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## News and Notes

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### Was Muhammad Inspired ?

A SYMPOSIUM.

**B**EFORE we venture upon an answer to this query as put to us by Muslims, it is well to know our own minds. We broached the subject in our last issue, and then with a view to securing a statement, the fairest possible to Muhammad and, at the same time of practical value for ourselves, we addressed the question to more than a score of representative members of the League. We append some of the earliest replies that have reached us. It will be seen that they present considerable divergence in point of view. But when allowance is made for the point of view from which the replies are made, it may be said that they try to do justice to the question. A vital matter of this nature can never, and should never, be dealt with in a reply of five or six lines, as was done in "The Epiphany." We do not personally see that the definite reference to Muhammad arose at all from the question as put to the Editor. The correspondent's question was couched in general terms; it had been wise had the reply been general also. After all, it is especially the members of our League in India that become involved by an answer like this. It is surely due to us, who of all people are face to face with Muslims, that an answer on such a subject should at least make some claim to being adequate.

[As we go to press information has reached us that the members of the Oxford Mission, Calcutta, are genuinely sorry for our sakes as well as their own, that statements should have appeared in *The Epiphany* that will be apt to affect our work adversely, while suggesting at the same time that their attitude to Islam has undergone a change. As a matter of fact the the editor proper was away at the time the statements about Muhammad were inserted. Ed.]

## I.

With sadness we reply that Muhammad's claim to be in succession to God's Apostles and Prophets is negated by his failure to study or follow the approved Messengers of God who preceded him. In contrast with the hundreds of quotations of the Old Testament found in the New Testament, it is doubtful that the Quran contains a single quotation from any of God's servants, and the Quran passages which claim special revelation are grievously at variance with the inspired Word of God, everywhille *verbally* approved by the Quran itself.

We all know that men like Balaam the son of Beor, and Judas Iscariot had times of illumination, and the better portions of the Quran rank with illumination of that sort. This we readily admit.

But when Muhammad proceeds to deny the cardinal Truths of God's Revelation and to change and falsify and contradict God's previous messages, we no longer can pay him any respect.

So far as Monotheism goes, the Devils believe it and tremble, and may preach it, if it suited their purpose.

There have been many "Christian Prophets," and we look for more to come; but we refuse the "false prophets" who are anti-Christian and enemies of God and His Truth. The idea of superseding God's Way of Salvation through Christ the Son of God is altogether reprehensible and unthinkable.

M. G. GOLDSMITH.

## II.

"The New Testament warns us to test the spirits of prophets whether they are of God." The test according to St. John is this: "Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: every spirit which annulleth Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of Antichrist." "This is the Antichrist even he that denieth the Father and the Son." Judged by this test, Muhammad is not of God. He is the Antichrist. For he denies the Divine incarnation and annulleth Jesus and usurps His supremacy. He denies the Divine Sonship of Jesus and the unique relation of God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to the test of St. Paul Muhammad is anathema, for he perverts the Gospel of Christ and preaches "a different gospel which is not another gospel." According to Christ's own test Muhammad is "a thief and a robber," for he enters not by the Door into the Fold, but climbeth up some other way.

If Muhammad was Divinely called and inspired to teach the Arabs Monotheism and obedience to the Will of God, then why is his message not valid and sufficient for other idolatrous and polytheistic peoples? If his inspiration was sufficient for the idolaters of Arabia then why not also for the Hindus of India? Divine truth is not merely of local, but also of universal application. If Muhammad was

Divinely inspired to lead a polytheistic and idolatrous people to a higher and better faith, then Islam ought to be a *via media* for Christianity. Islam, like Judaism, ought to be a Schoolmaster leading the nations to Christ. In fact it has the opposite effect on pagan races. It becomes not a means to an end, but an end in itself. Christ is used only to enhance the glory of Muhammad. Muhammad must increase while Christ whom he has superseded must decrease.

The life and work of Muhammad can be explained otherwise than by the supposition of a Divine call and inspiration. While we must be fair and charitable to our Moslem friends we cannot acknowledge the Divine inspiration of Muhammad at any time, else we shall compromise our position and defeat our object as Christian missionaries of making disciples of the nations and bringing men to Christ.

