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European Christian and Indian Muslim Biblical Polemic in Colonial India

Mohammed Afzal

Zakir Husain Delhi College

This paper seeks to investigate how the theological issues of the abrogation and corruption of the Bible were treated in the German Pietist, Carl Gottlieb Pfander's Persian work *Mizan-ul Haq* (*The Balance of Truth*, 1835) and Rehmatullah Kairanwi's Arabic response *Izhar-ul-Haq* (*The Exposition of Truth*, 1867). By demonstrating a close link between the famous Agra debate of 1854 and Kairanwi's work, it is shown how the highly charged environment of a religious polemic in the nineteenth century colonial India between missionaries and maulvis had an influence on Kairanwi's treatment of the twin issues of abrogation and corruption, highlighting that the format of religious disputation in a colonial milieu narrows down the liberality of intellectual space so crucial for healthy inter-faith dialogues. The paper not only highlights the novelty of Kairanwi's scholarship in its use of a wide range of European Christian Biblical studies but also analyses the nature and purpose of his selective utilisation of these Christian authorities. The implications of Kairanwi's methodology on late nineteenth-century Indian Islamic scholarship are discussed.

Keywords: Religious Polemic, Colonialism, Biblical Criticism, Indian Islamic scholarship, Muslim Intellectuals.

This paper is an exploration of some theological issues which emerged from the polemical encounter between Carl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-68), a German Basel missionary and Rahmatullah Kairanwi, a nineteenth-century Delhi scholar in Northwestern provinces in Colonial India. This paper undertakes a critical assessment of the questions of Christian theology as presented in Pfander's *Mizan-ul Haq* (*The Balance of Truth*) and Kairanwi's *Izhar-ul Haq* (*The Exposition of*

Truth). The former was composed by Pfander originally in German as an elucidation of Christian creed for Muslims, whose first Persian edition was published in 1835 in Sushy, where he was stationed as a Basel Mission missionary. (Muir, "Controversy" 435) That *Mizan* "excited much attention" in "the followers of Islam" in Kabul and Herat was reported by an officer, who also emphasized the need to translate it into Urdu and Arabic. (Muir, "Controversy" 446) The first Urdu translation appeared in 1843 from Mirzapur, followed by other Urdu and Persian editions in 1849 and 1850 from Sikandra Orphan Press, Agra, where Pfander was recruited by Church Missionary Society (CMS) to evangelize Muslims. (Muir, "Controversy" 435) Apart from the lieutenant governor James Thomason's unofficial patronage of the Sikandra Orphanage at Agra, (Temple 130) the missionary labours of Abdul Masih (1765-1827) (Sargent 186) and Bishop Daniel Corrie (1777-1837) had already prepared a fertile ground for the effective dissemination of *Mizan*. (*Memoirs of Daniel Corrie* 275) *Mizan-ul Haq* had a circulation of 30,000 by the time of Pfander's death and was the instrument of the conversion of many Muslims. (Birks 70) The impact of *Mizan* on Muslims in nineteenth century north western provinces can be seen in references in Sir William Muir's article "Biographies of Mohammed for India and the Mohammedan Controversy" (January 1852) to the "stirrings" of the native mind by the publication of the large reprints of Pfander's book in both Urdu and Persian. Muir cited an extract from the 1852 report of the Agra Tract and Book Society:

A Hindu friend at Dehli, through whom many Mohammedans have received tracts and books, writes on the subject: 'I beg to inform you that I have received the books you forwarded to me. They have all been given away to learned Mussulmans, who required them very earnestly. At their own request, I made over to them all copies of *Mizan ul Haqq* I had; I have even obliged to give them my own copy. But they require still more copies...In another letter he remarks, 'In my opinion it would be very desirable to publish a great number of small pamphlets, containing that part of the *Mizan ul Haqq* which shows that Mohammed performed no miracle, and that also the Koran is no miracle. This will bring numerous Moslem readers to one point, a point which is quite sufficient to show that they have no firm ground to stand upon in defending their creed. (Muir, "Biographies" 387-421)

It was at this moment of crisis that Rehmatullah Kairanwi stepped forward as a defender of Islam and engaged in a religious polemic with Pfander in Agra in 1854. The public debate of 1854 in Agra was held between Pfander, assisted by the founder of St. John's College in Agra, Valpy French (1825-1891) and Kairanwi, assisted by Wazir Khan, a medical doctor in the Agra government hospital.

