

Christian-Muslim Relations A Bibliographical History

Volume 24. South Asia (1800-1914)

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2026

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Karl Gottlieb Pfander

Carl; Charles

DATE OF BIRTH 1803
PLACE OF BIRTH Waiblingen, Württemberg, Germany
DATE OF DEATH 1865
PLACE OF DEATH England

BIOGRAPHY

Karl Gottlieb Pfander was a German Christian missionary who is best known for his work in South Asia over a period of 19 years, and especially for his appeal to Muslims written in Persian titled *Mizān al-ḥaqq*. Sources on his life and work are relatively abundant and include his own letters from the field, mission reports and records, mission histories, and descriptions of his behaviour and writings from first-hand observers in South Asia (both supporters and opponents; see Powell, 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', pp. 90-1). His life, methods, writings and legacy portrayed in these sources have probably been contested as vigorously as those of any other participant in Christian-Muslim engagement in South Asia during the 19th century.

Pfander was born in Waiblingen in the Württemberg region of Germany. He was brought up in the Pietist tradition, came to faith at the age of 16, and showed an interest in Christian mission from an early age. In 1821, he began his studies at the Basel Missionary Seminary and, while engaged in biblical and theological studies, showed ability in languages, including Arabic. He also began his study of the Qur'an.

In 1825, the Basel Missionary Society assigned Pfander to evangelistic work in Shusha, in the province of Karabagh, present-day Georgia, where he visited people in the bazaars and distributed the New Testament and tracts in Turkish and Persian. He also sought to increase his knowledge of Persian and Arabic, and in this effort went as far as Baghdad, where he stayed for some time. As a result of the contacts he made, he felt a pressing need for literature that dealt in more detail with the questions that most frequently emerged in conversations about religion. When he requested such literature from his more senior Basel mission colleagues, they assigned him to prepare the material he needed himself ('The

Mizan-ul-haq, Miftah-ul-asrar, and Tariq-ul-hayat', p. 47). He completed the manuscript of *Waage der Wahrheit* ('Balance of truth') in German in 1829.

In 1833, Pfander married Sophia Reuss, who died in 1835. He worked to produce a Persian version of *Waage*, which was published as *Mizān al-ḥaqq* in 1835 and distributed in Persia and Russia. He also composed two further treatises in German, translated into Persian as *Miftāḥ al-asrār* ('The key of mysteries') and *Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt* ('The way of life'), but these were not published because the work of the Basel missionary team in Shusha was brought to an end by the Russian government in 1836.

By 1838, Pfander had settled in Calcutta and was accepted as a worker of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), 'after lengthy negotiations related to episcopal ordination' (Ledderhose, 'Pfander', p. 598). One of his first projects was to publish *Mizān* and *Miftāḥ* in Calcutta in 1839, followed by *Ṭarīq* in 1840. In 1841, he married Elizabeth Emma Swinbourne, and was posted in the same year to the CMS mission in Agra ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 252). For the next 17 years, Pfander's work consisted largely of preaching publicly in city markets in local languages, running the mission schools, arranging translations and new editions of his works, and replying to South Asian Muslims' written responses to what he had written.

In Agra, Pfander published his three treatises in Urdu (*Mizān*, 1843; *Miftāḥ*, 1843; *Ṭarīq* 1847). His books in Persian and Urdu were distributed widely in South Asia and started to draw written responses from Muslim scholars. Pfander wrote replies to these responses, his Urdu *Ḥall ul-ishkāl* ('Solution of ambiguity', 1847) being an answer to *Kitāb-i istiḥṣār* ('Book of questions', by Āl-i Ḥasan, Lucknow, 1845, a Muslim response to his own *Mizān*), and *Kashf al-astār* ('Unveiling of the curtain', by Muḥammad Hādī, Lucknow, 1845, a Muslim response to Pfander's *Miftāḥ*). All four of Pfander's books saw repeated printings throughout the 19th century, often in new editions, and continued to be recommended in Christian bibliographies well into the 20th century (Weitbrecht, *Descriptive catalogue*, pp. 65-71; Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, pp. 2-14). Some modern writers have called Pfander a 'polemicist' (e.g. Ahmad, *Islamic modernism*, p. 26; Daniel, 'Polemics', p. 7244), but a plain reading of his books in fact shows that he was probing the roots of Islamic faith and life only in a relatively short section of *Mizān*.

Pfander's *Ḥall* led to a public discussion with the author of *Kashf* held in Lucknow in 1848 (Pfander, 'Movements among Mahommedans',



REV. DR. C. G. PFANDER.

Illustration 6. Karl Gottlieb Pfander

pp. 252-3). A better-known public discussion was held in Agra in 1854. Pfander felt obliged to accept the challenge (Pfander, 'Movements among Mahommedans', p. 254) from Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī, who had published two books against his writings, *Izālat al-awhām* ('Removal of delusions', 1852-3) and *Aṣaḥḥ al-aḥādīth fī ibṭāl al-tathlīth* ('Most clear sayings in refutation of the Trinity', 1854), though the meeting foundered on the second day through disagreements over the status of the Bible. A number of widely divergent accounts of the debate were published soon after, including Pfander's own *Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥasah kā* ('Conclusion of the religious discussion') in the following year (Powell, 'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī', pp. 54-8; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 242-62; but cf. Becht, 'Offenbarungsschrift und Offenbarungsträger', pp. 138-41; Neill, *History*, pp. 459-60).

During the same year as the Agra discussion, Christians among the British civil servants in Peshawar were asking the CMS to send workers, and Pfander was assigned to establish the mission there in 1855 (Stock, *History*, pp. 208-13). Pfander wrote about his ministry routine in 1856, 'I preach regularly four evenings a week in the bazaars of the military station and twice in the morning in the city, partly in Hindustani, partly in Persian' (Ledderhose, 'Pfander', p. 599). He also completed a written response to the most recent written attacks by Muslims in Delhi and Agra. In 1858, the CMS assigned Pfander to Istanbul as its first worker on site there. He oversaw the translation of his books into Turkish and released his *Mīzān* after a Turkish anti-Christian polemical work, *Shams ul-hagīgat* ('The sun of truth') was published in Istanbul in 1862. Pfander went on to

write a separate book, *Raf' al-shubahāt* ('Dissipation of doubts') to answer the particular accusations levelled in this work. The copies of Pfander's new book, however, were confiscated by the Turkish government in July 1864, when the Turkish police attacked the premises of the CMS, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Bible Society, and closed them (*Church Missionary Intelligencer* [1864] pp. 212 and pp. 222-3; Stock, *History*, p. 154).

From Istanbul, Pfander and Elizabeth went to England, Elizabeth's home. She was ill when they arrived, but it was Pfander who died suddenly on 1 December 1865. Stephen Neill wrote that he 'desired that no biography of him should be written' (*History*, p. 526 n. 11), but a good deal has nevertheless been written about him, and his life and writings have raised a range of issues for a number of his biographers. During the 19th century and into the early 20th, evaluations of his life were mainly positive and even laudatory. Later in the 20th century, however, several influential evaluations painted a rather negative portrait, some with a touch of disdain. Discussions of Pfander's significance have revolved around four main issues: his contribution to Christian-Muslim engagement as a German Pietist; the scholarly characterisation of his work; the question of his involvement in colonialism; and the relationship of his writings to Orientalism.

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WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Mizān al-ḥaqq *Waage der Wahrheit* 'The balance of truth'

DATE 1835

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Persian

DESCRIPTION

Pfander's *Mizān al-ḥaqq* is a Christian appeal to Muslim readers to accept the authenticity of the Bible, to read it and to consider its teachings. Pfander composed it in German in 1829 while working as a missionary with the Basel Missionary Society in Shusha (then in Karabagh under Russian rule but close to the Persian border at the time; now part of Georgia). He did not himself plan to write the book, but was given the

task when he asked his mission colleagues for literature to aid him in his evangelism among Muslims and was instead assigned to write the book himself ('The Mizan-ul-haq, Miftah-ul-asrar, and Tariq-ul-hayat', *Church Missionary Intelligencer* 10 [1859] 47-8, p. 47).

Pfander completed his handwritten German draft, titled *Waage der Wahrheit* and running to 413 pages, in 1829 while he was in Shusha. After producing Armenian (1831) and Azeri (1832) versions of the text, he then set to work on a Persian translation, *Kitāb mīzān al-ḥaqq*, published in typeset script in Shusha in 1835. This original Persian version is 272 pages long, including a final section titled *Hikāyā* ('Narratives'), containing the testimonies of seven converts to Christianity (pp. 234-72). Pfander published a second Persian edition 316 pages long in Calcutta in 1839, after he had moved to India in 1838. This is the edition on which the following description is based. The Persian *Mīzān* circulated in Persia in the late 1830s and widely in South Asia during the 1840s and after. An Urdu translation appeared in 1843. The work turned out to be one of the best examples of a type of Christian-Muslim written engagement that takes seriously the truth or falsehood of religious claims, including the central beliefs of the partner, while inviting the partner to a friendly, respectful and reasonable conversation.

Mīzān opens with an Introduction which, after offering general considerations on human happiness and the limits of human reason, proposes a set of five criteria for determining a true revelation of God (pp. 1-15). The first is that a true revelation must satisfy the cravings of the human soul for eternal happiness. The other criteria require that a true revelation must not go against the human conscience that God has given; must not go against the holiness of God; must represent God as being one, eternal, almighty, omniscient, gracious and creator of the heavens and the earth, since these traits of God are recognisable when observing the universe; and cannot contain logical contradictions. The book is then divided into three parts. The first makes a case for the authenticity and reliability of the Bible (pp. 15-49), and the second sets out, on the basis of the first part, the major Christian teachings (pp. 49-188). The third part raises questions as to whether Muḥammad can be judged a true prophet of God, and whether the Qur'an can be called the word of God (pp. 189-270).

Part I aims to bring Muslim readers to an understanding that the Torah and Gospel referred to in the Qur'an are both genuine and extant, and are in fact the same scriptures that Christians use in modern times. In ch. 1 he briefly presents the Qur'an's respectful testimony to the Torah and Gospel as a declaration that these are indeed inspired books and the word of God

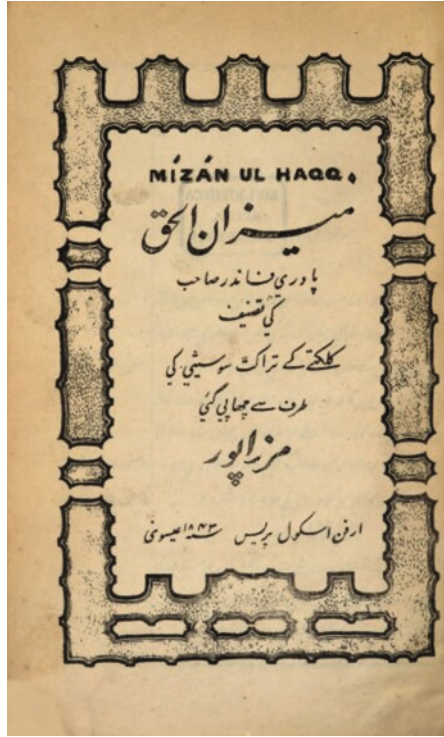


Illustration 7. Title page of the first Urdu edition of *Mīzān ul-ḥaqq*

(pp. 15-18). On this basis, Pfander urges Muslim readers to accept and read the Bible. He argues in ch. 2 that the relationship of the Gospel to the Torah is not one of abrogation but rather accord (pp. 18-31), offering as support the commandments of Jesus in the Gospel accounts that not only affirm the Torah but also deepen its meaning. The implications Pfander draws from this are that the Qur'an does not therefore abrogate the Torah and Gospel, and that the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel remain in force for Muslims, as for all nations of the world.

Ch. 3 (pp. 31-49) begins with a list of several traditions about the formation of the Qur'an that suggest uncertainty and doubt. These come from *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*, the collection of authoritative Hadith by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrizī (fl. 1337), which is an expansion and revision of the earlier *Maṣābīḥ al-sunna* ('Lamps of the *sunna*'), compiled by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-Baghawī (d. 1122). Pfander's intention here is to show that, while Muslims cannot actually explain when and

how the Torah and Gospel were allegedly corrupted, the Muslim sources themselves offer a story of Muslim tampering with the Qur'an. He follows this with a series of questions that probe the reasonableness and feasibility of accusations against the Bible, such as the likelihood that Jews and Christians could have conspired together to falsify the Torah in their possession in exactly the same way. Pfander then makes the case that the Muslim accusation that Jews and Christians changed their scriptures in response to the appearance of Muḥammad can be dealt with directly by reference to extant biblical manuscripts dating from pre-Islamic times. He mentions the existence of the *Vaticanus*, *Alexandrinus* and *Ephraemi* codices, some from as early as 250 years 'before the hijra' (p. 39), and points out that it is possible to compare texts of the Bible dating from before and after the rise of Islam in order to detect any changes. He also appeals to the witness of the many biblical quotations contained in the writings of the Church Fathers, also pre-dating Islam. The traditions of Islam tell a story of the destruction of manuscripts of the Qur'an, Pfander writes, while in modern Europe ancient manuscripts of the Bible are treasured and kept in public places such as libraries for all to see. Why then accuse the Bible of having been corrupted and falsified? Pfander suggests that the accusation was invented by Muslims when they became aware that the contents of the Bible contradicted much of Islamic teaching.

