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News and Notes

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Series X

No. 8

August, 1922.

1st August = 7th Zu 'l-Hijjah (12th mo.), 1540, A.H.

Was Muhammad Inspired ?

A SYMPOSIUM.

IV.

TO a certain type of missionary and Indian Christian the statement, 'We believe God truly inspired Muhammad,' would be shocking, there is no doubt. Before passing any judgment however, on this answer, we must keep in mind that the Spirit of Christ is, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." The Spirit of Christ demands that we must be charitable and not always look to the dark side of the picture, but commend things that are good. That is what the Apostle to the Gentiles asks the Church at Philippi to do; (Phil. 4, 8). No one can deny that the life of Muhammad after his flight from Mecca was not what it was when he lived there. As we condemn his life and doings when it was immoral and bad, why should we not commend and praise those things in his life which were noble and good? If God did not inspire Muhammad to stand singly against the whole country and denounce idolatry, who did? Did Satan do this? Who gave him strength to bear all suffering and persecution because of his preaching that God is one, and that His will must be obeyed? Did Satan? So long as he followed the light given to him God helped him, but when he went astray he was left alone. If any one is to be blamed, it is the so-called Christian Church which did not shine, and Muhammad instead of becoming an apostle and prophet of the Cross turned out to be what we deplore.

If it is the word 'inspiration' that shocks some people, I want to know if Cyrus was not inspired to do Jehovah's will. The prophet of the Exile calls him "His anointed," etc.

YOHAN MASIH.

V.

The question you have raised seems to me a most serious one. The use of the phrase, "on him be peace," appears, at the outset, most objectionable; for it apparently puts Mohammed into the same class with Moses and David and *Christ*. Aside from that, everything obviously depends upon our definition of "prophet" and "inspiration." If the former means no more than a teacher of religious truth, then there have been, and are, prophets innumerable. And if "inspired" means simply guided or influenced by God, there have been myriads of inspired men. On the basis of such loose definition as this, Muhammed may be called a prophet and inspired; for I believe him to have been a sincere religious reformer, raised up by God, as every true reformer and teacher is. At the same time I believe that after the death of Khadjjah he was met by the double temptation of world-conquest and sensuality, and *fell*.

I do not see that your question: "If God did not inspire him, who did?" calls for any answer more than this: God taught him, for all truth is of God; but that does not constitute 'inspiration' in the accepted sense of the word. Nor do I see any difficulty in accounting for his "noble behaviour at Mecca"—any more than in accounting for that of Seneca or Marcus Aurelius. No one questions that there have been good men and great teachers outside the pale of Christianity, but that does not make them inspired prophets. Take Socrates: shall we say 'on him be peace,' and call him an inspired prophet of God?

C. A. R. JANVIER.

VI.

With reference to your request for correspondence about the inspiration of Muhammed, I have one or two remarks to make.

Dr. Zwemer's application of Carlyle's dictum (quoted on the first page of the June issue) is surely a complete justification, so far as Dr. Zwemer's opinion counts, for the statement that 'God truly inspired Muhammed.'

But what I want to draw attention to is the sentence quoted later from Dr. Zwemer: "We admit the stupendous strength of the spiritual forces that exist and exert their influences in the world of Islam, but it is perfectly evident that these forces are incompatible in their aims, and irreconcilable in their ideals, with those of Christianity." Now, what is the meaning of the words "spiritual forces"? Can a spiritual force be incompatible and irreconcilable with the spiritual forces of Christianity? Is there more than one source of spiritual power in the universe? Or, to put it another way, has the witch doctor spiritual force or has he not? Is spiritual force a thing which necessarily "came out of heaven," or can there be a spiritual force which is "earthly, sensual, devilish"?

It is arguable that Islam had, and has, spiritual force, but that its "stupendous" forces are and were not spiritual at all, but otherwise. If, of course, it had spiritual force, then Muhammed, who introduced it to the world, was inspired just in so far as that force was spiritual, *i.e.*, of God, and new in the environment in which he proclaimed it. I admit that it had spiritual force, but I do not admit the "stupendous strength of the *spiritual* forces that exist in the world of Islam." At the present time I should say that its stupendous strength does not rest on spiritual forces but on others.

