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News and Notes

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God-inspired Scripture

II

BY THE REV. L. E. BROWNE, M.A., B.D.,

Bishop's College, Calcutta.

THE word Inspiration is used in a great variety of senses, indicating every possible stage from the verbal inspiration which Muhammad believed he had in the words of the Qur'an, to the happy idea that flashes into the mind of the composer of a witty 'limerick.' The word is frequently used to describe the process by which the Holy Scriptures came to be written, but by reason of the wide variety of meaning of the word its use too often confuses instead of elucidating the issue.

In what sense is the inspiration of Scripture understood by Muslims? This is what the greatest living authority on Islam says, * "Speech is an eternal attribute of God, which, as such, has no beginning and is never interrupted, just as little as His knowledge, His might, and the other characteristics of His eternal Being. What therefore is recognized as the activity of the speaking of God, His revelation—and therein the Qur'an has the first interest for Islam—cannot have arisen in time through a special act of God's creative will, but exists from all eternity. The Qur'an is uncreated." That is what a Muslim understands by inspired Scripture, and before we speak to Muslims about the inspiration of our Scriptures we must realize what they will think we mean. Nor need we think to avoid the difficulty by comparing our Christian inspiration with *ilham*, the inspiration of saints, rather than with *wahi*, the inspiration of prophets and of the Qur'an, for both *ilham* and *wahi* are accurate reflections

* Goldziher: Vorlesungen über den Islam, p. 113.

in the human heart of the Preserved Tablet on which is engraved all that God has decreed, and the only difference between them is that the angel messenger who casts the knowledge into the heart can be seen by the prophet but not by the saint.* Now it is perfectly clear that no Christian would make such a claim for the Bible as that it was uncreated and existed from all eternity. With the exception of that Jewish writer who said that God studied the Torah every day, it is doubtful whether Jew or Christian has ever used such language of the Old or the New Testament.

A cursory study of the Scriptures themselves does not suggest any unanimity among the authors as to the method of the composition of the books. A number of the Old Testament prophets headed their prophecies with the words, 'The oracle of Yahweh,' or 'Thus hath Yahweh spoken.' St. John the Divine threatens anyone who dares to alter a word he has written. St. Paul more cautiously 'thinks' that he has the mind of Christ. St. Luke and Jesus ben Sira give accounts of the composition of their books which read much like the way in which any ordinary author sets to work.

It is therefore necessary to decide the question, not by any *a priori* considerations, but by a study of the contents of the books and of their influence.

The influence of the Scriptures on the lives of men is an extraordinarily strong witness to the fact that there is something in Scripture which does not occur in like measure in other literature. If we were to estimate inspiration in this practical way we should undoubtedly find a larger measure of inspiration in the Psalter and the Gospels than, say, in Chronicles.

The modern critical study of the Old Testament has had the result—which unfortunately its opponents have failed to notice—of emphasizing, more than ever before, the inspiration of the writing prophets. For the accurate dating of the different parts of the Old Testament has shown that the message of the moral unity of God—*One because He is holy*—which was proclaimed by the 8th century prophets, was new to the world, and was uttered at a time when political reasoning would have suggested that Yahweh was one of the less powerful gods. Moreover, Comparative Study of Religions has shown that this truth is absolutely vital. It is lacking in Hinduism and in Islam.

This is certainly the outstanding example in the Old Testament of a message which the prophets received from outside their normal circle of reasoning. It is probable that in every case where we can point to inspired words, they were written by an author whose thoughts had been directed into those channels by his communion with God. If we wished to enter into controversy with Muslims we might challenge them to show that the Qur'an has exercised such an uplifting

* Macdonald: *The Religious Life and Attitude of Islam*, p. 253.

influence on men's lives as the Psalter, or to show any theological idea in the Qur'an which was so utterly novel to the world as the ideas of Isaiah, chapter vi. But such controversy would embitter rather than attract. We cannot do better than follow the advice of Macdonald,* "Face to face with the Bible we can safely leave the Muslim. When he needs help he will seek it; it is for the missionary to see to it that so seeking he will find. And in that search of his, very much will depend upon the theological training of the missionary to whom he turns, for none but a schooled theologian can meet the needs of an educated Muslim. But the missionary must also see to it that he does not by a stiff doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy lay up future dangers for his convert. It is true that the tendency of the Muslim enquirer will be to welcome such a stiff doctrine; for him the stiffer it is, the better. But our Biblical criticism is already penetrating the East, and the time is near when faith built upon Old Testament proof-texts will not stand the test. That reconstruction of our attitude towards the Bible which we are all facing is of immediate and practical imminence in the Muslim field."

