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News and Notes

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A Valiant Soldier for Jesus Christ in Persia.

A YOUNG Persian chemist, dissatisfied with Islam, one day bought a New Testament and was so much attracted by St. John's writings, that he journeyed a hundred miles to meet and talk with the nearest missionary.

Some months later, Bishop Linton, while passing through the town, was stopped by the young man, who expressed a wish for baptism. His sincerity was apparent, for all the efforts of his family to turn him from his purpose were of no avail, and he was baptized. After a course of training he returned to his native city, refusing all efforts of support as a mission worker, preferring to follow his own calling and give his time to preaching—a solitary witness in a city of ten thousand Muslims.

Bishop Linton and a friend spent a night, sometime later, at the home of this Valiant Soldier of the Cross. The incident is thus described: "We had hardly sat down before some men began to drop in. One by one they came, until six of them were present. Then the young Christian introduced them: one was a hat maker, others were shop-keepers and one was his own brother. 'These men,' he said, 'are all Christians and they want to confess their faith in baptism.' The bishop, who is very careful whom he baptizes, began to examine them and for the next two hours the conversation went on. Each man separately spoke of his desire to be baptized, until in the end the bishop turning to me, said: 'These men are ready for baptism: who can forbid water?' Then followed a service I shall long remember. We stood in this simple Persian home around a table; an oil lamp was placed in the middle of it and a bowl of water was brought in. The baptismal service commenced and as the men gave their answers one by one, there was no mistaking the real joy they had found in Christ." (From *The Epiphany*, Calcutta.)

Book Reviews.

(1)

NUR-UL-HUDA, OR MYSTERY RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY. (In Urdu) by Padre Barakat Ullah M.A. (Published by F. M. Najmuddin, Anwar Manzil, Sanda Road, Lahore. 2 vols. 12 as. each.)

Controversial literature may be of many kinds. Some is mere dialectic—an affair of words and phrases all directed to bring the opponent's argument into contempt and without the justification which a real desire to know the truth and teach it affords. The two volumes of Padre Barakat Ullah, now under review, do not come into this category at all. They are a painstaking, scholarly and in the opinion of the reviewer largely successful reply to the book by Khwaja Kamal-ud-din Sahib on the origins of Christianity. It is written politely with some good-humoured banter but should give no undue offence to Ahmadiyyas who read it, if they are as concerned as the author is with an enquiry into the truth of the matters discussed and not simply to gain a victory for a party. The style is frequently rhetorical and addressed to the Khwaja Sahib in the first person. This form sometimes entails unnecessary repetition, but of the value of the book there can be no doubt. It contains a mass of information which in all probability is not to be found in any other book in the Urdu language, and Christian workers can read it with great profit. The author has read widely and the evidence of this is to be found on every page. Sometimes one ventures to disagree with the conclusions stated, but points where one disagrees are very few and relatively unimportant. In order that those who do not read Persian Urdu may know the subjects dealt with and gain an idea of the scope of the book, something in the nature of a summary has been undertaken and the reviewer hopes that this will lead more to read the book for themselves.

The thesis of Khwaja Kamal-ud-din is that the Gospels, and in particular the Christian religion as developed in the early centuries, has been materially influenced by the Polytheistic religions, the Solar Myth and the Mystery Religions; even to this extent that on the one hand it substituted Christ for Mithra, Baal, Astarte (sic), Bacchus, Adonis, Horus, Osiris, etc.; and, on the other hand, the Virgin Mary for Demeter, Isis, Juno, Diana etc.; and that Christian beliefs and customs are derived from Paganism. This is Khwaja Kamal-ud-din's counterblast to the book called the "Sources of Islam", or probably the two books by Muir (revised and amplified by St. Clair Tisdall) and by Blair on the same subject.

At the outset the author of Nur-ul-Huda contrasts the Islamic and Christian theories of inspiration and draws the conclusion that a line of argument which may be fatal to Islam is not necessarily dangerous to Christianity. It is also pointed out that Kamal-ud-din has no hesitation in using the arguments of rationalists who are opposed to all religion and whose theories have been discredited by competent historians.

The pagan worship of the early centuries is described at length and the customs of the devotees of the Mystery Religions so far as they are known. The impure fables of the polytheists are contrasted with the story of Jesus. Through the progress of thought these stories were gradually regarded as parables and many people were attracted by the promise of salvation, the claim that man could by the mysteries attain to the knowledge of God (Gnosis), the preaching of immortality, the emphasis placed on the individual experience of religion, and the idea of the coherence of the universe in a universal system. It is pointed out that human nature could

not be satisfied by a merely political religion such as Cæsar-worship, that the influence of Astrology was strong, that different gods and goddesses were gradually differentiated only in name and the attributes of all ascribed to each, that there was a sense of sin and a longing for immortality which all contributed to the success of the polytheistic religions. In contrast to these facts there was much in these religions which rendered them unworthy: e.g., their rites and sacred books were impure, they were bound up with magic, geomancy and superstition, had a low idea of God, placed too much influence on the individual and not enough on the social; failed to change men's moral nature, made only an emotional and aesthetic appeal and embodied nebulous conceptions which could be interpreted according to the worshipper's bent of mind; superstition for the superstitious and philosophy for the philosopher. It had no doctrine of rewards and punishments to make its conception of immortality ethical, etc.

