

News and Notes

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Debunking

THIS is becoming the popular indoor sport of historians. Usually it means the shattering of the heroic aspect of a great character in the interests of his common humanity. It is flattering to the mediocre, and incidentally, all too, true. The distortion which the gilding of time lends to a figure of significance is often an enemy to the truth. The colors in which history is presented are all too often reflections of the pigment of the historian's personal prejudices.

Islam has had her "Boswells" and her Carlyses—and she has had her debunkers. The biography of the Prophet is most elusive because of the ecstatic idealization on the one hand, and frenzied hatred on the other. One can find both in documents and sources as well as in contemporary publications. The wonder is not that this is true, but that gradually the two are growing a bit cautious and creeping nearer to each other in fact, if not in interpretation.

The modern apologist for Islam makes little brief for things Muhammedan—he seeks and retains only things Muslim. Never is the religion spoken of as "Muhammedanism." No longer is Islam to be retarded by legislation for seventh century Arabia. Muhammad himself, somewhat debunked, is looked upon as way ahead of the ideas and ideals of his time, but at the same time somewhat lagging for the twentieth century. His life and example are not for all time; he led the way to an Islam, a complete surrender to the will of God, which is not essentially and distinctively Muhammedan, but the true essence of all religion. The following excerpts from an article in the current ISLAMIC CULTURE, one of the best of Muslim quarterlies, will indicate the newer tendencies in Muslim thought:

'God made one religion; man divided it by dressing it in different garb and giving it different names, calling it Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and so on. The people took the name for a reality and erected round those names edifices of credulity and superstition, myth and ritual, custom and tradition, till, in the words of the immortal Hafiz, they lost sight of the reality and began to follow the fiction,

‘Islam (*i.e.*, Surrender to the will of God) is the religion of nature itself. It was the religion of the first man and it was the religion of all the Prophets and seers who came at different times to guide their fellow-beings. It is as old as the firmament above. The light of the sun is but a humble manifestation of the same eternal truth for it is by submission to Allah that it has life and light.

‘The Quran does not enjoin belief in one Prophet Muhammad, but belief in the divine mission of all the Prophets and messengers of Allah, of every age and every nation.

“Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus and (in) that which was given to all the (other) Prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit.”

‘Over and over again the Quran reverts to this fundamental principle of religion and calls upon all lovers of God to follow Muhammad and believe in all the Prophets and all the revelations without distinction; it condemns the particularist attitude of the followers of various religions:

“And when they are called upon to believe in all that Allah has revealed, they say: We believe only in that revelation which was sent to us, and deny all other revelations.”

‘The Quran calls such an attitude a denial of all religion—nay a denial of God Himself.

‘This position is an assertion of the absolute unity of all religion. It is an unequivocal statement that, just as there can be only one straight line between two points, so between God and man, there can only be one connecting link—Islam (Surrender to God’s will). Hence unlike other religions, Islam does not call upon the neophyte to renounce his old faith, but it calls upon him to subscribe not only to the truth of his old religion but, in addition to that, to the truth of all other Prophets and their teachings. Hence a Muslim can truly say that he is a better Hindu than a Hindu, a better Zoroastrian than a Parsi, a better Jew than a Jew and a better Christian than a Christian. Once you believe in the oneness of all religions all these religious controversies become loathsome to your mind and you become as charitable as the great sun shedding lustre on friend and foe alike. Once you subscribe to this eternal truth of the Kingship of Allah, you unite all the great spiritual forces which are now defeating one other in unhealthy rivalry into one great, irresistible spiritual force which will sweep away the hosts of evil and destruction.

‘The next great step in this revolution was the restoration of personal merit to its proper place. Various religions before the advent of Muhammad believed that faith alone could secure the salvation of an individual. But Islam made personal endeavour—conduct—a *sine qua non* of salvation. No man can be saved by professing a certain belief unless his actions justify that profession.

