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## News and Notes

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Series X

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1st December = 11th Rabi'ul Akhir (4th mo.), 1341, A.H.

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### The Situation in the Near East.

**T**RULY the changes in the Near East have of late been kaleidoscopic. The Kemalist victory over the demoralized Greeks—the evacuation and burning of Smyrna—the repeated intrusion of Kemalist troops into the neutral zone—the wild rumour that Kemal Pasha, under cover of night, had successfully penetrated into and captured Constantinople—and last of all the deposition of the Sultan, and the declaration by the Angora Government that in future the Khalif of all the Moslems will be shorn of his political power—these things have given us all, and not least, Moslems, plenty to think upon and talk about.

While the progressive party amongst Indian Moslems (incurably suspicious of British intentions) loudly protest that Reuter's telegrams are deliberately worded so as to make the Kemalists appear as the enemy of Islam, it is nevertheless clear that a large number of the orthodox are genuinely alarmed at some of the steps the Angora Government propose to take with regard to the Khilafat. It would seem that very radical changes are contemplated. Will orthodox Moslems submit to them without protest?

Immeasurably more serious for the world at large is the attitude the revolutionaries are adopting towards non-Moslem peoples. If reports be true, the allied High Commissioners are faced with extravagances that may soon pass the limits of endurance. 'The Turks are no longer reasonable'—'it is believed that they can be convinced only by a display of force.' There are here elements which may easily make for another war, which God forbid!

And yet another aspect. While one has to guard against being led into unnecessary alarm by heavy headlines in newspaper reports, yet what are we to think of the statement that the Turks are determined on the evacuation of all Christians—estimated at 1,000,000

souls—from Turkish territory? As though their cup of humiliation and grief were not yet full! What will such a policy, if carried out, mean for the future of Christian missions in those lands? We would fain believe the report untrue, but the following extract from a recent letter by Dr. Rendel Harris, dated 6th October, Constantinople, and published in the *British Weekly*, only serves to confirm our fears:

“Up to the present we are all right here; if we have not shared the fate of Smyrna, it is because Lloyd George intervened. Whatever fault people may have found with his ‘slap-dash diplomacy,’ he has saved the situation so far; but as no one believes he can continue to resist the French in opposing the Turk, we may any minute have the Kemalists across to light fires of death in our scenery. We have epidemics of fear among the Christian populations, and the material for actual epidemics in the crowds of refugees that are being deposited here. The problem of dealing with the *émigrés* is gigantic. It outruns anything but national assistance; private efforts are insignificant. Think of nearly 200,000 Smyrmites expatriated, with the loss of all their goods. Think of the last Christian city in Asia Minor wiped out, and the last of the Seven Churches contributing its Archbishop to the tale of martyrs!”

—:O:—

## Was Muhammad Inspired?

### XVII.

**B**EFORE saying yes or no in answer to this question, it seems very important to understand clearly what we mean by Inspiration.

In the language of the Bible, inspiration is the influence of the Spirit of God on the mind and soul of man. It was under this divine influence that the writers of the sacred scriptures of the Old and of the New Testaments devoted themselves to the task entrusted to them. As they were prompted by the Spirit of God, the thoughts and ideas were of divine suggestion; but the words and expressions were their own. God made use of their gifts for the good of mankind and for His own glory.

Therefore we believe that ‘each Biblical writer used the style that was natural to him. Some wrote poetry, sublime and beautiful; some prose, direct and simple. We know the message is God’s; but the task of clothing it in human language was that of the Prophet or Apostle, Psalmist, Evangelist or Historian whom God commissioned to write.’ This is the Christian idea of Inspiration.

Now it is proper to inquire, ‘What is the Muslim idea of Inspiration?’ What do the Muslim theologians say about it? What does Muhammad himself say? And what, above all, does the Quran, or God the author of the Quran, say?

1. Muslim theologians will gladly accept the Christian idea of inspiration, when they are speaking of their saints, *sufis*, holy men, and Old Testament prophets; but they consider it below the dignity of Muhammad to have had an inspiration of this kind. It is impossible for them to hold that God only suggested certain ideas to Muhammad and that he expressed them in his own words. Muhammad, according to them, only repeated what was sent down to him. His inspiration consisted of the contents of the Quran which the Angel Gabriel brought down to him, section by section and in groups of verses, as circumstances required. Not only the thoughts; but also the words and letters of his inspiration were divine. (Ibn-i-Khaldun, Vol. I, pp. 171, 172.)

