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News and Notes

A Monthly Paper printed for the private use of the
Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

Series XVIII

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Notes from a Deputation Address to the Home Churches.

How many of you have sought to win a Jew to Christ?
Why neglect them? Is Judaism "good enough"?
Jesus restricted His ministry to 'the lost sheep of the house of
Israel.'

Are we prejudiced because we cannot forget that
Jews rejected the Messiah and crucified the Prince of Life?

Muslims strongly resemble the Jews.
They have been neglected—their conversion, too, is difficult.
Some reasons for this; the Muslim creed:—
(1) No god but God; (2) Muhammad His apostle.

Who was Muhammad—what did he claim for himself?
At first merely a 'warner'—finally, the *seal* of the prophets.
That creed, adapted, might suit the Jew:
'There is no god but God; Moses is the apostle of God.'
The Christian might state it in the form of John XVII, 3.
(.....'and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.')

The chief significance of this part of the Muslim creed lies here:
Muhammad has *displaced* both Moses and Christ.
He has done more—
He denied both the Divinity and the Death of Jesus.
The fruit of the former we shall consider in a moment.
The latter denial means—
There is no Calvary, (and no place for it) in Islam!

II.

The other denial gives force to the first part of their creed :

'There is no god but God'—(cf. Quran—Sura CXII.)

The Jew and the Muslim are here on similar ground.

i.e., Neither can contemplate an objective manifestation of God.

(*Vide art. in News & Notes* : May, 1928.)

It is for them unthinkable that the majesty of God.

Should be veiled in human flesh.

Thus, the Muslim dreads nothing so much as *Shirk* :

i.e., the blasphemy of 'associating a partner' (with God)

This for him is, apparently, the one unpardonable sin.

God will have no partner to share His Glory.

Thus, *La Sharik* is almost a slogan of the Muslims.

Over against this we proclaim The Good News :

Immanuel—God with us !

These two phrases represent irreconcilable view points—

Both cannot be true.

No believer in Christ can compromise in this matter,

We believe that Jesus of Nazareth was *Immanuel* ; that the glory of

God has shined for men in the face of Jesus Christ.

This, together with the fact that God loves each one, is the greatest discovery that man can make—

We labour and hope and pray for the Light to shine in the hearts of all Muslims.

L. BEVAN JONES.

Rationalism : Indian or Islamic ?

THE conviction has been growing in our mind, that there is a very real division of loyalty still dominating the mind of the Muslim Indian. He has still the difficulty of the Parsee, and in lesser degree the Christian Indian, of having ties that give him more in common with non-Indian nations, than with the Land in which he lives. What a day for India when her minority groups can feel that they are as much the sharers in the future—and the past—of India as the Hindu !

Within the last few years it has been unconsciously emphasized that to be an Indian is to be a Hindu. The disappointment in the Khilafat Movement, communal tension, and the rest, have subtly stressed this position. With Muslim insistence on Communal Representation, it is readily understandable that there should be suspicions that the Community looms larger than the Nation. How well founded are these suspicions? Is there still a Pan-Islamic loyalty that would cut across National loyalty in a crisis? Recognizing that there are many broad-minded Muslims who would cry out

against such a charge, the question has presented itself again in the current article of Prof. Khuda Bukhsh, in the *Moslem World* of January. Very great place is given to Nationalism—but my question is; what is the “Nation”? Islam—or India?

First a quotation from *Studies Indian and Islamic*:

‘What Swaraj would be like, who can say? But one thing is beyond doubt—it would be a paradise where the followers of the Prophet would have no milk or honey.....should it ever come to pass it will divide Indian humanity into two great unequal halves—clean and unclean—Heaven for one and Hell for the other.’

From the current *Moslem World*:

‘The abolition of the Caliphate will, indeed, endure and permanently endure to the entire benefit of Islam. It will fashion for Islam a new sense of unity, founded not upon fiction but truth—a unity based upon cultural traditions and material interests. With fullest consciousness has Islam realized that its future lies in its powers of cohesion and solidarity. It has further realised that that solidarity should draw its strength and sustenance from a scheme of things, real and vital, and that scheme is naught else save that of *Nationalism*, and *Nationalism* pure and undefiled.

