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News and Notes

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The Wahhabis.

*From the account by Sir Wm. Hunter,
in 'Our Indian Mussalmans', pubd. 1871.*

ABDUL Wahab died 1787, but bequeathed his conquests to a worthy successor. In 1791 the Wahabis made a successful campaign against the grand Sheik of Mecca. In 1797 they beat back the Pasha of Bagdad with immense slaughter, and overran the most fertile Provinces of Asiatic Turkey. In 1801 they again swept down upon Mecca with more than a hundred thousand men, and in 1803 the Holy City fell into their hands. Next year they captured Medina. In these two strongholds of Islam, the Reformers massacred the inhabitants who refused to accept their creed, plundered and defiled the tombs of the Muhammadan saints, and spared not even the Sacred Mosque itself. Every devout King and Emperor of Islam had sent thither the richest oblations which his realm could yield, and the accumulations of eleven centuries were now swept into the tents of the sectaries of the desert.

The consternation of the Muhammadan world can only be compared to the thrill which passed through Christendom, when it was told that Bourbon's banditti had bivouacked in the Vatican, and that the Vicar of Christ was prisoner in Sant' Angelo. The highest temple of the Mussalman faith was not only pillaged, but grossly polluted by armed schismatics; the prophet's own tomb was mutilated; and the path of pilgrimage, the Mussalman's avenue to salvation, was closed. From the marble pile of Saint Sophia in Constantinople, to the plastered wayside mosque on the frontier of China, every Muhammadan house of prayer was filled with lamentation and weeping. A few of the Shiabs declared it was the twelfth Imam made manifest;

but to the orthodox believer it seemed clear that *Al Dajjal*, the lying Prophet foretold by Muhammad, had now descended on the earth, and that the end was come.

Spite of fasting and supplication, from 1803 to 1809, no great pilgrim caravan crossed the desert. The Wahabis overran Syria, sustained a War with the British in the Persian Gulf, and threatened Constantinople itself. It was Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt, who at last succeeded in crushing the Reformation. In 1812, Thomas Keith, a Scotchman, under the Pasha's son, took Medina by storm (!) Mecca fell 1813; and five years later, this vast power, which had so miraculously sprung up, as miraculously vanished, like a shifting sand-mountain of the desert.

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Wahabi-ism is a system which reduces the religion of Muhammad to a pure Theism, and consists of seven great doctrines. First, absolute reliance upon One God. Second, absolute renunciation of any mediatory agent between man and his Maker, including the rejection of the prayers of the saints, and even the semi-divine mediation of Muhammad himself. Third, the right of private interpretation of the Muhammadan Scriptures, and the rejection of all priestly glosses on the Holy Writ. Fourth, absolute rejection of all the forms, and outward observances with which the mediæval and modern Muhammadans have overlaid the pure Faith. Fifth, constant looking for the Prophet (Imam), who will lead the True Believers to victory over the Infidels. Sixth, constant recognition both in the theory and practice of the obligation to wage war upon all Infidels. Seventh, implicit obedience to the spiritual guide. The Wahabis form, in fact an advanced division of the Sunis—the Puritans of Islam.

* * * * *

The Wahabis, now a scattered and homeless sect, profess doctrines hateful to the well-to-do classes of Muhammadans. In formal divinity they are the Unitarians of Islam. They refuse divine attributes to Muhammad, forbid prayers in his name, and denounce supplications to departed saints. It is their earnest, practical theology, however, that contains the secret of their strength. They boldly insist on a return to the faith of the primitive Muhammadan Church, to its simplicity of manners, its purity of morals, and its determination to spread the Truth, at whatever expense of the blood of the Infidel, and at whatever sacrifice of their own lives. Their two great principles are the unity of God and the abnegation of self. They disdain the compromises by which the rude fanaticism of Muhammad has been skilfully worked up into a system of civil polity, and adapted alike to the internal wants and foreign relations of Musalman States. *They exact from every convert that absolute resignation (islam) to the will of God which is the clue to the success of Muhammad.* But while, like other reforming sects, they ceaselessly insist on this fundamental

doctrine, they weaken their cause among the learned by their unitarian divinity, and among the simple by a rude disregard of established rites and hallowed associations. In the greater part of Asia the Wahhabi convert must separate himself from the whole believing world. He must give up his most cherished legends, his most solemn festivals, his holiest beliefs. He must even discontinue the comforting practice of praying at his father's tomb.