2. Muhammad himself claims to be the recipient of an extremely unique and most extraordinary message from God—a Revelation greater than any that had preceded it. He asserted that the Quran which he recited had been dictated to him by the Angel Gabriel who brought it down from the ninth heaven, where, ages before the creation of the world, it had been inscribed, by God's command, upon a Preserved Tablet, and therefore the words and expressions as well as the thoughts of his message were divine. He put in nothing from himself, only God made use of his vocal organs! (See *Mishkat* and other collections of Traditions.)

3. The Quran says, 'He does not speak of his own desire. It is the revelation sent down (to him). He is taught by one possessed of great powers (the Angel Gabriel) the mighty, who stood up straight and was in the highest horizon; then he drew nearer and came down, so that there was the distance of two bows or less than that.'

The Quran says all this to prove that Muhammad was not a self-deluded man, and that there was no delusion or hallucination. Muhammad actually saw the Angel Gabriel at close quarters. It was not that he only imagined to have seen the angel, while in reality he had not seen him. In addition to these assurances of the Quran, Muhammad himself has described the angel so fully that there remains no doubt about his having seen him frequently. The Traditions are full of the descriptions of the Angel Gabriel. As Muhammad's hearers had never seen the Angel, he could very safely describe him at full length!

Now it is perfectly clear, from the evidence of Muslim theologians, Muhammad himself, and the Quran, that Muhammad was not inspired according to the Christian idea of inspiration. This type of inspiration is not acceptable to Muhammad and therefore it is useless to try to pin it on him. He claimed an inspiration of a different kind.

Muhammad said he always saw the Angel Gabriel and heard his voice, and repeated after him the verses of the Quran, and continued to repeat them until they were memorized, and that in all his teaching and preaching, he only recited what he was taught by the Angel who brought all that he brought, from near the throne of God.

Consequently, if Muhammad was inspired, his inspiration consisted of the contents of the Quran, and therefore the Quran must be the revealed word of God, and the life and actions of Muhammad, being all regulated by the Quran, must be regarded as the final and fullest reflection of the nature and will of God, and it will be perfectly logical to say that Muhammad can not be held responsible for anything that he ever said or did. The worst things that ever came into his life, were preordained and sanctioned by God. All the murders and depredations that he planned and ordered, were planned and ordered by God. Even his marriage with the wife of his adopted son, was solemnized in heaven by the same Supreme Being. In short, there was nothing in the life and deeds of Muhammad for which he himself was responsible.

Again, Muhammad's knowledge of things was a true copy of what God had preordained and caused to be written on the Preserved Tablet. Therefore, whatever Muhammad said and taught about Gog and Magog, Haroot and Maroût, Alexander the Great, the Seven Sleepers, the creation of shooting stars and mountains, was taught to him by the Angel Gabriel. Muhammad said that Mary, the mother of Christ, was the sister of Aaron, and that Gideon was contemporary with Saul and David.

All this must be true if Muhammad was inspired and if the Quran is the revealed word of God; but it is self-evident that there is not an iota of truth in all this rubbish. These historical blunders and mythical tales, which are contained in the Quran, can not belong to God; for God can not tell a lie and can never be ignorant of history.

But Muhammad says he never said anything from himself. He only recited what the Angel taught him, and the Angel taught him only what God told him to teach. Consequently, every statement of Muhammad, if he was inspired, is put back into the mouth of God. Therefore it is absolutely impossible to escape this inevitable inference that if Muhammad was inspired and truthful, then God is ignorant; but if God is not ignorant of facts, and if He did not supply Muhammad with wrong information, and if that Almighty, All-Knowing and Holy Being is what we Christians believe Him to be, then Muhammad was never inspired by Him. Muhammad's admirers must seek for some other source of inspiration for Him. It is impossible to prove that Muhammad was inspired by God.

M. M. ISMAIL.

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Enough has probably been said upon this topic, and we would sincerely thank members for taking the matter up and contributing such interesting statements. In bringing the discussion to a close we would offer some remarks that seem necessary by way of explanation. In seeking the opinions of selected members on this subject of Muhammad's authority, we had in mind no technical criterion

either Christian or Moslem, but just the simple issue as to whether, in those earlier years, the spirit of Muhammad was consciously open to the influence of the Spirit of God or not. About one-third of the replies received were written from this point of view. It is not a question as to what we may think of Muhammad's ideas on the subject of his own inspiration, nor what (if he could know) he might think of our views in general, but just an impartial attempt to see whether, from the records of what he was and did and said, we can deduce a real measure of Divine Guidance in the early activities of this man who afterwards fell so low.

