



Victory of Prayer Over Prejudice



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The Author

The author occupied a number of high public offices in India, Pakistan, United Nations and the International Court of Justice during a period extending well over forty years (1932-1973). He was a Member of the Viceroy's Cabinet (India), a Judge of the Supreme Court of India, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Pakistan's Ambassador at the United Nations, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations and Member, Vice-President and President of the International Court of Justice.

Victory of Prayer Over Prejudice

John Alexander Dowie was by birth a Scotsman. He was born in Edinburgh in 1847 and studied for the Church in his early years.

In 1872 he went to Australia as a cleric and acquired a certain degree of reputation for healing. In 1888 he went over to the United States of America and started the publication of ~ paper called Leaves of Healing. In 1896 he founded the Christian Catholic sect. In 1901 he started building a town in the State of Illinois which he called Zion City. He established many factories within the area of the town and became in effect the uncrowned king of Zion City. In the same year he claimed to be Elijah III.

Dowie was a bitter enemy of Islam and of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him. He gave repeated expression to his hostility towards Islam in his speeches and writings which were published in the Leaves of Healing. On one occasion he delivered himself of the following despicable verbal caricature of Islam:

I think of the falsehood of Muhammad with great contempt. If I were to accept those falsehoods I would have to believe that in this gathering and indeed in any part of God's earth there is no single woman who possesses an immortal soul. I would have to acknowledge that you women are but wild animals which can be used for an hour or a day as playthings and that you have no eternal existence, and that when those who are dominated by

bestial passions have satisfied their lust with you, you would die the death of dogs. This would be your end. This is the religion of Muhammad (Leaves of Healing, Vol. VII, No.5, 26 May 1900). On another occasion he said: I warn the Christian people of America and Europe that Islam is not dead. Islam has great strength; though Islam and Muhammadanism must be destroyed. The ruin of Islam will not be compassed through the supine Latin church or the powerless Greek church. (Leaves of Healing, 25 August 1900, p. 7)

Being provoked by his reviling of Islam and the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, and his eagerness to destroy Islam and the Muslims, Ahmad confronted him with the following challenge in September 1902:

I am surprised at the attitude of some Christian missionaries who have studied philosophy, physics, astronomy, etc., and yet invite people to accept a weak human being as God. Recently there has appeared in the United States of America a man, apostle of Jesus, whose name is Dowie. He claims that Jesus in his capacity of God has sent him into the world to invite people to the doctrine that there is no God besides Jesus. But what kind of a God is he who could not safeguard himself against the Jews, who was betrayed by a treacherous disciple against whose mischief he proved helpless. He ran to a fig tree to eat of its fruit and did not know that it bore no fruit; when he was asked when would the Day of Judgement arrive, he confessed his ignorance of it. He became accursed, which means that his heart had become impure and had turned away from God and that he had been cast away from God and His mercy. He climbed towards heaven because

the Father was very far from him, even by millions of miles, and this distance could not be overcome unless he ascended to heaven in his physical body. What a contradiction is here! On the one hand he asserts: 'The Father and I are one' ; and on the other he journeyed over millions of miles to meet Him. If the Father and Son were one why did he have to endure the fatigue of such a long journey? The Father was where he himself was, as both were one. Then on whose right hand did he sit?

Now we address ourselves to Dowie who deifies Jesus and calls himself his apostle and says that the prophecy mentioned in Deut. 18: 15 is fulfilled in his advent and that he is himself Elijah and the apostle of this age. He does not know that his artificial god was never conceived of by Moses, and that Moses repeatedly admonished the children of Israel that they must not deify any creature, whether man or animal, neither in heaven or on earth. He reminded them that God had spoken to them, yet they had not seen Him; and that their God was above having a shape or a body.

But Dowie, repudiating the God of Moses, presents a god who has four brothers and a mother. He has repeatedly declared in his paper that his god Jesus has told him that all Muslims will be destroyed and not one of them will survive, except those who should acknowledge the son of Mary as their god and Dowie as the apostle of that artificial god.

