A JESUIT missionary in Syria has apparently pretended that he could prove that the manuscript containing the above work was by an ‘Ali Ṭabari of the twentieth century, if he were given fifty Syrian pounds to print his report on it. In view of this very strange assertion by a man who, to my knowledge, has never given himself the trouble to examine the manuscript, the following statement of facts will not be out of place.

The Rylands Arabic MS. marked Crawford 631 constituted an integral part of the Bibliotheca Lindesiana, the books of which were collected by several generations of the Earls of Crawford and Balcarres, and kept at Haigh Hall (the private residence of Lord Crawford) before they were acquired en bloc by Mrs. Rylands in 1901. In 1897 (i.e. when the MSS. were still at Haigh Hall), Lord Crawford and the Orientalist Michael Kerney wrote a hand-list of all the Oriental manuscripts found in the Bibliotheca Lindesiana. This hand-list was published at Aberdeen in 1898,¹ and the MS. Crawford 631 containing the Apology is registered twice in it (pp. 10 and 50), once under the title of “‘Ali Ibn Zain at-Ṭabari,” and another time under “Kitāb ud Din Wa-d-Dawlat.” Further, on p. xxxvii of the Introduction, written in 1897, Kerney informs us that this hand-list was made from a catalogue written 30 years previously, or in 1867. Now this very catalogue of 1867 is found in Rylands Library, and p. 213 of it is entirely devoted to the description of this Arabic MS. 631. From this description we learn that the MS. had in the Library of the Earls of Crawford and Balcarres of that time the press mark $\frac{E}{6}$. Further, when in the year

¹ Bibliotheca lindesiana: Hand-list of Oriental Manuscripts.
1868 Lord Crawford purchased the Hamilton collection of 303 Arabic MSS. He rearranged the numbers of all his Oriental MSS, and the MS. of the Apology received the number 631; before this year the MS. had the number 157. Judging from this number we may state with confidence that the MS. was lying on the shelves of the Library of the Earls of Crawford and Balcarres at least some twenty-five years earlier, i.e. since 1843.

I hope that with all thoughtful and impartial scholars this note will dispose of the fantastic assertion of the Jesuit missionary and put a stop to this unworthy nonsense and unqualified absurdity about a work which is certainly one of the most authentic that the Arab and Syrian world has ever seen. There is no need to emphasise here the fact that the MS. is absolutely genuine and authentic in every respect without the shadow of doubt.¹