We have no reason to suppose that information on secular subjects—history, archaeology, science and the like—was ever vouchsafed to Biblical authors outside their normal circle of reasoning. And if that is so, we have already travelled miles from the ideas which are connected in the Muslim's mind with the words 'revelation' and 'inspiration.' To clear up our own ideas we may note further that the guidance of God did not end with the authors. It is seen also in (1) those who chose the books to be regarded as Holy Scripture, (2) those who translated them into other tongues, and (3) those who comment on the books, and every reader of them. I venture to suggest that if any devout reader of Holy Scripture will say by what means he is enabled to assimilate the spiritual lessons of the Bible he will have gone a long way towards understanding the means by which the inspiration came to the authors to write those words.

Have we then something to offer the convert which is far less tangible than the infallible Qur'an? Have we no infallible Book, nor infallible Pope? No; but we have an infallible Friend. Jesus Christ, Whom we have known, in Whose hand we place our hand in confidence, who is alive and with us now, is the perfect and infallible image of God. Our relation with Him is not merely of knowledge, but of love. The early church fought a life and death struggle with Gnosticism, that oriental faith which claimed full knowledge of God. India too, in its long search for God, has sought Him almost entirely by the path of knowledge. One of the greatest things that we have to teach India is that it is not sufficient to have information, knowledge, about God: we must have Him, be bound to Him by the bands of love and moral obedience. The Qur'an speaks about God. The Bible speaks

* Macdonald: Aspects of Islam, p. 14.

about God. But in Jesus we are in living touch with God Himself. The knowledge of God follows as a natural result, if we are one with Jesus; for the more we grow into Him, the more knowledge, both intellectual and moral, we have of God. The Bible is just the text-book that shows us the way to go to Jesus.

Musalmani-Bengali.

II.

THE article on this subject appearing in the May "*News and Notes*" by one of our Indian brethren, was exceedingly interesting, and while agreeing with a good deal that was written, I find that our Bengali preachers think as I do in regard to the statement that the Muslims of Bengal are "able to enter into the spirit of pure Bengali terms rather than the Islamic ones." This statement does not coincide with our experience. Both in preaching and in circulating literature we find that unless the Muslims hear or see the Islamic terms, they consider that the message is not for them.

Here are the considered opinions of two of our senior preachers. One said, "In my opinion Musalmani-Bengali cannot be dropped at this stage.

The other not knowing who had written the book "*Nabider Keccha*" (Stories of the Prophets) said, "I think that both the Injil, and any tracts for Muslims that are published to-day, ought to be written in a similar style to that adopted in "*Nabider Keccha*." Having said this he produced a list of Musalmani words which he considered should be included in tracts written in simple Bengali.'

Mymensingh, E. Bengal.

H. W. MASTERS.

III

A lady member writes as follows:—

'For work among the village people it is absolutely essential in speaking to them. For simple tracts it is also most desirable, because those who can read, read them aloud and the men and woman can understand them. These people would neither understand nor listen to Bengali pure and simple.

As regards books in Musalmani-Bengali I am not so certain about its use, but I think it preferable provided it is not overdone. I, too, think some of the terms that we have used convey no meaning to these people and others prove to be objectionable.

People who work among educated Muhammadans know better than I do, but I think even educated Muhammadans like their own religious terms to be used. These terms appeal to their hearts more.

Ruh Quddus is an expression I prefer not to use: the people understand *Athma* perfectly well. *Asmani Bap* is a most undesirable term to use; only a Muhammadan who becomes a Christian can tolerate and understand the term, and then he would use the term we use as Christians.