F. L. NUNN.

### III.

I think that the position of the writer in *The Epiphany* is one with which I do not wish to quarrel, except in so far as it is very short and thereby lays itself open to misunderstanding. It suggests that 'submission to God's will' as taught by Muhammad is the same thing as Christian submission, whereas it would appear to rest on a far more static and legalistic conception of the nature of God than Christians can accept—or perhaps I should say 'ought to accept.'

On the central question, is there any reason for doubting that the earlier truths which Muhammad taught came to him as the result of earnest religious concentration and searching? It seems to me that that is the obvious meaning of the record, and that only some *a priori* dogmatism would make one think of denying it. If this is so, the question is simply one of words. Is the name 'inspiration' to be given only to the writers and the writings of the Old and New Testaments, or is it possible for a Christian to concede some measure of inspiration, that is, of conscious touch with the Divine Source of all being, to Muhammad at his best and most unselfish period, or to Socrates, or the Buddha? My answer would be that the name 'inspiration' can so be given, and that one can do that without lessening one's faith that there is in the Old and New Testaments a supremely revealing, supremely inspired, record of the ways of God with man and of the mind of God toward man. Indeed it seems to me that the inspiration of the Bible is seen to be all the more glorious as one views it as the crown of all inspiration. Nor need this apply only to what went before Christ. For Muhammad was no more really in a position to assimilate the Christian message as his own than a prophet living in a pre-Christian time.

W. PATON.

## On Introducing Muslim Boys and Girls to the Children's Friend.

BY A PANJAB MISSIONARY.

**F**OR work among children in any land *the* primary requisite, next to love of the Master, is love of the little ones and an understanding of the child-mind. Any one who has not got this, cannot hope to carry the Lord's message to a child's heart. Such *little* things affect the soul of a child, such *small* matters mean so much to little people! A loving look, a smile, a hand laid caressingly on the head,—any one of these may mean the first drawing of the young heart towards Him who takes the babes in His arms and blesses them. *Make friends* with the children for Jesus' sake. I remember at the Lucknow Conference how one after another of the converts from Muhammadanism got up and spoke of some small kindness shown by a follower of Christ as having been the first means of turning his heart towards the Master. If such was the effect on adults, how much more on the sensitive nature of a child? In Moslem homes to which we have access, we should look out for opportunities to speak to the children. In schools we should not be satisfied with the routine discipline and teaching, but find occasion for closer contact and understanding. Sickness or death in your pupil's family, or even the child's own sore finger, will give a precious chance for sympathy.

Opportunities of past years are rapidly slipping away. We must be on the look out for those of the new era. In former years many young girls were being taught with their mothers in Zananas, and it was easy to direct their reading and thought to the Gospel message. The person and character of Jesus, if lovingly portrayed makes a strong appeal to young minds. There is much in the Old Testament scriptures that is attractive to the Moslem, and interesting to children of all lands. Abraham, Moses, and David are familiar names to them, and some of the Psalms may well be taught by heart.

I fear that the immense strain put upon the Christian Church and Missionary Societies by the mass of illiterates gathered into the community of nominal Christians, has, of late years, absorbed so much strength that work amongst the Moslem women and children has greatly suffered; whereas formerly it was one of the most fruitful fields.

The spread of female education has resulted in many Girls' Schools being opened where each religious community has its own teaching. While we rejoice in these increased facilities, the fact that Moslem girls are not so readily reached in their own homes as formerly makes one long to provide them with good, healthy literature; otherwise their education too often opens the door for the modern novel or corrupt Indian imitations of the same.

One wonders, in these days of concentrated attention on

childlife, that the Christian Church does not put forth more effort to capture the child-mind of the Hindu and Moslem communities in India. Thousands of these children are coming under Christian influence in day schools all over the land, thousands more who are being educated in Government and other day schools come occasionally within reach of the Christian evangelists, and yet in our province the little books or tracts that might win the hearts of these boys and girls are so few that you may almost count them on your fingers. What are these young people going to read? Where are their books and magazines? How often one meets parties of boys on their way to or from school and how many eager hands are stretched out for something new to read! How gladly the picture leaflet is seized upon and immediately read aloud by some bright faced laddie eager to show his proficiency in the art of reading! Or, one is seated in a courtyard surrounded by a crowd of women listening to the Bible stories, when a girl is pushed forward who has been attending a school in the city, and shyly asks for a book. You test her powers and find she can read fluently in the vernacular; but you have nothing really suitable to give her, no printed message that she might treasure and take home with her.