Part II begins with a survey of the books of the Bible, what they contain, and how they are arranged (pp. 49-59). Pfander then takes up the biblical precepts and doctrines that he asserts are incumbent on Muslims on the basis of his arguments in Part I. Ch. 1 gives a brief explanation of the attributes of God and God's will for humankind (pp. 59-66), ch. 2 introduces an extensive passage on the fallen state of humankind (pp. 66-92), ch. 3 the way of salvation through the Messiah (pp. 92-128), and ch. 4 the way in which humans may obtain that salvation (pp. 128-44). Pfander appeals to the witness of the individual conscience and heart to argue that no one perfectly keeps God's law, but rather everyone knows of sin and impurity within. God will punish the guilty according to their transgressions. Since humans are not able to bear the consequences of their sins, they must look for a way of deliverance. God in his love and mercy made the way (ch. 3), and that is through the death and resurrection of Jesus. From Adam through Abraham, Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament, God signalled the salvation to come. Here, Pfander also briefly addresses questions about Jesus's deity, divine sonship and incarnation, matters that he claims must be accepted by faith because they go beyond

human understanding. Salvation is obtained by faith, he asserts in ch. 4, and that too is a gift of God's grace. Pfander explains the work of the Holy Spirit according to the New Testament, and from there offers a number of simple illustrations of 'three in one' to make a case for the divine Trinity. The work of the Holy Spirit includes bringing about the new birth of the believer.

Pfander next asserts in ch. 5 (pp. 144-61) that the Holy Spirit also motivates and empowers the true Christian to do good works in obedience to God. The Christian follows God's law from love and thankfulness and, when in need or difficulty, looks not to the government but only to God. Pfander describes Christian prayer as a continual conversation with the heavenly Father, having no set external form. Christians live at peace with all people, and their charity is extended to all, including enemies. They work faithfully in their trade or profession to earn their living while they strive for spiritual completeness. Christians are certainly not perfect, but they live with the hope that, after they die, Jesus will raise them from the dead and they will live in his presence with joy.

At this point in the progress of Part II, Pfander returns to the theme of Part I, evidently to use the content of the preceding five chapters to argue further that the Bible is the word of God. In a series of seven points, he asserts that the Bible satisfies the cravings of the human heart, produces changes in one's heart and life, and sets out the attributes of God as no other writing can (ch. 6, pp. 161-73). That the Bible shows itself to be the word of God in its deep spiritual content and tone, in prediction and fulfillment, in the miracles of Jesus and in his resurrection from the dead, and in the spread of the Christian faith by peaceful preaching.

Part II ends with an expansion on this final point – how the Christian faith first spread (ch. 7, pp. 173-88). Beginning with the New Testament history of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles, Pfander attempts to trace the story up to the end of the third century. He cites references to Christians in Roman authors and points out Qur'anic verses that mention the *ḥawāriyyūn* ('disciples', e.g. Q 3:52). He also indicates how Muslim commentators variously identified the unnamed apostles in Q 36:13-27 as Paul, John and Peter. Pfander writes explicitly that believers were never commanded to spread the religion of the Messiah by means of holy war. In fact, the Christian faith spread everywhere and Christians were persecuted and martyred, but they never rebelled. After Constantine made Christianity legal in the fourth century, the quality of Christian discipleship began a downward trend.

Part III moves beyond affirmation of Christian teaching and the reliability of the Bible to consider the claims Islam makes for Muḥammad and the Qur'an. In addition to the five criteria laid down in the introduction, Part III proposes four new criteria for determining true prophethood. Among these, Pfander asserts that the personal character and actions of anyone professing to be a prophet must be examined. He first looks at the claims of Muslim scholars that Muḥammad was foretold in the Bible (ch. 1, pp. 191-201), quoting the prediction attributed to Jesus in Q 61:6. He considers and responds to claims that particular verses refer to Muḥammad: Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; Psalm 45:3, 4; Isaiah 42:1-4, 11; Isaiah 21:7; John 14:16, 17, 26; and Mark 1:7. Pfander concludes that none of these verses prefigures the career of Muḥammad and offers in their place the predictions of Jesus in Matthew 24:24-6 and 7:15 that false prophets would appear.

Ch. 2 addresses the question of whether the excellence of the language and style of the Qur'an prove that it is the word of God (pp. 201-6). Pfander dismisses the power of this alleged proof in a series of four points, among them the assertion that any who want to claim this distinction for the Qur'an in Arabic would need to become proficient in many other languages in order to compare the Qur'an with the scriptures in other religions that their devotees claim to have miraculous eloquence. Another point shifts it to the subject of the following chapter – it is possible that unworthy content may be expressed in language that some would consider extremely elegant.

Pfander begins ch. 3, on the contents of the Qur'an (pp. 206-35), by noting what he considers positive material, which he says Muḥammad learned from Jews and Christians. Then he examines the Qur'anic narratives about biblical characters, evaluating them against the biblical accounts. He indicates many errors as well as the inclusion of stories and traditions from outside the Bible. He writes that the Qur'an contains many things that conflict with the most important truths of the Gospel, and gives a series of eight examples, largely related to the deity of Jesus and his redemptive death but also including Jesus's command to love one's enemies and do good to them. He determines at this point, on the basis of the Qur'an's contradictions of biblical teaching, that the Qur'an cannot be the word of God. But then he adds two longer 'proofs'.

Pfander judges that the contents of the Qur'an are unable to satisfy the desire of the human soul for salvation and assurance, returning to a criterion set out in the Introduction. In this connection, he asserts that Muḥammad cannot be the mediator that Muslims confess him to be,

because he was a sinner. The Qur'an's commands to fight and kill give a false idea of God according to the standard of the New Testament, and these commands even contradict other parts of the Qur'an. The portrayal of heaven in the Qur'an is also at variance with the holiness of God, and many verses seem to circumscribe the free will of humans. Pfander closes the chapter with a critique of Islamic teachings on abrogation and multiplicity of meanings, and offers a lesson on principles of interpretation.

Ch. 4 sets out to examine the personal character and conduct of Muḥammad, with the stated aim of testing the Muslim claim for his prophethood (pp. 235-57). Pfander first discusses at length whether Muḥammad performed miracles or foretold future events. He argues that the Qur'an does not support a claim of miracles, quoting several passages that deny this ability to the 'messenger'. On this basis, he judges Muslim extra-qur'anic claims for miracles to be ascribing falsehood to the Qur'an and presents a series of arguments against the claim that Muḥammad split the moon. Pfander writes that mere traditions about supposed miracles cannot be accepted as evidence, and then later contrasts this with what he considers the evidence of eyewitness testimony to the miracles of Jesus described in the Gospel. He also denies that there was any evidence that Muḥammad possessed the gift of prophecy in the sense of foretelling events.

Pfander then opens the subject of Muḥammad's wives and devotes particular attention to Q 33 and the traditional Muslim story of Zayd and Zaynab. Quoting Q 33:37 and citing Muslim commentaries on the verse, he asserts that such passages portray Muḥammad as being full of sensual desires and he also cites verses that could not have been revealed by a holy God. These verses are entirely Muḥammad's own composition, writes Pfander, and they put in doubt other passages that claim to be from God. For example, he writes that Muḥammad recited Q 2:217 as a justification for the attack on the Quraysh caravan narrated in early Muslim sources as the beginning of violence. Pfander also refers to several assassinations attributed to Muḥammad in early Muslim narratives, as well as to the massacre of the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayza. He bases his statements about Muḥammad on the Qur'an and popular Muslim commentaries, on Hadith collections in use at the time, and on the *Sīra* of Ibn Ishāq and other popular Muslim accounts, which he names. (Later editions and translations of *Mizān* also refer to the 1843 work by Gustav Weil, *Mohammed der Prophet*, noting that Weil based his book on the same Muslim materials.) Pfander claims that, according to the Muslim narratives, the decisions Muḥammad

made show instability of character. Pfander credits the temporal success of Islam to the desire among Muḥammad's followers for conquest, spoil, dominion and prosperity.

Ch. 5 follows on from this last point to address the remarkable territorial expansion of Islam, from the story in the Muslim narratives of the attack on the Quraysh caravan at Badr through the conquest of Mecca and on to conquests of wider territory under the caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar (pp. 257-70). Pfander also recounts the conquests of Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Persia. But the evaluation of the nature of these events as the Muslim sources represent them is by no means obvious, and Pfander understands the Arab conquests to be the spread of Islam by the sword. He characterises the acceptance of Islam by individuals or groups as being out of fear of attack, self-interested desire for booty or other advantages associated with being Muslim. Having been coerced into Islam, he continues, Muslims are now compelled to remain in the religion upon pain of death. But truth cannot be proved by the sword, he claims, and people cannot be forced to love God. This evidently leads him to an assertion that a religion that permits its members to use compulsion and war in order to bring in others cannot be from God. He then reminds the reader of his description of the early spread of Christianity in the last chapter of Part II and allows the comparison to stand.

Pfander concludes the book by rejoicing in the spread and number of Christian missionaries in the world and the fruit of their witness, which he calls a sign of the last days. He then makes a direct appeal to Muslim readers to accept the gospel invitation he has presented (pp. 267-70). Early Persian editions of *Mizān*, like the original German draft, attached a set of seven narratives about converts to Christianity in various nations (pp. 271-316 in the second Persian edition, including an account of 'Abdulmasih [CMR 24, 136-47], pp. 303-9).

SIGNIFICANCE

Mizān al-ḥaqq is one of the best-known writings on Christian-Muslim relations, certainly in South Asia in the 19th century and since, but perhaps also in the full fourteen centuries of Christian-Muslim engagement. It is the first work of Christian-Muslim dialogue written by a European Christian and fashioned through extensive interaction with Muslims in territories where they were numerous, to be published in local Muslim languages and distributed widely among Muslim readers in Asia. Very soon after the publication of the first Persian edition, Pfander, en route to India, heard that the book 'had excited great attention' in Persia, as reported by

William Muir, who recorded anecdotal evidence of widespread reading and discussion of the book at early stages of its distribution in north India ('The Mahommedan controversy', *Calcutta Review* 4 [1845] 418-75, pp. 446-7; 'Biographies of Mohammed for India. The Mohammedan controversy', *Calcutta Review* 17 [1852] 387-421, p. 418). Later, after observing Pfander's work for three years in Peshawar, Herbert Edwardes wrote, 'The Moslem doctors of Turkey, Persia, Affghanistan, and India, have never had such a bone to pick as Pfander's "Mizan-ul-Haqq"' ('The late Rev. Charles Gottlieb Pfander, D.D.', p. 101). In 1875, 'Imāduddīn wrote that *Mizān* had been 'very widely circulated and very generally read' ('The results of the controversy in north India with Mohammedans', *Church Missionary Intelligencer* 10 [1875] 276-80, p. 276). It continued to be printed throughout the 19th century in many translations and multiple editions and was recommended in Christian bibliographies (e.g. H.U. Weitbrecht, *A descriptive catalogue and review of Urdu Christian literature, 1886-1901*, Lahore, 1902, p. 68). Just a few years into the 20th century, E.M. Wherry estimated that it 'aroused more discussion among Muhammadans than any book written in [the 19th] century' (Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, p. 1). In 1932, and also writing from India, L. Bevan Jones concurred with that estimate and qualified it with 'any book written for Muslims' at all (*The people of the mosque*, London, 1932, p. 238).