E. H. P. FISHER.

VII.

In my 'Life of Muhammad' (pp. 35-40), I have given the views of oriental scholars (Muir, Koelle, Macdonald, Rabbi Geiger). On the whole I think that Dr. Koelle's view is probably the more correct one: it is consistent with the fact that Muhammad was opportunist. (Dr. Koelle considers that the *patriotic sentiment* was a very important factor in the inception of Islam, that there was no break in Muhammad's career. 'The ardent preacher, the zealous reformer, the austere Prophet at Mecca, pleading amid annoyances and oppositions for mere toleration and the bare recognition of his teaching, is in reality the seed and the precursor of the military commander, the insatiable conqueror, the despotic autocrat of Madina. In both cases he is essentially the same man.')

In an interview with the Quraish chiefs, Muhammad said that by embracing his faith they would not only get freedom but would subdue the rest of the Arabs and the Persians also. (Sirat'ul-Rasul, Egypt ed. part I, pp. 145-6.)

The Muslim claim is that as a Prophet he was inspired to usher in a new dispensation, superseding what had gone before. The latest Qadiani commentator on Sura II. 100: translates *ayat* not by 'verse,' but by 'communication.' The argument is that the Jewish law is abrogated and a better one sent. The doctrine of the abrogation of Quranic verses is declared to be false.*

We often use the word prophet as meaning preachers of righteousness: the Muslim idea is stricter: he is a *rasul* inspired by *wahi* method to deliver God's message. In this Muslim sense, I do not see how any oriental scholar can call Muhammad a prophet.

After mature consideration and wide reading I gave my own view in my 'Life of Muhammad' (pp. 228-32). Increased knowledge only confirms the views then expressed.

E. SELL.

* This innovation of the Qadianis was itself shown to be utterly groundless by Dr. D. B. Macdonald in answer to our question in the Moslem World Magazine, vide October issue 1917, pp. 420-423. Ed.

(The personal view to which Canon Sell refers occupies the closing pages of his biography of Muhammad, and is quite the best brief statement of the character on the great Arabian that we have seen. It has the merit of deliberately seeking to do justice to Muhammad's good points. The 'Life' concludes with the following paragraph: 'The impartial student of history will come to the conclusion on a careful review of Muhammad's life and work, that, though he was a very successful Arab Chief, and did much to maintain and spread a belief in one God, he has entirely failed to establish his position as a divinely commissioned prophet, or to show that he was sent with 'the guidance and the religion of truth that he might exalt it above every religion' (Sura, 48 : 28), and make it set aside all that had gone before. We cannot, therefore, admit that Muhammad was sent from God with a new and divine revelation, or that Islam supersedes Christianity.')"

VIII.

With regard to the question raised, it seems to me that a good deal depends upon the connotation given to the term "prophet." If in the N. T., Epimenides is called a "prophet" (Titus 1: 12), there can be no exception taken to the application of that term to Muhammad. Man's discernment of truth is dependent upon his moral condition, and it was in Muhammad's earlier years, when sincerity of heart and singleness of aim were predominant within him, that he descried the truths which God had revealed. It was the subsequent limitation of inward receptivity that led to the subsequent distorted and defective vision of truth.

J. IRELAND HASLER.

IX.

It seems to me that it can hardly be correct, in view of his character and anti-Christian creed, life and methods to call Muhammed *inspired*. Was he not more in the position of, and like, Balaam upon whom the Spirit of God came for the object of delivering a special message? A man who *had* his eyes shut and now opened—*awakened*, but not *quickened* by the Spirit—and for what? To see the folly and abomination of idolatry at a time when, and in a country where the Church had become so corrupt. Being of an ardent temperament his whole soul rose up against it, and God made use of his natural gifts to convince men of the error of idolatry and the truth of the unity of God.