The *kind* of experience we had in mind is well illustrated in the following deeply interesting personal account of how Dr. R. F. Horton, of London, was led to write that most helpful manual of devotion, "The Open Secret." He says:—"Now it only remains to mention the providential circumstances under which the book has been written, for I should feel myself wanting in fidelity if I did not acknowledge the Lord's strange dealings with me. Suddenly, in the midst of a busy and crowded life, I was arrested by a failure in my sight; without a moment's warning all the machinery stood still, and I was condemned to a period of inactivity, forbidden to speak in public, to do pastoral work, and even to read or write. And what made the dispensation more amazing was, that at the time an accumulation of sorrows, such as I had not before experienced in life, had been piled upon me, so that it seemed as if my sole resource lay in active and absorbing work. When the first sound of the blow was over, I began to ask whether God had in it some design, and gradually the conviction was impressed upon my mind that He had, and that the design primarily was, to set me in such conditions as would make the preparation of this book possible. The selection of those conditions was so remarkable and unforeseen that I could hardly have been more clearly directed if I had heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write."

Driven into the central silences, where the sounds of the world die away, and where the closed senses, by a gentle compulsion, drive the soul into communion with God, I had leisure to reflect on those methods of devotion which I had used for many years in the stress and strain of life, and to subject them, like a sea-battered ship, to the overhauling and repairs of the dock. They were already tested, and I was able to commend them to others as a ship that has weathered many storms and reached a haven of refuge.

I was banished for weeks to a foreign country, and imprisoned in a hospital under injunctions of almost unbroken rest. Then, provided, as I am convinced, by the same Hand that was directing all, came quite unexpectedly a friend who was able and willing to read for me the necessary books, and to write at my dictation, hour after hour.

How much in this book is due to my fellow worker it would be impossible to say, but we agreed to ascribe the work not to one another, but to God, who, as we both believe, put it into our hearts

and carried it out by the labour of our hands and brain. The book, therefore, goes out to fulfil its mission with a feeling in the author's heart that it is not his, but God's.'

Those last few words evidently shocked some good folk, and it is interesting to see how the author defends them in the preface to a new edition :

'NOT HIS BUT GOD'S.'

"A very kindly critic has taken exception to this sentence, as if it implied a claim to inspiration. He thinks I might alter or eliminate it. ~~But, indeed,~~ while I know how full of human weakness and fallibility the composition and the writing of the book are, the subject, the plan, and the execution came to me so easily and so distinctly as the answer to daily and hourly prayer, that I should be unfaithful if I did not confess that the Holy Spirit was at work according to the promise, 'They shall all be taught of God.' He certainly works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure."

\* \* \* \* \*

The human element of weakness and ignorance in such transactions is well brought out in another volume which we value so much that we take leave to transcribe it also in this place. It is from the book of that saintly scholar, Dr. Rendel Harris, called 'The Guiding Hand of God.' He has been discussing the part God has in guiding a Moslem who uses the Fatiba, and also a man like John Henry Newman, who ultimately finds his rest in the Roman Church. He says at one place :

"Here is a ship in full sail making for a particular port under the influence of a particular wind ; is the wind responsible for the port ? The answer is in the negative, for another ship in full sail is making for a port in exactly opposite direction under the very same wind. And here is a soul, sailing on a reactionary track towards errors which were supposed to have been long exploded, and close by, another soul (they might have been brothers), sailing on a progressive track towards half-discovered truths and all the rocks which lie outside Port Discovery. Is God responsible for both motions ? The answer is yes, if we are only considering wind and sails ; but we cannot limit ourselves in that way. What about the rudder ? The responsibility of the hand on the rudder is of quite another order from the responsibility of the winds that fill the sails ; the one is a problem of natural mechanics, the other of spiritual mechanics. *Who holds the helm ?* That is the real question. The answer is that in almost every case the helm is humanly held with occasional superadded pressure from an invisible hand, and it is only in the case of real saints that the human pressure becomes microscopic or actually falls to zero, while the Divine pressure becomes permanent and the settled uniform experience. Between the two extremes of the Life in Self and the Life in God, the phenomena of the religious life have to be placed. They are

very complex, where we have often to say 'God only knows whether this was of God or not.' We can apply general principles, and say with Christian confidence that every wind which blows us, and every orientation of the compass which turns us into greater love of Christ and into the co-ordinated greater love of man in Christ and for Christ, all that makes us think highly of Him and lowly of ourselves, that makes us worship where we used to be indifferent, and self-sacrificing where we used to be self-content, is of God, and is the result of the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit; and this is true, whether the ship reaches a Roman port or any other."

