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News and Notes

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Christ Brings Peace

(From Dr. Zwemer's greeting to the readers of 'Orient and Occident').

A REMARKABLE interpretation of Jesus Christ as the Peace-maker is given by Al Ghazali in the *Ihya* (Vol. IV, p. 245):

"Jesus the Prophet was of those who were especially favoured. Among the proofs of it is this that he called down peace upon himself, for he said: 'Peace be on me the day I was born and the day I shall die and the day I shall be raised up alive.' And this was because of his peace of mind and his loving kindness towards men. But as for John the son of Zecharia (on him be peace), he took the place of awe and fear towards God and did not utter these words until after they were repeated to him by his Creator, who said: 'Peace be upon him the day he was born and the day he died and the day he was raised again.'

This is an interesting critical comment on the two passages referred to, which occur in the same chapter of the Koran, and I have never seen them used elsewhere as an argument for the superiority of Christ to John. Christ brought peace by breaking down the walls of partition and division. He came to give childhood its place and womanhood her honor and manhood its task and its true dignity as the defender of the weak and helpless. In Jesus' presence the slave drops his pride, the hypocrite loses his mask, the timid gain courage, the outcast finds home and the sinner forgiveness. The depth and breadth of His peace pass all understanding. He bridges the chasm between races and classes. He teaches us to have compassion on all. Christ forgives because He understands; and He understands because He was made like unto His brethren in all things except sin. He is our Peace. Because of what we have experienced from Him and in Him ourselves we extend to you to-day the beautiful Moslem greeting which, because of Christmas, has to us an ever deeper and a holier significance:

"Peace be upon you and the mercy of God and His blessings."

A Striking Appeal to Muslim Men

That the conscience of Muslim India is not altogether happy about its treatment of women is indicated in the letter we reproduce below. It was given a prominent place in the Ahmadiya bi-monthly paper, *The Light*, published from Lahore.

“Behind the Veil”

by

MISS H. A. HAFIZ, I. T. COLLEGE, LUCKNOW.

TO almost all of my Muslim brethren the scenes behind the veil are more than familiar. Perhaps some of you have been responsible for them. May be a few of you have discussed a solution of the distressing conditions. But how many of you have done anything to correct them?

I feel that the present condition of women is the result of their economic dependence. Most of us, I fear, value people according to their utility to us. We forget that human life and personality, in themselves, are sacred. We forget that Muslim women are more than half the whole Muslim population. And we try to attain ideal heights without utilizing the energy “behind the veil.” We are obstructed in our path. We look around and yet we know not what invisible force is keeping us back. That invisible force, which Muslim men have neglected; which they have robbed of its rights, even against the instructions of our Holy Prophet, is the strength of the women. The Prophet says: ‘The best of you is he who is the best in his treatment towards his wife.’ Again he says: ‘Acquisition of knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim man and woman.’

Have we a true desire for national renaissance when we have made more than half the population inefficient? Muslims have been, because of their practice, regarded as those who crush down womanhood. There are families where the head of the family is very broad-minded as far as the education of his children is concerned—perhaps because this has become a fashion—but who treats his own wife as a slave. She can not get out of his clutches. She can not even go to see her own brothers and relations. She is commanded absolutely to break away from her blood-relations. Her happiness and sorrow depend entirely on the whims of this one man. Has he not brought upon himself a greater responsibility in this absolute and unscrupulous attitude of his, than he would otherwise have?

We could help matters if we would pass from the individualistic, selfish conception of religion to the broad and healthy social conception; if we did not put ourselves first. Respect and love can never, never be bought by force or compulsion. These drive them away. It is when we lose ourselves in the interest of others that we gain the full allegiance of happiness, love and respect.

If Muslim men would, even now, turn this great mass "behind the veil" into a strong and efficient force, we should be very near the "Swaraj" (Home Rule) we talk of. Let the Muslim lady express her individuality. Do not bind her down by customs. Give her her birth-right—freedom of will which God has bestowed upon every individual. Do not assume an attitude of superiority. Respect her for her personality and her humanity and thereby respect the Great Prophet, the Emancipator of Woman, who said, 'Paradise lies at the feet of mothers.'