* * * * *

The work among Muhammadans is interesting now-a-days. One Muhammadan man told me that there never has been so much talk about religion. Jesus is coming soon, some say; and various other rumours are current. Not only have the people of the West the best *kitab* but they have the chief religion, I sometimes hear them say. This does not mean they intend to accept it but it gives us the open mind we need. They wont buy books now-a-days though, and for this reason I find the tracts most useful. By the way, they use them for their charms!"

Brahmanbaria, E. Bengal.

(Miss) A. L. COWLES.

Committee on Work Among Muslims, National Christian Council of India.

Notes of a meeting held at Lahore, April 17-18, 1925.

The following members were present : Rev. Ali Bakhsh, Professor R. Siraj-ud-din, Rev. Dr. Griswold, Professor Mohd. Ismail, Rev. L. Bevan Jones, Rev. F. J. Western, Rev. H. J. Lane Smith, Rev. M. T. Titus. Convener, and F. D. Warris, Esqr., co-opted. A telegram came from Mr. D. A. Chowdhury regretting that owing to illness he was unable to attend. Rev. W. Paton, Secretary of the National Christian Council, was also present and gave valuable assistance.

I. THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY showed that the Committee had done a considerable amount of useful work since its first organization in the early part of 1923. The following details are of interest :—

1.	Number of books and tracts authorized	...	...	52
	Of these to date there have been published	...	...	25
	There remain unpublished	...	...	27
2.	The amount of subsidy secured amounts to			Rs. 14,013
	From the I. L. F. for publications			Rs. 3,383
	" " " " Lit. Worker			Rs. 2,000
	" " " " A. C. L. S. M. for publications			Rs. 8,630
3.	The languages in which these publications have been executed or planned :—			
	English	...	...	4
	Urdu	...	...	45
	Bengali	...	...	3
4.	Number of books translated	...	...	29
5.	New works	...	...	18
6.	Reprints	...	...	14
7.	Writers and literature workers whose works or services have been available :—			

Dr. S. M. Zwemer	Rev. J. Ali Bakhsh
Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner	Mr. K. Feroze Khan
Rev. W. Goldsack	Rev. J. W. Richards
Rev. J. Takle	Rev. L. Bevan-Jones
Rev. C. C. Mylrea	Prof. M. M. Ismail
Rev. Anwar-ul-Haqq	Rev. Kewal Singh
	Rev. M. T. Titus

II. TRAINING OF WORKERS. (1) *Missionaries*. Canon Western presented this subject which was discussed at length. It was felt that some

special course of study might be prepared by the committee for the use of those who come into almost constant contact with Muslims but who do not have either the time or inclination to take advanced training in Arabic or Urdu. Accordingly a sub-committee, consisting of Rev. L. Bevan-Jones and Prof. M. M. Ismail, was appointed to draw up such a course, and print the same in "*News and Notes.*" It was also requested that a reserve supply be printed separately in leaflet form by the Secretary of the Missionaries to Muslims League for the use of those who may call for it.

It was decided that the Secretary should correspond with the Principal of the Landour Language School with a view to arranging for a Summer School of from two to four weeks for special students who may wish to pursue a course in Islamics.

(2) *Indian Workers.* It was voted that the attention of Missions and Churches be drawn to the need for Indian workers to specialize in work for Muslims, and that any such should receive special education and training, of the kind that it is proposed to offer in the Department of Islamics at the Bareilly Theological School. (See note below)

It was also recommended that wherever opportunity offers such men be given the chance of associating with some experienced person for a time, before being appointed to independent work. The names of some of those with whom such persons might be associated are here suggested:—

Rev. L. Bevan-Jones, Dacca, Bengal.
 Maulvi Ahmad Masih, S.P.G., Delhi.
 Rev. Sultan Md. Paul, Fategarh, U.P.
 Mr. K. Feroze Khan, Poona.
 Rev. M. T. Titus, Moradabad, U.P.
 Maulvi Abdul Haqq, Jagraun, Ludhiana District, Punjab.
 Maulvi Shah Abdul Qadir, Hyderabad, Deccan.