Whereas Khan's demonstration of his familiarity with European sources of Biblical criticism proved advantageous to Kairanwi in his attack on the textual integrity of the Bible, French's admission of various readings of the Bible and the presence of clerical errors in ancient manuscripts undermined Pfander's position in a public polemic in which the slightest concession was viewed as a sign of defeat. *Izhar-ul Haq* (1867) was composed by Kairanwi on the 1854 Agra debate after he had migrated to Constantinople following the Indian Mutiny. The central concerns of 1854 religious polemic, as described by Pfander, also occupied a prominent place in *Izhar*: "the abrogation and corruption of our Scriptures, as asserted by the Mohammedans, the Divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and Mohammed's pretended mission and the Koran" (Birks 72). The apparent victory of Kairanwi in the debate, as perceived by the native Muslims in Agra, is testified by Imadullah, a Muslim convert to Christianity in his autobiography, who once had thought that

Mohammadanism was the best of all religions on earth, because Moulvie Rahmat Ullah and others had, in their presumptuous belief, proved Christianity to be false, and also because I had been present at the great controversy which the Mohammedan learned man had held with Dr. Pfander in Agra. (*Autobiography of Imaduddin* 15)

The theologically intertwined issues of the abrogation and corruption of the Old and New Testament were the central concerns of the debate. In *Mizan*, the first question raised by Pfander belongs to the domain of Christian and Islamic jurisprudence, that is, whether the revelation of the New Testament annulled the strictures of the Old Testament, and by the same logic, whether the law of the Qur'an abrogated the precepts of the New Testament. Making a distinction between the "external" or "legal questions of ceremonial observance" and "moral" precepts of the Old Testament, Pfander advanced the argument that it is the former which fell into disuse after the descent of Christ, and not the latter: "But the ceasing-to-be-of-force of temporary and external precepts has never implied or necessitated the abrogation of the moral and eternal principles and doctrines of the Torah. These, by the appearance of the Gospel, have been made much more forcible and complete" (Pfander 05). For example, the ceremony of the sacrifice of animals for the forgiveness of sins commanded in the Old Testament prefigured the crucifixion of Christ for the atonement of the sins of mankind in the New Testament. After citing many examples of such kind, Pfander denied the annulment by the Gospel of the precepts of the Old Testament, asserting that it "only sub-

stituted what was spiritual for that which was external, and completed what had been begun in those books” (Pfander 07). Pfander maintained that the Gospel is in accord with the Torah, and “has not abrogated and nullified, but strengthened and perfected the doctrines contained therein” (Pfander 08). By the same logic, Pfander sought to prove that the appearance of the Qur’an did not abrogate the Old and New Testament, establishing that the observance of the precepts of the last two books “is binding not only upon Christians, but also upon Mohammedans and all other nations of the world” (Pfander 10). Pfander’s argument for the universal applicability of the Old and New Testament prepared the ground for the reception of the Bible in north India.

Pfander’s distinction between “ceremonial” and “moral” precepts had echoes of Thomas Aquinas’s famous division in *Summa Theologica* of the three types of Biblical precepts: moral, ceremonial, and judicial. On the permanence of moral laws, Pfander is in agreement with Aquinas, while the issue of the applicability of judicial law to Christians was fraught with ambiguity in Aquinas. However, in his case against the abrogation of the Old and New Testament, Pfander made use of Aquinas’s opinion in *Summa* that ceremonial commands were instituted for that particular time and to the foreshadowing of Christ in order to show some kind of continuity from the Old Testament to the New, especially in his example of how the ceremony of animal sacrifice in Jewish law was meant “to prefigure the offering of Christ for sinners” (Pfander 05). Pfander’s substitution of the words like completion, perfection and fulfillment for abrogation is worth noting in his argument. Pfander linked the abrogation of the holy-scriptures with the essential attributes of God, which are common to people of the Book. According to Pfander, the assumption that the revelation of the New Testament or the Quran annulled the previous law implied that God had no knowledge of future when the Mosaic law was instituted, which meant either a denial of foreknowledge, which is considered one of the essential attributes of God, or ascribing mal-intention to God, which will be a dilution of God’s goodness (Pfander 08).