Blackstone's picture leaflets, admirable and attractive as they are, must be folded to carry away and are very apt to be torn and disfigured, and one knows the Moslem prejudice against pictures as a breach of the second commandment.

We *urgently* need *stories*; Bible stories and other stories, simply told for *boys* and *girls* for free distribution or at a very small price.

Another line of effort that seems neglected is that of simple hymns and songs for little children, such as are sung in every Sunday School in Christian lands. Would that some Indian mother with the gift of song would arise to produce such ditties and that the critics who control publication might be induced to accept *simple* compositions (tracts or songs) in words that will enter into the comprehension of a child.

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## **Should we Alter our Methods with Muslims?**

I HAVE been following the discussions about the use of controversial literature with a good deal of interest. My sympathies are all with Dr. Eddy's viewpoint, *but* I do not think we should discard all our old tools at once by any means. The sledge hammer has its use, but not to drive a tack. Also, I do not think everyone is qualified to use the heavy tools. Here I sell a fair number of *El Hadaya* and *Mizan* but I always have the colporteur tell me whom they are for, especially the former. I would not think of spreading these excellent

works broadcast than I would of teaching heresy, but when a person wants to know the truth and assures me that he is not afraid to have it, I should be sorry not to have the right thing to give him. I hope that the discussions and the movement to revise our literature will result in giving us some good tracts for general distribution and also some pamphlets or even booklets. In a population where 95% are illiterate it is not much to the point to scatter leaflets broadcast, and for this reason I would rather have some well-written neat little books on Christian ideals and character.

F. J. BARNY.

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### Book Review.

#### TWO TRANSLATIONS OF THE QURAN.

(1) **THE QURAN TRANSLATED INTO URDU.** By the Rev. AHMAD SHAH, S. P. G. Mission,\* Cawnpore.  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ , 508 pp. Cawnpore: Zamana Press, 1915. Price Rs 2-12-0 postage extra.

(2) **THE QURAN TRANSLATED INTO HINDI.** By the Rev. AHMAD SHAH, S. P. G. Mission, Cawnpore.  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ , 432 pp. Cawnpore: Law Press, 1915. Price Rs. 2-8-0 postage extra.

Mr. Ahmad Shah, who is responsible for these two attempts to render the Quran into Urdu and Hindi, is well known to all those who are interested in Hindi literature, as the translator into English of the famous *Bijak* of Kabir. As Mr. Ahmad Shah rightly claims in the brief and modest preface to the Hindi translation, this is the first time that an attempt has been made to render the Quran in Hindi, though there are several versions in Urdu, the best-known and probably the best of which was made by Maulavi Nazir Ahmad, the famous novelist, and also the translator of the Penal Code into Urdu.

The present translator in the preface to his Urdu version sets forth the main considerations which have influenced him in carrying out his task, viz. a desire to avoid foreign words, to be as idiomatic as possible, while disturbing the order of the Arabic original as little as possible and retaining all Arabic words, which are current in Urdu, together with an endeavour to translate with fairness and an absence of bigotry and partiality, without prejudging any of the points which have given rise to controversy between various sects of Musalmans. It is obvious that some of these considerations are not applicable to an attempt to render the Quran into Hindi, but both these versions seem to have been made with great care and a laudable desire to be fair. Both versions are accompanied by abundant footnotes, explaining difficulties or allusions in the text, and these are similarly characterized by a spirit of impartiality. A comparison of two short corresponding passages from each rendering will show how widely the two differ in vocabulary, though the grammatical framework is practically the same. The first passage is Sura Iv, verses 26-8. The Urdu runs thus: "Tun donon apne rabb kí kis kis ní'mat ká inkár karte ho. Aur jo kuchh uspar hai faná honewálá hai, magar tere rabb kí zát barí 'azimat aur buzurgí wálá hai

\* Present address, 15/131 Civil Lines, Cawnpore. U. P.

baqi rahegi " The corresponding Hindi is: " So tum apne prabhu ke kis kis bardan se mukarte ho. Aur jo kuchh uspar hai nast honehara hai parantu mere prabhu ki asti jo bari mahima aur baraiwali hai rahjaygi."