‘If the teachings of all the Prophets had been preserved intact, we should have had an accurate record of all the revelations and should have seen at once that fundamentally they are the same, even

as God is One. Unfortunately they have been handed down to us in such form that it is impossible to say definitely where the divine ends and the human begins. But the final revelation, the Quran, has been preserved intact; so anyone who maintains that all religions are divine ought, if he is consistent, to admit that the Quran is "the Book revealed by God." Hence in the Islam is found the culmination of all the great spiritual movements of the world, and the more men come to realise it the nearer shall we be to universal human brotherhood. Already we see various reforming movements, aiming at the unification of humanity under one universal religion. If we study those movements carefully we shall find that they are one and all inspired by Islam. Their fundamental principles are borrowed from Islam. Islam is the first and the only religion which has not only expounded those principles which form the kernel of the teachings of these movements, but also has given practical rules for their realisation such as none of these movements has been able to place before its votaries. Such movements have the charm of novelty, but that will last only so long as true knowledge of Islam is withheld from mankind through the negligence of Muslims. When Muslims shake off their lethargy and take their place in the religious councils of the world, there will be but two alternatives before mankind. As the Quran says:—

“Religion with Allah is the Surrender (to His will);” and the test of religion is conduct, not creeds or ceremonies.’

This is in one sense real debunking from the Muslim camp; at the same time there seems to be a new pair of rose-colored spectacles—a subtle logic that makes of Islam something she certainly hasn't been. May it not indicate a craving for religion pure and undefiled that cannot be satisfied until Islam has taken to herself more than one—shall I say Christian?—feature?

The problem as to where to navigate our attitudes to preserve our intellectual integrity, a Christian attitude toward truth and fairness, is no simple one. Dibble, in his MOHAMMAD (prescribed in India) believes that by “steering a zigzag course between the Svylla of rhapsodical praise and the Charybdis of envious detraction” we may arrive at something approximating truth. Perhaps half-way between an Ahmediya publication, and an Arya Samaj tract! Somewhere between the enlogies of Ameer Ali, and the psycholological analysis (out-Freuding Freud) of Dr. Worrell in the current *American Oriental Society's Journal*.

At least some phases of modern Islam do not simplify our missionary problems.

Work among Muslims in Mid-India

The following was included in the report of the Committee on Muslims work of the Mid-India Christian Council:—

WING to the small proportion of Muslims in the population of Mid-India, many have thought that work among Muslims in this part of the country is not very important. Your Committee feels that this is a mistake. Our Muslims have largely come from outside for business or for Government service and their percentage of literacy is much greater than

for Muslims in India as a whole. Also they hold high positions in Government service and in community life to a much greater extent than their numbers would indicate. These facts together with their present receptivity to new ideas make it a matter of great importance to increase our efforts to Christianize them. The time is especially favourable for approaching them owing to the recent communal differences which have caused the Moslems to be more friendly to Christians than formerly.

No effort has been made to collect statistics as to conversions from Islam in this area during the past year. However, we have heard of two conversions at Pendra Road, one at Itarsi and one at Chhindwara. This last one is said to be making good progress in the Christian life and is proving to be a valuable Christian worker.

Recommendations.

Your Committee wishes to recommend:

1. That the following books be prepared in Hindi:—
 - a. "The Life of Mohammad" by Grainger, now out of print, to be reprinted by the Mission Press, Jubbulpore.
 - b. A new book to take the place of "The Moslem World" by Brown, now out of print and out of date, to be published by the Tract Society at Allahabad.
 - c. The Urdu tract, "How the Death of Christ Differs from the Deaths of Saints, Patriots and Martyrs," to be printed in the Nagri character by the Tract Society, Allahabad.
 - d. A few other Urdu tracts to be printed in the Nagri character as may be decided in consultation with the Tract Societies at Lahore and Allahabad.
2. That this Council and the missions in this area co-operate in every way possible in starting the school of Islamic studies at Lahore, in finding suitable candidates to send to the school and in sending candidates that may be found.
3. That the missions in this area prepare their missionaries and their Indian workers, both men and women, for more effective work among Muslims by (a) getting suitable books and tracts, (b) by taking advantage of every opportunity for training and (c) by holding local Conferences on work among Muslims under the leadership of suitable persons whom this Committee may be able to recommend.
4. That each mission in this area, during the coming year, make some definite effort at special work among Muslims, such as distribution of literature, friendly social contacts, teaching women in Moslem homes, and constructive discussion of religious subjects.