III. LITERATURE PROJECTS.

1. "*The King of Love.*" A Life of Christ for Moslem children, by Miss Padwick. The action of last year was reaffirmed, and the Secretary of the P.R.B.S. Lahore, was instructed to have it translated from the Arabic and published as soon as possible.
2. "*The Friend of Sinners.*" This simple Life of Christ for village Muslims, by the Rev. L. Bevan-Jones was approved, and recommended for a grant both for English and Urdu from the I.L.F.
3. "*What God Hath Used.*" The remainder of this excellent group of Nile Mission Press publications was recommended for grants to the A.C.L.S.M. The 18 tracts to be published separately in Urdu.
4. "*Muhammad and the Bible.*" By Rev. W. Goldsack: approved for publication in Urdu, and for a grant from the A.C.L.S.M.
5. "*The Verse of Stoning.*" By Canon W. H. T. Gairdner: approved for publication in Urdu, and for a grant from the A.C.L.S.M.
6. "*Inspiration.*" By Canon W. H. T. Gairdner: approved for publication in Urdu, and for a grant for the A.C.L.S.M.

OCCUPATION OF LARGE CENTERS. The following large centers were named as ones which need to have specially trained missionaries responsible for work among Muslims, and the Secretary of the N.C.C. was asked to correspond with the Missions concerned to remind them of their responsibility in the matter:—

<i>City</i>	<i>Mission Responsible</i>	<i>Special worker, if any</i>
Quetta	M. E. Mission & C. M. S.	A. L. Grey
Karachi	M. E. Mission	G. B. Thompson
Lahore	A. P. Mission	.....
Peshawar	C. M. S.	C. B. G. Chambers
Rawalpindi	A. U. P. Mission	W. T. Anderson
Delhi	S. P. G. Mission	.....
Lucknow	M. E. Mission	.....
Patna	B. M. S.	G.N. Gibson (designate)
Calcutta	Oxford Mission & Scot. Ch. Mission	.....
Dacca	B. M. S.	L. Bevan-Jones
Madras	C. M. S.	Canon E. Sell
Colombo	W. M. S & S. P. G.	.....
Hyderabad, Deccan	C. M. S.	L. S. Dudley
Bombay	C. M. S. S. P. G. M. E. Mission	H. J. Lane-Smith
Ahmedabad	I. P. Mission	.....

PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION. Mr. Warris of the Punjab Religious Book Society reported an encouraging increase in the sales of their own publications during the past year. He is regularly placing advertisements in several papers, and also sends out catalogues and special circulars from time to time. The Secretary of the Committee also reported that he had been able during the past two years to take orders for 611 copies of books, and emphasized the need of more individual missionaries pushing the sale of literature.

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY. Since the present Secretary will be going on long leave at the end of this year the Rev. L. Bevan-Jones was selected to take his place at the time of his proceeding on leave.

M. T. TITUS,
Secretary.

Literature (in Arabic) for Juniors.

Mr. Upson is asking in Egypt: 'Should we concentrate upon Christian literature for Seniors or for Juniors'? There are those who would reply "for Juniors" and certainly we must think of the men of to-morrow. But, on the other hand, are the juniors at the present moment prepared to give very much attention to Christian literature, or to study of any kind? At the moment of writing they seem to prefer *politics*; perhaps this is all the more reason why we should try to teach them something better!

Quite a number of books and tracts are now ready:—

1. Junior Portionettes; or, as they are called, "Leaves from the Tree of Life"; these are four-page portionettes but specially selected for children by Miss Monro and Mr. Morrison: there are four varieties, and all four are now ready at P.T. 8 per hundred (about 2s/-).

2. Arabic Christmas Cards. Miss Padwick first started these and some thousands were sold; we have just stocked a re-print of two thousand copies and hope to clear out the stock this month. Are we too sanguine? The price has now been reduced to P.T. 1 per copy.