‘Every nation, within its bosom, must be its own architect, working out its own destiny, fulfilling its own mission, unaided and uninterfered with by others. Independent and free from extraneous control or domination, the tie of Islam will bind them all, weaving them into one powerful confederacy, stirred by the self-same ambition to win for Islam and her representative their rightful place among the modern nations of to-day. That such is the trend of events is clear to all who seriously scan the political horizon. And sheer necessity and instinct of self-preservation have put Islam on the defensive. The East has awakened to the danger which threatens its political existence, and this danger can only be effectively met by appropriating and using the weapons forged in the West. Constantinople, Cairo, Kabul, North Africa, India—wherever the cry of the *muezzin* is heard—the very same phenomenon meets the eye; Western education, Western methods, good or evil; Western principles of agitation, open or secret; even Western social customs, serious or gay; and last but not least the strident, and ever more strident, call for Freedom and self-determination.

‘But the wave of Westernism, sweeping as it is to-day in full force over the Orient, has not weakened, impaired, or destroyed Islam. Islam stands erect, foursquare to the winds that blow. It may sound strange but it is none the less true, that Western influences and Western experiences, instead of weaning us away, draw us closer and yet closer to Islam.’

We believe Prof. Khuda Bukhsh really “feels Indian”; we have looked upon him as a very sane spokesman for modern Islam in

India: but if he still feels, as he *did* some years ago, that 'Muhammedans have no more intention of renouncing their claims upon India than the English have,' there is a long long way yet to go before India's nationhood can fully embrace her Muslim constituency.

Correspondence.

THE EDITOR OF NEWS AND NOTES.

Feb. 10, 1930.

DEAR SIR,

IN your review of Rev. Barakat Ullah's book "Nur-ul-Huda" in your February issue, you ask certain questions about replying to those that calumniate the Gospel. Is it true, in view not only of much of St. John's Gospel, but of Mark XI. 27 to XII. 27, to say that Jesus "opened not his mouth in debate?" To this I will add another question. "Is it right to allow enquirers actual or possible, to be hindered by false statements left unanswered, or to permit our less educated Christians to have their faith shaken by such?"

I am,

Yours faithfully,

W. MACHIN.

(After finishing the following bit, we realize that we haven't been quite fair to Mr. Machin. Our typewriter ran away with us; we do not mean to imply that his questions even suggest all that follows. We apologize before we begin.)

We are grateful to Mr. Machin for his letter and the questions he asks. We agree with him in much that is implied in his letter; and it is a good thing that we all think these things through.

So far as the first question is concerned, it depends on our definition of debate. The spirit of Jesus was as far removed from the theological quibblings of the schoolmen as one can imagine. Jesus answered questions that were asked; He exposed the absurdity of the position of the religious aristocrats with adroit counter-questions—and, we like to think, with a smile at the littleness of spirit His questioners exhibited. He was ever seeking the impartation of truth—but mere logical victory, we feel, was never His aim.

We made the questioned statement, however, in the review, in direct relation to the time when He was being reviled and spit upon—when He stood as a sheep before His shearers, and opened not His mouth. And what an eloquent silence! And how eloquent we would be if, on some occasion, we can in perfect serenity offer the other cheek. Is the Sermon on the Mount, then, so very impracticable? We have tried every other way, and have succeeded in losing ourselves in the mazes of logical disputation—largely dry, lifeless stuff for a hungry soul.

There is a place in our work for Muslims for a certain type of controversy. There are very real objections a Muslim must clear before he can come the whole way. The real question is; where does questioning end, and "argufying" begin? Is the enquirer, actual or possible, attracted by our controversial literature? Or is it by our witness? What men are craving in this day is a Way of Life—an experience of God. Are we not lagging behind the procession a bit when we give out the impression that what interests us is a program of retribution?

To know when and when not demands one who is sensitive to the distinctive needs of the Muslim, as well as one filled with a real "sense of

what is vital" is his own religion. Such a one was Canon Gairdner, of Cairo. To quote from his biography by Miss Padwick: (*italics mine.*)

'From another angle it was he who took the lead. He was now becoming familiar with certain Muslim objections which he must always meet when he would fain present one of the truths he lived by, and he wearied of the endless defensive controversy :

'For one and a half hours we went at it, very unprofitably as one would think . . . at such times the preaching of the Gospel seems impossible. When one is set upon with questions and objections, silence and evasion are impossible, and answering is useless and unprofitable—so one is in a dilemma.

'It seemed to him that much of this defensive work might be done by literature. If there were but little books dealing singly with the main difficulties, they might be handed to Muslim friends who reached the inevitable objection-point, and they might be distributed over the countryside and do their preparatory work in opening minds. Still more might there be books of narrative free from argument, yet understanding and anticipating and meeting the Muslim's difficulties as he heard the Christian story. But when Gairdner looked for such books he found that the literature by which the Christian Church had set forth her living truth to Muslims was a curiously arid, machine-made literature.