We have a message for Dowie that he need not be anxious to destroy all the Muslims. How can they acknowledge the godhead of the humble son of poor Mary, especially as in this age the tomb of Dowie's god has been discovered in this country and there is

present among them the Promised Messiah, who has appeared at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh millennia, with whose advent many Signs have been manifested? Dowie's claim, that all Muslims will be destroyed and only those will be saved who will acknowledge Jesus as god and Dowie as the apostle of the god, spells danger for even those Christians who believe in the son of Mary as god but do not acknowledge Dowie the false apostle. Dowie has clearly proclaimed in the revelation alleged to have been received by him that it is not enough to acknowledge Jesus as god unless Dowie is also acknowledged as Elijah and an apostle for the age, according to the prophecy mentioned in Deut. 18: 15. They would not be saved unless they acknowledge all this, in default of which they would be destroyed. In this situation the Christians of Europe and America should make haste to acknowledge Dowie, lest they should be ruined. Having accepted one absurd doctrine, namely, the godhead of Jesus, they should have no difficulty in accepting another absurd doctrine that Dowie is the apostle of that god.

As regards the Muslims, we wish to point out respectfully to Mr. Dowie that there is no need for the fulfillment of his purpose to subject millions of Muslims to destruction. There is a very easy way of determining whether Dowie's god is true or our God. That way is that Mr. Dowie need not repeatedly announce his prophecy of the destruction of all Muslims, but should keep me alone in his mind and should pray that of the two of us, the one who is false may die before the other. Dowie believes in Jesus as god and I consider him a humble creature and a prophet. The matter in issue is which of us two is in the right? Mr. Dowie

should publish this prayer which should bear the testimony of at least one thousand persons. When the issue of the paper that contains this announcement reaches me I too will pray accordingly and shall append to my prayer the testimony of a thousand persons, if God so wills, I am sure that through the adoption of this course a way shall be opened for Mr. Dowie and all the Christians for the recognition of the truth.

I have not been the first to propose such a prayer. It is Mr. Dowie who, through his announcements, has put himself in that position. Observing this, God, Who is jealous, has urged me towards this confrontation. It should be remembered that I am not just an average citizen of this country. I am the Promised Messiah, who is being awaited by Mr. Dowie. The only difference is that Mr. Dowie says that the Promised Messiah will appear within twenty-five years, and I proclaim that he has appeared already and that I am that person. Hundreds of Signs have appeared in my support in the earth and from heaven. My Community numbers approximately a hundred thousand and is rapidly increasing.

Mr. Dowie boasts that he has healed thousands of sufferers through his attention. We retort: Why then was he not able to heal his own daughter and let her die, and still mourns her loss? Why was he not able to heal the wife of his follower who was in extremity in childbirth and Mr. Dowie was summoned to her side and she died? It is noteworthy that hundreds of people in this country practice the art of healing and many of them become experts in it and yet no one acknowledges that they possess spiritual merit. It is surprising how the simple people of America

are trapped by Mr. Dowie. Were they not carrying the burden of unduly deifying Jesus that they took over this second burden also? If Mr. Dowie is true in his claim and Jesus is indeed god, this matter can be determined by the death of only one person; there is no need of destroying the Muslims of all countries. But if Mr. Dowie does not respond to this notice and offers a prayer according to his boasts and then is removed from this world before my death, this would be a sign for all the people of America. The only condition is that the death of either of us should not be compassed by human hands but should be brought about by illness or by lightning, or snakebite or by the attack of a wild beast. I grant Mr. Dowie a period of three months to make up his mind to comply with my request and I pray that God be with those who are true.

The method I propose is that Mr. Dowie should come into the field against me with the permission of his false god. I am an old man of more than sixty-six years of age. I suffer from diabetes, dysentery, migraine, and deficiency of blood. I realize, however that my life depends not upon the condition of my health but upon the command of God. If the false god of Mr. Dowie possesses any power he will certainly permit him to come forth against me. If instead of the destruction of all the Muslims Mr. Dowie's purpose can be served by my death alone, he will have established a great sign, in consequence of which millions of people will acknowledge the son of Mary as god and will also believe in Dowie as his apostle. I affirm it truly that if the disgust that the Muslims of the world feel towards the god of the Christians were to be placed on one side of the scale and the

disgust that I feel towards him were to be placed on the other side of the scale my disgust would be found to be heavier than the disgust of all the Muslims of the world. The truth is that Jesus son of Mary is from me and I am from God. Blessed is he who recognizes me and most unfortunate is he from whose eye I am hidden (Review of Religions, Urdu, Vol. I, No.9, pp. 342-348).

The challenge of the Promised Messiah was given great publicity in the American Press, in some organs of which its substance was published almost verbatim, among them the Literary Digest of 20 June 1903, the Burlington Free Press of 27 June 1903, the New York Commercial Advertiser of 26 October 1903.

