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1908.

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

WAS HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE INSTITUTE, ON
MONDAY, APRIL 27TH, 1908.

LIEUT.-COLONEL MACKINLAY, IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following candidates were elected :—

ASSOCIATE.—Rev. T. Stanley Treanor, M.A. (Dub.).

LIBRARY ASSOCIATES.—The John Rylands' Library, Manchester ; The Royal Dublin Society Library, Dublin.

The following paper was then read :—

THE SHIA TURKS.

By Rev. G. E. WHITE, Dean of Anatolia College, Turkey.

MOHAMMEDANISM is sometimes praised by onlookers for presenting a united front in contrast with Christianity, which is rent into many sects more or less discordant with one another. The fact is, however, that one great seam runs through the Mohammedan world, not to speak now of minor factions, and their mutual antipathies are most intense where the two wings come into closest relation with each other. These parties are the Sunnite, which is reckoned orthodox by the doctors of Islam, and the Shiite, also called Alevi and Redhead, whose adherents are admittedly sectaries.

The Persians are known as a Shiite nation, and we hear that a few Arabs and Indians, many Albanians and others in European Turkey, the Nusariyeh in Syria, and scattered individuals and communities from the Cape of Good Hope to China belong to the same nonconformist faction. As the most authoritative expounders of the Mohammedan faith are Sunnite Arabs, so its most valiant defenders are the Sunnite Turks. Yet in the stronghold of Turkish power, the fair provinces of Asia Minor, about one-fourth of the people are not Mohammedan at all but Eastern Christians, and of the Mohammedan

population about one-fourth—some suppose one-third—are not Sunnite at all but are schismatic Shias. For the present this line of cleavage is kept very much out of sight, but circumstances might easily take such shape that this internal breach would come to the surface as a deadly wound.

To describe these Shia Turks is the object of the present address. My information is not drawn from the writings of others, but comes from personal observation and acquaintance during long residence in the country. One large element in the



The illustration is that of Piri Baba, Sheikh of the Bek Tashi Tekye, of Marsovan, Turkey, and his three children, with the author of the paper, the Rev. G. E. White, B.D.

heterogeneous population around my home is composed of Shias. I have slept in their houses, eaten at their tables, visited their shrines, and engaged in long conversations with their people, whether humble villagers or revered *hojas* and *dedes*.

The Shias are among the most simple, ignorant and despised of the people of Asia Minor. They are cunning, secretive, deceptive. They are reproached with having no "book." Jews are recognised as the people of the Tevrat or Law, Christians as people of the Injil or Gospel, and orthodox Mohammedans as

people of the Koran, while the poor Shias have no authoritative Scriptures corresponding. They prefer the name "Alevi" for themselves, which indicates their allegiance to the fourth Caliph : and are asserted by outsiders to revere Ali and his martyr sons Hassan and Husseyn far more than the Prophet himself. They ignore as far as possible the first three successors of Mohammedid and never give the names Abu Bekr, Omar or Othman to their sons. The deadly struggle between the house of Ali and their rivals, during the first generation after Mohammedanism was launched upon its career, must have produced a deeper and more lasting influence than students of history can easily realise. The victorious party accepted the Sunna, or traditional doctrine supplementary to the Koran, while the Alevis rejected it. The latter claim to be primitive and puritan Mohammedans, and hold the whole line of Caliphs since their hero Ali as usurpers and impostors. They profess allegiance to a line of Twelve Imams, of whom Ali was the foremost. In return for the name "Redhead," flung at them in contempt by their orthodox neighbours, they retort with the epithet "Vezidees," which they interpret to mean devil-worshippers, though originally the term may have come into use from the fact that Vezid was the Caliph under whom the last representatives of the house of Ali were slain. When a Shia Turk lays aside his habitual mask of secrecy he pours forth a terrific flood of denunciation and vituperation upon the devoted heads of his present masters. "Ah, in the next world we'll saddle them for our asses, and we'll ride them, and we'll ride them!"