The makers of New Turkey are the young women. While they were silent there were hardly any social reforms, but when they stood up, side by side, with the young men of Turkey, they transformed Turkey. Can we do likewise? Perhaps we can do better, for we have the example of Turkey to guide and warn us. *Shall we take up the challenge? Shall we stop talking and begin to act? Shall we do what our good sense tells us to do?*

* * * * *

This candid statement, alike lofty in tone and noble in its conception, is no isolated cry. The rising generation in India not infrequently write on this question. Here is an extract from a letter sent by a Dacca Muslim to *The Epiphany* on the reasons for the backwardness of Indian Muslims.

'The most striking obstacle lies in the fact that the Muslims have very cruelly neglected the spread of education among the women. We should all remember that they are the mother-race and from them we are inspired from our very childhood. The inspiration, habit and character, which we receive from them in our childhood lead us in our after life through the struggling and bustling field of the world. But the Purdah System, as it now obtains in India, stands in the way of female education. Turn over the pages of history and you will find that no nation ever flourished without the spread of education equally among men and women.'

* * * * *

But perhaps the most pathetic aspect of all is that indicated by the fact that even Miss Hafiz, notwithstanding the obvious enlightenment she enjoys, should still be content to point to Muhammad as the "Emancipator of women."

Two Incidents at The All-India Muslim Gatherings at Aligarh.

ALIGARH University celebrated its Jubilee amid scenes of great enthusiasm at the close of the old year, and for this event and the All-India Muslim League Conference which followed, Muslims from all parts massed into the town. The University, having weathered early storms, has justly come to occupy a position of fame and honour. It was inaugurated 50 years ago in the face of fierce orthodox Muslim opposition, with 50 students. To-day the opposition to modern learning and the denunciatory message of the then Khalifa are forgotten, and the University has, in all, 2,000 students, each of whom has pledged himself to raise four rupees for the Jubilee Fund.

A Press correspondent waxed eloquent when he described the assembled crowd as presenting "a Red Sea of Turkish fezzes" in the vast marquee. In the midst of this crowd a Muslim lady created a sensation. It was Atiya Begum, a Bombay lady of a ruling family, "a strong Islamic suffragette," who with great boldness, rose first of all to protest that adequate arrangements had not been made for Muslim ladies to attend. But she could not be heard for most, thereupon she mounted her chair and vehemently protested against this tendency to confine modern university education in Islam to *men*.

But what the leading daily of India described as "The Aligarh Bombshell," and an educated Hindu correspondent to the same journal called "A Blazing Indiscretion," emanated from no less a person than Sir Abdul Rahim, the learned author of "Muslim Jurisprudence," and late Senior Member of the Executive Council of the Government of Bengal.

He devoted the major portion of his speech to the relations between Hindus and Muhammadans which, all the world knows, have of late years been strained.

But Sir Abdul allowed himself to go so far as to say that he doubted whether "at any time in the history of India the relations between the two communities were so seriously strained as at present." On this point many will be found to disagree with him. Anyway, had this been the worst that he said, it may have caused only a passing emotion.

But he singled out the Hindu extremists, as represented by the *Suddhi*, *Mahasabha*, and the *Sangathan* movements (all aiming at the consolidation and development of Hinduism) and said that "the Muslims regard these movements as the most serious challenge to their religion which they have ever had to meet, not even excepting the Christian crusades, and as a grave menace to their political status." He even pointed out in *that* assembly that "some of the Hindu leaders have talked publicly of driving out the Muslims from India as the Spaniards expelled the Moors from Spain, that is, *unless they perform*

Suddhi and become Hindus." At which point Sir Abdul is reported to have remarked, "we shall be a big mouthful for our friends to swallow." (!)

If disillusionment was needed as to the present relations between the two great communities it has come, but it has come through a speech which will probably have immediate consequences of a retrogressive nature. As the *Statesman* says, "It will be a miracle indeed if the Hindus keep silence after what has been said"; and, "Sir Abdul Rahim takes a heavy responsibility when he blows into a flame the hot embers of Hindu-Moslem fires."

