviolable ties of faith and fidelity. It is evident that the prevalence of sin in the world is due to the absence of that certainty in matters relating to a life beyond the grave as exists in the case of temporal pleasures, and worldly honour and property. A man of the world cannot trust in God to the same extent as he can count upon a box of precious jewels or other valuables. Nor has he the same fear of God as he has of the temporal laws of earthly governments. The reason of this is that formal religious beliefs are quite powerless and give way before the certainty which avails in temporal affairs and earthly connections. Salvation is, therefore, impossible without certainty in spiritual matters and to this the Holy Qur'an testifies in the words: *من كان في هذه* "Who is blind here, shall be blind hereafter, nay worse than blind." How can salvation be attained without a certainty? What purpose does a religion serve if it does not take a man to the fountain of certainty and salvation? The hearts of the companions of the Prophet undoubtedly overflowed with such certainty, for they wit-

nessed the heavenly signs with their eyes and had thus a certain belief in the Word of God. Their lives were, therefore, purified and purged of every dross. But what means of certainty remained in the hands of those who followed them, hundreds of years afterwards. True, they had the Holy Qur'an, and the Holy Qur'an is like a two-edged sword, cutting with one edge the internal evils and thus expurgating the hearts of Muslims themselves of every impurity, and destroying with the other all erroneous doctrines taught by the false religions. God says : *يتلو عليهم اياته ويزكيهم ويعلمهم الكتاب* "The Prophet of God rehearses to them His signs, and purifies them and imparts to them a knowledge of the Book." Therefore, this purification of the soul which is effected through the Holy Qur'an, has not been mentioned independently but as having been brought about by the Holy Prophet. This is the reason why the Word of God never comes into the world alone. The brave spiritual warrior who can wield this trusty sword and is a true judge of its worth, also comes with it. Therefore every age stands in need of a new champion to bring about a true and fresh certainty with regard to the Holy Qur'an, to reveal its true worth and to convince its opponents through it

of its truth and their error. This need is the greater in this last age, for being the time of the appearance of Antichrist and of the final struggle between heavenly and earthly forces, a braver vanquisher must appear in the field.

In short, when the Holy Qur'an says plainly that the man who remains blind in this life *i.e.*, does not see the light of certainty, shall also be blind in the next (*i. e.*, shall not attain to salvation), it is the duty of every seeker after truth to seek this light of vision and seek the living religion in which the lights of the living God are manifest. Lifeless is the religion in which the chain of a certain Divine revelation does not run unbroken. Such a religion close the way to certainty, the only light to attain salvation, and makes men depend upon idle tales of marvels done in the past. It makes them despair of God and throws them into utter darkness. How can a religion point the way to God and release men from the bondage of sin, when it has no means of bringing them to certainty. It is only with the shining of the sun of certainty that the day of the disappearance of sin rises.

The only true religion in the world is that which shows the way of certainty by living heavenly signs, and those who do not follow

such a religion are in hell in this very life. What can a mere doubt avail when it leads us to the only conclusion that a thing may be either right or wrong. Freedom from sin is impossible without certainty. To lead an angelic life upon earth is a tale without certainty. To forsake the world and all its immoral pleasures is impossible without certainty. Pure transformation in one's life is impossible without certainty. To be drawn to God with an extraordinary heavenly magnetism is impossible without certainty. To rise above the earth (*i.e.*, materialism) and soar to the higher regions (of spirituality) is impossible without certainty. To fear God as one ought to fear to attain to true righteousness, is impossible without certainty. To abide by the minutest rules of piety, and to be sincere in one's deeds, is impossible without certainty. To consider God as the most precious treasure which the soul of man can possess, to spurn the riches and greatness of this world and to have no desire of temporal honour and regal pomp, is impossible without certainty. Let those who call themselves Muslims, answer how they can get out of the darkness of doubt and reach the light of certainty. There is only one way, and that is the Word of God as is indicated in the verse

يخرجهم من الظلمت الى النور "Bringeth them out of darkness into light."