F. E. LIVENGOOD,
Convener.

Survey of Central Provinces and Berar

In connection with the appended statistics the following points may be noted:—

1. The population of the Central Provinces remained almost constant during the decade 1911-1921. There was a decrease of Mohammedans from 5,85,140 in 1911 to 5,82,032 in 1921 or about 0.5 per cent while Christians increased from 73,403 to 77,718 or nearly 6 per cent. Out of the Mohammedans total 245,024 are inhabitants of Berar, where the number has increased by 3 per cent as against 0.6 per cent increase in the total population.
2. Dashes indicate "no figures available."
3. Figures for Drug are unaccountably incomplete. It cannot be that the figures in the line above have been misplaced, as from the figures of female literacy they obviously could not refer to Mohammedans.

4. The returns for Bilaspur show female literates in excess of males and in Amraoti where they are almost equal the females literate in English are in excess of males. The proportions of males to females among Mohammedans and Christians are worth noting.
5. Figures for Sunnis and Shiah for Raipur and Saugor appear doubtful. It is difficult to believe that there are no Bohras in such large towns.
6. The large number of Christians in Feudatory States is accounted for chiefly by the return of 34,291 from Jashpur.

With regard to Berar the Census Officer makes the following comment:—"The large population of Mohammedans in Berar is due to the fact that it was for a long period under the sway of Mohammedan rulers and is still a portion of the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The incursions of Aurangzeb's armies into the Deccan left behind them many Mohammedan landowners and cultivators of the soil, and their descendents now form a strong Mohammedan community."

In the C. P. the largest proportion of Mohammedans is in Nimar with over 40,000 or more than 10 per cent of the whole population. The chief stronghold is Burnhanpur, once the capital of the Faruki dynasty. Other districts where they are more numerous are Jabalpur and Nagpur, where they have been attracted by trade and the service of large commercial centres. The majority of the Mohammedans in the Central Provinces belong to Sunni sect. Shiah are only about 2 per cent of the total and they apparently decreased by more than half during the decade, though it is thought this may be due to inaccurate enumeration. Indigenous Mohammedans are almost exclusively Sunnis, and Shiah are either immigrants from up-country or members of trading classes like Bohras.

I conclude with another quotation from the Census Report, which should be of interest to us as missionaries, and give us food for thought.

"It is quite clear the number of proselytes to Christianity is so small that the result is not sufficient to disturb the Census statistics. During the decade the number of Indian Christians increased from 62,580 to 68,252 or by less than 6,000. Of this increase nearly one-half comes from Chhattisgarh where the Chamars always provide a number of converts. In spite of the fact that there have been two famine years towards the end of the decade, the conditions favourable to conversion have had little tangible result. There have been no wholesale conversions. During the War it has doubtless been difficult for the missionaries to provide the same amount of funds, and the number of missionaries has not been available. From some of the reports, where the number of enquirers after Christianity has been shown as very large, it appears that the number of actual converts is infinitesimal. The Non-co-operation Movement, particularly in the Maratha country, has led to some hostility to the missionaries, owing to the stirring up of racial feeling. Whatever may be the cause, there is little in the Census figures to disturb the mind of the most orthodox Hindu."

The last sentence would be even more true with regard to the mind of the orthodox Mussalman. It is a humiliating comment from one whom we may accept as representing the average onlooker, that during ten years of missionary labours we have neither succeeded in "disturbing the Census statistics" nor in "disturbing the mind of the orthodox Hindu," even with the help of "two famine years" which made the "conditions favourable to conversion." Let us pray that during the next decade before the next Census Report is published "those that have turned the world upside down may come hither also." We need a disturbance among the dry bones of the Church and then will follow the disturbance among the minds of our Hindu and Mohammedan neighbours."

GEORGE W. MAW,
Itarsi.