In *Izhar-ul Haq*, Kairanwi’s refutation of Pfander’s argument against abrogation began with a redefinition of the concept as “the expiration of the period of the validity of a practical injunction”, with the qualification that the incidence of abrogation is related only to “injunctions that are not eternal and are equal with regard to the possibility of their existence.” Kairanwi’s attachment of the specificity of time to God’s injunctions is not the attribution of “ignorance” to God as Pfander charged but a manifestation of “divine wisdom” (Kairanwi 3: 193) Kairanwi went on to point out Pfander’s misrepresentation of the Islamic position on abrogation:

We do not think that the Book of Psalms abrogated the Torah and by itself abrogated later by the Evangel, as has been falsely claimed by the Christian author of Meezan-ul Haq who has wrongly asserted that this has been claimed by the Holy Qur'an and its commentaries... Therefore it is valid to posit that some of the injunctions enjoined by the Torah and the Evangel have been abrogated by the Holy Qur'an. We never claim, however, that the laws of the Torah and the Evangel have been abrogated by the Qur'an as a whole. (Kairanwi 3: 194-95)

To refute Pfander's claim, Kairanwi divided incidents of abrogation into two categories: (i) The abrogation of certain injunctions (enjoined by earlier prophets) by the laws of a succeeding prophet, (ii) Occurrences of abrogation in the law of the same prophet with regard to previous injunctions. To support his argument, Kairanwi provided instances of abrogation in the Bible. After citing a dozen examples of abrogation, at the end of the twelfth example titled "The Abrogation of the Law of Moses", Rehmatullah declared that "Christian law has abrogated all the practical injunctions of the law of Moses, be they of eternal nature or otherwise." However, Kairanwi's assertion appears to contradict his earlier statement that abrogation is related only to injunctions that are not eternal. To iron out this inconsistency in his argument, Kairanwi claimed that his conclusions are based on the readings of the Christian Scriptures, which have been corrupted by the Jews and Christians.

To prove the upholding of the principle of abrogation within Christianity, Rehmatullah quoted verses 16, 20, 21 of Book 2, and verses 11, 12, 13, 24 and 25 of Book 3 from St. Paul's epistles to the Galatians (included in the Bible) in the sections of *Izhar* titled "Abandonment of the Torah", "The Law of Moses under the Curse", and "The Law Abrogated by Faith":

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal, 2:16)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal:2:20)

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then

Christ is dead in vain.” (Gal:2:21)

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.” (Gal:3:11)

“And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.” (Gal:3:12)

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal: 3:24)

“But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Gal: 3:25)

From the Protestant dissenter Nathaniel Lardner’s commentary on the verses 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the book 3 of Paul’s letter to the Galatians, Rehmatullah drew the inference that Paul’s insistence on justification by faith meant liberation from the strictures of the Mosaic laws (Pfander 209). Lardner’s commentary on Paul’s letters not only emphasized Christ’s crucifixion as freedom from the ordinances of the Mosaic law, replacing it with a universal ethic rooted in the spirit of Christ, but also retained a sense of Paul (04-64 AD) as the Apostle of Gentiles (non-Jews): “Christ says, the text has redeemed us from ‘the curse of the law.’ Thereby some would understand particularly the Jews, who, they say, alone were under the law. But I think it is evident, that the apostle means Gentiles as well as Jews” (Lardner ix: 491). Given the non-applicability of the concept of annulment to Gentiles, Lardner’s interpretation of Paul’s epistles is sensitive to the complexities of Paul’s message to the Jews and non-Jews. Rehmatullah’s selective citations from Lardner were with a view to negate the possibility of doubt in his argument for the validity of abrogation within Christianity. The eclectic nature of Kairanwi’s citations from Biblical exegetical works becomes more apparent from his selection of the paraphrase of verse 20 by Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) in his *A Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament* (1703): “there being then no necessity that he should die to purchase justification for us, and no sufficient Virtue in his Death to procure it.” (Whitby 2: 272) Given Kairanwi’s questioning of the authenticity of the New Testament on grounds of textual variants, this selection is awkward as