Now that thirteen hundred years have passed since the dawn of prophecy in *Arabia*, and this age has not witnessed the shining heavenly signs and heavenly light with which the Holy Qur'an came into the world, and Christianity, Aryanism and Atheism with all the forces of evil are attacking, tooth and nail, the Word of God. His Prophet and faith, and the Muslims have nothing in hand but a few written leaves to whose miraculous power and efficacy they are utter strangers, and the miracles that are related in support of their truth, are mere tales of wonders abounding in the history of every sect—which under these circumstances is the way by which the top of the high minaret of certainty can be gained? How can the enemy be convinced that Islam can point to methods, unknown to other religions, by which a man may attain to certainty in his belief of God and be freed from the trammels of sin? What are the arguments on whose strength a seeker after truth ought to give it a preference to all other systems? Can any wise man be expected to condemn a thing which is good and devour another which stinks as nasty? Every good heart is willing

to accept the truth, provided truth is able to show its light. What is generally offered now-a-days to other nations under the name of Islam, is husk not kernel, shadow not substance. How can it be accepted then? What is the use of conversion if there is no change for the better. A person changes his religion to get rid of some evil, and as a remedy for a disease, but if the same disease prevails in the new religion, what good there is in the change. Do not even the Brahmaos with all their rejection of the most excellent attributes of God, assert that they believe in one God? But the truth is that none believes in God except the person whose eye of certainty has been opened. He only is released from the bondage of sin who sees God with the eye of certainty. All other stories are false, all atonements vain.

The same Living God Who manifested Himself by His word spoken through His prophets, manifests Himself again in this late age by the same means through me that people may believe and escape destruction. The Holy Qur'an is, no doubt, the Word of God. His most excellent word, but it is a sealed book to you, ye sleepers! Your eyes cannot see it, nor can your understandings comprehend it.

It is now in your hands but you cannot get its blessings like the unbelieving Jews who had the books of the prophets in their hands. If you speak justly, you shall yourselves bear witness that on account of the disappearance of the light of its certainty from your eyes, you cannot avail yourselves of its power of sanctification. If the testimony of external facts has any weight, you can bear witness against your own condition in this age, if you mind to bear a true testimony. Tell me truly do you shrink from sin and act righteousness as a man shrinks from the use of poison? Speak and do not lie, are you walking firmly on the path of piety on which the Holy Qur'an has laid so much stress? Say and be candid, do you possess the signs which appear after certainty? Nay dissemble not, and say if you love God as ardently as His righteous servants do, and if you can show that constancy and firmness in His path which the sacred ones have shown. Call Heaven to witness and say if you have an undisguised aversion to the rotten carcass of low motives and worldly desires, and if you are flying towards the true God with sincerity and zeal and the singleness of heart. Do not dissimulate nor try to please

others only like a vain braggart for there is a God Who sees everything you do and hears every word that you utter, and know while you speak that His wrath is a consuming fire whose flames devour every vanity and conceit in an instant, state honestly, are not your feet so enchained that you cannot move out of worldly desires and worldly vanities, your hearts so bent low upon low motives that you cannot aspire after anything higher, your necks so bowed down that you cannot arise your heads to heaven, and your hands so tied that you cannot do anything which is not of worldly interest? Had you a certain belief in God, you would have shunned the poison of sin. The whole world would have perished because of this poison, had it not been for the timely establishment of this heavenly propaganda by the Divine hand. But if you boast that you are faultless and free from the darkness of sin and attracted towards God by the powerful steam-engine of certainty, I tell you plainly that you have told a lie and brought a false charge against the Maker of earth and heavens. For this daring falsehood, the curse of God shall soon betake you and disclose your misdeeds before you die.

Certainty does not come alone but is

attended with its light. No one can take you to heaven but he who comes from heaven. If you knew that the fresh and certain Word of God is the true remedy for your diseases, you would not have rejected him who came with this blessing in the beginning of the century. Ah triflers! no deed can rise to heaven until it proceeds out of certainty; internal dross and impurities cannot be washed, nor spiritual diseases cured until the heart overflows with certainty. You boast of your Islam, but what you have is a lifeless routine of formal ceremonies, not the living organism, the essence of Islam. True Islam works a manifest transformation. A light is kindled in the heart which burns the low desires and worldly motives, and a new life is breathed into the muslim of which you are not aware. All this comes after certainty, after the sure Word of God which comes from heaven. God is *known* through God and not by any other means. As you know those better who talk familiarly with you, so does a man advance in the knowledge of God through His word.