The book is crucial for understanding Christian-Muslim relations on the eve of the 20th century because it was written out of a practical knowledge of traditional Muslim accusations against the Bible, what Ignaz Goldziher later diagnosed as the *Kernpunkt* of Muslim polemic ('Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-kitāb', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 32 (1878) 341-87, pp. 363-4). The first section makes a positive case from the Qur'an for the genuineness and credibility of the Bible and briefly answers the accusations of abrogation and corruption. If appropriate and meaningful dialogue is to take place, the participants would need to allow the contents of both Bible and Qur'an into the conversation. But dialogue could not even begin if Muslims refused to give credence to the Bible on the basis of the accusation that it was corrupt, falsified or abrogated. The priority given to this subject in *Mizān* seems to have been justified by subsequent developments: both written and public Muslim responses to Pfander's writings primarily attacked the authenticity of the Bible (Kairānavī, *Izālat al-awhām, I'jāz-i 'Īsavī, Izhār al-ḥaqq*; see Powell, 'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī', pp. 51-7; Schirmacher, 'Muslim apologetics', pp. 78-81). Even decades later, writes Avril Powell, and despite any intervening Christian responses, the Indian '*ulamā*' 'continued to

affirm that the *tahrīf* issue was central to their objections to Christianity' ('Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 89).

Muslim refutations, however, did not generally pick up on what Pfander wrote about the Qur'an and Muḥammad in Part III of *Mīzān*. Instead, the response from Muslim scholars in India tended towards rationalist objections to Christian doctrines and arguments from European biblical criticism. Pfander's use of Islamic sources for the story of Muḥammad and the sayings attributed to him has rarely been examined or even noted in Western scholarship, and possibly never with nuance. Clinton Bennett suggests that Pfander's knowledge of Islam, 'based primarily on the Qur'an, was probably more accurate than that of many of his contemporaries, who relied only on European sources' ('Legacy', p. 77). Pfander's knowledge of the earliest sources available to him in Persian and Arabic could reasonably be seen as an academic advance or a movement towards meaningful engagement with his Muslim interlocutors. Curiously he has seldom been granted credit for either. In *Mīzān*, he claimed to be passing on the account from the Muslim narratives, while in his brief *Remarks on the nature of Muhammadanism, traditions* (Calcutta, 1840), he worked comfortably with both Sunnī and Shī'ī collections of Hadith. His use of these foundational sources is not the perpetuation of medieval polemic based on ignorance and fear, but can rather be understood as a pioneering reading of the sources in their original languages and sometimes in manuscript, in the light of the most recent academic research, along with a Christian response. Whether or not Pfander could be 'fundamentally sympathetic to Muhammad or to Islam' after becoming familiar with the sources, as Norman Daniel seemed to require (*Islam and the West, the making of an image*, Edinburgh, 1960, p. 287), could appropriately be kept separate from the fact that he did show considerable familiarity with them.

Perhaps because of its notoriety and the response it drew, *Mīzān* has attracted a number of influential characterisations ranging from the very positive to the rather negative. Muir, writing in India in the midst of the expanding circulation of the book in Persian and Urdu translations, judged it to be of 'extraordinary value' ('The Mahomedan controversy', p. 435), praising its contents, arguments, style and printed appearance, and even recommending the immediate printing of ten thousand copies (pp. 444-6, 465, 475, 540). At the CMS, the book was known as 'a mild, temperate, and very able vindication of Christianity from the misrepresentations of Mohammedanism. It is defensive, and, of necessity, controversial, and in a becoming spirit' ('Dr. Pfander's works', *Christian Missionary Intelligencer* 15

(1864) 222-4, p. 222). And an official of the East India Company wrote from the North-West Frontier that

[n]ext to the New Testament itself, it is the book most likely to be of use among Mohammedans. The contrast between Christianity and the religion of Islam is made so strong and in such moderate language, that it seemed to create an anxiety for future inquiry and investigation. (quoted in Muir, 'The Mahomedan controversy', p. 446)

On the other hand, Bevan Jones wrote in 1932, 'Despite the vogue Pfander's writings once had, it has to be admitted that they chiefly serve today as a guide to something better'. In particular, he faulted Pfander for including negative criticisms of Islamic teachings and of the character of Muḥammad (*The people of the mosque*, pp. 238-9). Even so, *Mizān* continued to be printed through the second half of the 20th century, especially in the revised edition produced by William St Clair Tisdall in 1910 (Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 297). Christine Schirmmacher suggests that, in the modern Muslim world, *Mizān* 'continues to excite debate' and reports publication of Arabic and English editions as recent as 1986 ('Muslim apologetics', p. 76).

Mizān attracted a number of responses and refutations from Muslim writers, including a government official at Agra as early as 1845 in a book titled *Kitāb-i istiḥṣār* ('Book of questions') (Muir, 'Biographies of Mohammed for India', pp. 411-17; Stock, *History*, vol. 2, p. 170; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 226-7); from 'Alī l-Baḥrānī in his *Kitāb lisān al-ṣidq* (1890; U. Ryad, "Alī l-Baḥrānī, *CMR* 18, 555-8); into the 20th century from 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Jazīrī in 1934. In Iran, at least five responses were published in the 19th century: *Mizān al-mawāzīn fī amr al-dīn* (1871) by Najaf 'Alī Khān Dānish Tabrīzī (d. 1891) (*CMR* 20, 222-4); *Qiwām al-umma fī radd shayāṭīn al-kufra* (1873) by Āqā Najafī Iṣfahānī (d. c. 1914) (*CMR* 20, 236-9); *Hidāyat al-mustarshidīn, fī radd al-muḍillīn* (1888) and *Hidāyat al-jāhidīn* (1888) by Muḥammad Taqī Kāshānī (d. 1903) (*CMR* 20, 257-60); and *Ḥusām al-dīn dar ithbāt-i taḥrīf-i Tawrāt u Injīl* (1891) by Muḥammad Khān Kirmānī (1846-1906) (*CMR* 20, 272-5). The best-known response came from Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī in his *Izālat al-awhām* (1852-3), *Ijāz-i 'Īsavī* (1854-5) and *Izhār al-ḥaqq* (1867-8). Less well-known is the book's influence on the conversions of a number of Indian Muslims to Christianity and on their subsequent writings, among them Ṣafdar 'Alī ('The two converts', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, new series 2 (1866) 41-51, p. 46; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 289) and 'Imāduddīn Lāhiz ('The results of the controversy in north India with Mohammedans',

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Kitāb Miftāḥ al-asrār
'The key to mysteries'

DATE 1836

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Persian

DESCRIPTION

Pfander wrote *Miftāḥ al-asrār* to make a case for the deity of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity. Written in German in about 1836 and translated into Persian by Pfander himself while he was serving as a Basel Missionary in Shusha, Karabagh, it is 89 pages long in the first edition, which was published in Calcutta in 1839. After writing *Mizān al-ḥaqq*, he felt that the deity of Christ required a more complete and explicit treatment than he had provided in Part II of that work ('The Mizan-ul-haq, Miftah-ul-asrar, and Tariq-ul-hayat', *Church Missionary Intelligencer* 10 [1859] 47-8).

Together with an introduction of ten pages, *Miftāh* comprises two parts. The first sets out the teaching of the Bible on the deity (*ulūhiyyat*) of Jesus Christ in three chapters (32 pages) and the second sets out the teaching on the Trinity (*ta'lim-i taslīs*) in three further chapters (47 pages). In the introduction, Pfander briefly mentions the high regard shown to ʿĪsā in the Qur'an and adds that the truth about the identity of Jesus is not determined by reason alone but is accepted from revelation, by which he means the Old and New Testaments. He affirms that the concepts of Jesus's deity, his divine Sonship and the Trinity are mysteries (*asrār*), and the key (*miftāh*) to these is faith in the word of God, the Bible.

Pfander's case for the deity of Jesus in Part I (pp. 11-42) begins with the words of Jesus in the Gospel accounts about his identity. In ch. 2 he presents evidence for the deity of Jesus in the other writings of the New Testament, and in ch. 3 he cites passages from the Old Testament that Christians have understood to be prophecies about the deity of Jesus. He first advances Gospel passages in which Jesus claims divine attributes for himself, uses the term 'God' (*Khūdā*) for himself or permits it to be used of him by others (pp. 11-21), and then quotes passages in which Jesus refers to himself as the Son of God, together with others in which an angel or a voice from heaven calls Jesus by this title. Among the verses he cites and explains are the 'I am' sayings in the Gospel of John, where Jesus claims for himself an identity Pfander considers far above the merely human.

In ch. 2 (pp. 21-31), Pfander complements the evidence of the Gospel accounts with passages in the writings of the Apostles that declare the deity of Jesus, explaining what these mean when they call Jesus 'Son of God'. In ch. 3, he argues that the Old Testament shows Christ as the eternal Word and the revealer of the divine nature, and also that the universe was created through him (pp. 31-42).

Part II, on the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (pp. 42-89), starts with an assurance to the Muslim reader that Christians believe in only one God. Understandably, this is repeated throughout ch. 1 (pp. 42-54). Although the names 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit', under which God reveals Himself, express differences in person, there is still only one God. Pfander's 'proof' of the divinity of the Holy Spirit is an exposition of verses and passages in the Bible that refer to the three Persons of the Trinity. After he has made his case from scripture, he then shows in ch. 2 that the idea of Trinity in Unity is in no way absurd (pp. 54-72). Unity in multiplicity is found in nature, and the idea of a Trinity is not foreign to other religions. The doctrine is in accord with sound reason and the highest intelligence, yet it remains a mystery.

Pfander adds in ch. 3 (pp. 72-89) that the discussion of the Son of God and the Holy Spirit must include theological considerations such as divine attributes. This is because a doctrine of absolute unity in simplicity would lead to the paring away of attributes such as knowledge, will and power from God. He asserts that the divine attributes of justice, holiness and love are most clearly revealed in Jesus Christ and he finally appeals to his readers to accept the deity of Jesus so that they may benefit from his atoning sacrifice and his intercession for humankind.

SIGNIFICANCE

Just a few years after *Miftāḥ* was first published in Calcutta in 1839, William Muir wrote a description and analysis of the Persian text in the *Calcutta Review* ('The Mahommedan controversy', pp. 437-42). He generally found Part I satisfactory but was not able to say the same about Pfander's arguments in Part II to 'reconcile the mystery of trinity in unity with the conclusions of sound reason' (p. 439). He understood Pfander to be making the case 'that there are marks in creation which do plainly indicate the Trinity of the Creator', though he himself thought that the illustrations Pfander offered proved nothing, and to claim too much from them invited ridicule. As Muir himself saw the matter, it was very unlikely that humans would think of the doctrine of the Trinity without the assistance of revelation. Writing more than 150 years later in 1993, Avril Powell faulted the book for opposite reasons (*Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 139-43). To her, Pfander's emphasis on the importance of revelation for understanding the deity of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity was a 'rejection of human reason' (p. 41). E.M. Wherry and many other Christians in the 19th century, however, appreciated Pfander's distinctions and found the book 'to provide all that is required on this subject at present' (*Muslim controversy*, p. 13).

In this work, Pfander chose as foundation for his case the teaching of the Bible rather than philosophical arguments. A purely biblical presentation addressed to Muslims may now seem entirely familiar, but in 1839 it would have been one of the first published in Muslim languages. Pfander's choice of foundation probably reflects his German Pietist heritage, and the approval of Wherry and other Christians seems to indicate a sense of common evangelical perceptions. His approach also shows a practical knowledge of Christian-Muslim conversation, related to the strategy of arguing for the deity of Jesus first of all from Jesus's own words, as noted by Muir:

This is a very suitable arrangement, as the Mahommedans always ask first for Christ's own assertions, pretending that no statements of another party are to be received towards the proof of that which our Saviour himself did not even affect to claim. ('The Mahommedan controversy', p. 438)

Miftāḥ went through many printings and multiple editions in both Persian and Urdu from the 1840s into the 20th century, when it continued to be recommended in Christian bibliographies (Weitbrecht, *A bibliography for missionary students*, London, 1913, p. 67; Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, pp. 9-13). In 1912, William St Clair Tisdall translated and revised it into an edition by which it has since been known to English readers.

A Muslim reply to *Miftāḥ* entitled *Kashf al-astār li-kasri Miftāḥ al-asrār* ('The curtain drawn aside to show the "Key of mysteries" shattered') was published in 1845 by Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī (nephew of the Lucknow *maulvī* Āl-i Ḥasan). Muir gave a substantial description of this work as well as a discussion of the theological issues involved ('The Mahommedan controversy', pp. 466-75). A few years later, Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī published an Urdu tract attacking Pfander's explanation of the Trinity in a work titled *Aṣṣaḥḥ al-aḥādīth fī ibṭāl al-tathlīth* ('Most clear sayings in refutation of the Trinity', Delhi, 1854; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 226-9).

PUBLICATIONS

Archives Basel, Basel Mission Archives – G.36a Karl G. Pfander, *Kitāb Miftāḥ al-asrār*, first Persian edition, Calcutta, 1839

K.G. Pfander, *Kitāb Miftāḥ al-asrār*, Agra, 1843, 1850² (Hindustani/Urdu trans.)