Census Returns relating to Mohammedans

					TOTALS	SUNNI
All Religions					15,979,660	
Mohammedan					5,82,032	5,73,659
Christian					77,718	
Jabalpur Division						94,860
1	Saugor	...	...	M	22,522	22,522
				C	1,784	...
2	Damoh	...	...	M	10,024	9,704
				C	500	...
3	Jabalpur	...	...	M	42,033	41,600
				C	6,993	...
4	Mandla	...	...	M	5,617	5,545
				C	724	...
5	Seoni	...	...	M	15,553	15,489
				C	287	...
Narbada Division						92,533
6	Narsinghpur	...	...	M	11,371	11,338
				C	481	...
7	Hoshangabad	...	...	M	20,636	20,214
				C	2,334	...
8	Nimar	...	...	M	39,987	38,799
				C	3,852	...
9	Betul	...	...	M	6,451	6,372
				C	538	...
10	Chhindwara	...	...	M	15,862	15,810
				C	877	...
Nagpur Division						87,607
11	Wardha	...	...	M	18,252	17,899
				C	219	...
12	Nagpur	...	...	M	37,391	36,303
				C	6,635	...
13	Chanda	...	...	M	11,388	11,081
				C	941	...
14	Bhandara	...	...	M	12,076	12,753
				C	430	...
15	Balaghat	...	...	M	9,615	9,581
				C	351	...
Chhattisgarh Division						38,589
16	Raipur	...	...	M	17,831	17,831
				C	4,975	...
17	Bilaspur	...	...	M	14,570	14,332
				C	3,478	...
18	Drug	...	...	M	6,471	6,426
				C	1,999	...
Berar						2,41,880
19	Amraoti	...	...	M	70,773	69,418
				C	2,192	...
20	Akola	...	...	M	73,348	72,871
				C	989	...
21	Buldana	...	...	M	59,131	58,695
				C	520	...
22	Yeotmal	...	...	M	41,772	40,806
				C	346	...
Feudatory States						18,191
				M	18,458	
				C	36,273	

Christians, Central Provinces and Berar, 1921.

SHI'AH	LITERATE			LITERATE IN ENGLISH		
	TOTALS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS	MALES	FEMALES
8,373	661,553 66,590 20,679	6,09,249 60,357 12,825	52,304 0,233 7,854	64,798 6,800 12,902	58,492 6,651 8,485	6,306 149 4,417
889						
...	2,631	2,407	224	316	313	3
...	1,017	587	430	585	368	217
320	1,234	1,126	108	158	152	6
...
433	6,230	5,557	673	1,069	1,033	36
...	5,280	3,525	1,755	5,182	3,520	1,662
72	947	869	78	118	117	1
...
64	1,764	1,587	177	184	184	...
...
1,774						
33	1,328	1,241	87	145	144	1
...
422	2,575	2,355	220	349	343	6
...
1,188	3,585	3,286	299	319	315	4
...	588	432	156	163	110	58
79	1,279	1,110	169	122	122	...
...
52	1,873	1,780	93	171	169	2
...
2,015						
363	2,422	2,255	167	185	181	4
...
1,088	5,903	5,284	619	766	748	18
...	4,116	2,647	1,469	3,076	2,115	961
307	1,931	1,762	169	141	137	4
...
223	2,571	2,415	156	176	173	3
...
34	1,778	1,617	161	130	130	...
...
283						
...	3,480	3,090	381	387	372	15
...	1,679	1,134	545	247	180	67
238	2,693	2,342	351	474	457	17
...	1,278	573	705	598	317	281
45	...	...	...	...	...	...
...
3,144						
1,355	6,659	6,068	591	589	585	4
...	787	399	388	497	232	265
477	5,551	4,978	573	362	359	3
...	450	273	177	184	106	78
436	3,687	3,297	390	224	215	9
...
876	3,414	3,176	238	146	145	1
...
268	2,180	1,935	245	174	165	9
...	503	367	136	203	160	43

Notes

Dr. Titus announces the annual meeting of the Christian Literature for Muslims Committee of the N. C. C., to be held in Forman Christian College, Lahore, on November 21st. Members may secure accommodation through Prof. R. Siraj-ud-Din.

Dr. H. U. Weitbrecht Stanton calls attention to his very valuable little volume, "Selections from the Quran," which would be useful as a sequel to Dr. Zwemer's compilation in the August number of *News and Notes*. It is conveniently arranged historically, divided into the periods of revelation. Anyone wishing to begin an intelligent study of the Quran would do well to secure Dr. Stanton's book. It is published by the S.P.C.K., and may be secured for 1s. (one shilling).

A Request

"Please pray for a Muhammedan girl who has just finished normal training in a Mission School that her interest and the seed sown may continue to grow and that she may be willing to keep in touch with the Mission School."

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscription, etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.).

Matters of interest to members of the League, items of news and requests for prayer should be sent (if possible early in the month) to the Hony. Secretary :—

Rev. M. S. Pitt,
 Methodist Theological College,
 Jubbulpore, C. P., India.