The manner in which the Word of God comes, is in itself a clear indication of the Divine origin of the word. It often happens

that the servant of God prays to Him and immediately receives an answer from Him, and this occurs not once or twice but the process may continue to twenty, thirty or fifty times and sometimes a whole day or a whole night passes in this verbal intercourse. The answers are always in the most eloquent and sweet words and sometimes in words and languages quite unknown to the supplicant. Along with it there is an outpouring of heavenly signs and miracles, and a profusion of Divine favours and assistance. Is it possible that after all this continual verbal intercourse and evident signs, doubt should still lurk in the mind as to the Divine origin of that word? Not at all. On the other hand, this is the only means by which a man can see God even in this life, and to him the impenetrable mystery of the next world is solved beyond a shadow of doubt. All aspects of a brutish life in which a man indulges in his passions, vanish away with the glorious entering of the light. In the heart that is thus illuminated, there grows up a strong aversion to the dead gods and an ardent love for the Living One. As wordly men are mad after the things of this world, he is out of all patience to attain the nearness of God and a close union with Him.

In short, the Word of God which a man receives with the full certainty of its Divine origin, is the key to certainty and all spiritual blessings which flow from that pure fountain-source. When Almighty God wishes to draw any one of His servants to Himself, He sends His Word upon him, favours him with a personal verbal intercourse with Himself, comforts him with extra-ordinary heavenly signs and shows him in a variety of ways that it is His Word. The Word of God revealed in this manner becomes the substitute of an actual sight of God. It is then, and not till then, that a man understands that there is a God, for he hears His sweet and awful voice "I am." Before Almighty God reveals Himself by His Word, a man's belief in His existence based on an observation of the material universe, does not amount to certainty. The perfect plan and consummate laws of order discovered in the universe only give rise to an idea of the probability of the existence of a Creator. But the certain conclusion that there is a God, can never be arrived at, nor an impure life of sin dragging a man lower and lower into the pit, be got rid of, except by His Word.

It would also appear from this, how absurd is the doctrine of salvation invented by the

Christians. They think that the suicide of the son of Mary has brought them to the door of salvation, whereas they know it as a matter of fact that they are involved in a narrow and dark hell of sin, doubt and veiling from God. Where there is doubt there can be no salvation, for the pure fountain-head from which salvation flows is certainty. The greatest blessing that man can have is the certainty that there is a God who in His wrath consumes the sinners and the transgressors, and in His mercy turns to those who turn to Him. This certainty is the only remedy for all sins. No other atonement can ever release you from the bondage of sin, no blood can wash the impurities of your heart. Is it not a matter of every day experience that certainty alone is the truth barrier against everything that is harmful. You do not hold out your hand over a flame because you know that it will burn. You do not stand before a furious lion because you are certain that it will tear you. You do not take a poison, for you are fully conscious that the result will be death. Countless instances have verified the fact that where there is a certainty of loss or destruction proceeding from an act, it is never essayed and is viewed with horror. Why not apply this established truth in matters spirit-

ual? Nothing but certainty can keep a man back from sin. A goat will not feed in a pasture where there is a lion standing before it—such is the wonderful effect of certainty even upon animals. The heart which is full of God's existence and of His power, awe and grandeur, can never think of disobedience to His commandments. But if a person cannot refrain from the commission of sin, it is certain that certainty does not reign in his heart. Has a certainty of God's existence not even the force of a certainty in the material world, or is the one of lower degree than the other?

Want of certainty is the only cause of the sin which drives a man away from the presence of God, and generates a hellish life. Ah, with what trumpets should I proclaim that certainty alone can effect a release from the bondage of sin, a renunciation of false asceticism and assumed piety and a revealing of the face of God. The religion that does not take a man to the fountain-head of certainty, does not deserve to be so called; it is a sink of corruption, nay, the very hell. The spring of life flows from certainty, and the wings which enable a man to soar to heaven grow out of certainty. Try that you may see the God into Whose presence you must at last go. Certainty is the vehicle which