Archives Basel, Basel Mission Archives – G 36b Karl G. Pfander, *Kitāb Miftāḥ ul-asrār*, Agra, 1850²

Karl Gottlieb Pfander, *Kitāb Miftāḥ ul-asrār*, Istanbul, 1861 (Turkish trans.)

K.G. Pfander, *Kitāb Miftāḥ al-asrār*, Agra, 1862⁴

K.G. Pfander, *Miftāḥ ul-asrār*, Lahore, 1895⁵ (Urdu trans.)

K.G. Pfander, *The Miftah ul asrar*, Lahore, [n.d.] (Urdu trans.)

K.G. Pfander, *Miftāḥ ul-asrār* (*The key of mysteries*). *A treatise of the doctrine of Trinity in Unity*, London, 1912 (revised and English trans. by W. St Clair Tisdall); Pfander/Miftahul (digitised version available through muhammadanism.org)

K.G. Pfander, *Miftāḥ al-asrār*, Cairo, 1921 (Arabic trans. of Tisdall's 1912 revision); Pfander/miftahul_arabic (digitised version available through muhammadanism.org)

STUDIES

Powell, *Muslims and missionaries in pre-Mutiny India*

E.M. Wherry, *Muslim controversy*, London, 1905

W. Muir, 'The Mahommedan controversy', *Calcutta Review* 4 (1845)
418-75

Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt
'The way of life'

DATE 1836

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Persian

DESCRIPTION

Pfander wrote *Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt*, a treatise on sin and redemption, with especial reference to the false views entertained by the Muhammedans on these doctrines in 1836, when he was in Shusha, Karabagh (it was published in Calcutta in 1840). Running to 194 pages in the Persian original, more than twice as long as his earlier *Miftāḥ al-asrār* (1839) but shorter than his better-known *Mizān al-ḥaqq* (1836), it focuses on Christian teachings about sin and salvation. His reason for writing it was that he felt the doctrine of sin and redemption 'required a more complete and explicit treatment than the plan of the Mizan would allow' ('The Mizan-ul-Haq, Miftah-ul-Asrar, and Tariq-ul-Hayat'; cf. Muir, 'The Mahommedan controversy', p. 442; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 138).

Ṭarīq is divided into three parts, together with an introduction of six pages, which portrays the unhappy condition of humanity, makes an initial case that this condition is due to sin and asserts that the true meaning of sin must be sought in the word of God. In Part I (pp. 6-61), Pfander sets out his understanding of the origin and nature of sin, and its consequences; in Part II (pp. 61-153), he explains the way of escape from sin and its consequences, including the ways proposed by Islam and other faiths; and in Part III (pp. 153-94), he describes the fruits or results (*natā'ij*) of the salvation offered by Jesus Christ.

Pfander opens Part I with an explanation in ch. 1 of the sin of Adam and Eve according to Genesis and the understanding in Christian tradition of the effects of this as set out in the Old and New Testaments (pp. 7-42). He examines the particular biblical insight that the real evil of human sin lies in intention, distinguishing this from the Islamic concept of minor and

major sins (*ṣaghīra wa-kabīra*). Sin is universal, he writes, and has even touched the prophets of God. In ch. 2, he traces the dreadful consequences of sin in this world and the next (pp. 42-62), asserting that the denial of sin is a rejection of the witness of the senses on the one hand and the holiness of God on the other.

The substantial Part II presents various ways through which humans have sought to escape sin and its consequences. It begins with a general consideration of human reasoning about God's mercy, repentance and reformation, which Pfander argues cannot be real reasons for forgiveness or remission of sins (pp. 62-76), and then surveys the ways of salvation proposed by the Zoroastrians, Hindus and Buddhists (pp. 76-110), and finally the Muslims (pp. 110-27). He judges that all these are false promises that doom their devotees to disappointment. Part II ends with a detailed explanation of the way of salvation taught in the Gospel (*nijāt dar Injīl*, pp. 127-53). Here, Pfander particularly emphasises the atonement for sin that God has provided for humanity in the crucifixion of Christ.

In Part III, he describes in detail the fruits of salvation through Jesus Christ (pp. 153-92). Forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, he asserts, lead to a life of sincere prayer, meaningful communion with God, and hope of everlasting glory and happiness. The book closes with an appeal to the reader to accept the 'way of life' set forth in the Gospel (pp. 192-4).

SIGNIFICANCE

Pfander's inclusion, along with the views of other faiths, of a careful and detailed explanation of Christian teaching on the themes of sin and salvation in the scholarly terminology of Muslim leaders in 19th-century India was a significant contribution to Christian-Muslim engagement. Protestant and Pietist teachings about sin and salvation had already been presented to Muslims in south India in the writings of German Pietist missionaries such as Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg (1682-1719) and Benjamin Schultze (1689-1760), but not in the Muslim heartland of the north before Pfander.

Tarīq al-ḥayāt appeared in many printings and multiple editions in Persian and Urdu from 1840 until its English translation and revision by W. St Clair Tisdall in 1912. It received high praise from readers who shared Pfander's beliefs, including in a review written in India by the British civil servant William Muir, who wrote in 1845 that it 'stands unrivalled as an exposition of Christian doctrine in Persian' ('The Mahomedan controversy', p. 444). Muir considered the book's subject 'of extreme importance

[...] above all to the Mahommedan' because of what he perceived to be Islam's 'loose and imperfect ideas of sin in general' and lack of a concept of 'inward sin' in particular (p. 442). He commended Pfander's method of describing the Christian doctrine thoroughly before making a comparison with corresponding tenets in Islam (p. 443), though his praise was most effusive for Pfander's use of Persian:

The *Tariq ul Hyat* displays an uncommon exuberance of language and richness of diction – a perfect facility in the Persian idiom, and a degree of ease in adopting elegant and appropriate illustration, which astonishes the Mahommedans of this country, and perplexes them to account for the *Padre's* accomplishments. (p. 444)

At the beginning of the 20th century, the American missionary E.M. Wherry agreed with Muir about the style and language of *Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt* and wrote 'it is hard to find a book better suited to be placed in the hands of any earnest Muslim' (*Muslim controversy*, p. 8).

On the other hand, Avril Powell has written disparagingly about Pfander's 'Pietistic evangelical stance' in *Ṭarīq*, asserting that he was 'incapable' of getting beyond a 'Eurocentric' and 'Orientalist' perspective (*Muslims and missionaries*, p. 144). She also seeks to contrast what it contains about 'sin and salvation' with medieval Christian apologetic – a view that might legitimately be queried (G. Nickel, 'Jesus', in A. Rippin and J. Mojaddedi (eds), *The Wiley Blackwell companion to the Qur'an*, 2nd edition, Oxford, 2017, 288-302, pp. 293-9). Pietists and other evangelicals did not conceive of their approach as an innovation, but rather looked to biblical revelation as the source of their teachings on these subjects in line with traditional Christianity. In terms of Muslim-Christian relations, however, it is difficult to understand why individual Christian contributions to serious theological engagement should be discounted simply because they do not match all other eras and expressions. Pfander's explanations of Christian teaching on sin and atonement were common understandings among a wide variety of communions in England, Europe and North America, and also among civil servants and missionaries in India, during the 19th-century (D.W. Bebbington, 'Atonement, sin, and empire, 1880-1914', in A. Porter (ed.), *The imperial horizons of British Protestant missions, 1880-1914*, Grand Rapids MI, 2003, 14-31, pp. 16-18), and are even more widespread today in the churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Muir suggested that there were ideas within *Ṭarīq* to which an Indian Muslim of his day would not want to respond because they were 'most foreign to his purposes and desires' ('The Mahommedan controversy', p. 444). Indeed, there seem to have been no responses to the work written in South

Asia. However, this was not the case in Iran, where at least three responses were published in the 19th century: *Nuṣrat al-dīn* (1850) by Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1871) (*CMR* 20, 213-18); *Sabīl al-najāt* (1884) by Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Mar'ashī Shahrastānī (1840-98) (*CMR* 20, 244-8); and *Anīs al-a'lam fī nuṣrat al-Islām* (1894) by Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṣādiq Fakhr al-Islām (d. 1914) (*CMR* 20, 335-7).

PUBLICATIONS

- Archives Basel, Basel Mission Archives – G.37a Carl G. Pfander, *Kitāb Ṭarīq ul-ḥayāt*, Calcutta, 1840
- K.G. Pfander, *Kitāb Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt*, Agra, 1847²; *Tarik_ul_hayat_a_treatise_on_sin_and_red* (digitised version available through Google Books)
- K.G. Pfander, *Kitāb Ṭarīq ul-ḥayāt. The Way of Life in Urdu*, Lodiana, 1847 (Urdu trans.); 103022520 (digitised version available through Hathi Trust)
- K.G. Pfander, *Kitāb Ṭarīq ul-ḥayāt. The Way of Life in Urdu*, Agra, 1853 (Urdu trans.)
- K.G. Pfander, *Ṭarīq ul-ḥayāt*, Lahore, [s.d.] (Urdu trans.)
- K.G. Pfander, *Tariq ul hayat*, London, 1862⁴
- K.G. Pfander, *Ṭarīq ul-ḥayāt*, Ludhiana, 1875⁴ (Urdu trans.)
- K.G. Pfander, *Ṭarīq ul-ḥayāt*, [s.l.], [s.d.] (fifth Urdu edition, see Weitbrecht, *Descriptive catalogue and review of Urdu Christian literature, 1886-1901*, Lahore, 1902, p. 71)
- K.G. Pfander, *Ṭarīqu 'l-hyāt* (*'The path of life'*), trans. and revised by W. St Clair Tisdall, London, 1912 (English trans.); Pfander/Tariqu (digitised version available through muhammadanism.org)

STUDIES

Powell, *Muslims and missionaries in pre-Mutiny India*

Remarks on the nature of Muhammadanism, traditions

DATE 1840

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE English

DESCRIPTION

Remarks on the nature of Muhammadanism, traditions is a booklet of 38 pages that Pfander wrote to provide information about the Hadiths

that played a large part in the doctrines of Islam in Persia and India, as he had personally discovered. He drew the traditions he included from the *Mishkāt al-maṣābīh* of al-Tibrīzī (fl. 1337) and from three works of the Persian scholar Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1699), *Ḥayāt al-qulūb*, *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* and *ʿAyn al-ḥayāt*.

Pfander states his intentions for the book at the outset as being to offer a counterbalance to what he considered the presentation of only the 'fair side' of Islam (p. 3). The Hadiths and theological writings, he feels, will reveal the negative side of the religion. The main part of the book then sets out descriptions and translations from the chosen sources under the headings 'God' (pp. 6-9), 'Creation' (pp. 9-22), 'The nature of sin' (pp. 22-5), 'The means of forgiveness of sin' (pp. 25-31), 'The nature of the punishment of Hell' (pp. 31-4) and 'Paradise' (pp. 34-49). The book ends with a sharp evaluation and appeal to the reader.

Pfander judges that, according to what the Hadiths teach, knowledge of God in Islam has no practical value – it leaves the heart unaffected and unaltered. God is far off and there is no relationship with Him such as that of a child to a father (p. 6). While the sources mention the moral attributes of God, they seem to treat these lightly, and Muslim prayer is ritual in nature, a heavy burden rather than a delight (pp. 7-8). Traditions about creation seem to highlight the appearance and huge size of angels. They also emphasise that Muḥammad was the first created being (p. 11) and make plentiful claims about his sinlessness and his miracles (pp. 11-17).

The heart of Pfander's discussion of the traditions would appear to be the section on sin and the means of forgiveness (pp. 22-30). He finds little awareness of the holiness of God and of the actual nature of human sin; it is an external act, so lying is permitted under certain conditions, especially in the Shīʿī sources, and evil thoughts are not counted as sin (pp. 23-5). Pfander describes the means of forgiveness in the traditions as 'God's mercy, faith in God and Muḥammad, and repentance' (p. 26), but writes that these are found inadequate by Muslims, who add the intercession of Muḥammad, good work, and repetition of phrases and verses (p. 26). He quotes the tradition from *Mishkāt* that relates that Muḥammad alone among the prophets was found worthy to intercede with God (pp. 26-7).