It was as though the compilers, holy men though they were, had been caught in the argumentative machinery of the schoolmen, and had expended all their vital strength in meeting Muslim arguments with juster arguments. The objector himself might be left on the field prostrate but cursing. The books were starved of personality and of appeal to aught save logic and justice. Moreover, he saw, and it was one of his most fruitful perceptions, that the converts made by this literature were often born in its image—with the spirit of disputation rather than of worship and love, and apt to hammer rather than to woo and win.'

We are sure we will all agree that, for what controversial literature is necessary (and we think *most* of it is not), it is its Spirit that counts. If filled with the Spirit of Jesus, it exemplifies the "only asset of the Church"—a phrase with which Gairdner startled some of the smugness out of us.

The Muslim understands us only too well. He knows that with very few exceptions, we will meet him on his own ground—endlessly weighing prophets with prophets, codes with codes, theologies with theologies. We must present to him something amazing, unique, and wonderful. He smiles at our sectarianism, our theological debates. There is in us no cause for wonder.

To return to the questions.

We entirely agree that there is a serious question involved in the matter of the shepherding of the babes in faith we now count as part of the Christian Church in India. We shall say nothing more than that we feel this so keenly as to devote our life to work in a Theological College, where splendid young life is in training for a shepherding of the flock, and a building of a strength of faith and trust that will not be subject to such wolves as the Ahmadiyahs sometimes prove themselves to be.

Higgins' "Apology."

(We were about to review this most interesting book ourselves. But we are borrowing this from *Islamic Culture* where it appears over the editor's initials, because it gives the Muslim attitude toward the work. We are not sure as to the ethics of this unmasked borrowing—but our feeling is that *News and Notes* is a League letter, and as such confidential and personal. Ed.)

"THE object of the following Essay is to abate the mischievous spirit of intolerance which has hitherto existed between the followers of Jesus and those of Mohammed by shewing that the religions of both, however unfortunately changed by time, are the same in their original foundation and principle." With these words, Godfrey Higgins, a Yorkshire squire, and a Member of the Asiatic Society, presented his tract "An Apology for the Life and Character of the Celebrated Prophet of Arabia, called Mohammed or the Illustrious" published in A. D. 1829, a reprint of which "edited, with introduction, critical notes, appendices and a chapter on Islam by Mirza Abu'l-Fazl" now lies before us, published by the Reform Society, Daryabad, Allahabad in A. D. 1929. Higgins was of those Christian writers who regard Islam as a form of Christianity no more heretical than that of admittedly Christian Unitarians. There is plenty of internal evidence in this treatise that he was a man who would in any age have been regarded as a "crank;" the recurrence of an altogether perverse and groundless theory—that the Caliph 'Othman was the actual author of the Qur'an as we possess it—will suffice as an example; but, a little madness notwithstanding, his work contains close reasoning and telling arguments as well as proofs of an unusual magnanimity. No doubt his reputation as a "crank" prevented the dedication of his little book "To the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland," wherein he expresses his wish to correct "what appear to me to be the erroneous opinions which some of the Members of your Society (as well as others of my countrymen) entertain respecting the religion of many millions of the inhabitants of the Oriental countries, about the welfare of whom you meritoriously interest yourselves," from having the desired effect. Also, perhaps, the fact that he did not mince matters enough for "noblemen and gentlemen" who were nearly all bound by faith or fastidiousness to the tenets of the Church of England as by law established.

"The domestic slavery of the Mohamedans is no doubt indefensible, but what is this compared to the African slave trade and the plantations of the West Indies? We hear enough in all conscience of Popes of Rome and Archbishops of Canterbury, of council and convocations, of bulls, articles, canons and concordats; but when did we ever hear of any public act of these men against this horrible traffic? Shew me the bull, shew me the canon or act of convocation. The Bishops of Rome and Canterbury themselves deserve the epithet of *pander to the base passions of their followers*, which they give to Mohammed, for not having, when the atrocity of this traffic was clearly proved, excommunicated all those engaged in carrying it on, as was done by the Quakers... We make many professions of a wish to convert the poor Negroes; I advise our missionary societies to use their enormous wealth in giving the Negroes their freedom as soon as converted, declaring them brothers, after the example of the Mohammedans. I can assure them that this will make more proselytes than all their sermons."