### Called to Higher Service.

During the months of October and November the League suffered heavy loss in the passing to their reward of no less than three of its members. We recorded the deaths of Dr. Hooper and Rev. John Allaudin Khan last month. Now we have to announce the further loss of Rev. Peter Noble, with whom the Hon. Sec. was associated as a colleague for 13 years. Mr. Noble twice audited the accounts of the League,

*Dr. Hooper* was a veteran of the C.M.S. in North India. He belonged to, and was the last link with the well-known band of Englishmen who came out to India as missionaries immediately after the Mutiny. Robert Clarke and Rowland Bateman were his contemporaries. He had a very distinguished career at Oxford, excelling in Hebrew and Sanskrit. At his first station, Benares, he gained a great reputation for Sanskrit learning.

Thus it came about that the C.M.S. set him apart, more than 30 years ago, for literary work. He became a prolific writer and translator of theological books. For his translation of the Bible into more than one Indian language he was given the D.D. degree at Lambeth by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He could speak the Urdu and Hindi languages with a faultless correctness both in pronunciation and grammar!

Dr. Hooper was a remarkable example of a theologian of the old school, who, while being an open critic of the modern ideas of higher criticism and thought, continued to exercise a powerful influence on the men and thought of the present day.

\* \* \* \*

*Rev. John Allauddin Khan*, of the Church of God Mission, Calcutta, was born in the Mymensingh District, Bengal, of Mohammedan parents. One who worked with him has sent us the following note:

In the death of Brother Khan not only has his own Mission suffered an irreparable loss, but the revival movement in Bengal and South India has lost a great leader, the Bengal Moslem convert community one of its brightest lights and noblest examples of Christian character and ability, and the whole Indian Church a true man of God. The profound sympathy of all who knew and honoured him certainly goes out to his widow and her eight children in their great bereavement.

Brother Khan was baptised in 1894, when about 17 years of age, a Miss Ehrenburg, a converted Jewess in the Australian Baptist Mission, being the one who was instrumental in bringing him to the cross of Jesus, where as a sin-burdened penitent he found the glorious peace and salvation which from that time forward he lived to make known to others.

He was a powerful preacher, expository, logical, convincing, and as a writer in Bengali (in which he also wrote many hymns) he stood in the first rank, as the readers of his paper, the *Shruaid*, can testify. He had a marvellous grasp of divine things coupled with a rare ability to make them clear to others.

He was a really Christo-centric man, and his gifts in the Spirit made him a leading exponent as well as personal example of the Pauline type of Christian, in his clear apprehension of and entire reliance upon the person of the living Christ. Widely known, especially in Bengal and the South, and held in high esteem by the leaders of evangelical Christian thought wherever he went, he would seem to have been cut off just as he was coming to the height of his influence and power. We can but humbly say, 'God's will be done.'

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*Rev. Peter Noble* spent practically the whole of his life as a missionary—a period of 19 years—in the one city of Dacca, East Bengal, and was thus well-known in the district. Though not engaged in any direct effort to reach the Moslems, his work constantly brought him into touch with them, and he was ever ready with speech or song to tell them also of the matchless love of Jesus. He was a born organizer, and his efforts on behalf of Social Service Exhibitions gained him from the Government of India the award of the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal last New Year. He has been taken in his prime, at the height of his power, and that is very hard to understand, but his fine example serves to remind us that we should buy up our opportunities. Much sympathy is felt for his widow and three small boys.