About Hadiths on Paradise, Pfander writes, 'All is sensual enjoyment there' (p. 34). He translates multiple traditions from the Shīʿī works *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, *ʿAyn al-ḥayāt* and *Ḥayāt al-qulūb* about all the women who will be given to men in the garden, about eating and drinking, including wine, about birds and trees and other features of 'Behesht' (pp. 34-8), and he

finds that the corresponding Sunnī traditions in *Mishkāt* ‘are the same and of no better nature’ (p. 38). In fact, his sense that the ‘improper’ ways in which paradise is referred to (p. 38) seems to set the tone for his very negative judgement on Islam in the closing pages of the book (pp. 39-40). He claims to have proved the ‘assertions’ he made at the start about the ‘dark side’ of Islam, and urges his Christian readers in Calcutta to ensure that ‘the light of the Gospel, reflected in the holy walk and conversation of true believers [...] be made to shine upon [Muslims] in its unadulterated heavenly splendour’ (p. 41).

SIGNIFICANCE

Remarks was Pfander’s earliest publication for English readers, appearing more than 25 years before the English translation of his Persian *Mizān al-ḥaqq*. It therefore provides an insight into the thought of a well-known and widely characterised figure in Christian-Muslim relations at an early point of his work in 19th-century India. From the first page to the last, Pfander is concerned about issues of truth, which he judges according to the criteria of his own Christian faith. He combines this with a facility in the languages of Islam and an attention to the details of Muslim texts that he feels are important for a balanced understanding of the doctrines of Islam. The timing of this description of Muslim traditions in English in 1840 is noteworthy. The Hadith collection *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ* had been translated into English in India in 1809-10 by A.N. Matthews (*CMR* 24, 97-101), but little use had been made of it by Western scholars before Pfander’s booklet (see p. 3). Aloys Sprenger’s discussion of Muslim traditions (*Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad nach bisher grösstentheils unbenutzten Quellen*, Berlin, vol. 3, pp. lxxvii-civ) was published only in 1865, and William Muir’s critique of Sprenger’s discussion – from India – appeared after this (‘Value of early Mahometan historical sources’, *Calcutta Review* 46 [1868] 349-90). Ignác Goldziher’s famous *Muhammedanische Studien* had to wait until 1889, and it was only in 1905 that E.M. Wherry wrote that the English reader who wanted to become familiar with Muslim traditions was still limited to Matthews’s *Mishcāt ul Masābih* (*Muslim controversy*, London, 1905, pp. viii-ix). As for Shī‘ī traditions, Pfander may have been the first to translate and describe the collections of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī into Western languages. Along with these sources, which he found to be recently published and popular in Tehran, Pfander presented information about common Muslim beliefs and practices that he had heard of and observed from living among Muslims in Karabagh, Persia, and India over the course of 15 years.

Pfander's Pietist understanding of Christianity seems to be reflected in the attention he gave to the nature of sin, the means of forgiveness, punishments and rewards. In 1840, he also published his Persian *Ṭarīq al-ḥayāt*, subtitled 'A treatise on sin and redemption, with especial reference to the false views entertained by the Muhammedans on these doctrines'. His Pietist background probably influenced him to take his investigation of Muslim traditions deeper than others: for example, he suggests that prayer in the form of bowing on one's knees 'in the closet' before God to pour out one's heart and ask forgiveness for one's sins 'and strength from on high to walk in His paths', may well be unknown among Muslims (p. 8). He also distinguishes Christian prayer from Sufi 'internal contemplation' that aims at 'absorption of the mind into the Divine Being' (p. 8). Simply because religious practices are known by the same term across religions does not mean that they are the same in reality.

PUBLICATIONS

K.G. Pfander, *Remarks on the nature of Muhammadanism, traditions*, Calcutta, 1840; BV001627534 (digitised version available through MDZ)

K.G. Pfander, *Remarks on the nature of Muhammadanism, traditions*, London, 1858²

Ḥall ul-ishkāl

'The solution of ambiguity'

DATE 1847

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Urdu

DESCRIPTION

Ḥall ul-ishkāl (in full, *Kitāb Ḥall ul-ishkāl, dar javāb Kashf ul-astār wa Kitāb-i istiḥṣār ma'a murāsālāt ta'līf kashīsh Fānḍar ṣāḥib*, "The solution of ambiguity" in response to "The curtain drawn aside" and "The book of questions", with exchange of letters, written by pastor Pfander') is an Urdu book published by Pfander in 1847 to answer the responses of three Indian Muslims to the Persian translation of his *Mizān al-ḥaqq* (1839) and *Miftāḥ al-asrār* (1839). It is a short compendium of Christian-Muslim written engagement in mid-19th-century India, involving Pfander and William Muir (CMR 24, 666-96) together with the Muslim scholars Sayyid Āl-i Ḥasan (c. 1801-early 1870s, Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 181 n. 79,

186), Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī (1813-58) and Sayyid ‘Abdullāh Sabzvārī (about whom Pfander ‘could discover no details’, Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 171). In addition to Pfander’s correspondence with Āl-i Ḥasan and Sabzvārī, *Hall* includes his replies to Hādī’s Persian *Kashf al-astār li-kasri Miftāh ul-aṣrār* (“The curtain drawn aside to show the “The key of mysteries” shattered’, Lucknow, 1845) and Āl-i Ḥasan’s Urdu *Kitāb-i istifsār* (‘Book of questions’, Lucknow, 1846).

Hall begins with Pfander’s response to *Kashf al-astār*, which runs to 84 pages, after which follows an Urdu translation of Muir’s remarks on *Kashf* (pp. 85-92; from ‘The Mahommedan controversy’, *The Calcutta Review* 4 [1845] 418-75, pp. 466-75). Next come ‘Ten perfect questions’ put to Pfander by Sabzvārī of Lucknow with Pfander’s replies (pp. 93-8), and then Pfander’s reply of 65 pages to *Kitāb-i istifsār* (pp. 99-164). The work concludes with an appendix of 62 pages containing the entire correspondence between Pfander and Āl-i Ḥasan written between 1844 and 1845.

In *Hall*, Pfander defends the explanations of the contents of the Bible and Christian teaching on the deity of Christ, the divine Sonship of Jesus and the Trinity that he had given earlier in his *Miftāh al-aṣrār* (especially in response to the critique of *Kashf al-astār*) and in his replies to Sabzvārī’s ‘Ten perfect questions’. He also repeats the case for the authenticity and reliability of the Bible made earlier in the first main section of his *Mizān al-ḥaqq* – fully ten of the 18 ‘questions’ in *Kitāb-i istifsār* attacked the genuineness and authority of the Bible. In fact, Pfander also needed to defend the Bible in his response to *Kashf al-astār*: on the basis of Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī’s claim that the deity of Jesus and the Trinity were ‘impossible’, *Kashf* declared the New Testament text corrupted.

A third theme of *Hall* is answers to objections to the Christian doctrine of new birth. Muir’s detailed English description and evaluation of *Kashf al-astār*, included in *Hall* in Urdu translation, appeared remarkably soon after the publication of *Kashf* (‘The Mahommedan controversy’, pp. 465-75). In the same essay, Muir also included a brief description of Pfander’s correspondence with Āl-i Ḥasan attached at the end of *Hall* (pp. 449-50). Several years after the publication of *Hall*, Muir offered a commentary on *Kitāb-i istifsār* (‘Biographies of Mohammed’, *The Calcutta Review* 17 (1852) 378-421, pp. 411-17). The letters between Pfander and Āl-i Ḥasan had also been printed, in both Roman Urdu and English translation, in the Urdu monthly paper *Khair Khvāh-i Hind*, and the correspondence with Sabzvārī had appeared in English translation in the *Calcutta Christian Intelligencer*. In the preface to his response to *Kashf al-astār* (*Hall*, pp. 1-5), Pfander challenges the book’s claim to be a ‘shattering’ (*kasr*) of his *Miftāh* and

a successful argument that all questions of truth should be decided by human understanding. This thesis of *Kashf*, that ‘no one can believe what his mind fails to comprehend’, goes against Islam itself, writes Pfander, but even so, he dedicates the first part of his response to ‘intellectual objections’ (*Hall*, pp. 5-29). This line of attack on both his *Mizān* and his *Miftāh* proved to be a major element in the refutations and correspondence, and Pfander was obliged to respond in *Hall*.

In describing the correspondence between Pfander and Āl-i Ḥasan, Muir wrote that Āl-i Ḥasan’s approach was typical of ‘the most sensible and intelligent Mussulmans’: ‘they erect blinded reason into a sovereign judge, before which every thing must bow, and they find that a very summary and convenient mode of despatching the claims of Christianity’ (‘The Mahommedan controversy’, p. 450). Further on in his review of *Kashf*, Muir suggests that this approach is not used by Muslim opponents out of conviction but rather as a kind of temporary pose ‘assumed for the nonce’ to refute Christian arguments, because ‘they dare not apply the rule to their own faith’ (‘The Mahommedan controversy’, p. 470; *Hall*, p. 89). Avril Powell has also picked up on Āl-i Ḥasan’s ‘scholastic mode of argument’ in his correspondence with Pfander and in his *Kitāb-i istifsār*, and on Pfander’s response in *Hall* (Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 188-9), helpfully locating the polemical approach of *Kashf al-astār* in the particular philosophical atmosphere among the ‘*ulamā*’ in Lucknow in the early 1840s (pp. 173-7). Hādī, she explains, put aside the traditional Muslim apologetic and polemical approach to highlight instead ‘an overriding philosophical argument about the role of reason in determining religious truth’ (p. 173). By contrast, she characterises Pfander’s approach as a ‘reduction of the role of reason to a mere common sense “checking” function on the injunctions of revelation’ (p. 174). With his Muslim interlocutors, Pfander made the case that ‘the nature of the relevant test [...] should be “spiritual” not “rational”’ (*Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 176-7).

Accurate understanding of this written exchange is assisted by the account of his interaction with Hādī’s *Kashf* that Pfander wrote at the very time that he was composing his rejoinder (‘Letter’). Writing from Simla during a break from his usual busy schedule in Agra, Pfander says that he has read *Kashf* carefully, quoting extensively from it in his letter. In light of this account, Powell’s characterisation of Pfander’s approach to reason could possibly leave a false impression. In thinking through Hādī’s arguments, Pfander disagrees not with the use of reason but with Hādī’s insistence on the unassailable supremacy of reason. As great as reason is, writes Pfander, reason also has limits beyond which it cannot go. No human

logical formulation has the power to judge revelation when it comes to the deity of Jesus or the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Godhead (see Muir, 'The Mahommedan controversy', p. 470). Pfander notes that while Hādī has denied to Christians the right to believe that some affirmations about God are 'mysteries' (*asrār*), Hādī has himself acknowledged that there are some things that reason cannot judge, 'and in regard to them the doctors of law say that because such and such a question is beyond the province of reason, therefore it must be believed on the authority of hearing, i.e. of revelation and tradition' ('Letter'). Instead of this, Pfander wants Hādī to face the 'historical' question that he posed in *Mizān*: whether the text of the Bible has been altered since positive and respectful expressions about *Tawrāt* and *Injīl* were made in the Qur'an. One other important indication of the nature of the exchange from this letter is Hādī's attempt on the one hand to deny Christian belief in the deity of Jesus on the basis that it is impossible and that the Bible has been corrupted, and on the other hand to claim that Muḥammad is attested to in biblical passages such as Isaiah 42, Psalm 2 and even Isaiah 53 ('Letter').

SIGNIFICANCE

Hall ul-ishkāl may be one of the best examples of written engagement between Christians and Muslims in which deep theological disagreements are carefully considered and answered in the language and idiom of the other. Muir described Pfander's reply to *Kashf* as 'brief and pertinent', and judged the attacks in *Istifsār* to have been 'ably noticed and well refuted' by Pfander ('Biographies of Mohammed', p. 417). In the new century, E.M. Wherry acknowledged that *Hall* possessed some value as 'a discussion with the learned doctors of Islam', but suggested that, by 1905, the book was no longer suited to the conditions 'which at present exist in connection with the Muslim controversy' (*Muslim controversy*, p. 14).

Hall highlights a dimension of Pfander's writings that is often overlooked or perhaps even deliberately neglected amid negative criticism of his faith and methods. Before he wrote it, he had presented Christianity to north Indian Muslim leaders in three Persian treatises and Urdu translations of them (1839-46), in doing this arguably honouring their languages and seeking to express Christian teaching in their scholarly idiom. He had addressed his readers directly and invited written responses. (In his 1846 letter, Pfander writes that in July 1842 he sent his books to the *mujtahid* of Lucknow, Sayyid Muḥammad Naṣīrābādī, with an invitation to respond.) He was very probably the only European Christian who entered India in the 19th century with the ability not only to present Christian teaching to

the Muslim mind in Persian and Urdu, but also to welcome, read and comprehend Muslim first-language critiques of his books and to offer written replies to those critiques.