‘And, in an earlier passage:

“I shall abstain from giving any account of, or copying, the disgusting trash which has been written respecting the character and conduct of Mohammed by the Christian priests—some of them (Prideaux for instance) men of great learning and high respectability—men who, indeed, ought to have been above such conduct, but whose zeal in this case has actually destroyed their sense of right and wrong and, as it should seem, taken away from them the use of their understandings. If I were to detail the vulgar abuse in which they have indulged, no information respecting the character of Mohammed would thereby be conveyed to any *liberal or reflecting mind* and the Christian religion would be wounded by the infamous behaviour of its professors.”

“Though that most Christian and pious emperor, Theudoseus, decreed the destruction of the beautiful temples of the ancients, the priests had not the same objections to their rites and ceremonies. The tawdry, dirty, disgusting churches of the Romish and Greek Christian in every part of Europe—their pictures, images, festivals, processions and ceremonies, taken from the very worst parts—the dregs—of pagan idolatry—prove that the priests of the religion of purity could condescend to the basest accommodations to delude or to increase the number of their proselytes, a practice actually recommended by the person admitted by a majority of Christians to be the head of the religion itself. *Pander to the base passions* of his followers, indeed! Where can anything like this be found in the religion of the *Impostor*? The prejudices of the Pagans or of the Christians are equally set at defiance. No holy water, no relic, no image, no picture, no saint, no mother of God, disgrace his religion. No such doctrines as the efficacy of faith without works, or that of a death-bed repentance, plenary indulgences, absolution or auricular confession, operate first to corrupt, then to deliver up his followers into the power of a priesthood, which would of course be always more corrupt and more degraded than themselves. No, indeed! The adoration of one God without mother or mystery or pretended miracle, and the acknowledgment that he, a mere man, was sent to preach the duty of offering adoration to the Creator alone, constituted the simple doctrinal part of the religion of the Unitarian of Arabia.”

‘It is as a Unitarian Christian reformer that this author throughout his work represents the Prophet, and at a time when Unitarian Christians had only lately ceased to be persecuted even in England, it may be doubted whether such representation would not be rather a hindrance than an aid to his impassioned plea for toleration. But he goes much further. It would, indeed, appear that he holds the Muslim view that the coming of Mohammed (May God bless him!) is distinctly foretold both in the Old and New Testaments: that he is, in truth, both the “Comforter” of the Christians and the Messiah of the Jews. He does not merely state this opinion, but supports it by a series of arguments so interesting that we cannot refrain from quoting some of them. He is probably quite right in his contention that the multitudes of Christians and considerable numbers of Jews who accepted Islâm in the first century A.D. were converts on the ground of Scriptural prophecy.

“It was the universal tradition, as well as the words of the record, the Gospel histories, that Jesus, before his ascension, promised his disciples that he would send a person to them in some capacity or other; the Greek of our Gospels says, as a *Paraklytos*, translated comforter. The Mohammedans maintained, and yet maintain, that Mohammed was this person foretold by Jesus Christ, the same as Cyrus was by Isaiah—both by name;

that he was called by Jesus not by a word which ought to be rendered in the Greek language, as in our Gospel histories, *paraklytos*, but *periklytos*, which means not comforter, but famous or illustrious, and which in Arabic, is the meaning of the word Mohammed; that the Gospel of the Christians had originally the latter of those words, but that it was corrupted to disguise the truth The fact of the loss of the autographs cannot be denied and as for ancient copies there does not exist one before the sixth century Those who would destroy the ancient manuscripts of the Gospel histories, would not scruple at re-writing a skin of parchment on which an ancient father's work was written; and it is admitted by the first divines of the Christians that they have been corrupted to serve other purposes; and those who would do it in one case would do it in another. That the word being confessed to be Hebrew, if it be wrongly written, it is much more likely that the early Christian writers, *the greatest liars upon earth*, should lie to serve their own purpose, than that St. John, a Hebrew, understanding both Hebrew and Greek should have made a mistake They further add, that it is a well-known fact that a person was expected by great numbers of Christians in accordance with the prophecy, from a very early period, which shews that the construction put upon the passage in the Acts, by the Roman Church and by Protestants, was not general. Of this Montanus, in the second century, earlier than Tertullian, furnishes an example. He was considered by his followers to be the promised person, which afforded to his opponents an opportunity for propagating the unfounded and malicious report that he pretended to be the Holy Ghost. That it was to meet these persons, particularly Montanus, that the Gospel histories were falsified, long before the time of the real true paraclete or periclyte, as Mohammed by his success, is proved to have been. That after the time of Montanus, but long before the time of Mohammed, Manes was also held by his followers, who constituted, as Mons. Beausobre has proved, a great, learned and powerful sect, to be the promised person. These persons seem, of all others, to have been the most likely to have understood the language in which Jesus spoke, and they could not discover the person in the twelve tongues of fire.