### Notes

*Rev. H. A. Bilkert* writes: 'The Arabian Mission rejoices in the baptism of two converts during the past year. One of these is the first fruits of the Busrah Boys' School and witnessed an especially good confession. A bookshop was opened in Bagdad in August and within a month disposed of over 1100 pieces of Nile Press Literature, ranging from the single Khutbas to larger works like *Mizan el Hagg*. The Mission has purchased a launch, in charge of Rev. and Mrs. Dykstra, with headquarters at Amara, with which it is hoped to reach some of the many villages along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Plans are also afoot whereby the Boards of the Presbyterian U.S.A., the United Presbyterian, the Reformed Church in the U.S.A., and the Reformed Church in America will unite to form a mission for the occupancy of Bagdad, Mosul, Hillah and other strategic points in upper Mesopotamia. The clause in the recently signed treaty between Great Britain and the Government of Iraq assuring religious liberty to all, will benefit this proposed mission. For all of these things we offer praise and ask the prayers of the members of the League.'



*Dr. S. M. Zwemer* after completing his tour in Java and Sumatra has arrived back safely in Cairo. We learn from him that a postponement of the proposed Conferences in the Near East has been unanimously agreed upon. It was not merely that the conditions in the Near East were felt to be altogether too unsettled to ensure the best results, but there was a generally expressed opinion that considerably more time was needed for preparation for the Conferences. These will not now take place before the spring of 1924.

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*America's Mosque to Go.*—The Detroit News for August 9, states that Highland Park, Detroit, is to lose its Moslem mosque, the only shrine of the Islamic faith in North America. Constructed a year ago, at 204, Victor Avenue, by Muhahhad Karoub, a wealthy Moslem real-estate man, the mosque has stood as the only outward symbol of Islam in the Western World.

Dissension in the rank of the followers of the Prophet, and lack of interest on the part of most of them in the mosque services, are the reasons assigned for the failure to draw gatherings of the faithful. Mr. Karoub now proposes to raze the edifice, and dispose of the site. His decision is based on the fact that he spent approximately 55,000 dol. in its construction; and since its dedication it seldom has been used for religious worship.—*Herald of Gospel Liberty.*

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*A Member in N. India writes:* 'We have just had a splendid young Mohammedan man converted and baptized. Please ask for the prayers of the members of the League for him that he remain faithful. He is now in one of our Training Schools. Another young man whom we baptized two years and a half ago has been a great force for Christianity in his home city, which is a veritable Moslem stronghold, has succeeded in keeping in touch with his parents, and has been living as an out and out Christian at home most of the time in spite of persecution, and is now going to teach in a Mission School.'

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### **For Praise and Prayer.**

**PRAISE** for all signs of blessing in the work of the American Mission in Mesopotamia. Let us remember that field in our prayers.

**PRAISE** for the conversion of a promising young man in North India, and prayer that he may have grace and strength to remain faithful.

**PRAYER** is asked for a Mohammedan lady of good standing in Southern India, who, whenever visited, freely and eagerly speaks with her missionary friend about Christ. It is felt that she is not far from the Kingdom. Let us pray that she may be led to give her allegiance to Christ.

**PRAY** for the Conference at Lausanne, that the representatives of all parties may wait upon God for His wisdom and guidance.

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### NEW MEMBERS.

22.	Miss C. Dalenberg	Arabian Miss. Bahrein,	Persian Gulf, (26th Day)
169.	Miss Ruth Jackson	do.	do. (26th Day)
170.	Miss Rachel Jackson	do.	do. (26th Day)
259.	Rev. B. Hakken	do.	do. (26th Day)
268.	Dr. H. Kraemer	Dutch Miss.	Jogjakarta, Java (4th Day)
219.	Rev. H. M. Angus	Baptist Miss.	Barisal, Bengal (5th Day)

(The above new members have been given numbers left vacant by resignations, etc. So far as can be ascertained at present we close the year with a membership of exactly 300.)

### DEATH OF A MEMBER.

On **November 6th**, Rev. Peter Noble of the Baptist Mission, Bengal, very suddenly and unexpectedly, from pneumonia; aged 49 years.

### NOTICE!

Will all members within the Indian Postal area who have not paid their subscription for 1923 in advance, please note that the January number of 'News and Notes' will be sent to them, as formerly, by V.P.P. to collect two rupees, plus any small amount that may be outstanding.

*The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0. The Secretary will be glad to send spare copies of this issue to addresses mentioned by members with a view to securing new subscribers. News and requests for prayer will always be welcome and should be sent early in the month to the Hon. Secretary:—*

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,  
Baptist Mission,  
Dacca, Bengal, India.



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