The Muslim written responses to Pfander's books to which he replies in *Hall* show that attacks on the integrity of the Bible were central to Muslim polemic in South Asia in the middle decades of the 19th century. Prior to Pfander's defence of the Bible in *Mizān al-ḥaqq*, South Asian Muslims were the inheritors of a millennium of well-developed accusations against the Bible from medieval Islam (see Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, Princeton NJ, 1982, p. 220) in which the charge of *tahrif* was the nub of Muslim polemic (Goldziher, 'Ueber muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahli Kitāb', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 32/2 (1878) 341-87, pp. 344, 364). In the 1840s, refutations of Pfander followed the way of rationalist assault, exemplified by *Kashf* and *Istifsār*. Muir lamented that, as long as Pfander's opponents refused to acknowledge the limits of reason in theological matters and declined to apply this rule evenly to their own faith, 'we have little hope from Mahomedan discussion' ('Mahomedan controversy', p. 470).

For a realistic understanding of Christian-Muslim relations in India in the middle of the 19th century, it is important to recognise that *Kashf* and *Istifsār* were not objections to the judgements on the Qur'an and Muḥammad that Pfander had expressed in his *Mizān*, but were rather attacks on the case for the authenticity of the Bible he had made in *Mizān* and his commending of the deity of Jesus on the basis of the Bible in *Miftāh*. The effect of the Muslim attacks was, on the one hand, to forbid the use of the Bible in the encounter and, on the other, thereby to rule Christian expressions of faith out of order. Muslim accusations of *tahrif* continued throughout the 1850s, through the twin strategies of the use of European 'higher' criticism and the challenge to public debate (see *Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥasah kā* below). Muslim writers in India continued to push this particular polemic into the 20th century and indeed into modern times, when, among contemporary Muslims, the doctrine of the textual corruption of the Bible is 'virtually unchallenged' (K. Zebiri, *Muslims and Christians face to face*, Oxford, 1997, p. 6).

Beyond the Muslim disagreement with Pfander's books, *Hall* also portrays an unusual – perhaps unique – combination of a German missionary and a British civil servant who both knew Arabic, Persian and Urdu, were able to read and understand Muslim religious writings and describe and analyse them for others in English, and could compose direct responses

to Muslim interlocutors in their preferred language. Muir expressed open admiration for the German apologist in 1845: 'Let him not forget the singular advantages and talents he possesses – nor abandon his post of champion of Christianity among the Mahommedans' ('The Mahomedan controversy', p. 450), and he later provided scholarly logistical support to Pfander with his *Testimony borne by the Coran to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures* (Agra, 1855) and his massive four-volume *Life of Mahomet* (London, 1857-61, see vol. 1, preface, p. iii). Powell states that by 1845 Muir had been 'co-opted to lend scholarly assistance to Pfander' (*Muslims and missionaries*, p. 177), but without providing any evidence that Muir's support was less than completely genuine (cf. *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 147). Though from different national backgrounds, the two individuals represented Christian communities in Europe that had already considered high claims for reason and rationalism in the wake of the Enlightenment and had formulated their own concepts of the relationship of reason to revelation. The scholastic arguments in the books and the correspondence written by the Lucknow 'ulamā' were thus remarkably familiar. Pfander and Muir did not agree with assertions about the autocratic supremacy of human reason, but that is not the same as saying that they devalued reason or interacted with Muslims irrationally.

PUBLICATIONS

K.G. Pfander, *Hall ul-ishkāl, a reply to Kashf-ul-astar and Kitab-i-istifsar*, Agra, 1847; 23161204 (digitised version available through e.rara.ch)

Archives Basel, Basel Mission – Archives C.VI.g.1 *Kitāb Hall al-ishkāl, dar javāb Kashf al-astār wa Kitāb-i istifsār ma'a murāsālāt ta'līf kashīsh Fandar Şāhib*, Akbarabad, 1847 (English title given: *Hall-ul-Ishkal; a reply to Kashf-ul-astar and Kitab-i-istifsar*)

Archives Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library – Church Missionary Society Archive CMS:CI/0227/15 C.G. Pfander, letter to Rev. J. Innes, Simla, 24 August 1846 (draft held at Basel Mission Archives)

STUDIES

A.A. Powell, *Muslims and missionaries in pre-Mutiny India*, London, 1993, p. 172

B.D. Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India*, Princeton NJ, 1982

Gordon Nickel

Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥasah kā
 ‘Conclusion of the religious discussion’

DATE 1855

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Urdu

DESCRIPTION

Over time, various versions of the story of the public debate held between Karl Gottlieb Pfander and Raḥmatullāh Kairānavī (1810-91; *CMR* 24, 253-60) in Agra in April 1854 have become better known than the writings of the debate partners themselves. *Ikhtitām dīnī mubāḥasah kā*, *main dō khat pādri Fāndar ṣāḥib ne mauvī Raḥmatullāh aur Muḥammad Wazīr Khān ṣāḥib kō mubāḥasah ke bāb main likhe hain* (‘Conclusion of the religious discussion, together with two letters that Padri Fāndar wrote to Maulvi Raḥmatullāh and Wazir Khān with regard to the discussion’) is Pfander’s own published Urdu statement about it, in 155 pages, written during the year that followed. According to this, Kairānavī and his ‘second’, Muḥammad Wazīr Khān, challenged Pfander to a public debate during the early months of 1854, first through his younger missionary colleague Thomas Valpy French (1825-91; *CMR* 24, 338-44) (Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 240-2). Pfander agreed to participate, though reluctantly (‘Movements among Mahomedans’, p. 254), and French became his assistant in the debate, which was held in Agra on 10 and 11 April 1854.

The book’s subtitle indicates which particular *mubāḥasah* (‘discussion’) is being referred to in its mention of the names of Pfander’s opponents. Some Western repositories cite the work as *Ikhtitāmi mubāḥisa*, which can be rendered as ‘the last discussion’ (e.g. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Google books). This is a mistake based on the transliteration of the Urdu book title. The letter ‘i’ at the end of *Ikhtitāmi* is a preposition to make it a possessive compound, and in transliteration it should come after a space or hyphen. *Ikhtitām-i mubāḥasah* would thus be the correct transliteration of the Urdu for ‘Conclusion of the discussion’.

Ikhtitām is not a report of the 1854 debate, but rather contains materials from Pfander’s wider interfaith conversation with Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān, which includes reflections on – and even a continuation of – the debate. It was published in 1855 at the Secundra Orphan Press, Agra, and its contents are presented in three sections: the *muqaddima*, or preface (pp. 1-8); the substance of the discussion between Pfander and his interlocutors set out in 11 *maqāsid* or resolutions (pp. 9-116); and an appendix

containing a letter to Kairānavī and a letter to Wazīr Khān (pp. 117-54). On the final page is a list of spelling mistakes and corrections.

Pfander begins by noting recent publications written by Kairānavī with the help of Wazīr Khān (pp. 1-2). Much of the contents of these new books, he claims, he has already answered pre-emptively in his *Mizān al-ḥaqq* (1839) and *Miftāḥ al-asrār* (1839) and especially in his *Ḥall ul-ishkāl* (1847), his response to two earlier works of Muslim polemic, *Kashf al-astār* (1845) and *Kitāb-i istifsār* (1845). What is new in the books, he writes, is Kairānavī's use of material from European authors, whom Pfander considers atheists and apostates, and the views of heretical Christian groups. He writes that, because Kairānavī has not answered the arguments that Pfander raised related to abrogation and other issues, he will now present that material in this book.

The 11 resolutions presented in the main part of *Ikhtitām* can be roughly divided into five key concerns, the most prominent being the authenticity of the Bible and Muslim theories of abrogation. Pfander also addresses the subject of biblical manuscripts (*maqṣid* 6), the identity of Jesus (9 and 10), and the status of the Qur'an and Muḥammad (11). Fully four of the *maqāṣid* defend the authenticity and genuineness of the *Tawrāt* and the *Injīl* as the word of God (2, 3, 4, and 7). Pfander responds to the Muslim argument that Jesus's Apostles were not prophets, and thus to the Muslim accusation that the writings of the New Testament authors do not qualify as divine revelation (pp. 15-22). Rather, he asserts, the Apostles were ordained by Jesus himself; they were able to perform miracles, and whatever they taught or said was the teaching of Jesus and the word of God. He argues that Jesus's Apostles were prophets like the prophets of the Old Testament – and in some respects exceeded them. Further on this point, Pfander explains what he means by his use of the term *ilhām* ('inspiration') (pp. 33-44). God's word came to the prophets through a voice, in a vision or dream, or directly to the prophet's heart. Since these words were given to the prophets through inspiration, he argues, they are divinely revealed. Prophets and Apostles are not infallible in other aspects, but they are infallible when it comes to the writing of the message and its propagation. Here Pfander is basically giving a Christian doctrine of scripture, and he takes the term *ilhām* from the Urdu translation of 2 Timothy 3:16 (p. 35). (Powell explains how the term *ilhām* became a source of confusion between Pfander and Wazīr Khān in their correspondence following the debate; see 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 84-5).

Pfander also highlights passages from the Qur'an that are positive and respectful towards the *Tawrāt* and the *Injīl* (pp. 61-7), as he had done

earlier in his *Mizān ul-ḥaqq* (1839, pp. 15-18). His challenge to Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān is that they should accept the pre-Islamic scriptures that the Qur'an describes as the word of God. If they insist that the *Injil* referred to in the Qur'an is a different book from the present Gospel, the onus is on them to produce a copy. Also, from *Mizān*, Pfander repeats his list of other 'evidence' that the *Tawrāt* and the *Injil* are the Word of God (pp. 23-33), including the claims that the *Injil* satisfies the heart and spirit of the believer; that it leads to repentance, forgiveness, salvation and cleansing of the heart; and that it connects believers to God through Jesus Christ.

Three resolutions relate to Islamic theories of abrogation, which was the designated topic on the first day of the April 1854 Agra debate (Pfander, 'Movements among Mahommedans', p. 254; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 245). Pfander argues that the Torah was not abrogated by the Gospel (pp. 9-14). He quotes extensively from Gospel passages in which Jesus cited the Old Testament, thereby showing that he accepted the earlier scripture and did not doubt it. Here Pfander needed to contend with the accusations of the second-century Christian philosopher Justin Martyr that the Jews altered the text of the Septuagint (cf. Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 249). Islamic theories of abrogation start with the effort to resolve contradictions within the Qur'an and extend to the claim that successive scriptures cancel one another with time (J. Burton, 'Abrogation', *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. J.D. McAuliffe, Leiden, 2001, vol. 1, 11-19, p. 11). Pfander deals with the claim that he had heard from Muslims through substantial faith conversation, as he had done earlier in *Mizān* (1839, pp. 18-31), and as he had reported from the debate ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 255; but cf. Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 246): the argument that the *Injil* is abrogated (*mansūkh*) by the Qur'an just like the Gospel (allegedly) abrogates the Torah (pp. 44-7). Pfander addresses this claim from the witness of Christ and his disciples, quoting Luke 21:33 and Matthew 24:35 where Jesus said his word would never be changed or abrogated by anything till the end of the world. He also cites Galatians 1:8 and 1 Peter 1:23-5 to argue that nothing will be considered gospel (*euangelion*) except what Christ gave. Christian teaching about the abrogation of the Torah, Pfander explains, cannot be compared to the Muslim concept of abrogation: the Torah itself has not been replaced, but rather what it contains about rituals such as sacrifices is not applicable after the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus. Further, personal likes or dislikes of Gospel content, or the opinions of Muslim scholars that some verses do not make sense, do not amount to proof of abrogation or alteration (*tahrif*). Pfander wants to say that the personal likes or dislikes

of Muslim scholars are not a standard, nor is it valid to say that a particular verse is beyond a particular scholar's understanding. Instead, he believes that the standard is for Muslim scholars to prove that a particular verse was not revealed in the Bible (pp. 67-9). Here he repeats his debate challenge to Muslims to either present a copy of the *Injil* that they hold to be the *Injil* referred to positively in the Qur'an, or accept that the Gospel presently in the possession of the 'People of the Book' is the same as the Qur'an's *Injil* ('Movements among Mohammedans', p. 256).