Christianity made its appeal by its spirituality, its principles were acceptable to the reason, its foundation was historical and it had moral power.

Renan is quoted to show that Christianity established a new standard of life in the world, and Mommsen to the effect that had Paganism had this power it would have prevailed and Christianity have failed especially in the time of Julian. But though at this time a great effort was made to resuscitate dying paganism, in Gibbon's opinion, Julian's efforts could not revive a religion which had neither religious nor moral power. In addition, Christianity had an element of great strength in the Person of its founder and the highest aspirations of Greek philosophy found realisation in Christianity.

In contrast with the pagan religions Christianity appealed to all classes of society and made for the unification of humanity.

After this detailed discussion, to which it is impossible to do full justice in the space at our disposal, the contribution of Christianity to religious thought of a new conception of faith is dealt with in a very able manner. Faith as trust in a personal living God had not been taught and was not realised to be a means of establishing a spiritual relation between man and God: but faith in this sense was the foundation of Christianity and its doctrine has no parallels in paganism.

Zeller is quoted to show that the age was one in which men were inclined to the view that without revelation God could not be known. Here Christianity could bring forward its Holy books. In addition to all these facts Christianity made an important contribution to the solution of the problem of evil. Christ was the man of sorrows but also the Lord of Glory and the Cross and the Christian doctrine of the love of God threw divine light on this dark problem.

Further, to a world interested in salvation the Christian evangel brought an entirely new conception of salvation, *viz.*, that it was not simply release from the material world but redemption from sin.

Christianity's idea of God was infinitely superior to anything in the chaotic pagan religions. Even in Plato God was an abstraction, but Christ's teaching of a loving heavenly Father, the Creator and Preserver of mankind without whom even a sparrow falls not to the ground unheeded, was entirely new and abundantly comforting.

Lastly, the Author of Christianity was an historical person and not a myth.

Khwaja Kamal-ud-din's rash statement was that Christianity was totally based on sun-worship and that it was Constantine's idea to establish

Christianity by simply changing the name of Apollo for Christ's and setting Christ on the chair of Apollo. In this way the people of the Roman Empire did not see much change in their religion. To this statement Padre Barakat Ullah opposes the testimony of Gibbon who shews that Constantine went out of his way to persecute the adherents of the old religion, breaking down the pagan temples and confiscating the temple properties. While it had been true that in the eclecticism of paganism one God could be easily substituted for another, this could not be the case with Christianity which showed a marked intolerance to such eclecticism and characterised the pagan religions as Satanic, declaring that salvation could be found in Christianity alone. In the conclusion of this section the author asks the pertinent question, 'If Rome found no difference in Christianity and its old religion, why were Christians persecuted?'

In Chapter 3 of his book, Padre Barakat Ullah discusses the important question of Christianity and the World of Morals. If we are to judge by fruits there can be no comparison made between Christianity and Paganism. In the last days of the Republic immorality spread over the Roman Empire like a flood. Cicero is quoted to shew the utter despair that came over men of character when they contemplated the state of society. Philosophy had no remedy and the principles of Ethics were confined to books or to the lips of sages. Christianity brought its influence to bear and inspired a spirit of purity, ended the practice of abortion, infanticide, gladiatorial shows, suicide; gave a new position to women, emphasised human brotherhood to the amelioration of the lot of the slave and inculcated a new regard for the poor, the sick and the needy.

In the second volume of his book Padre Barakat Ullah turns to other considerations.

Against the alleged influence of paganism and Greek philosophy on the Gospels he shows that Kamal-ud-din's assertion that the Gospels were written long after the assimilation into Christianity of the Solar Myth and other pagan elements, is entirely without foundation.

The Gospels were written in the first century. If John 13: 3; 12: 8, shew influence of the Solar Myth, as the Khwaja Sahib asserts, then what comes of the following words of the Qur'an *Allahu nuru's-samawate wa'l-ardee*? Does not the Khwaja Sahib know the difference between a metaphorical expression and the one to whom the metaphor is applied?