Most of my Redhead acquaintance are an agricultural or pastoral people, living near to nature and in close sympathy with her changing moods and seasons. They do not intermarry with any other sect or race, whether Mohammedan or Christian, and reside, for the most part, in separate villages of their own people. They love the fertile plains and upland pastures of Anatolia, with its clear streams running among the hills, its wholesome climate, its abundance of nourishing food, and, over all, its sky of Mediterranean blue. The Shias probably represent the original inhabitants of the country with but little intermixture of foreign blood. They perpetuate many ideas and customs handed down by tradition from the centuries before the Christian era. Government officers give them no place in the civil administration, and socially, they are a class inferior and apart, but they render their full quota of recruits to the Turkish Army, and pay taxes with none to intercede in their behalf. An Armenian has perhaps a better chance of

raising a cry of remonstrance that will be heard than has his Redhead Turkish neighbour. Redheads lead the simple life, a life often very hard and coarse, but many of them seem to be quite clean, wholesome persons, men whom I am glad to count among my acquaintance. They claim the Mohammedan right of practising polygamy for those who can support more wives and households than one, but plural marriages are not common, and they disallow the right of divorce. They know little of commerce, and have little of luxury in their houses of stone or of sun-dried brick. The men, often assisted by the women in the fields, raise most of what appears on their tables, and the women, often assisted by the men, weave and sew and knit most of what they wear. But for a table grateful to a traveller, or lodging refreshing to a weary man, commend me to the patriarchal establishment of a well-to-do and hospitable Redhead Turkish bey, albeit I have sat at such a table on which was neither knife, nor fork nor spoon.

One is almost startled to recall how much of the life of these people is under religious prescription or prohibition, and then to form a picture of what their religion really is. Part of their faith and practice with regard to superhuman beings is evidently Mohammedanism, but part, varying with the locality and the individual, is pure paganism, some of which in historic origin antedates either Mohammedanism or Christianity. They regularly have no mosques, though in recent years the government has been compelling some villages to build them. The mosques often remain unopened, however, unless in the sacred month of Ramazan a preacher is sent to instruct an unresponsive congregation in correct Mohammedan form. I have been in a Shia village for days together without hearing the call to prayer more than once, and that one time it was given because there happened to be present then an orthodox believer. In the clear dawn of a summer morning a company of us were once mounting our horses for a journey, after having spent the night in a Shia village, when one of our number, an orthodox Mohammedan, was heard muttering that he had not yet said his prayers that morning. "What does the Almighty need of your prayers," said our host; "He knows what you are without your telling Him. It is the clean heart God wants, the clean heart." In general, Shias greatly dread the illwill of their Sunnite masters, and endeavour to observe the set forms as to prayer, fasting, and other worship with care enough to keep from becoming a public scandal, but secretly they hold to their own peculiar views with great tenacity. Strict Mohammedans

say, "We know that the followers of Ali are not true believers ; if they confessed what they are, what we know them to be, we could not fellowship them ; but since they deny to us their real beliefs and claim to be one with us, we do fellowship them." And that is good Mohammedan doctrine, the aim of which is not to *be* but to *seem*, to recognize not that which *is* but that which is *professed*.

More specifically, in their theology Shia Turks suppose that they believe in one God, eternal, immortal, invisible, the Creator, Lord and Judge of all men, but practically they pin their faith much more firmly to numberless intermediary and intercessory beings. God is thought of as a being very far away. The idea of the Ruler of the universe and that of the ideal earthly monarch must influence each other, and the Oriental conception of the ideal sovereign pictures a person of absolute power, above all law, seated on a lofty throne, from which he dispenses favours with a lavish hand, or strolling through his domain, scattering blessings here and there without regard to merit. Such a ruler is expected to be capricious in his administration. He cannot be much influenced by ordinary processes of law, but he is expected to pay quick attention to the requests of his personal favourites made in behalf of some third party. Near the person of the monarch there will undoubtedly be courtiers so influential that their requests cannot be rejected. If, then, a humble citizen of the kingdom can gain the intercession of an influential courtier, he will probably escape all penalty and secure all available good fortune without regard to the merits of his case. Shia worship, therefore, is in reality offered their patron saints, of which more after a few moments. Mohammedans never approach the Divine Being as a father, or endow him with the attribute of love. John sums up their sad condition in the words (First Epistle, ii, 23): "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." Mohammedans worship God from motives of fear, or duty, or self-interest. The great Christian mainspring of action, love for a personal Master and Saviour, love for the Father as revealed in the Son, is lacking in their darkened lives.

Eastern people usually emphasize the sovereignty of God to such a degree as to become fatalists denying human free will, though this doctrine involves them in many practical difficulties, they cannot escape the entanglement. But if a man's conduct is all written in the stars before his birth, there is no adequate ground left for moral rewards, if he does well the merit is not

his and if he sins he is not to blame. There is consequently no adequate sense of sin or responsibility. Sin is little more than misfortune, and the act which elicits dire penalties might have been slighted over if the ruler had been looking somewhere else just then, or had happened to be in a different mood. Certainly there must be some atonement for sin, if only the guilty conscience could find the acceptable sacrifice, the mediator whose intercession cannot be refused. For conscience works, even though it has not its legitimate basis to work upon in an adequate sense of moral responsibility.