"The Kibla": A Mecca Newspaper.

DR. ZWEMER IN '*Neglected Arabia.*'

THE by-products of the great war have not yet been catalogued or indexed. The mingling of races and religions on the battlefields of three continents, the rising tides of passion and prejudice and propaganda, the impact of the best and the worst of our western civilization on the best and worst of Islamic culture—who can measure the effect of all this on the future? The Moslem press of Egypt and in India suffered kaleidoscopic changes because of the censorship, but retained its vitality and enterprise to a remarkable degree in spite of paper shortage and the enforced exile of many an editor. Before the war, Mecca, the religious capital of Arabia and Islam, had no newspapers, no telephone, no water system or sanitation, no postage stamps, no national flag. The Turk ruled as far as he was able, and that meant stagnation. With the Arab revolt and from the day the King of Hejaz joined the Allies, Jiddah and Mecca began to feel the throb of a new life—aeroplanes, wireless and telephonic communications, Ford cars on the road to the Holy City, a new government, new army regulations, new schools, harbour improvements, and of course a newspaper.

I became a subscriber from the first, and have read with astonishment, sometimes with amusement, the news of the world through the green spectacles of the Hejaz—the Holy Land of Arabia—for four years.

The paper is called *Al Kibla*, "The True Direction for Prayer," because all the Moslem world prays towards the Beit Allah or Kaaba. The number before me happens to be number 477 of the fifth year, and is dated on one side of the title page, Thursday, 13th Sha'aban 1339 A. H. On the other side in western (Christian) era as April 21, 1921. It is the official organ of the Hejaz kingdom, and at one time aspired to be the official organ of the new Caliphate, but this aspiration was doomed to failure. It is printed bi-weekly at the Government Press, and has never outgrown its modest four-page dimensions.

Even the advertising columns, however, are eloquent of conditions in the Forbidden City, and the fact that well-known "infidels"

like myself can send in letters to the editor and remit subscriptions is suggestive of a new day. The entire last page is devoted to a notice that could only appear in one paper in the whole world, and shows the tragedy of the annual pilgrimage as nothing else could do. It is a notice of the effects and personal baggage of a list of Javanese pilgrims who died unknown during the past week. All their little belongings were turned over to the Dutch Consulate at Jiddah, and their relatives and friends may here find record of how the search for peace and for God ended. The list contains twenty-two names, *e.g.* : The Hajji Idris from Batavia, Java, conducted by the Mecca guide Hassan, found dead with the following possessions : one plain girdle, one ornamental girdle, one head-dress, one black garment, one rattan suitcase, but no passport papers." At the end of the long list I notice the words, "to be continued!" The mortality among pilgrims from India and Malaysia is notorious.

The leading articles in the issue are, as always, political. The first is a vigorous reply to certain criticisms of the Hejaz government that appeared in a Malay paper, and ends with an appeal to religious motives—"how could any such things take place in Holy Territory or on the part of the direct descendants of Mohammed the Prophet of God?"

The second is entitled *Reckless Diplomacy*, and reviews the failures of western diplomacy and politics since the vain promises of world peace and self-determination at Versailles. "You cry peace, peace, and there is no peace. Look at Ireland, Poland and Russia, Palestine and Egypt! If that is the result of western civilization and culture in the 20th Century, then let us all praise Allah, we who go barefooted or in sandals, that we are free from such a terrible burden of horrors. And in conclusion all we can say is this, Allah has the final decision, and He is the best of all judges on the bench."

Alas, it is the impact of this wicked western world also that is the occasion for a "notice" in the next column asking all parents to present their infants for immediate vaccination by order of the public health department. The list of ships given as "arrived" with so many and such a cargo of human freight, all bear strangely western names of Scotch Clans or Welsh towns.

The foreign news is partly taken from the *Weekly Times* of London, and tells of Germany's payments to the Allies, the Soviet republics in the Caucasus, the condition of Albania, the coal strike in Britain, the treaty with Japan, new troubles in Silesia and Bulgaria, ending with a half column on the American Navy and the control of the Pacific!