With regard to the date of the Greek influence on Christianity Khwaja Kamal-ud-din implies that Greek influence was from 130 A.D., onwards. Harnack is cited against this to show that the influence of Greek Philosophy was not earlier than 220 or 230 A.D., and that even then no pagan myths or stories were assimilated. The truth is that the Gospels are free from this Greek influence; so free that they could be translated into Hebrew or Aramaic with ease. The teaching of Jesus and the picture drawn of Him in the Gospels is entirely free from such influence. The Logos doctrine found in John now comes up for discussion. Here the author with much detail traces the history of the Logos doctrine from the Old Testament conception of the Word of God and the Wisdom literature through Philo. He shews the fundamental differences in the use of the term in Philo and John. Philo used the doctrine to preserve the idea of God's complete transcendence above a world with which He could have no contact without loss to His Holiness. With John matter is not essentially evil, and his doctrine emphasises the Divine immanence in Humanity. John's interest in the doctrine is moral and religious and Philo's philosophical. In any case similarity in terminology does not imply identity of thought. The Padre Sahib very

pertinently asks whether the use in the Qur'an of the phrase *Kalimat-Ullah* shows dependence on Greek philosophy.

The assertion that the Divinity of Christ and the Trinity are due solely to the teaching of John and Paul is rebutted by some chapters on the teaching of the Synoptics. The chapter on the teaching of Paul and the Synoptic Gospels is a most suggestive one. The dating of the Christian feasts is shewn not to be due to any encroachment of the Solar Myth, and it is made clear that baptism was a Jewish rite and the Lord's supper an institution by Christ in the spirit of the Jewish feast of the passover, and so neither of these can be said to have a pagan origin. The problems associated with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth are gone into with perhaps undue detail, but in all the discussion is kept at a high level.

The reviewer apologizes for his temerity in writing a review of a book not in his mother tongue and trusts that any deficiencies in what he has written may in the kindness of his readers' hearts be put down to this fact. His only justification for writing the review is that he feels that perhaps less than justice has been done to this excellent work by Padre Barakat Ullah.

Akbarpur, U. P.

J. W. SWEETMAN.

(II)

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAM—by Khan Sahib Khwaja Khan, B.A., pp. 120. Stiff covers, Re. 1-4-0.

The book presents to its readers a brief and comprehensive study of the Philosophy of Islamic mysticism.

The author's aim is, first, to show (after the manner of Euclid) what *Tasawwuf* is not, rather than what it is. It is not, he says, what "common villagers" think it to be, viz., "nothing more than Vedantic doctrines and Grecian aphorisms". Secondly, he seeks to show that Islamic doctrine and practices if probed deeply will be found to have the support of the best and most earnest thinkers of the West. But the profuse quotations from Sufi writers, scattered throughout the book, instead of disproving "the nebulous ideas of *Tasawwuf*" entertained by "common villagers", rather go to show that they *do* contain much of "the Vedantic doctrines and Grecian aphorisms". To establish his second claim, though, the author mentions western scholars such as Herbert Spencer, John Locke, Joseph Mullins, I. J. De Boer, yet he rarely quotes them himself in support of the doctrine of Sufis.

The first chapter entitled "Cosmological Conception", dealing with the universe in relation to God, describes it to be of God's essence; "with the Sufi, the essence is all one of the created and of the creator". By way of elucidation he quotes Shaikh Nizamuddin of Delhi: "When the King of Love wished to remove the veil from His glory and display His attributes and to play love with Himself the light of His Essence effervesced and broke into two. One became nebulous; the other that effervesced became fire. When fire became alloyed, it became air and when air became heavy, it turned into wind. When wind became heavy, it became water, and from water froth, and from froth came out earth. From earth grew bodies:—till Adam became a mirror to reflect His Self. For without a mirror there could be no reflection."

In face of statements such as these one fails to see how a certain class of Sufis are not to be regarded as *Adwaitis* (monists), a view which the author would not countenance.

This chapter also makes valuable reference to the origin of the religious orders, and to their three schools of thought. The second chapter, entitled "Psychological Aspect" deals with various Islamic conceptions of Soul and Spirit. The quotations from Sufi writings indicate the influence of Greek Philosophy. The Khan Sahib writes, "Some with Thales consider that soul is water". Speaking of mind, he writes, "The Sufis locate mind in three places. "Pine-heart" is located near the nipples, is the soul of motive power and is shared by the lower animals. The second is located in the brain and is called the "spherical mind". It is called the colourless mind, and is the seat of consciousness. The third is located near the seat, and it is called "the lotus mind". It is the soul in repose, and is shared by the mineral Kingdom."

The author's assertion that, "There have been a few Philosophers in Islam who believed in the doctrine of metempsychosis", may sound astonishing to some, but it clearly indicates outside influence on the mystical Philosophy of Islam.