“The argument of the Mohammedans respecting the translation of the word into Gr. *paraklytos* instead of *paraklytos*, receives a strong support from the mode adopted by St. Jerome in the Latin Vulgate in rendering it by the Latin word *Paraclitus* instead of *Paracletus*. This shews that the copy from which St. Jerome translated must have had the word *paraklytos* and not *paraklytos*. Of the gospel of Barnabas, Mr. Sale says in the preface to his translation of the Koran p. 98. ‘This book appears to be no original forgery of the Mohammedans, though they have no doubt interpolated and altered it since, the better to serve their purpose; and in particular, instead of the Paraclete, or Comforter, they have in this apocryphal gospel inserted the word Periclyte, that is, the famous or illustrious, by which they pretend their prophet was foretold by name, that being the signification of Mohammed in Arabic’. . . . It must be confessed that the word, as written by Bishop Marsh and as it is almost certain that it must have been used (as he observes) by Jesus Christ, appears strongly to support the assertion of the Mohammedans. . . . I am of opinion that the Mohammedans have as much right to render this word by the word Periclyte or Periclyte, as the Christians have by the word Paraclete. Nay more, I maintain that the balance of probability is on the side of the Mohammedans, because the Christians cannot be justified in rendering the Chaldee jod in the last syllable by the Greek letters e or y instead of the letter i. . . . If this were a Chaldee, Hebrew or Arabic

word, used by Jesus, it ought to have the sense given to it which the word in those languages means. . . . It is admitted by Bishop Marsh, an authority not to be disputed when quoted in argument by a Mohammedan, that it is a Syro-Chaldee word, or an Arabic word, and not Greek. One or both of these languages must have been spoken or at least understood by Mohammed, and there is no reason to believe that the Greek translation of the word would ever become a subject of discussion by him. What had he to do in Arabia with Greek translations of the speeches of Jesus? Of what use could they be to people who did not understand a word of them, but who understood the original spoken by Jesus? He received the word as a human person, like many other sects in that day, and would as little allow it to mean the third person of a Trinity as the Unitarians do at this day."

'There is much more of interest on the same subject and much more of interest on other subjects in this early nineteenth century tract. While every Muslim will admit that the atmosphere of Christendom has grown much more tolerant since Godfrey Higgins wrote, it is doubtful whether such a work would be any more acceptable to "noblemen and gentlemen" to-day, on account of the pugnacity of style. Among Arabists at least, the prejudice has almost disappeared, so that one of the greatest living Orientalists, when questioned by the present reviewer, could only think of one well-known Oriental scholar in all Europe who would venture, for one moment, to question the absolute sincerity of Muhammed (God bless him) in his role of Prophet; and that one exception was a professional Christian missionary. From its tone and the nature of its contents this essay of Godfrey Higgins must always be more agreeable and consequently more instructive to Muslims than to Christians; and Mr. Abu'l Fazl has done well to unearth it and republish it in the East just a century after its first appearance in the West. Mr. Abu'l Fazl is a gifted and a fertile writer, whose pen is wholly at the service of Islam. His contributions to the present work as Editor are all that one could wish except in one respect: that he is over-positive in the solution of some problems which remain problems to the closest students of the day. He holds unusual views on the nature of Divine Revelation, and is persuaded that the Qur'an is with him. He is as much entitled to those views and that persuasion as we are to express our utter disagreement; but when he asserts positively, as though there were no doubt whatever on the point, against the tradition and belief of the majority of Muslims, against the bulk and weight of German "higher" criticism, and the accepted meaning of the text, that the Qur'an expounds his view of Revelation, it is a little irritating. We mention it only to prepare the Muslim reader, and there should be thousands of Muslim readers of this very interesting work, for the slight shock which we ourselves received.'

Leadership.

'O God, Shepherd of generations and Saviour of souls, in troubled days Thy Church looks to Thee for men of leadership, endowed by Thy Spirit with vision, and able to make known Thy truth. . . . whose hearts are moved with compassion even as Jesus our Lord pitied the confused multitudes that gathered about Him. . . . whose faith is to weary hearts as the shadow of a great rock in a desert place; in the name of Jesus. Amen.'

NEWTON.

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 request for prayer should be sent (if possible early in the month) to the Hony. Secretary :—

Rev. M. S. Pitt,
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New Members.

Rev. D. Gustafsson, Swedish Mission, Kashgar.