Whitby is famous for his criticism of John Mill's edition of the Greek New Testament (1707, which contained thirty thousand textual variants and marked the foundation of textual criticism) for its apparent undermining of the sacred status of the Bible (Tregelles 50). The range of Christian writers cited in *Izhar* is impressive as the author had already showcased his familiarity with Christian sources in a list of no less than 216 Christian authors in his work *Ijaz Isawi* (1853) (*Autobiography of Imaduddin* 15). However, considering Rehmatullah's random selection of European sources in *Izhar*, Pfander's statement that Rehmatullah's searching out of Christian commentaries and critical writers in the Agra library was "not indeed with any view of learning the truth, but only to obtain materials for refuting it" seems validated by reading the *Izhar* (Birks 71).

The issue of the corruption of the Old and New Testament is central to the theological dialogue between *Mizan* and *Izhar*. The author of *Mizan* sought to refute the assertion made by some Muslims that Jews and Christians altered their holy books to erase references to the prophetic office of Mohammed. Pfander argued that there is a lack of historical evidence and want of specific textual references in the accusations made by Muslim divines: "at what period, by whom, and in what manner this tempering with the text was effected; and which are the corrupted passages". (Pfander, 11) Pfander went on to argue that the internal evidence of the suras of the Quran (the Cow, the Evidence, the Jonas, the Prophets) pointed to the corruption by the Jews and Christians of their scriptures "after he [Mohammed] had appeared, and at the commencement of his preaching." (Pfander, 15) It is important to note that Pfander's extraction from the Quran of the temporal coordinates of scriptural corruption was a repetition of his predecessor Henry Martyn's second reply to Mirza Ibrahim: "for it appears from the Qur'an itself, that up to the time of Mohammad no such corruption had taken place." (Martyn, 102-103) However, Pfander does not base his investigation (of the truth or falsity of the charge of corruption) on the testimony of the Qur'an (which in his view is corrupt) but on the material evidence of history. Like Martyn, Pfander emphasized the impossibility of the willful alteration of Christian Scriptures due to the wide spread of Christianity especially after the arrival of Mohammed, the wide circulation of Scriptures in Christian lands, the absence of a universal accord among Christians, geographical distance, and the party spirit and animosity between Christians and Jews as deterrent to alteration in Scriptures. (Martyn, 103-104) However, unlike Martyn, Pfander sought to give a historical proof of the genuineness of the New Testament by citing the historical writings of the Bishops and teachers who immediately followed the Apostles of Christ: the letters and books of the theologians and writers of the end of first and second centuries, such

as Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian; the works of Origen and Cyprian, who wrote in the third century; the theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries, such as Eusebius, Ephraem Syrus, Ambrose, Basilius, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine. (Pfander, 18) It is important to remember that the defense of the Bible on the alleged evidence of History emerged in eighteenth century Britain as a response to the Deistic criticism of Christian scriptures. (Herrick, 165) Compared to the unwillingness of the Deists to examine the evidence of Christianity, the Christian apologists engaged in a careful sifting of Biblical and historical evidence. For instance, John Conybeare in *The Nature, Possibility, and Certainty of Miracles* (1722) asserted: "That the several Historical Books of the New Testament were written in that Age, in which they are commonly said to have been written; and by those persons, to whom they are ascribed, we have as great Evidence, as we can have of any Fact at that Distance of Time. They are all along quoted by succeeding Writers, both Christian and Heathen". (Conybeare, 17-18, emphasis original)