can take you to God. It is swifter than lightning and can take you to the remote goal in the twinkling of an eye. Seekers after righteousness! if you wish to walk upon earth with pure and humble hearts, if you desire that angels may shake hands with you, seek the path of certainty. If you have not attained that stage, follow the person who has seen God with the eye of certainty. And if you still question me as to how a person can see God with the eye of certainty, I shall give the answer, whether you attend to it or not, that the only means of obtaining certainty is the living Word of God, which has within it, and is accompanied with, living signs. When it comes from heaven, it raises the dead from their graves. You have eyes and yet these are of no avail without the shining lustre of the glorious orb of light. Similarly your own conjectures cannot lead you to a true knowledge of God. The faint light of reason also stand in need of the light of a sun which sheds its light from heavens upon earth, and this is the living Word of God. Without His Word the knowledge of God is imperfect. The word is a go-between in God and man. When it descends, the light of God comes with it. It takes to heaven the person upon whom it descends with all its

attendant signs, its full glory and the Divine power and majesty. In short to reach God, there is only one way and that is the Word of God.

Of all the gifts of God, the most precious is the gift of His sure and certain word revealed to a man. Through the word a person reaches the highest stage of advancement in the knowledge of God. He as it were sees God, and his belief in His existence is the belief of an eye-witness. Divine awe and grandeur then take full possession of his heart and the darkness of doubt vanishes away as gloom before the light of the sun. He then walks upon the earth like an angel, and is unique in his righteousness, unique in his hatred for sin, unique in his love for the one God, unique in his faithfulness to Him, unique in his fear of God, unique in his trust in Him, and unique in his fidelity to the tie of friendship. Moreover, as the Word of God has promised that Divine revelation shall always be granted to faithful hearts, reason also requires its actual continuance in the world for the good of mankind. There is no remedy for sin and transgression except the certain revelation of Divine Beauty and Glory. Experience shows that there are only two forces

which can keep a man back from transgression or disobedience, *i. e.*, true love for, or true fear of, the being whose commandments are transgressed or disobeyed. True love for a kind and gracious friend is also attended with the fear lest the tie of friendship should at any time be broken. *Therefore, the person whose heart is inspired with true love for God or true fear of Him, and the person who knows and loves such a person and is affected with his superior influence, are both released from the bondage of sin.* But the person who does not belong to either of these classes, cannot be free from the poison of sin. There are some hypocrites who pretend that they are sinless and pure in heart, but they only try to deceive men and God. Release from sin is impossible unless a death is brought about on the carnal desires of the heart by the awe inspiring fear of God through the piercing rays of certainty, unless true love and true fear dominate the heart, and it is consecrated with the glory and beauty of God. But the heart can never realise these conditions so long as there reigns not a certainty in it regarding the existence of God and His two attributes of glory and beauty.

From this it is clear that certainty regarding God's existence is the root and the only

means of salvation. It is certainty which makes a man submit to the Divine will under trials and afflictions, and excites him to enter into burning fire for His love. It is certainty again which excites love and prepares a man for death. It is due to certainty that a man forsakes his own comforts and conveniences for the love of God, becomes indifferent to the nod of approbation and the tribute of praise, and makes the whole world his deadly enemy for the sake of one. Where the danger is certain, a man fears to approach even that which is allowable. He holds his tongue from the utterance of improper words as if a padlock had been put upon his lips. But such certainty is the result either of actual sight of God or of being addressed by Him in words which proceed certainly from His mouth and prove their Divine origin by the power, glory, attraction and heavenly signs which accompany them. Without such revelation there can be no certainty either of God's existence or of His attributes. The Word of God revealed to the former prophets and the miracles wrought by them, cannot now serve as a conclusive argument of God's existence, for neither are those miracles plainly witnessed by any man, nor does that word descend,

at the present time. The Holy Qur'an is indeed a miracle but it cannot serve as such unless there is a person who displays its excellences. But no one can do this unless he is himself purified by the revelation of God.