3. Miss Trotter's Story Parables are now in a special new form; we call them the 1924 Series, each one having a full-page illustration specially sketched this summer by Miss E. A. Wood; the numbers ready to date, or soon to be ready, are:—

- 521. The Threshold and the Corner.
- 522. Letter from a far Country.
- 523. Field of the Simpleton.
- 524. Man Drowned in Sand.
- 525. Weaving of Said.
- 526. Debt of Ali ben Omar.
- 527. House of el-Hasan.
- 528. The Robe of el-Rashid.
- 529. The Coin that did not ring.
- 530. Lost in the Desert.

We are able to supply the new series at the old price—P.T. 15 per hundred.

In respect of Senior literature, I am pleased to draw attention to Miss Trotter's Series of "Chats with Women." There are ten in this series:—

- 441. Sweeping.
- 442. Weaving.
- 443. Patching.
- 444. Washing.
- 445. Giving a crust.
- 446. Carrying the Water.
- 447. Lighting the Lamp.
- 448. Brazier of Charcoal.
- 449. Money.
- 450. The Mother's Lap.

These are published at one millieme each, or the whole set for P.T. 1, either separately or stitched together. All the ten are now ready.

Notes

Islam in Mesopotamia. Mr. Bilkert of Busrah writes:—'I wish I could report some really encouraging features from the work here in Busrah. But Islam is still Islam and there are no signs of an early breaking away. There is no very real devotion to Islam as a religious system. I am of the opinion that the number who are sincere Muslims and find in Islam any spiritual satisfaction, are very, very few. But as a social system it is still powerful and there are few who dare face the reproach which breaking away would mean. We do need prayer—for ourselves for patience, perseverance and faith, and for those who are inquiring the way, that they may have courage and grace to follow the light.'

* * * * *

The late Miss Wood of Hyderabad, Deccan, whose death we report with regret in this issue, had been ill for a long time. 'Her work in Hyderabad was unique. She had done zanana work there for years and was the only missionary of the M. E. Mission there who knew Urdu. She will be greatly missed for her very life was given for her Moslem sisters of that great stronghold of Islam in the Deccan.'

NEW MEMBERS

99.	Mr. P. John	B. M. S.	Patna, India
12.	Rev. H. J. Scudder	Amer. Arcot Miss.	Punganur, Madras
40.	Rev. E. Savarirayan	" " " "	Vellore, " "
292.	Rev. R. C. Das	Ch. of God Miss.	Kurigram, N. Bengal
188.	Rev. J. F. Minnis	Meth. Prot. Miss.	Dhulia, Bombay Pres.
370.	Rev. Paul M. Cassen	" " "	" " "
31.	Mrs. Pearl. L. Hite	" " "	" " "
84.	Miss Grace Perley	" " "	" " "
526.	Miss Theresa Frank	" " "	" " "
527.	Rev. J. I. Kaylor.	Ch. of Brethren	Vada, Bombay
61.	Miss. Fulcher	Z. B. M. Miss.	Sholapur, Bombay
529.	Miss. G. Chapman	E. " Luth. Miss.	Saujbulak, Persia
377.	Mrs. K. Schalk.	" " "	" " "
514.	Miss H. C. Schonhood	" " "	" " "
290.	Miss A. Enderson	" " "	" " "
528.	Mr. R. Whitwell	C. M. S.	Cairo
375.	Mr. Rackett	C. & M. A.	Ain Karim, Palestine
10.	Mr. Irish	C. & M. A.	Hebron, "
122.	Miss Derr	C. & M. A.	" " "
236.	Miss M. T. Maxwell		Safad, Galilee
530.	Rev. W. V. K. Treanor,	C. M. S.	Allahabad

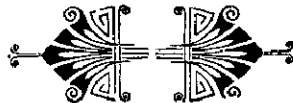
(Most of the new members here notified have taken the numbers of others who have fallen out. The last number indicates the present strength of the League.)

Death of a Member

We report with regret the death, early in April, of Miss C. Wood of Hyderabad, Deccan,

The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s.). 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:—

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Dacca, Bengal, India.



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