If a fatalistic creed minimizes moral responsibility, Shia belief in the transmigration of souls strikes at a true sense of personality. They say that God created man and entered into him with the human spirit. At death the spirit comes out. If the man has forgotten God, ignored worship, has been and done evil, used bad language, and so on through the category he may be reborn an animal, *he deserves to be*. On the contrary a noble animal, like a fine horse, may be the present abode of some good man. Shias proceed to confuse the personality of men whom they hold saints. They affirm that He who was revealed to Christians as Jesus was revealed to them as Ali. That is, the same person or principle appeared in two incarnations. One must not, therefore, give too much weight to their professions of reverence for Jesus and His Gospel or to their offering of prayers in His name.

Shias claim to be very near Christians, so near that less than the thickness of an onion skin separates the followers of Ali from those of the Nazarene. In one respect they show remarkable confidence in Christians. One of the regular social customs of Mohanmedanism is the use of the veil, which every woman must wear in the presence of any men except the members of her own immediate family. This requirement means that no man can trust any woman, and no woman trusts any man. But Shia women, who are said to eat at table with, and not after, their husbands, do not wear the veil in the presence of Christian men, but meet them freely and with open faces. And Shias like Christians are said to make the sign of the cross on the top of every loaf of bread before it is baked.

This last custom is often urged, along with other indications, as proving that this peculiar people are apostate Christians in origin. The supposition is that their forefathers were Christians, who, in some time of agony when the crescent and the sword of Islam were in the ascendant, yielded a formal

assent to their conquerors' faith, while cherishing in secret some of their ancestral rites. It is very generally affirmed that they secretly observe a debased form of the Lord's Supper. Some Shias know and confess that their ancestors were of Christian faith, and certain names and idioms of speech furnish indubitable confirmatory evidence thereto. But Christian blood flows in the veins of many Turks, and personally, I am not convinced that the ceremony of eating and drinking, which is undoubtedly a part of their worship, is one in origin with the Supper instituted by our Lord. The Shia priests are a class of men called *dedes*, who dwell singly or in groups at shrines called *tekyes*. Each *tekye* has its own parish, which may consist of a considerable number of villages, and at some distance from the sacred centre. Once or twice a year, most regularly in the autumn, the *dedes* make a circuit of their parishes, and this is a great event for the villagers. Their most highly prized services are held on this occasion and with great secrecy. Guards are posted, sometimes in a triple line, around the village, around the house, and at the door of the building. The place of meeting is a common house; the time, always after nightfall. Eyewitnesses and participants in the worship say that a table is set with sacrificial or sacramental food and wine, of which the congregation partake. Then the *dede* preaches beautifully, inculcating the common virtues, teaching their peculiar observances, and emphasizing the common bonds that link all the communities together. Prayers are offered, in which every person present is remembered, and even every article of furniture in the room has its share. For instance, one person brings forward the lamp, a prayer appropriate to it is offered, and then the attendant sets it back on its shelf. Then a religious dance takes place, the men and the mature women present going through some form of motion in time together. Such performances would naturally be viewed as scandalous, or at best as very suspicious, in the East, and these gatherings are roundly denounced as indecent by sober-minded citizens. On these tours the *dedes* gather up abundant religious dues from their people, for they are regarded with great veneration, and they rule their willing congregations as with a rod of iron.

Peasant life in the Orient is rather sombre. Death is possible any day. An average of one sick person to every house of a village is not uncommon. Crop failure may bring famine any year; delayed or scanty rains mean drought and hunger; oppression by officials, a robber raid, war, accident, pestilence, disease among the cattle, may occur at any time.

and the humble rustics feel unable to cope with the powers, natural or super-natural, that lie back of such calamities. Hence it is a question of constant and practical importance how to propitiate the unseen beings so as to retain their simple joys and escape their dreaded evils. For the solution of this problem the Shia puts his chief reliance in the saints who are his intercessors with God. These may be such persons as Ali, or Jesus, or any of the great prophets, but these renowned personages are beyond the acquaintance and reach of the ordinary villager. And so every village, as a rule, has its own shrine, frequently "a high place," and surrounded by a sacred grove, where there is a holy grave. The occupant of this grave, called an "*evliya*," was once a man, of great reputation for sanctity, and now, though dead, is regarded as lord of the region and the protector of his own people. He takes a lively interest in the affairs of his parish, and prayers presented by him to the Almighty cannot be lightly ignored or rejected.