Since according to the plain dictates of human nature and conscience, the soul of man shrinks from a death of doubt, and is thirsty after a manifest certainty, it follows that the mighty and wise Being who created the soul of man with this thirst, must have beforehand made provision for it to quench that thirst and satisfy itself with certainty. But what are the means provided to acquire this certainty? Let me declare it openly in answer to this question that certainty is produced in obedience to the law which has prevailed since the commencement of the world, viz., by the love of God supported by His supernatural deeds. Do not deceive yourselves by thinking that the Word of God revealed in the past is sufficient to produce conviction and that there is no need of a fresh revelation. The Arya Samajists are involved in the same fatal doubt. They think that the Word of God was revealed in the Vedas and that there is no need of any new revelation

subsequent to the Vedic revelation. But they are deceived as are also the Christians who think that the Bible contains all the religious teachings and that they have no need of the Qur'an. The answer to these frivolous assertions is that the object with which the Word of God comes to men is the bringing about of certainty. Almighty God reveals His word to men that they may believe in His existence and attributes and know the ways of His liking from the ways which He hates, so that with the blessing of certainty their faith in God may be perfect and they may avoid every path of wickedness and transgression and walk in the paths of righteousness. But when the days are over during which a prophet of God lives upon earth, and the Word of God revealed to him gradually loses its force and attraction and becomes a story of the past, it fails to fulfil the object with which it was revealed, and the hearts of men are at last devoid of the certainty which it brought about at first. Look at the Jews who have the books of the prophets in their hands and deceit in their hearts. How many are there among the Christians who being smitten on the right cheek, turn to the other, and to him who takes away their coat, give

the cloak also, and refrain their eyes from looking to lust, and do not judge other people, and have not crooked, deceitful and ambitious hearts? If any one is rarely to be met with among them with these qualifications, he has not shunned evil because of the injunctions of the Gospel but owing to his own good nature.

In short, as you stand in need of fresh meals every new morning, you require fresh revelation to renew your faith. When the light of faith which is certainty, begins to diminish with the lapse of time, people rehearse the Word of God, but the rehearsal does not pass their lips. The Word of God, remains far from them and does not even touch them, and, therefore, they cannot be affected with its good influence. So the word is taken away from among them, and leaving but dead bones in their hands it rises to heaven. Then a new magnetiser is created and the Word of God draws him to itself and with the strength of the word he is granted a certainty. The knowledge which had risen to heaven is brought back by him to earth.

This is the Divine Law according to which certainty is generated afresh in the hearts by the fresh Word of God. The hearts that follow the law which Almighty God has abolished,

become disfigured. There does not remain a single man in their midst who is worthy of receiving a new Divine revelation. Such a book is like the stagnant and stinking water with which is mixed an enormous quantity of filth and mud. Such a law gives no benefit to its followers, for its signs are all idle tales of the past. The fresh water of heaven, *i.e.*, the fresh Divine revelation, does not come to them. These are the signs that God has forsaken such a people. It is, therefore, a criterion of dead religion that it is wanting the light of fresh revelation. The people who follow it, put their trust in words which are not confirmed by the fresh Word of God or new signs from heaven. Their hearts are, therefore, dead and the light of certainty which consumes sins and transgressions, does not come near them.

To sum up, the fresh Word of God is a buttress of the Divine Law. It takes the boat which is drowning on account of sins to the haven of safety. I repeat over and over again and wish that I were able to impress it upon hearts that by the Word of God is meant the word which descends afresh in an age. From its very nature it first of all convinces the person upon whom it descends as well as those who

are in close contact with him, that it is certainly the Word of God. In being the Word of God it does not differ from the words spoken by Almighty God to the former prophets, though there may exist a distinction in other respects. But it must be clearly borne in mind that from this definition of the Word of God, we exclude the doubtful words imagined to have been inspired, which are neither accompanied with heavenly signs and Divine assistance, so that the words receiving a support from the deeds might be able to convince men of their supernatural origin nor does the person who receives them, know them to be certainly Divine and not satanic. In this connection it is important to note that the weak and inefficacious words whose origin is doubtful even to the person who receives them, are actually satanic or are at least mingled with satanic suggestions. The person who trusts in them, goes astray, and the person who is subjected to this dangerous temptation, is undone, for Satan sports with him and leads him into a path of which the end is destruction.