Characteristic of this Meccan bi-weekly, which calls itself "a religious, political and social newspaper," is the carefully printed "*Prayer Time Table*" which appears in each issue. It shows sunrise, noon, sunset, etc., for Mecca latitude, and the exact time to the minute for the five ritual prayers.

With all its limitations *The Kibla* is a sign of the times, a harbinger of a new day of liberty.

With a press at Mecca and automobile service from Jiddah—perhaps airplanes—who would dare prophecy at what distant date the messengers of the King may find their way to the Kaaba as pilgrims of Jesus who have found the true Beit-Allah in his loving heart.



The Survey of Christian Literature for Muslims.

IT is to be regretted that there has not been more time allowed to collect all the information required in the different areas now being surveyed.

Quite possibly in places where the bulk of existing Christian literature is for Muslims, the Committees have been able to get to grips with their task more promptly. But in India, unfortunately, the time allotted was, through one cause or another, reduced to just half. In spite of this, however, the members of the Committee have been tackling the question right earnestly.

The opinion was expressed by one of the Indian members at Lahore, that in recent years the position of India in the matter of influence in the Muslim World has undergone a change, and that instead of other countries guiding India in thought and action, it is India herself that is now taking the lead. All the more reason, therefore, that the literature we prepare and distribute to Muslims in this land should be abreast of the times. No one will deny that the attitude of Muslims generally in India towards Christianity has altered very considerably during the last 25 years—that is, say since the time when that fine Christian and gifted scholar, the late Rev. G. H. Rouse, M.A., D.D., wrote those famous tracts of his.

It is only fair, as well as wise, that, with this changed attitude on the part of many educated Indian Muslims, the manner of our approach to them should manifest a corresponding change in the literature we offer them to-day. It is not to be disputed that Dr. Rouse laid the entire force of missionaries to Muslims under deep obligation by his splendid piece of work in writing that series of tracts on many of the numerous points of contact and controversy with Muslims. The influence of those pamphlets, first written in the Bengali language, has been widespread and profound. Dr. Rouse used to speak of how, when they came to be read in Egypt, some of the followers of Mohammad there, thirsted for the blood of the author of certain of them! Seriously, much of such literature has had its day so far at least as the growing class of educated Muslims is concerned. If it is felt desirable that a number of those tracts (which are now largely out of print) should be re-issued with a view to use among Muslims, they should be passed under careful scrutiny first.

It will not surprise our readers to be told that by far the greater portion of literature specially prepared for Muslims comes under the heading of "Apologetics." Literature with the evangelistic appeal is conspicuously absent, but the needs of workers among Muslims are fairly well supplied. If we may anticipate the publication of the report, we surmise that there is going to be a call for a change of emphasis in future literature. We are feeling,

to quote the words of the late Dr. Imad-ud-din of the Panjab, that "There is little use now in spending our time in preparing other books for controversy with Islam. *Why tread on the body of a fallen enemy?* Let us go on now and work with all our heart and mind." And what will you say when you know, that he, himself a convert from Islam, and a dought controversialist, wrote those words in 1875, in a review of the work of *the previous 25 years.*

But with what work should we go on now "with all our heart and mind?" With positive contributions from the Christian side. The new emphasis will be in that direction. First and foremost we must, as those who are informed about Islam, bring to bear all our skill (yes, and strategy), all our passion and persuasion, our prayers and devotion and our love, to the task of presenting to them Jesus, the Friend of Sinners, and the Crucified for Sinners,—the Risen Saviour, the True and Living Way to God. And this in our life and conversation, as well as in our preaching and our writings. Surely this is the supreme business of every missionary called by God in these days to minister to Muslims. Here is a method, *the method* which carries with it the promise of success: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men (and that means Muslims or nobody) unto Myself."

Will you permit a simile that has suggested itself repeatedly in the course of work for this Survey. Muslims for the most part are before us like an army entrenched in pits of long standing prejudice. We have repeatedly tried to "rush" their position by frontal attacks, and the success has in truth been small. But there is another method in strategy—that of *drawing the enemy out of their position.* Let us who are in the van of Christ's army today, give ourselves more and more to that method, of making Him the great object of attention. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

And then from several correspondents, it is abundantly clear that we require literature for simple men and women, boys and girls, which exemplify in tract and story the peace and joy, the freedom and fullness, the beauty and power of life in Christ—literature that will make Muslim readers feel, 'Here is something worth having, something I have not got; something I must have.'

