

5. An Appeal

Before bringing this to a conclusion, I would appeal to the Ahmadis to think over these questions with a cool mind and to study the writings of the Promised Messiah. Is it not strange that M. Mahmud today puts exactly the same interpretation on the writings of the Promised Messiah as the strongest opponents of the movement put upon them in its early days? When the Promised Messiah first announced his claim, the opponents said that he denied the fulfilment of the prophecy relating to the advent of Ahmad in the person of the Holy Prophet, that he claimed to be a prophet and that he taught a new religion. All these charges were immediately declared to be false, but the Maulvis gave out that he was really deceiving them by using vague words to escape incrimination. If what M. Mahmud teaches today is right, then indeed the Maulvis were in the right, and the great service that M. Mahmud has thus done to the Ahmadiyya movement is that he has proved that the Maulvis, who opposed the Promised Messiah and declared him to be a *kāfir* first on account of his claim to prophethood, and a deceiver afterwards in denying that he claimed to be a prophet, were in the right. For the Maulvis said that the Mirza Sahib himself claimed to be Ahmad and that he denied that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the Ahmad whose advent was foretold by Jesus, and the Promised Messiah and his followers denied these charges; but now M. Mahmud says that it is written in the writings of the Promised Messiah that he himself, and not the Holy Prophet Muhammad, was the Ahmad prophesied by Christ. If M. Mahmud is right, then indeed the opponents of the movement were also in the right, and the Promised Messiah and his followers were only deceiving them and the public.

Again, when the Promised Messiah announced his claim, the Maulvis who opposed him said that he claimed to be a prophet and that therefore he was a *kāfir*; the Promised Messiah wrote and stated under oath that he did not lay claim to prophethood but that he claimed to be a *muhaddas* and that a *muhaddas* could be metaphorically called a prophet, that his prophethood was the reflected prophethood (*zillī nubuwwat*) of a follower and not actual prophethood, a partial prophethood which signified only the revelation to him of certain prophecies and deep significances of the words of the Quran, and not the perfect prophethood of a real prophet, a partial or metaphorical or reflected prophethood recognised under different names by the *Ulama* of the *umma*; he even signed an agreement stating that the word *prophet* (*nabī*) might be obliterated from his writings and the word *muhaddas* substituted for it; the Maulvis said that he was deceiving the public by the use of the words partial (*juzwī*), metaphorical (*majāzī*), and reflected (*zillī*), and that he really claimed to be a prophet; M. Mahmud now says that the Promised Messiah was in fact a real and perfect prophet, that his prophethood was not the partial prophethood of a follower but the perfect prophethood of a prophet. If M. Mahmud is in the right, then the opposing Maulvis were also in the right throughout and the Promised Messiah was actually deceiving the public and giving false assurances under the cloak of vague words. What an irony of fate, that to make him a prophet he is to be recognised as a deceiver first!

Warning of grave consequences.

But the gravest of all the consequences of the teaching of M. Mahmud is that, in recognising the truth of these doctrines, the Promised Messiah is to be accepted as the teacher of a new religion altogether, not of Islam as it was taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The basis of the religion taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the simple formula of faith: *lā ilāha illa-Allāh-u Muhammad-ur rasūl-ullāh*, i.e., there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah. When a non-Muslim accepts Islam, he has to confess his faith in the above formula.

This formula is, therefore, the basis of the religion of Islam, the foundation on which the superstructure of Islam is erected, and for the last thirteen hundred years it has served that purpose. But according to M. Mahmud no one can now enter Islam who simply professes his faith in that formula; a new prophet has arisen and faith in him only can make a man enter into the circle of Islam. Even those old Muslims who professed the formula of faith have been turned, bag and baggage, out of the circle of Islam. Therefore, according to M. Mahmud, the very basis of the faith of Islam which he preaches has been changed. And if the foundation is gone, the superstructure cannot remain. Therefore the Islam he preaches is altogether a different faith from the Islam which has been preached for the last thirteen hundred years. To give an illustration, we are told by M. Mahmud that just as after the appearance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad faith in Jesus Christ and the earlier apostles did not avail, so now after the appearance of a prophet, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, faith in Muhammad and the earlier prophets does not avail. Is it not clear from this that just as Islam supplanted Christianity, the new Islam of M. Mahmud supplants the old Islam of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, though it might contain the old law? Could heresy go beyond that?

It is time our brethren should ponder on these matters, and rally round the true doctrines of the Promised Messiah before the false doctrines gain a prevalence, as the false doctrines attributed to the first Messiah gained ground and a great part of the world was involved in an error which is almost the gravest of religious errors. In the same manner, these novel doctrines of M. Mahmud will be the cause of the gravest dissension in Islam if they are not checked in time. I hope the good sense of the community will come to the rescue of the movement.

THE END.