Under these circumstances the question would naturally arise as to the criteria by which a Divine revelation may be distinctly

recognised as such. For the guidance of seekers after truth, we point them out below :—

(1) It has a Divine power and blessing whose sublimity and grandeur clearly point to the Divine origin of the word though there may be no other argument, and which so completely overpower the receptacle of the revelation that even if he were thrown into fire or were about to be struck with lightning, he would never say that his revelation is a satanic suggestion, or of a doubtful origin. On the contrary, his soul is full of the conviction that it is the certain Word of God.

(2) It has in it a supernatural majesty.

(3) It comes with a force and a loudness.

(4) It has a heavenly bliss in it.

(5) It often takes the form of question and answer. A man puts a question and receives an answer from God, and this process is repeated several times. During the time that the answer is communicated to him, he is under the influence of a sort of slumber. But the mere utterance of certain words in a state of slumber, is no evidence of their Divine origin.

(6) It sometimes comes in languages quite unknown to the person to whom it is revealed.

(7) It has a heavenly magnetism which at first

exercises its influence upon the inspired one so as to make him sever all connections, and then gradually begins to work upon capable hearts and draws a whole world to him.

(8) It delivers a man from errors and all erroneous beliefs, and acts in the capacity of a judge. It does not contradict the Holy Quran.

(9) The prophecy which it contains is true in itself and must be fulfilled though there may be an error in understanding it.

(10) It makes a man improve in righteousness and morals, alienate his heart from the world and hate sin.

(11) Being the Word of God it is corroborated by His wondrous deeds and contains grand and powerful prophecies which are fulfilled in their time. When the word and deed combine, certainty flows like a river, and being disconnected with an earthly life a man becomes an angel. (*Review of Religions* vol. I, 1902.)

It is a Divine law which can be traced as far back as the history of man that by the wonderful working of His grace, He first causes the Holy spirit to descend upon whomsoever He wills, and by the assistance of the Holy spirit instills His love into his heart, grants him perseverance and faithful-

ness, and strengthens his knowledge and suppresses his weaknesses with manifold signs until the man is actually prepared to sacrifice his life in the way of God. His connection with God is made so strong and undissolvable, that no trial or adversity can break it and no sword can cut it asunder. This love has no temporary support and transitory motive. It is not called forth by the desire of heaven or the fear of hell, or by any longing for worldly comfort or worldly gain. It is undescribable and the nature of it is not known to any one but God, not even to the person who loves. He does not know why he loves and with what object, for his soul is naturally drawn to it. This connection is not produced by knowledge, for knowledge comes afterwards and illuminates the connection which is already existing. It is like the fire which is hidden in flint, but to lighten which it is necessary to strike it with steel. The person so favoured possesses on the one hand inherent love for God, and on the other he is granted a zeal for sympathy with his fellowbeings. So, as he is himself momentarily drawn towards God, he draws all capable hearts to himself. In Muhammadan theologic terminology such a person is called a نبي (Prophet), a رسول (Messenger), or a محدث (Reformer). The prophets are the recipients of Divine reve-

lation and are spoken to by God, and heavenly signs are manifested at their hands. Their prayers are accepted, and when they pray to God, they receive an answer from Him.

Ignorant men sometimes say that they also see true visions and receive inspirations and have their prayers accepted though it be on rare occasions. According to these men, there is no distinction between themselves and the prophets of God, who must, therefore, be either impostors or self-deceived men. Such vanity has led many a man to destruction. A seeker after truth can easily see that the holy prophets of God are not ordinary men. They are a class especially selected by God and endowed with numerous spiritual blessings. Notwithstanding their rejection by their enemies, they ultimately vanquish them, and their light shines forth so clearly that all intelligent men have to admit a remarkable distinction between them and their opposers. A beggar who possesses a few rupees, cannot claim an equality with a monarch whose treasures are full. In like manner, the glow-worm which emits a sparkle of light in darkness, cannot say that there is no distinction between it and the sun. Hence also the man who occasionally sees a vision which is true, and thus catches only a glimpse of the light, is

a fool if he claims an equality with the prophets of God who are as the sun. Nor has Almighty God given the human soul this glimpse of light unpurposedly. It is meant to serve as a guide in the recognition of the claims of prophets, and thus all available means are placed by God within the reach of men, so that they may have no excuse for rejecting the prophets. (Vol. III. Review of Religions, 1904)