Had Muhammed continued a simple, humble, and sincere learner, God would surely have opened his eyes to further truth and he might have become a true apostle to his people in the sense of Brainerd and others; but he allowed "self" to come in and frustrate the grace of God, and seized the opportunity, only too quickly perceived by the old nature, to minister to his own self-aggrandisement. He certainly

did not begin by being an imposter. And is not the very fact of the Moslem creed being based partly on a truth and that a fundamental truth of revelation, though with a false addition, the great source of its power and spread? That which is truth in it—the unity of God—appeals to the consciences of men while the added half meets the desires of their fleshly mind.

F. M. READE.

Notice for the July 1922 Number of the Moslem World.

How Arabs Regard the Christian Message.

A very interesting article on the attitude of the Arab mind towards the Gospel in this issue is from the pen of Dr. Paul W. Harrison, whose visits to the interior of Arabia have qualified him to write in an illuminating manner on these people whose home life is so little known.

The editorial in the July number of the *MOSLEM WORLD* shows the changed attitude of the clergy of the ancient Christian Churches of the Near East—Greek, Armenian and Coptic—and states that a new spirit of co-operation now exists, so that American missionaries are invited to preach in the old Churches, and the leaders of those Churches share in the services of the Missions. In this new day when student volunteers from the old Churches are amongst the most earnest and active workers, we may look forward to the time when the missionary passion in those Churches will once more be fanned into a flame.

A scholarly article on "Eclecticism in Islam," written by the Rev. Arthur Jeffery, M.A., a professor of Oriental languages in the American University at Cairo, indicates in a very careful and discriminating analysis of the origin and development of Islam how the original driving power of Mohammed's forceful character was not very enduring. The subsequent movements in Islam which give new religious life, especially Sufism, and the more modern Babism and the Ahmadiya movement, were all of an eclectic character.

Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, the editor, has an interesting study on a particular class of the Muhammedan traditions which are known as the *Hadith Qudsi*, or Holy Traditions, so called because they purport to contain the actual words of Allah. Examples of such traditions are given in this article, some of them obviously based on Jewish and Christian sources.

Interesting details of the life of Turkish peasants are to be found in a second article by Rev. S. Ralph Harlow, of Smyrna; and Miss M. Cay, who has spent nearly thirty years in village work in Egypt, gives a graphic account of some of her experiences under the

title "Off the Beaten Track." The history of the Moslem sect known as the Ibadhites and their present condition it described by the Rev. Percy Smith, of Algiers.

Notes on Current Topics contain many interesting items of news on all phases of Moslem life, and the Book Reviews and Survey of periodicals also contain valuable information.

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THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY acts as agents in India for 'The Moslem World' and will be glad to receive orders from intending subscribers. The price in Indian currency, at the present time, is Rs. 6-12-0. Will subscribers please note that their orders should in every case be sent to the Christian Literature Society, P. O. Box 507, Park Town, Madras, and not direct to the Publication Office in New York. To send orders to New York merely confuses things.

From recent information to hand from the New York office it appears that this excellent magazine has only about 65 Christian supporters in India, and of these about 20, at most, are members of our League. Surely the untiring efforts of our friend Dr. Zwemer, in his desire to serve us all through the medium of this unique magazine, are deserving of wider support from the 222 members of this League resident in India!

Book Reviews.

The following useful publications in Arabic have been issued from the Nile Mission Press, and should be stocked by all missionaries who are able to make use of them amongst Arabic-knowing peoples.

THE STORY OF TWO HEROES. The story of David and Goliath, beautifully illustrated in colours, for children. Price 1½ piastres.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE DEITY OF CHRIST. A valuable treatise of sixty-one pages containing Biblical passages showing that Jesus is spoken of as God, Lord, Son of God, Creator, etc. This should be in the hands of every Indian and Chinese Mullah who knows Arabic. Price 1½ piastres.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. A translation of part of Dr. Andrew Murray's book *The Life of Prayer*, and of four articles by Dr. F. B. Meyer on various phases of Christian experience. Price two piastres.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAVE. Reprint of an article from the Magazine '*Beshairu's-Salam*.' Price ½ piastre.