Here is the heart of Shia worship. When a man fears a reverse in business, attains some object or earnest desire, or wishes to engage in special devotion, when a wife longs for a child, like Hannah, or when a mother yearns for a sick or absent son, when a community engages in the annual ceremony of praying for rain, or unites in some common petition or thanksgiving, recourse is taken to the village shrine and saint, or a journey is made to some spot of more renown further away. In the real crises of life Shias turn to their saints. And in this respect all the inhabitants of Asia Minor are much alike. Christians and Mohammedans appeal to the Supreme Being through the agency of their various mediators. Different sects have different saints, for the most part, but the principle of offering worship by means of intercessors is acted upon in general by all. How these gropings show the need for the intercessory work of Christ?

All down the centuries the more important praises and petitions of all Anatolian people have been accompanied by sacrifices, and Shias keep up the old custom with more assiduity than any others now. The building of a house or a boat, the escorting of a bride to her new home, the setting out on a pilgrimage, the inauguration of any important public enterprise or personal venture, is consecrated by the shedding of blood. The meat is eaten by the persons chiefly concerned or is shared by them with the poor. A cock is sometimes sent from a house where there is sickness to some other family, where it is eaten, and the people who participate in the sacrificial food become thereby intercessors for the welfare of their sick friend.

Or a larger animal may be distributed in parts to many houses, either to secure the prayers of those households or as a token of thanksgiving for some blessing already received. After a death it is the custom to furnish a table with what is called "soul food," either on the evening after the burial or some days later when the natural feelings of grief have somewhat spent themselves. Food is provided, in kinds and quantity according to the ability and piety of the house of mourning, a company of friends and neighbours is gathered, not forgetting the poor, prayers may be said by some *hoja*; but in any case all the persons present are regarded as exerting their influence with the righteous judge in behalf of the friend who has passed into the realm of eternal rewards. Last spring the rains were belated and scanty, and from almost all the villages of Anatolia choice animals, sheep, goats and cattle, were provided at community expense, slain with simple sacrificial rites at the village shrines, and the flesh was then eaten by the villagers and such other people as happened to be present at the time, with the accompaniment of earnest supplications for God's mercy in the gift of fertilizing showers.

A Shia Turk believes quite as sincerely in evil spirits as in saints, and he lives in mortal terror of being bewitched by the evil eye. Lunacy, epilepsy, dumbness and other maladies are attributed to possession by *jinn*s, or unclean spirits. Some persons claim to have witnessed their gathering by the thousand in a veritable pandemonium. The claim of being skilful exorcists is made by some, the standard remedy being "reading" from some sacred book over the afflicted person. Sometimes the person possessed is taken to some sanctuary and left there in confinement for a longer or shorter period, that the influence of the holy place may avail to rid him from the dominion of beings unholy. One method of treating the sick is to ask the person whether he "sees" anything; if he does, probably he is under the influence of evil spirits; if he does not "see" anything, probably he is suffering from an ordinary physical ailment, and treatment is given according to this diagnosis. Fear of the evil eye, whether the dreaded glance proceed from some living man or dead ghost, seems to be connected with thoughts about evil spirits. The eye of a stranger is not liked. Blue is supposed to be a dangerous colour, and blue-eyed children are not acceptable. Blue beads are a general prophylactic against harm from an evil eye as absorbing and neutralising the baleful glance. Amulets, charms, bits of writing from sacred volumes done up in leather and other devices, are used to ward off harm

from those powers, seen or unseen, that are always so ready to work unexpected harm. No child or tender plant or animal should be praised without the utterance of some charm, like the words "wonder of God," to forefend the danger of a spell being thrown over it by some baleful being jealous of the praise. Perhaps the very air of the Orient stimulates the growth of such notions. I have been entertained in his home by an Englishman long resident in the Orient, a man of classic learning, concerning whose beautiful baby boy I uttered a few words of appreciation. The father immediately spoke the Turkish charm designed to avert the evil eye, and added that in his household they had often seen some favourite plant or pet animal bewitched by the expression of praise, and destroyed, unless the preventive charm was also used.