It is a significant fact that in seeking information as to the kinds of literature that are urgently needed at the present time, whereas only a quarter of those to whom we addressed our questions were ladies, all of them (and members of the League in each case) sent in replies.

There appears to be a serious lack of suitable literature for such Moslem women as can read, and it is apparent from their replies that our lady correspondents have grasped the importance of this opportunity for representing their side of things as strongly as possible, in order that some more worthy provision may be made for the Moslem women of India in the future.

Moslem girls and boys, reading in the higher classes of schools, are another class for whom suitable story books are urgently required. More than one correspondent expressed the opinion that if only another A. L. O. E. or a Miss Marsden could be found this particular need would be met.

Having stated various needs in the matter of literature still to be created, correspondents were asked to make suggestions as to authorship, but here difficulties arise. There are certain types of literature that should undoubtedly be undertaken by Indians. Now it appears that few Indian men and fewer Indian women are really willing to take up this work, and the number of cultured Indian Christians really equal to the more difficult tasks is very small.

It is to be earnestly hoped that some of the special difficulties in the matter of literature production will be solved in the near future by closer co-operation and co-ordination between the different Mission Boards represented on the fields. Our common needs alone, in the service of the one Great Master, should be enough to bring us together with offers of men and means in order that we may give of our best to these needy people.



Notes.

Lord Lytton, the new Governor of Bengal, replying to an address of welcome presented by the Bengal Moslem Federation, in the course of his remarks, said:

"You have spoken in your address of the necessity for special protection for Mohammedan interests in educational and political matters. I can assure you that I would never willingly consent to any action which would discriminate unfairly against your community, but I must tell you frankly that I dislike the communal representation of any religious communities, and the insistence upon the necessity for selecting individuals to fill administrative posts on grounds of either race or creed. In the present stage of constitutional development in India it is necessary, I know, to do this for a time, but I would plead with you, as with other communities, to help to hasten the day when all such discrimination will be abolished."

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The duty of Indian Muhammadans.—The nation has been deprived of Mahatma Gandhi's leadership for a considerable time. Since almost all the prominent Muslim leaders, including the Ali brothers, had willingly surrendered their right of leadership to the Mahatma, the conviction and incarceration of the latter has placed the Mahommedans in a very awkward position. When any nation surrenders its right of judgment to another, it loses all capacity for sound thinking. The Mussalmans, without any exception, blindly followed Mahatma Gandhi, while among the Hindus there were not a few who, although they agreed with the Mahatma in principle, yet they refused to follow his political programme. What will the Mahommedans do now that the Mahatma has gone to jail for six long years? We think it now time that the Indian Mahommedans should reconsider their position and decide a new line of policy for themselves.

Vakil, (Amritsar.)

* * * * *

Insulting the Dead.—It is reported that Raja Hossain, the ruler of Mecca, has levied a death rate on the Musalmans of Mecca and Medina as the result of which a serious atmosphere has been created. The desire of every religious Mussalman is that his dead body be buried either in Mecca or in Medina; and that is why, from time immemorial, religious Mussalmans have been making provisions for their dead bodies to be taken to the holy cities. They have never grudged money in this direction, but no tax was ever realized for the burial of the dead. None ever attempted to insult the dead by levying a tax.—*Mahammadi.*

NEW MEMBERS.

292	Rev. F. M. Perrill,	M.E.M.	Ballia, U.P. (23rd Day)
293	Rev. J. W. Pickett,	M.E.M.	Arrah; Bihar (11th Day)
294	Rev. W. H. Hezlep,	A.P.M.	Mainouri; U.P. (22nd Day)
295	Rev. J. D. Morris,	B.M.S.	Aijal, Lushai Hills (4th Day)

NOTE.—The name of Rev. H. Dyche of Dinapore, added last month should be inserted at the 11th Day in the Prayer List, and not at the 21st.

The last figure shown indicates the number now in membership.

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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