Kairanwi attempted to refute Pfander's historicist defense of the New Testament by demonstrating that there is an absence of uninterrupted transmission of the reliable reporting authorities of the gospels. The Christian claim of the proof of the originality of the New Testament depends on the testimonies of Clement and Ignatius in the first and second centuries. This is precisely what Kairanwi sought to demolish through his own training in hadith-centric studies of Waliullah tradition and his selective use of advances in modern Biblical criticism in the West. In order to undermine the historical evidence of Christianity adumbrated by Pfander from the letters of Ignatius (the first century AD), Kairanwi pointed to the difference of opinion among scholars for or against the authenticity of the letters, underlined in the second volume of Nathaniel Lardner's *The Credibility of the Gospel History, or the Principal Facts of the New Testament Confirmed by Passages of Ancient Authors, who were Contemporary with our Saviour or his Apostles, or lived near their Time* (1727-1755), whose author is considered the founder of modern critical research in early Christian literature:

Of these seven, mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, there are two editions; one called the larger, and oftentimes the interpolated; and another called the smaller. And, except Mr. Whiston, and perhaps some few others, who may follow him, it is the general opinion of learned men, that the larger are interpolated, and that the smaller have by far the best title to the name of Ignatius...But whether the smaller themselves are the genuine writings of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, is a question that has been much disputed, and has employed the pens of the ablest critics...I make little doubt, but the smaller epistles, which we now have, are, for

the main, the same epistles of Ignatius which were read by Eusebius, and which, it seems pretty plain from Origen, were extant in his time...If there be some few sentiments and expressions which seem inconsistent with the true age of Ignatius, it is more reasonable to suppose them to be additions, than to reject the epistles themselves entirely...As the interpolations of the larger epistles are plainly the work of some Arian, so even the smaller epistles may have been tempered with by the Arians, or the orthodox, or both; though I do not affirm there are in them any considerable corruptions or alterations. (Lardner, vol. 2, 76-77)

Similarly, Kairanwi underscored the uncertainty of the testimony of Clement's letters by referring to Lardner's opinion that there is lack of clarity whether Clement in these places refers to "words of Christ written and recorded" or whether he "reminds" the Corinthians of the words of Christ, which he and they might have "heard from the apostles", or other witnesses of the Christ. (Lardner, vol. 2, 38) The "impartiality" of Lardner's work, which was praised even by his Deistic opponent Thomas Morgan (d. 1743), in the treatment of the history of Christian sacred Scriptures is exploited by Kairanwi here in his partial approach to Christianity. (Lardner, vol. 1, lxxvi) Similarly, to undermine the testimony afforded by the writings of Titian (150 AD) and Origen (185AD), the author of *Izhar* cited the opinion of British Methodist Biblical scholar, Adam Clarke (1762-1832) that their "genuine" works are lost and the extant works are believed to be full of "corruptions". (Clarke, vol. 1, 03) Ecclesiastical histories, such as Eusebius' *History of the Early Church* (written in the fourth century AD), and the authority of Church fathers such as St. Jerome (c. 347-420 AD) are used to underline the unreliability of the books of the New Testament. (Kairanwi, vol. 1, 17)

To demonstrate that the Gospels were later impositions of the Church rather than genuine, Kairanwi referred to the German protestant scholar, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's (1752-1827) theory of the Original Gospel, according to which there is a possibility that in the early period of Christianity the short sketch of the life of Christ was the Original Gospel, from which many versions derived and the four gospels are later impositions of the Church. Quoting Eichhorn's *Introduction to the New Testament* (5 volumes, 1804-12) through Andrew Norton's "Introduction" to his *The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels* (1837), Kairanwi drew the conclusions that the Original Gospel has become extinct from the world, the present gospels are a mixture of truth and falsities, the text of the gospels was distorted at different periods of history as Celsus objected to it, and the non-existence of the present gospels before the end of the second century. (Kairanwi, vol. 3, 22-28) In his argument against the authenticity of the New Testament, Kairanwi made use of the scholarly efforts of Eichhorn (1752-1827), who