Fasting is prescribed by all Eastern rules for religious conduct, but our Shia friends render only eye-service during the month of Ramazan, when the orthodox Mohammedan world spends the days in fasting and the nights in feasting. Shias keep ten or twelve days, the more devout even thirty days, before the tenth of the month Mouharrem, especially refraining during that period from the use of water. They say that Ali or one of his sons was put to death by being deprived of water, and so they drink none in memory of his suffering. They supply the needs of the body, however, by the use of milk, soup, and drinks of water mixed with fruit juices. When the tenth of Mouharrem comes there are sad scenes in the Persian part of the Shia world. White-shirted men form in processions that march through the streets, beating themselves over the head and shoulders with whips, until their persons and their garments are clotted with blood, while they wail "Hassan, Husseyn, Hassan, Husseyn," in their annual lament for the untimely death of their favourites. In Turkey such Passion Plays are not seen; on the contrary your good Alevi, having denied the flesh to a perceptible degree and mourned with real regret for the heroes of his faith, feels in a satisfied mood with himself and with things generally. They make at this season a soup coloured red, and send portions from house to house, for as much as three days in succession. This soup is called Ashoura, and even Christians and other outsiders are welcomed to a share in it if circumstances admit. It is regarded as sacrificial, and it brings the greatest festival of all the year to Shias. The Hadji Bek Tashi tekye in this city, a Shia foundation, serves red soup at Ashoura to all comers, and I partook of it a year or two ago, in response to the invitation

of my friend the sheikh. He told me that they had made up about eight bushels of cracked wheat, 250 pounds of grape syrup, with walnuts, corn, and several other ingredients into the soup, and had served it with "health-giving bread"—health-giving because provided at a sacred shrine and season—and hundreds of people, rich and poor, had partaken of the bounty. Such a meal is undoubtedly viewed as a sort of sacrament.

I believe the main features of Shia religion have now been touched upon, except the matter of pilgrimage. Saints or sacred men, sacred seasons, and sacred ordinances require sacred places to complete the requirements, and one will be naturally expected to repair to such places as he has opportunity, and to acquire merit by doing so. The great resort of Shia pilgrims is Kerbela near the Persian frontier, to which corpses are brought for burial in incredible numbers. From most of Asia Minor this point is too distant, and the Hadji Bek Tashi tekye not far from Angora is the religious centre for pilgrims and for all the interests of Shia Turks. The chief Sheikh resident there is believed by some to be a veritable descendant of the house of Ali. He administers vast estates and disposes of large revenues. Some time ago the central government at Constantinople demanded the deeds of the Shia endowments, but their Sheikh furnished copies of his deeds, retaining the originals, and sent word out to all the Shia Turks to be ready for an insurrection, and the deeds never passed out of their owners' possession. Redheads who can do so aim to go on a pilgrimage to this their great centre, especially to eat red soup there at Ashoura, the tenth of Mouharrem. At that time there must be a gathering of the clans and a series of ceremonies that would be well worth a considerable effort to witness. Of the twelve orders of Dervishes recognised in this part of the world there are two of outstanding rank, namely, the Rufa'i, to which the Sultan himself is said to belong, and the Bek Tashi, and these last are a Shia order.

Local shrines are the resort of pilgrims, frequently when special need impels to special worship. From beside the grave of a saint earth is carried to the fields to prevent mice and other pests from harming the crops. Some of the same earth mixed with water is given the sick to drink, or is smeared upon the body, and children who are in any way deficient are carried three times around the grave, that they may draw healing virtue from its occupant. Certain shrines have an annual celebration, when people may assemble to the number of thousands to sacrifice, give thanks and pray.

A few minor points may be added. Shias do not require celibacy of even their holiest *sheikhs* and *dedes*, but if a man voluntarily chooses a celibate life they regard him with additional veneration. Contrary to regular Mohammedan usage they allow the use of wine, though they claim never to use enough to fuddle the God-given reasoning faculty. I fear, however, that many of them drink till they are much the worse for liquor. I said they held by twelve Imams; they look for a thirteenth yet to come, and it is perfectly possible that at any day some *Mahdi*, a Guide, may arise, whose appearance would shake the whole Shia world. One village not far away is said to have some sort of fire worship, perhaps a relic of Persian customs, but as yet no details have been given me.