The Argonaut of San Francisco, in its issue of December 1902, gave an account of the challenge under the caption, 'English versus Arabic Prayer Contest', and concluded as follows:

'In brief the Mirza has written to Dowie: You are the leader of a community. I too have several followers. The decision as to who is from God can be easily sought. Each of us should pray that whoever is false, God should take him away in the lifetime of the other. The one whose prayer is heard shall be considered from the true God. The paper commented:

'This indeed is a most reasonable and just position.'

Dowie gave no reply to Ahmad's challenge but announced in the Leaves of Healing of 14 February 1903:

'I pray to God that Islam should soon disappear from the world. O God, accept this prayer of mine. O God destroy Islam.'

On 23 August 1903 Ahmad published another statement addressed to Mr. Dowie, in the course of which he said:

I do not say merely out of my own mouth that I am the Promised Messiah. God Who has created the heavens and the earth bears witness for me. To complete His witness He has manifested and continues to manifest hundreds of signs in my support. I say truly that His grace upon me is in excess of His grace that He bestowed upon the Messiah who appeared before me. His countenance has been exhibited in my mirror more widely than it was reflected in his mirror. If I say this only out of my own mouth, I am false; but if He bears witness for me, no one can call me false. I have thousands of His testimonies in my support, which I cannot number... One testimony is that if Mr. Dowie will accept my challenge and will put himself in opposition to me expressly or impliedly, he will depart this life with great sorrow and torment during my lifetime.

Dowie has not so far replied to my challenge nor has he referred to it in his paper. I, therefore, grant him time for seven months from today, the 23rd of August 1903. If during this period he comes forth in opposition to me and makes an announcement in his paper that he accepts fully the plan that I have put forward, the world shall soon see the end of this contest. I am about seventy years of age and Dowie, according to his own statement, is a young man of fifty years. I am not concerned about this disparity in our ages as the issue is not to be decided on the merits of age. It rests entirely with God Who is the God of heaven and earth and is the best Judge. If Mr. Dowie runs away from this contest I would call upon the people of America and Europe as witnesses that this would also be deemed to be his defeat, and in such case it should be concluded that his claim of being Elijah is a

mere boast and deceit. He may try to flee from death in this manner, but he should realize that his flight from the proposed contest is also a species of death. Be sure, therefore, that a calamity will most certainly befall his Zion very soon.

At last Mr. Dowie announced in the *Leaves of Healing* of December 1903: In India, there is a Mohammedan Messiah who keeps on writing to me that Jesus Christ lies buried in Kashmir. People ask me why do I not send him the necessary reply? Do you think that I should answer such gnats and flies? If I were to put my foot on them I would trample them to death. The fact is that I merely give them a chance to fly away and survive. Thus the issue was squarely joined between Ahmad and Dowie. From that moment Dowie entered upon a progressive decline of all his affairs. His health began to deteriorate, his followers began to have doubts and questioned his claims, he began to encounter financial difficulties. In 1905 he suffered a severe stroke of paralysis and was directed by his physician to move to a warmer climate. He was taken to Mexico and later to Jamaica. The affairs of Zion were handed over to a nominee of his who soon turned against him. His wife and children deserted him and he was charged with diverse illicit and immoral practices. On 9 March 1907 he died a miserable death, The prophecy of the Promised Messiah was truly and completely fulfilled. The *Danville Gazette* of 7, June 1907 wrote: 'Ahmad and his adherents may be pardoned for taking some credit for the accuracy with which the prophecy was fulfilled a few months ago.'

The *Truth-Seeker* of 15 June 1907 wrote 'The Qadian man predicted that if Dowie accepted the challenge, he would leave the

world before his eyes with great sorrow and torment. If Dowie declined, the Mirza said, the end would only be deferred; death awaited him just the same and calamity would soon overtake Zion. That was the grand prophecy: Zion would fall and Dowie would die before Ahmad. The Herald of Boston, in its issue of 23 June 1907, observed: 'Dowie died a miserable death with Zion City torn and frayed by internal dissensions.' Ahmad had often confessed that the keenest distress that oppressed his mind was the deification of Jesus by the Christian Church, and that he was most anxious to discover some means by which this matter might be conclusively settled and mankind might be rid of this enormity. He missed no opportunity of expounding the truth on the basis of the Holy Quran, the Christian scriptures and human reason. While exposing the baselessness of the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, he always took care to point out that, according to the teaching of the Holy Quran, he himself believed in Jesus as a true Prophet of God and revered him as such.