The use of Islamic Terms in Modern Bengali.

(The following correspondence is interesting in view of the recent contributions to the subject by some of our members. Ed. N. and N.)

"URDU-BENGALI CONTROVERSY"

TO THE EDITOR, "THE MUSSALMAN."

SIR,—In your issue of the 27th August last a letter was published under the long caption, "Muslims and Calcutta University—The Urdu-Bengali Controversy." The writer Mr. Towheed tried his best to prove that Urdu was the mother tongue of the Bengali Muslims, taking evidence from "Reason, History, Psychology and Fact." It requires no logic to ascertain that Bengali is the mother tongue of the people of Bengal. It follows as naturally as the night follows the day and it is as true as that water goes downwards.

He said, "If we are sure of anything, we are sure of this that Bengali is as much foreign to the Mussalmans of Bengal as any other foreign tongue." Surely it was a bold saying but it only betrayed the firm prejudice and narrow outlook of the writer.

If Bengali is a "foreign tongue to the Bengali Muslims, surely ninety per cent (or more) of them must be very extraordinary men. They grow up and attain manhood without a mother tongue, while they learn a "foreign" tongue from their mothers in their very childhood." The logic of the writer seems to be very strange. Because ninety per cent (or more) of the Bengali Muslims learn Bengali with their mothers' milk, express themselves in Bengali from childhood to death, write it whenever necessary,—and because there is a mixture of Arabic, Persian and Urdu words in their Bengali—therefore it can't be their mother tongue. And because a microscopic minority of Bengali Muslims, scattered here and there in towns only, speak a sort of "pidgin" Urdu, it must be their 'mother tongue.' Mother tongue indeed!

As for the mixture of Arabic, Persian and Urdu words in the Bengali used by Muslims, may I ask the writer which language of the world has not, more or less, a mixture of foreign words! The old as well as the modern

Bengali contain many Islamic words,—both in the writings of the Hindus and the Muslims. The "poothi" literature is predominantly Islamic. So the allegations that Bengali does not contain "Islamic ideas" is baseless.

As for "mussalmanising" the Bengali language, it is quite possible and practicable. Only a man who is ignorant of the current of the modern Bengali literature may be 'doubtful' about its success. If the writer would read the excellent poems (and other writings) of the fiery poet Kazi Nazrul Islam (and his followers) he would be convinced how easily and beautifully Bengali may be 'mussalmanised.' I may refresh the memory of your learned correspondent that many excellent writers of modern Bengali are accustomed to add to the grace and beauty of their style by using Islamic words in their composition,—words derived from Arabic, Persian and Urdu.

(We trust we shall no longer be told that it is the foreign missionary in particular who promotes and fosters the use of this dialect! "Ed. N. and N.)

The Moslem World, January, 1926.

The Leading Magazine in English on the Mohammedan World.

THE January number marks the beginning of the 16th year of the Quarterly, which has won a place for itself among the leading English reviews on Comparative Religion. The present issue tells of current events, reviews new literature, and gives a survey of what the magazines contain on Mohammedanism, but true to its special task it emphasizes Islam as a religious problem in contact and in conflict with Christianity.

The Rev. G. W. Broomfield, of the Universities' Mission, Zanzibar, writes on the "Psychology of Mohammed" as revealed in the Koran. Mr. George Swan introduces the reader to some of the literature current today among the Dervish Orders.

The dangers of the new Nationalism without true religious liberty are pointed out by Dr. Frederick Johnson, of Palestine. Three articles deal with Persia, one on the ancient shrine colleges of Meshed; another describes a church conference held in Hamadan, a unique gathering; and the third by the Rev. J. Christy Wilson gives an interesting survey on how Persia converts were won.

Another article of special interest is, "The Story of My Conversion," by J. Ali Baksh, of India.

The translation of Al Ghazali's chapter on Penitence and the editorial entitled "Behold the Lamb of God" reveal the spiritual need of the world of Islam. The Cross of Christ is the missing link in its creed, and love of Christ in its ethics. Christian missions reveal both.