The writer can never forget that he is with all his heart a Christian missionary, and while college work with large numbers of young men is his chief vocation, a missionary avocation at least may allow one to cultivate some friendly relations with the poor Shias. It is hard to acquire or retain any influence over them. They are recognised as Mohammedans, and the whole power of the Turkish Church and State is exercised to prevent anyone from avowing himself a Christian. They read almost nothing, and so the Scriptures have no opportunity to take hold, while their peculiar ideas of fate, pantheism and the transmigration of souls make it difficult for them to grasp Christian doctrine, even that concerning the person of Christ. They have not education enough to make them appreciate missionary schools. The medical missionary they can understand, and they seek our hospitals in large numbers. There they see and appreciate applied Christianity. Some of them say they never knew till sickness drove them to the hospital that there could be a place without bad language, hard feeling, harsh conduct, quarrelling, and similar dark concomitants of life. For all their efforts to win divine favour, to escape from the burden of sin, to face the future life without fear, they find no real satisfaction, no peace of heart. Some day, in some manner, they will come to understand the meaning of the life and work and teaching of Christ, and then,—would that I might be there to see!

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN.—The fact, stated by the author of the paper before us, that both Christians and Mohammedans alike in Asia Minor appeal to various mediators reminds us how frequently the remains of old pagan religions survive. The Mohammedanism adopted by the Shias in the country we are considering appears to be somewhat superficial; this difference from their co-religionists in India may perhaps be explained by the fact that some Anatolian Mohammedans are descended from nominal Christians, and the rest from pagans who differed from the old heathen of India.

A book has lately been written containing articles by several missionaries giving accounts of Mohammedans in various parts of the world; these writers make it evident that considerable differences exist—for instance, divorce is not by any means equally prevalent in all Mohammedan countries.

Mr. HENRY CARUS-WILSON.—I should like to put a question in the hope that there may be present someone who could give the answer. I observe that the writer of this paper only alluded in one place to the doctrine of “merit” as influencing the actions of the Shia Turks.

A study of the great Book Religions of the East shows that the doctrine of accumulated “merit,” under the symbol of “the Scales,” acts as a mainspring in the everyday life of the Mohammedan, just as it does in the case of the Hindu, the Confucianist, and the Buddhist.

The orthodox Mohammedan believes that he is attended through life by two recording angels, who keep an account of all his deeds, good and evil. For every good deed the good angel records five good marks in his book; but for every bad action the evil angel records only one bad mark in his book. Thus a man can, for instance, steal five dollars, and be quits with his conscience by paying back only one. The books, which are posted every day,

will be taken at the day of judgment to the weighing-scales, an enormous balance held by the Arch-Angel Gabriel, and those containing the good deeds put into one scale, called "Light," and the bad deeds into the other called "Darkness."

When all this is done, if there should remain a single grain to the good on the "credit" side, God in His mercy will let the man into heaven; but if the balance be the other way he must go to hell, unless God has mercy on him, or the prophets or saints specially intercede for him.

With such a belief as this it is natural that the storage of "Merit" should become the Mohammedan's chief consideration in life. The recognised methods of acquiring "Merit" are five, viz. : by prayers, by fasting, by almsgiving, by reciting the Kalima, or confession of faith, and by Hajj, *i.e.*, making pilgrimage to the holy places, of which the chief is Mecca. These five meritorious acts are called "the Pillars of Religion." The "Merit" acquired by these means is thus summed up :—"Prayer carries us half-way to God, fasting brings us to the door of His palace, and alms procure us admission." There are, besides, many other methods of acquiring "Merit."

This doctrine of self-justification is of course diametrically opposed to the Christian doctrine of justification by faith.

It would be interesting to know whether the Shia Turk practises this system of accumulating "Merit" to the same extent as does the orthodox Mohammedan.

Professor LANGHORNE ORCHARD.—The apparent divergence (on one or two points) of the last speaker from the author of the paper may, I think, be accounted for by the fact that the paper concerns itself with the Shia *Turks* only, not with the Shias generally.

That their religion is a corrupted form of Christianity seems shown by such features as their use of the sign of the Cross, their observance of what is held to represent the Lord's Supper, and their great reverence for the Lord Jesus Himself. These circumstances, taken together, have a cumulative force.

By the Shia intercessory system we are reminded that holiness and sin cannot blend; hence, for communion between God and man, there must be an intercessor, a daysman. We are also reminded that, as man departs further from God, he multiplies the number of intercessors.

We shall all join in thanking the author for an interesting paper.

The thanks of the Meeting were then accorded to the author for his interesting paper, and the Chairman stated that the Secretary, owing to illness, was unable to be present, greatly to his regret, and desired to join in the expression of gratitude for the paper of Mr. White.