studied the Old and New testament “by means of the higher criticism” or critical-historical method, (Eicchorn, xi) to conclude in his major German work, Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament (3 volumes, 1780-83) that “the chief foundation of our present ‘Samuel’ and ‘Chronicles’ (particular lives of David and Solomon) attained its actual form by passing through, at least, the hands of two different editors, of whom each increased and enriched it with his own peculiar additions.” (Eicchorn, 49) Making a reference to Norton’s disagreement with Eichhorn’s opinion, Kairanwi highlighted Norton’s admission that some portions of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are later additions. (Kairanwi, vol. 3, 26-27) The embedded intention of Kairanwi’s Biblical scholarship becomes evident in his selective citation of Norton’s admission in *The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels* (1837) that many passages in the Received Text of the Gospels were “spurious”, while deliberately not referring to his overall belief in the integrity of the Bible in his assertion that “the Gospels have not been exposed to any peculiar causes of corruption” but retain their originality. (Norton, vol. 1, 27)

In *Mizan*, to counter the interpretation that the Jews had altered the Old Testament to remove references to the coming of the Christ, Pfander had cited the evidence of John, Matthew, and Luke to assert the divinely inspired and uncorrupted status of the Old Testament, showing how the books of Genesis, Isaiah, Daniel, Micah, Zech, and Psalms did prophesize the coming of Christ. (Pfander, 20-21) In *Izhar*, Kairanwi first undermined the gospel of Mark and Luke by appealing to the testimony of Irenaeus (through Lardner’s commentaries) that these gospels were written after Paul’s death. (Kairanwi, vol. 3, 57-59) Then, Kairanwi proceeded to undermine the status of some of the books of the Old Testament as God’s revelation by citing Horne’s commentaries on the lost books of the Prophet and the Book of the War of the Lord discussed in the third chapter of “On the Credibility of the Old and New Testament”:

But supposing that the books in question were written by those who were truly prophets, yet they were not written by inspiration. This argument is forcibly stated by Augustine in the following manner – “In the histories of the kings of Judah and Israel, several things are mentioned, which are not there explained, and are referred to as contained in other books which the prophets wrote; and sometimes the names of these prophets are mentioned; and yet these writings are not extant in the canon which the church of God receives. The reason of which I can account for no other way, than by supposing, that those very persons to whom the Holy Spirit revealed those things which are of the highest authority in religion, sometimes wrote only as historians, and at other times as prophets under the influences

of divine inspiration; and that these writings are so different from each other, that the one sort are to be imputed to themselves as the author, the other to God as speaking by them; the former are of service to increase our knowledge, the other of authority in religion, and canonical. (Horne, vol. 1, 134-135)

To underline the mixing in the Old Testament of the divine inspiration with the human agency of the writer, Kairanwi cited T H Horne's views on the concept of "Inspiration" explained in "Appendix 1" to volume 1:

When it is said, that Scripture is divinely inspired, we are not to understand that God suggested every word, or dictated every expression. From the different styles in which books are written, and from the different manner in which the same events are related and predicted by different authors, it appears that the sacred penmen were permitted to write as their several tempers, understandings, and habits of life, directed: and that the knowledge communicated to them by inspiration on the same subject of their writings, was applied in the same manner as any knowledge acquired by ordinary means. Nor is it to be supposed that they were even thus inspired in every fact which they related, or in every precept which they delivered. (Horne, vol. 1, 565)

What is worth noting is Horne's adoption of a historical approach to Christian sacred scriptures in Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scripture in his investigation of "testimonies from profane authors" to the events mentioned in the Scriptures, with reference to a "new branch of evidence for their credibility" provided by coins, inscriptions, medals, and ancient structures. (Horne, vol. 1, vii)

The novelty of Kairanwi's book consists in his impressive citations from a wide range of European works, modern works of Biblical criticism, and Church and secular histories. This combination of the scripturalist emphasis of the Waliullah tradition with Western references had long-term methodological effects on Islamic scholarship of mid-nineteenth century India. For instance, Syed Ahmad Khan drew on almost the same sources in his major exegetical work, *Tabyen-ul Kalam*, the *Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible* (1862-1865) to forge a conciliatory attitude towards the Bible with a practical purpose of establishing reconciliation between the British rulers and Indian Muslims in a post-Mutiny scenario.