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Our File

The Best Friend.—Your Secretary has been deeply gratified and much encouraged by the very kind welcome given to "The Best Friend," (the Life of Jesus in simple English written for Muslims) which was sympathetically reviewed in our December issue. It belongs to us all, and we hope all will find use for it. We ourselves distributed a number of copies at Christmas time and among the letters of appreciation received one, containing these words, was very welcome: 'I very much like the simple style and this manner of telling the story of the life of Christ.' Words any one could have written! Yes, but they come from an educated Muslim gentleman who is a reader in an Indian University.

(Remember the price: 2s. (plain); 4s. illustrated; 6s. illustrated, with art paper covers after the word 'covers' thus: covers; subject to 25 per cent discount for quantities. Order direct from C.L.S. P. O. Box 501, Madras, or from the Secretary at Dacca.)

The Changing Outlook Among Students in Egypt.—The genial Principal of The American University at Cairo, in a recent letter, forwards most encouraging news about the present situation of progressive education in Cairo. He says:

'We are having some very interesting situations these days in our mission work for Moslems in this part of the world. You will be interested to know that 50% of our students here in the College of Arts and Sciences are Mohammedans, fine young fellows, from the best class of society, and so remarkably responsive to everything we have to offer, including their direct and earnest religious inquiry and attendance at Chapel exercises six days of the week, and preaching on Sundays for our boarding students. We have never had such a remarkable opportunity or such a responsive attitude before in the history of the work in this country.

'You will be interested to know too that the Azhar is very rapidly changing in its character. It has been taken over by the Egyptian Ministry of Education, and the man who has been made responsible for its administration is an entirely different man from the conservatives who have handled its control these centuries. He is a man who has been raised in England, who is progressive and liberal, and the probabilities are that we shall see at once some strange innovations into that old moss-grown institution. Of course we are realizing that these are the days of transition and one must not expect too sudden changes, but yet there is so much going on that shows for the disintegration of Moslem influence and the taking over of something nearer and nearer to the Christian's heart.'

Baptisms in Calcutta.—A man of God in Calcutta, himself a convert from Islam, who has for years worked to win Muslim youths to a saving knowledge of Christ, writes to say that on January 3rd he "had the joy of baptizing 3 young men who are all well-connected; and he asks us to pray for them that they may be steady and firm in the faith, and that God may make them true witnesses for Him to Bengal Muslims." He further desires "prayer for an educated Muslim young man of——, who has decided to become a Christian, but is weak. He will be a great power for Jesus if he becomes truly converted." And then—for is not our joy in this work "touched with pain?"—referring to another youth with whom some of us have had to do, he writes, "he has been found out to be a great cheat, drunkard and one who resorts to houses of ill-fame. Please pray for him too." And shall we not?

Dr. Zwemer's Visit to India, which was to have taken place this year, has had to be postponed.

For Praise and Prayer

- PRAISE** for the signs of progress and the promise of unfettered freedom among the youth of Egypt.
- PRAISE** for the baptism of three young men in Calcutta, and pray that they may become true and courageous witnesses for Christ.
- PRAY** for the one who is still "weak," but who under the spell of Christ, may yet be "a great power."
- PRAY** for the youth who like the prodigal is wasting his substance in a far country, that he may come to himself and to God.
- PRAY** for the Muslim women of India and other lands who are conscientiously seeking the freedom to which they are entitled.
- PRAY** for the serious political situation still obtaining in several Muslim lands, that God will overrule the unrest for His Glory.

New Members

12.	Rev. R. G. Korteling	Amer. Miss.	Punganur, Madras.
153.	Rev. Oscar Buck, D.D.	Drew Forest,	Madison, U.S.A.
412.	Miss Graves	C. A. Miss.	Jerusalem.
500.	Miss E. B. Davies	B. M. S.	Dholpur, Rajputana.
550.	Miss Parsons	C. A. Miss.	Jerusalem.
551.	Rev. J. Bell	B.M.S.	San Yuan, China.

The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. 4d.). 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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