ROOTS AND BRANCHES. A fourth edition, revised by the talented Superintendent of the Nile Mission Press, of Dr. Potter's well-known summary of Christian belief and practice. Price $2\frac{1}{2}$ piastres.

SACRIFICE AND ATONEMENT. Fifteen pages in verse. Price $\frac{1}{2}$ piastre.

YOUNG MEN'S PROBLEMS. A reprint of one of the "Alliance of Honour" series from *Orient and Occident*. Price $\frac{1}{2}$ piastre.

THE WHITE KNIGHT. A purity pamphlet by the Superintendent of the Nile Mission Press. Price $\frac{1}{2}$ piastre.

W. G.

Removal of Mosque at Lahore.

ILLEGAL ERECTION.

Demolished under Military Protection.

THE inhabitants of Lahore City had a surprise when they awoke this morning to find the principal vantage points of the bazaars in the hands of the military, with Lewis guns, cavalry and armoured cars cunningly stationed, says a *Pioneer* message, dated May 17. The military forces had been concentrated quietly, marching from the cantonment, five miles distant in the early hours of the morning. Their advent went practically unnoticed, and there were many in the civil station who were quite unaware of their presence.

This display of force marked the sequel to what has been the subject of bitter wranglings in the Municipal Committee for many weeks past—the illegal erection of a mosque, some of which encroached on municipal land. The Municipal Committee spent hours and days in discussing the matter, and even adopted the expedient of appealing to the Christian members to settle the question for them. The Christian members refused, however, and at their last meeting the Committee, after searching in vain for some easier course, decided that their bye-laws must be obeyed even though many members embrace the cause of non-co-operation, and served a notice on the Mosque Committee ordering the demolition of that portion of the mosque built on municipal land within 48 hours and the rest within 30 days.

The notice was ignored. Muhomedans were greatly excited by the incident, and there has been any amount of wild talk. Hence the troops this morning, when the Committee decided to accomplish the work of demolition themselves. Not, of course, that the Committee trooped there in a body, but they sent along lorry loads of coolies, the actual work of destruction being directed by the Deputy Commissioner and the Municipal Engineer. The lorries were used in transporting the building material from the mosque.

On the house-tops of the buildings that surround the mosque were to be seen three to four Lewis guns in different positions manned by *sipahis* of the 116th Maharattas, while a considerable number of Maharattas, Gurkhas and police were posted on the main streets and adjoining roads.

A fair number of tanks belonging to No. 8 Armoured Car Company were stationed on the Circular Road, and a couple were posted on the principal adjoining roads.

On the mosque was found an inscription with the words:—*Ya rab rahe salamai ye pak ghar ham log hain gharib faqat asra tera.* (By the mercy of God may this place remain as it is. We are poor people, and we are only depending on you—God).

A large number of the Northamptonshire Regiment, accompanied by a battery, were in readiness in the Telegraph Office compound, while a detachment of Indian lancers were posted near the railway station.

On the spot were Colonel Gregson, Major Ferrar, and members of the Municipality consisting of Mian Abdul Aziz, Dr. Arora, the Health Officer, and Mr. Mohammad Ishaq Khan, the Municipal Engineer. The road between the Lahore and Mochi Gates was closed to traffic, in order to prevent people from collecting near the spot and no disturbance of any sort has resulted. There were, of course, small crowds of Indians gathered out of curiosity, but the work was completed about noon without incident.

NEW MEMBERS.

208	Rev. M. E. Wigram,	C.M.S.	Bannu.	(16th Day)
299	Mrs. A. Lionel,	G.E.Z.M.S.	Madras	(15th Day)
300	Rev. W. Sutherland,	A.U.P.M.	Campbellpur	(16th Day)
			Di. Attock.	

The last figure shown indicates the number now in membership.

We are sure members will rejoice to see that the number in fellowship with us has now reached 300.

The new names may be inserted in the Prayer Cycle at the places indicated.

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.