Syed Ahmad Khan's (1817-1898) major exegetical work *Tabyen-ul Kalam*, the *Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible* (1862-1865), which dealt with the fundamental issue of the authenticity of the Bible, drew on almost the same sources in his major exegetical work as Kairanwi. In the second discourse of the

first volume of Tabyen, Syed Ahmad Khan quoted the same passage from Horne's *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* as had appeared (in Arabic translation) in the third volume of *Izhar*:

That those very persons to whom the holy Spirit revealed those things which are of the highest authority in religion, sometimes wrote only as faithful historians, and at other times as prophets under the influence of Divine inspiration; and that those writings are so different from each other that the one sort are to be imputed to themselves as the authors, the other to God speaking by them; the former are of service to increase our knowledge, the other of authority in religion, and canonical. Augustine. (Khan, 16)

Horne's appears to be the most cited Christian Biblical authority in Tabyen as it reappears in the fifth discourse of the first volume of Tabyen (under "Some of the Christian divines"): "that it seems very unsuitable to the ordinary conduct of Divine Providence to suffer a book to be lost". (Khan, 33) The eighth discourse of the first volume on the originality of the Christian scriptures is replete with references to Horne. Horne has been cited as many as ten times in the eighth discourse on page numbers 97, 98, 99, 126, 135, 137, 142 and 146.

However, unlike Kairanwi, for whom the presence of any inadvertent textual error invariably became a basis of the unreliability of the Bible, Syed Ahmad believed that existence of discrepancies in the manuscripts of the Bible were incidental to the transmission of the text: "It must be acknowledged that the occurrence of errors, at the time of transcribing, is not only confined to the Scriptures but extended indeed to all other books likewise; so much so that even our holy Koran of which there are thousands of manuscripts, is not free from such errors". (Khan, 142-143) Syed Ahmad's distinction between deliberate textual falsifications and inadvertent mistakes in the textual transmission of scriptures prepared a ground for his acceptance of the Bible as containing various degrees of authentic passages. (Khan, 150)

In the sixth discourse of the first volume of Tabyen on the question of the authenticity of a religious book, Syed Ahmad compared his test of ascertaining the authenticity of a sacred book through the reliability of its author (on the basis of which it falls into four distinct classes) to a corresponding passage from the fourth volume of *The Credibility of the Gospel History*:

It seems to me that when we speak of books and rank them according to the several opinions which men have of them, there may be five sorts:-1stly. Such books as are universally received.

2ndly. Such as are very generally received, and are doubted of by a few only.

3rdly. Such as Eusebius calls controverted or contradicted, which are received by many, or the most, but yet are doubted of by a good number of people.

4thly. Such as are received by a few only, or however are rejected by more than they are received. These Eusebius may call spurious.

5thly. There are such as are universally rejected Catholic Christians, as not having been used by any of the ancients, as books of value, and containing things contrary to the true Apostolical doctrine. These are altogether or throughout spurious. (Khan, 61-62)

However, this utilization by mid-nineteenth century Indian Muslim intelligentsia of European Christian sources, which created a kind of new intellectual interface between Indian Islam and Europe, dried up as the century came to an end. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Nazir Ahmad (1834-1913)'s name stands out as the most significant Indian Islamic theologian. His theological work *Ijtihad* (1907), which sought to negotiate matters of faith with the claims of rationality, only drew on Syed Ahmad's newly developed naturalist religion and classical Arabic sources of Islamic theology. (Ahmad, 01)

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Mohammed Afzal

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