The second passage is part of the famous Throne verse (Sura ii, 256), the Urdu being; "Allah hi hai aur uske aiwa koi ma'bud nahin, wuh zinda aur hamesha qaim rahnewala hai, jise na ungh ati hai na nind, Jo kuchh asman o zamin men hai usi ka hai aur uske samne uski marzi ke baghair kaun sifarish kar sakta hai." The Hindi rendering of this is: "Ishvar hi hai koi dev nahin baran wah jivata hai aur sada kal sthir rahne hara haijesena alas ata hai na nidra, jo kuchh svarg aur prthvi men hai usika hai uske sanmukh uski ichchha ke bina kaun binti karsakta hai." The labour involved in preparing these two translations must have been very great indeed, more especially as the Urdu version at least has been made direct from the Arabic, and is not merely a translation of a translation; and Mr. Ahmad Shah may be congratulated on the completion of a careful and scholarly project of no little interest.

in The Journal of the Royal Asiatic  
Society of Great Britain and Ireland, April, 1922. R. P. DEWHURST.

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## Mahomed Ali Studies the Bible.

“WHO WERE THE CHRONICLERS?”

THE following is the full text, according to *Young India*, of Mr. Mahomed Ali's letter to Mr. C. F. Andrews.

Bijapur Jail.

My Dear Andrews,—I had always had a great desire to go right through the Old and New Testaments—a desire whetted by my casual reading and also by the remarkably exquisite literary taste of the English translators of the early seventeenth century in the [authorised] version. Here I have the opportunity and the much desiderated leisure to satisfy the old longing, and while I devote, after my jailwork is over, a good deal of time to Quran reading and memorising, I am devoting perhaps as much to a study of the Bible. I have already read through the five books of Moses (on whom be God's peace). I have read all the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's letters.

But the more I read the more I feel the need of one or two books which could give me a correct idea of the manner in which the Old and New Testaments have come down to our own times. Who were the chroniclers? How can we satisfy ourselves about their trustworthiness? What happened to the Old Testament Books when Nebuchadnezzar searched and set fire to Jerusalem and took the Jews away to Babylon? Then, again, why have only the four Gospels been included in the New Testament? There are known to be some others as well, notably one according to St. Barnabas, rediscovered, I believe, in Egypt not long ago. How did the Twelve Disciples hand over their traditions? I use the word in its Muslim sense of Hadees. How are we to reconcile their discrepancies? I should, therefore, like to get from you, if possible and convenient, the loan of a few books of such a kind as would help me to understand these things from the point of view of a believer, as I know you to be, who is large-minded enough to take a rational view of them.

Then I would like you to lend me such books as have been written from the point of view of those who do not believe, but have not been labouring under gross or irrational prejudices. A typical book or two of the "Higher Criticism," as it has been called, would serve my purpose. I might mention that I read a book in Urdu by my old friend, Professor Nawab Ali, M.A. (once of Aligarh and now of Baroda College) on the history of the Scriptures, but it was not comprehensive enough to suit my purpose; and I would prefer to have both the believer's and the non-believer's points of view represented. I regret I cannot write about any other matter and about myself, personally, as this letter, too, is allowed by the courtesy and at the discretion of the Jail authorities as being "purely on business."

With affectionate esteem and regards,

Yours affectionately,

MAHOMED ALI.

[Will Mr. C. F. Andrews send in response, a copy of Lonsdale and Laura Ragg's book on 'The Gospel of Barnabas'? It is certainly time that a man of Muhammad Ali's standing should know the opinion of impartial experts on this topic.—ED.]

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### Notes.

We offer our hearty congratulations to two of our members whose names appear in the lists of the King-Emperor's Birthday Honours. The Gold Kaiser-i-Hind medal has been bestowed upon:

Dr. Miss Edith Brown, of the Women's Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, Panjab;

and, The Rev. Dr. H. R. Scott, of the Irish Presbyterian Mission Gujerat, Bombay.

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### Topics for Prayer.

PRAY for the little girls and boys of Islam in every land—that the sweetening and uplifting influence of the Spirit of Jesus may find its way early into many a heart.

PRAY that God may soon lay it upon the hearts of some gifted and devoted workers in India and elsewhere to prepare short stories and songs of praise suitable for these little ones.

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*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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