Beyond the material on abrogation, the *Ikhtitām* resolution that relates most closely to the Agra debate is Pfander's discussion of manuscripts of the New Testament (pp. 47-61). In Muslim tradition, the accusation of malicious alteration of manuscripts is closely connected to the claim that the original *Tawrāt* and *Injil* contain mention of Muḥammad, and that not finding mention of Muḥammad in the present Torah or Gospel accounts must mean that Jews and Christians erased the references (H. Lazarus-Yafeh, 'Tawrāt', *El2*, Leiden, 2000, vol. 10, 393-5, p. 394). Pfander reminds the reader that he dealt with Muslim claims about biblical references to Muḥammad in *Mizān* (1839, pp. 191-201). Wazīr Khān and Kairānavī have not been able to produce a single biblical manuscript containing mention of Muḥammad, Pfander concludes, so they are now using European biblical criticism's references to differences between biblical manuscripts to claim that the Bible was changed. These European writers themselves say that the manuscript differences are merely textual variants that do not affect the authenticity of the Bible (cf. 'Movements among Mohammedans', p. 256). Rather, Pfander argues, these are copyist errors of the kind that appear in all ancient manuscripts, including manuscripts of the Qur'an. He invites Muslim scholars to conduct a text-critical study of the oldest manuscripts of the Qur'an.

The three remaining resolutions touch on topics that Pfander had thoroughly covered previously in *Mizān*, *Miftāh al-asrār*, and *Tarīq al-ḥayāt*: the identity of Jesus, especially his deity (pp. 69-76) and his standing as unique Saviour (pp. 76-80); and Pfander's denials of Muslim claims that the Qur'an is the word of God and that Muḥammad is the apostle of God (pp. 80-116). These topics had originally been planned for discussion in the debates, but the impasse over the text of the Bible on the second day of the debate prevented this discussion from proceeding. Pfander wrote from Agra in a letter on 1 May 1854 that he considered *Ikhtitām* 'an opportunity for publishing our account [of the discussion], to which we shall add a discourse on the important subjects that have been left untouched by the breaking-up of the discussions at this point' ('Movements among

Mohammedans', p. 257). Finally, Pfander includes at the end of *Ikhtitām* two letters he wrote to his Muslim interlocutors during the months after the debate. The first letter, to Kairānavī, was written on 11 September 1854 (pp. 117-23). Its central concern is a disagreement between Pfander and Kairānavī about the details of the 10-11 April discussion, and follows an exchange of correspondence between them that includes one particular letter in which Kairānavī asked Pfander and French to agree to his version of the event (cf. 'Movements among Mohammedans', p. 257; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 255). Pfander writes that Kairānavī had not accurately presented the debate arguments made by French and Pfander, and conversely claims that Pfander had not recorded all the accusations made by Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān in an earlier letter because he had already proved to them during the debate that these issues were raised out of their ignorance. After reproducing the letter, Pfander comments that, since September 1854, he has seen two Muslim accounts of the debate, the Persian *Al-bahs al-sharīf fī asbāt al-naskh wa-l-tahrīf* of Wazīruddīn ibn Sharafuddīn (1854), and the Urdu collection *Pahlā hissa mubāḥasah-i mazhabī kā* by 'Abdullāh Akbarābādī (1854) (pp. 123-4). Pfander rejects both accounts as representing only the Muslim perspective and writes that the Persian account deliberately skips the responses he gave during the debate.

The second letter, substantially longer than the first, was written to Wazīr Khān on 14 August 1854 in response to a letter from Wazīr Khān that Pfander had received on 8 July 1854 (pp. 125-54). This letter is similarly contentious, but also includes some interesting discussion of the debate issues themselves. According to Pfander, Wazīr Khān claimed that Pfander had accepted the abrogation of the Bible and that Wazīr Khān had proved the alteration of the *Injīl*. No, Pfander attempts to clarify to Wazīr Khān: You presented scholarly mention of textual variants between New Testament manuscripts, perhaps largely caused by copyists' errors, which do not affect the message of the Gospel. Unless you can produce a copy of the Gospel that, according to you, is the exact copy that God revealed, and by this prove the existing Gospel to be altered, mention of textual variants will not help you.

Pfander appeals to Wazīr Khān for a more equitable consideration of the issues in two areas: Wazīr Khān is pressing Pfander to accept every statement that Wazīr Khān cites from European critical scholars. Wazīr Khān had added 30 more titles of European publications to the 14 titles he had cited earlier. Pfander replies that he does not accept the witness of scholars he considers atheists or heretics, noting that in the same way

Muslims also do not accept witnesses who disagree with Sunnī mainstream teaching. Second, Wazīr Khān uses mention of textual variants between New Testament manuscripts to make accusations of alteration. But even in Muslim tradition, Pfander notes, there are reports of Qur'an manuscripts that needed to be destroyed because of discrepancies, as well as writings by some Muslim scholars that asserted that the present number of suras and verses in the Qur'an and their arrangement are not correct.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Agra debate of 1854 has often been portrayed as one of the best-known single events in Christian-Muslim relations in South Asia in the 19th century, from both sides of the discussion (e.g. Stock, *History*, p. 170; Paul, *Lights in the world*; C.W. Troll, 'New light on the Christian-Muslim controversy of the nineteenth and twentieth century', *Die Welt des Islams* 34 (1994) 85-8, p. 86). Since the publication of Avril Powell's narrative of the debate in 1976, the event seems to have taken on a kind of mythical dimension through its interesting 'cast of characters' (Schirmacher, 'Muslim apologetics', p. 74) and its backdrop of British political and military domination just a few years before the Uprising of 1857.

Ikhtitām is probably the least known of Pfander's writings, as well as perhaps the least studied. There is no record of further Urdu editions and printings after 1855, and the book has not been translated into English. E.M. Wherry does not mention it in his *Muslim controversy* (1905) nor does H.U. Weitbrecht in his *Descriptive catalogue and review of Urdu Christian literature* (Lahore, 1902) or *Bibliography for missionary students* (London, 1913). Even so, it presents information that is essential for an accurate picture of what happened in the 1854 debate. Powell calls it 'the only direct rejoinder on the missionary side in the pre-1857 era' (*Muslims and missionaries*, p. 261), but she does not describe its contents (see also 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 91) and seems to present the debate largely on the basis of Muslim portrayals in such publications as Wazīruddīn ibn Sharafuddīn's *Al-baḥs al-sharīfī asbāt al-naskh wa-l-tahrīf* (1854, reprinted in Muhammad Taqī 'Usmānī, *Bā'ibāl se Qur'ān tak*, 3 vols, Karachi, 1968, vol. 1, pp. 186-9, 191; cf. Powell, 'Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī', pp. 53-8, and *Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 242-55). In other words, Powell did not take *Ikhtitām* significantly into account in the composition of her influential narrative. Dieter Becht suggests that for this reason the historical value of her narrative is 'doubtful' ('Offenbarungsschrift und Offenbarungsträger', p. 139).

Becht suggests a number of points on which popular Muslim portrayals might be questioned if other materials are given even weight. These go beyond details such as the number of attendees or the debate topics of the first and second days. Pfander would not have agreed with the Muslim accusation that the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 is faulty, writes Becht, while Pfander and French were not unprepared for the debate because of their alleged ignorance of critical theological schools, which is how Becht understands Powell's thesis. Both freely acknowledged the existence of textual variants in biblical manuscripts and, on the second day, French was easily able to refute the Muslim assertion that numerous textual variants prove the corruption of the Bible ('Offenbarungsschrift und Offenbarungsträger', pp. 140, 138; cf. Neill, *History*, p. 344). As T.G. Clark, who was present at the debates, wrote later the same year, the 'various readings' in biblical manuscripts are 'known, of course, to every scholar at home, and, as a fact, now almost to every Bible reader' ('Agra-discussion betwixt Mohammedan doctors and the missionaries', *Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland* [October 1854] 64-6, p. 66). Eugene Stock later wrote, 'The points adduced are familiar enough to even elementary Bible students in Europe' (*History*, p. 170). This also seems to mesh with resolution 6 in *Ikhtitām* (pp. 47-61). However, continues Becht, it seems certain that Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān misinterpreted the fact of textual variants between manuscripts as evidence of falsification of the biblical text.

This last point deserves further clarification towards understanding Christian-Muslim engagement as it has continued to the present day: controversial discussion of scriptural manuscripts shows no signs of abating – and now it often takes place on social media. The central concern of the alleged victory of Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān – what Clark called 'the whole gist of the discussion' ('Agra-discussion', p. 65) – was questions about the textual integrity of the Bible, especially the New Testament. Material in *Ikhtitām* on this subject is supplemented by a report of the debate exchanges in a letter Pfander wrote within three weeks of the event ('Movements among Mahommedans', pp. 253-8). On the second day of the debate, 11 April, Kairānavī denied that the *Injīl* mentioned in the Qur'an was the Gospel in use among Christians in the 7th century ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 256) or that any biblical manuscripts that could be dated to before the rise of Islam existed, a claim he continued to make in his Arabic *Izhār al-ḥaqq* in 1867-8 (see Beirut edition, 1998, vol. 1, pp. 501, 507). In subsequent correspondence with Pfander, Wazīr Khān also insisted that none of the surviving New Testament codices dated from earlier than the 9th or 10th century (Powell, 'Muslim-Christian

confrontation', p. 86). In fact, not only were pre-Islamic manuscripts of the Bible known in 1854, but Pfander had already informed Indian Muslim readers about the *Vaticanus* (from the 4th century), *Alexandrinus* (from the 5th century) and *Ephraemi* (also from the 5th century) codices – dated to as early as 'two hundred and fifty years before the *hijrat*' – in his 1839 Persian *Mizān* (pp. 39-40).

In the debate, Kairānavī went on to assert that the 'various readings' in manuscripts of the New Testament, as mentioned by European scholars, 'were a sufficient proof that the gospel is not now what it originally was, but that great alterations and additions had been made' ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 256). In response, French explained the significance of 'various readings' in critical scholarly literature and argued that, although there were differences in letters and words between the New Testament manuscripts, no important doctrine or fact was affected by this – and that the contents of the Gospel were therefore now the same as they were originally. French read out testimonies from the writings of Benjamin Kennicott (1718-83), Johann Griesbach (1745-1812) and Samuel Tregelles (1813-75) to the integrity of the New Testament contents, and described the abundance of ancient manuscripts as a proof that the New Testament had not been interfered with by Christian rulers, reminding the audience that, according to Muslim tradition, the Caliph 'Uthmān had burned all the manuscripts of the Qur'an that did not agree with his edition (see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, book 61, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, *bāb jam' al-Qur'ān*). French further explained that, through the careful collation of all ancient New Testament manuscripts, biblical scholars had corrected mistakes and again emphasised that none of the uncertain passages that remained affected any doctrine or command found in the Gospel (p. 256).

Wazīr Khān then argued that, if five or ten mistakes in New Testament manuscripts were acknowledged by European scholars, the true number may be many hundreds or thousands. French and Pfander replied that the entire text had been carefully examined in all the ancient manuscripts, and the number of mistakes were as the European scholars reported them. Kairānavī, for his part, would not shift from his assertion that the variant readings mentioned by European scholars must mean that the Gospel had undergone extensive alteration, and so Christians no longer possessed the original Gospel. According to Pfander, this is where the discussion broke down ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 256-7). Pfander challenged Kairānavī either to agree that the contents of the Gospels were unaltered and thus allow those contents to be admitted into the discussions proposed for the following days, or to produce proofs 'that the doctrines,

commands and facts, as now contained in the Gospel, are different from those contained in the copies that existed before Mahommed' (p. 256). Kairānavī declined both alternatives, to which Pfander responded that he had thus made it impossible to proceed. The meeting broke up, and some of the Muslims began to use Pfander's response as a pretext for declaring that they had won the discussion (p. 257).

In his letter, Pfander acknowledges failing to advance certain points that did not occur to him at the time and writes that he regretted letting Kairānavī 'get off' from having to prove his assertion that the Gospel had been extensively altered and [was] not the original ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 257). Pfander also describes the substantial correspondence from Kairānavī in the first weeks following the public discussion and his own willingness to reopen the discussion on the point at which it had faltered. That correspondence ended with Pfander's letter to Kairānavī included in *Ikhtitām*.

The impasse in Pfander's engagement with Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān, signalled in his final letters to them in *Ikhtitām* and reflected in the title of the book itself, also deserves some consideration. Pfander and French relied on the logical flow of their challenge that the Qur'an speaks positively and respectfully of the Torah and Gospel, that the scriptures of which the Qur'an speaks are the same as those that Jews and Christians possess today, and that Muslims should therefore admit the contents of these scriptures into the discussion. If not, Muslims should produce proofs 'that the doctrines, commands, and facts, as now contained in the Gospel, are different from those contained in the copies that existed before Mahommed' ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 256). Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān advanced European scholarly discussions of textual variants in biblical manuscripts on the premise that these were proof of *tahrīf*, by which they meant corruption or deliberate falsification of the texts (Powell, 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', pp. 81-4; *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 248). Pfander and French considered this a misunderstanding of the significance of textual variants. If neither side was willing to budge, further discussion became impossible (cf. Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 252). But how could a meaningful dialogue proceed if one side would not permit the other to bring in its own scriptures? Powell describes Wazīr Khān's approach as 'demanding that *munāẓarah* "rules" should prohibit any argument or evidence taken from the Bible itself because it was a corrupt text' ('Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 84; for Kairānavī, see Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 255). From the Christian side, Pfander suspected a connection between the Muslims' accusations of *tahrīf* and

their goal to keep the New Testament out of the discussion ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 258). Wazīr Khān's method of arguing for *tahrīf*, writes Powell, 'had the longer-term effect of stultifying all discussion between Muslims and Christians for the next few decades' ('Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 84). Powell also writes that Kairānavī's books *I'jāz-i 'Īsavī al-mulaqqab bih mişqalah-i tahrīf* (1854-5) and *Izhār al-ḥaqq* (1866-7) were 'narrowly polemical works, conditioned in content and argument by the time and circumstances in which they were compiled, specifically to reinforce the "victory" over the missionaries which had been claimed at the Agra *munāzarah*' (*Muslims and missionaries*, p. 271).

The impasse was also provoked by a number of extreme assertions to which it was impossible for the opposing side to give assent. Besides prohibiting Christian use of the Bible and denying the existence of any pre-Islamic manuscript of the Bible, Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān claimed that, if a single error is detected at any place in a document, even a single verse or a single word, its occurrence is 'sufficient to condemn a whole book or document' (Powell, 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 84; *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 252). Powell understandably calls this a 'rigid criterion', and one wonders whether Wazīr Khān and Kairānavī would have agreed to apply the same criterion to the Qur'an. Indeed, it seems that some versions of the debate story neglect the efforts of Pfander and French to find a way out of the impasse by appealing to roughly equivalent circumstances between the two sides. Pfander, French and their opponents actually shared a similar kind of belief in the revelation of the scriptures (Neill, *History*, p. 344; cf. Bennett, 'Victorian images', p. 119; Metcalf, *Islamic revival*, pp. 5-6, 15). After acknowledging copyists' errors in manuscripts of the Bible, Pfander suggested that such errors appear in all ancient manuscripts, including manuscripts of the Qur'an. French reminded his interlocutors that Islamic tradition itself reports discrepancies among manuscripts, the destruction of variant manuscripts, and the incompleteness of the Qur'an ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 256). Regarding European scholarship on Bible manuscripts, in *Ikhtitām* Pfander invites Muslim scholars to conduct a text-critical study of the oldest Qur'an manuscripts (pp. 59-61). When confronted by Wazīr Khān with D.F. Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* (Tübingen, 1835-6), Pfander sent him a copy of Aloys Sprenger's *Life of Moḥammad* (Allahabad, 1851) (Powell, 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 86, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 256). Strauss famously rejected the historical reliability of the Gospel accounts, and Sprenger similarly distrusted the earliest Muslim narratives about Muḥammad. (Powell writes that Strauss's theory

about the events of Jesus's life being merely mythological, 'if scandalous in Europe, would certainly be even more uncongenial and puzzling to a Muslim reader as an explanation of a revealed religion' ['Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 87]).

Pfander admits that he is not willing immediately to accept the writings of European 'atheists and apostates' about the Bible, but in *Ikhtitām* he asks Wazīr Khān whether Muslim scholars are able to agree with scholarship that contradicts mainstream Sunnī teaching (*Ikhtitām*, p. 59). One might say that these apparent attempts to appeal for a level scholarly playing field were important to Pfander because he wanted the Bible to be admitted into the discussion – and if so, the point was crucial for Christian-Muslim engagement. In any case the attempt does not seem to have been reciprocated. Powell insightfully writes that, in Wazīr Khān's approach, 'No time was to be wasted on seeking or evaluating either equivalence or difference on doctrinal questions' ('Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 80). And this lack of evenness extended to the study of the scriptural text as well. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh writes that, although Muslim scholars such as Kairānavī were quick to use European biblical criticism against the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, this 'never brought about a corresponding study of the Qur'an' ('Some neglected aspects of medieval Muslim polemics against Christianity', *Harvard Theological Review* 89 [1996] 61-84, p. 66; cf. A. Neuwirth, 'Qur'an and history – a disputed relationship. Some reflections on Qur'anic history and history in the Qur'an', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5 [2003] 1-18, pp. 3-4). Pfander's invitation to Muslim scholars to conduct for themselves a text-critical study of the Qur'an has not been picked up in any significant way. John Wansbrough wrote in 1977, 'As a document susceptible of analysis by the instruments and techniques of Biblical criticism [the Qur'an] is virtually unknown' (*Qur'anic studies, sources and methods of scriptural interpretation*, Oxford, 1977, p. ix). And to the present day, according to Majid Daneshgar, Muslim scholars largely refuse to consider anything written by European scholars of the Qur'an ('I want to become an Orientalist not a colonizer or a "de-colonizer"', *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 33 (2021) 173-85, pp. 183-4). In the meantime, academic scholarship on the origins of the Qur'an has raised a large number of issues seemingly equivalent to those attaching to the biblical texts, as well as questions that are in some ways even more intransigent (cf. S. Shoemaker, *Creating the Qur'an, a historical-critical study*, Oakland CA, 2022).

From the Muslim side, one of the issues that might have led to an impasse was the way in which interlocutors would speak about the Qur'an

and especially about Islam's messenger. Pfander included in *Ikhtitām* (pp. 80-116) some of the negative judgements on Muslim claims for the Qur'an and Muḥammad that he had originally set out in his *Mizān* (1839, pp. 191-257), material he would probably also have presented in the debate had it continued beyond two days. In correspondence with Pfander after the debate, Kairānavī proposed that, should the debate resume, Pfander and French should not speak disrespectfully of Muḥammad in their arguments. Pfander replied that he would continue to speak about Muḥammad and the Qur'an in the way 'we should think proper', but that 'we would not unnecessarily hurt his own and his friends' feelings' ('Movements among Mahomedans', p. 257). Some have faulted Pfander specifically for his denials of Muslim claims for Muḥammad (e.g. L. Bevan Jones, *The people of the mosque*, London, 1932, pp. 238-9), though whether or not such written denials of Muslim claims are considered legitimate expressions in Christian-Muslim encounter, the context of ordinary engagement at the time was one in which Muslims commonly and freely denied orthodox Christians' beliefs in the deity of Jesus, his divine sonship, and his redemptive death on the cross (J. Ridgeway, 'Missionary work, as regards Mohammedans, impossible, if controversy be interdicted', *Church Missionary Intelligencer* 15 [1864] 220-2, p. 221). Kairānavī in particular mounted an extensive and aggressive attack on the deity of Jesus both before and after the debate in his books *Izālat al-awhām* (1852-3), *Aṣaḥḥ al-aḥādīth fī ibṭāl al-tathlīth* (1952), and *Izhār al-ḥaqq* (1866-7) (M.P. Kamil, 'Islam and Christianity in 19/20th century South Asian debates', *International Journal of Asian Christianity* 5 (2022) 208-23, pp. 217-20).

A key narrative element in the popular characterisation of the debate is that Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān outwitted their Christian opponents, caught them off guard, beat them at their own game, used their own weapons against them and so on and that, as a result, the Christians were exposed and humiliated. There is even a suggestion that the CMS was embarrassed by Pfander and sought to remove him from Agra. Becht objects to this portrayal: 'Rather, as an experienced missionary [Pfander] was asked to set up a new mission station [in Peshawar] together with the young and inexperienced R. Clark' ('Offenbarungsschrift und Offenbarungsträger', p. 141). Clinton Bennett also gives short shrift to the rumour: 'There is no real evidence that the CMS lost confidence in Pfander or disapproved of his attitude toward Islam' ('Legacy', p. 80). Indeed, there seems to be no sense of shame or embarrassment in the CMS letters of 1854 ('North India Mission covering 1844-1886', CI1M13, 1853-5); in Pfander's reception in Peshawar in 1855 (H. Edwardes, 'Recollections of Dr. Pfander', *Church*

Missionary Intelligencer, new series 2 [1866] 100-2); in his 1858 placement in Istanbul as the first CMS worker there ('The Mizan-ul-Haq, Miftah-ul-Asrar, and Tariq-ul-Hayat', p. 48; S. Koelle, letter from Constantinople, 13 October 1866, *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, new series 2 [1866] 384; Stock, *History*, pp. 151-3); in the writings by the Agra debate witnesses and the later converts Şafdar 'Alī ('The two converts', *Church Missionary Intelligencer* [1866] 41-51, pp. 46-51 on Şafdar 'Alī; 'From Safdar Ali, inspector of schools in the circle of Jubbulpore', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, new series 2 [1866] 215-22; *Niyāz nāmāh*, Allahabad, 1867) and 'Imādud-dīn (*Hidāyat al-Muslimīn*, Lahore, 1868; 'Progress of Christianity in India', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, new series 6 [1870] 69-77, pp. 70-4, from 'Imādud-dīn's autobiography; 'The results of the controversy in north India with Mohammedans', *Church Missionary Intelligencer* 10 [1875] 276-80); or in later reminiscences of French's role in the debate (J.D.M., 'Bishop French as a C.M.S. missionary', *Church Missionary Intelligencer* [1891] 804-14, pp. 806-9). Bennett also notes, perhaps suggesting a different direction, that Pfander was honoured in 1856 with a Lambeth Doctor of Divinity degree and ordained in Anglican orders by the bishop of Calcutta ('Legacy', p. 80). For his part, Pfander accepted the prospect of Muslim accounts of the discussion published 'in their own way' and seems untroubled by this in his letter of 1 May 1854. Instead, he writes that he saw the Muslim assertion of victory as an opportunity to publish in what became *Ikhtitām* 'our account' and to present 'the important subjects that have been left untouched' ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 257) by the breakup of the discussion.

Perhaps still unexplored in relation to this narrative theme is the possibility of a cultural difference in the perception of honour and shame. Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān were rooted in a shame and honour culture. As the letters at the end of *Ikhtitām* make plain, it was very difficult for them to acknowledge that they were not aware of the basics of textual criticism, and were also not willing to examine the Qur'an by the same text-critical principles they wanted to apply to the Bible in the debate. Instead of acknowledging these challenges, they changed the subject to a dispute about the 'correct version' of the debate (see 'Movements among Mahommedans', p. 257-8; Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, pp. 255-7).

Another misconception, which Becht specifies in his dissertation, is the idea that Pfander deliberately strove to be controversial in the sense of taking a combative, confrontational or 'abrasive' stance ('Offenbarungsschrift und Offenbarungsträger', p. 141), a common characterisation of his conduct

in the 1854 debate. The debate as it actually developed was not a Christian attack on Muslims or Islam. On the contrary, the two days of discussions were a Muslim attack on the authority and authenticity of the Bible, particularly the New Testament. Pfander's books had already been in circulation in north India in Persian and Urdu for 15 years. As they are described above, his major writings were 'mainly "edifying" and non-polemical' ('Offenbarungsschrift und Offenbarungsträger', p. 141; 'The Mizan-ul-Haq, Miftah-ul-Asrar, and Tariq-ul-Hayat', p. 48). Pfander had not published anything new in the seven years preceding the debate, and his letters of 1853-4 show him busy with other concerns ('North India Mission covering 1844-1886', ClIM13, 1853-5; cf. Powell, *Muslims and missionaries*, p. 240). He did not desire or call the debate; rather, Kairānavī and Wazīr Khān visited French while Pfander was away in order to ascertain the weakness of the Christian claims and probe possible divisions between the missionaries (Powell, 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 80). Then they challenged Pfander to public debate and he accepted only reluctantly, writing on 1 May, 'I could not do otherwise than accept the proposal, although I was well aware that generally very little good is done by verbal public discussion' ('Movements among Mahommedans', p. 254). If, however, the term 'controversy' is understood in its particular 19th-century meaning of 'calm investigation of conflicting religious systems' (Ridgeway, 'Missionary work', p. 220), Herbert Edwardes's tribute is rather striking: 'Pfander was the very man for a controversy. He not only was the essence of good nature, but *looked* it, and it was difficult for any one to be angry with him for more than a passing moment' ('Recollections', p. 101). Two other important sources of essential information about the 1854 discussion, written in the decades following and not so far taken into account in assessments of the debate and its issues for Christian-Muslim relations, are Şafdar 'Alī's *Niyāz nāmah* ('Humble petition', Allahabad, 1867) and 'Imāduddīn's *Hidāyat al-Muslimīn* ('Guidance for Muslims', Lahore, 1868), both by Muslims who became Christians after the debate and attributed their conversions to what they had experienced in the course of it (see Powell, 'Muslim-Christian confrontation', p. 89).

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