This chapter more than any other shows clearly that the Psychology of Muslim Philosophy is far removed from the modern Philosophy of the West. The author's assertion in this chapter, that "Imam Ghazali was the forerunner in the conception of *tabular rasa* of the school of John Locke," (page 30) is an example of the superficial way in which the Western authorities are quoted in support of Muslim Philosophers. The third chapter, entitled "Ethical Basis" shows that the Islamic conception of Ethics mainly consists of religious ordinances. To the description of five religious ordinances, the author has added the Sufi *dhikr*, the devotional practices of the mystics of Islam. In the fourth Chapter, "Historical Development", the author, quoting profusely from the Quran and Hadith, shows that mysticism had its germ in the teachings of Muhammad. After a brief description of the development of the Sufi teachings, he concludes the chapter with a statement of the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, which he considers to be "a mixture of *Tasawwuf*, and rationalism". Before he reaches the conclusion the author is led to say, "So might the Muslim philosophers have remained well satisfied with what is taught in the Book (the Quran) without imbibing truths or hearsays from other sources. In their hands that teaching has become either pantheism or a sort of anthropomorphism—God sitting on His throne in the skies."

The fifth chapter, on the doctrine of *Ayân-i-Thâbita*, may be regarded as an appendix to Chapter I, further elucidating the Sufi conception of the universe in relation to God. This phrase—*Ayân-i-Thâbita*—has been variously rendered into English by the author, but the whole idea behind it centres round the question, "What is the reality of the world we perceive?" To a Sufi (the author writes), "the universe is the manifestation of God's twenty-eight names or attributes", and then again, "twenty-eight names were manifested in their serial order, and in their permutations and combinations, till the lowest insect that creeps is manifested." This "manifestation", described at length in Chapter I, has assumed the form of the universe by six stages of devolution. Thus it is that the phrase is also translated as *the Fixed Forms*. The final chapter, entitled "*Tasawwuf* and Modern Research", is a reprint from "Islamic Culture" of Hyderabad (Deccan). The entire chapter, which consists of about six pages, deals with the conception of the manifestation of God's essence by the process of devolution, and then the ascent of man back to the essence by the process of evolution. This view is supported by a number of quotations from the Quran and even from the Bible.

At the end a glossary is added consisting of 108 terms. It is unfortunate that, since these terms are not transliterated into Roman according to any standard plan, with proper accents, the glossary will not be of much use to one who is not already familiar with the original terms. The same is true of all the Arabic and Persian quotations or words used in the book. Besides, in spite of one full page of *Errata*, the book abounds in mistakes in the spelling of English and foreign words.

In the Preface, the author says, "The Rev. Dr. S. M. Zwemer. . . has authorised me to say that he has used my little book (*i.e.*, *Studies in Tasawwuf*, and not the present one under review) in his lectures on mysticism at the American University. The late Sir T. W. Arnold, of the School of Oriental Studies, London, informed me that he had recommended it to his students."

The book may be had from the author at 69 Jani Jahan Khan Road, Royapettah, Madras.

J. A. SUBHAN.

Notes.

The review of 'Nur-ul-Huda.'—We make no apology for the lengthy, but important review which we publish from the pen of one of our members of this reply to Khwaja Kamal-ud-din's *The Sources of Christianity*. It is good to know how ably Padre Barakat Ullah has handled the subject, and we trust many may be induced to procure these two small volumes (in Urdu) for themselves and their workers. They are stocked also by the P.R.B.S. Anarkali, Lahore.

* * * * *

Nicolas Notovitch's 'find' (see *N. and N.* for August).—Our readers will have noticed that it was in 1895 that an English translation of Notovitch's work first appeared in London. Your Secretary was then a boy in school at Blackheath, London, and well remembers how one day that year, on the occasion of the annual football match with the Old Boys of the School, something that an Old Boy said to him about Jesus roused his wrath. With the airy confidence of a youth of 19 summers the O.B. broke to him the news that it had just been *proved* that *Jesus was indebted for much of His teaching to Buddhists*. Little did he know then (what now is clear) that this gullible *Old Boy* had just read, or perhaps merely heard of, Notovitch's "find".

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English translation of the Traditions. We note with interest that the Ahmadiyyas (Lahore) are planning to bring out an English translation of "an abridgement of the six authentic traditional books of Islam". This work will run into several volumes, the first of which, now in the press, will be sold at Rs: 3/- (or 6 Shillings). They say: "The study of an authentic record of the actions and sayings of such a pure soul, would be an inspiring experience, especially for the people who have had no chance to study this Holy Person in detail." The work is consequently advertised as *The Holy Traditions*; but one wonders whether, 'expurgated' rather than 'abbreviated' will not prove to be the more strictly correct description.

In the same issue of *The Light* (August 16) in which this advertisement appears, there is another featuring *The Holy Quran*, with English translation and commentary, the compiler of which is described (for the first time we think) as *Hasrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B.*, and

the writer of the letter, from which we call our next note, refers to him as *His Holiness* (!) Conceivably there is a determination to see that he shall be not one whit behind "His Holiness" of Qadian.

* * * * *

An Evasive Answer. A correspondent to *The Light* writes as follows with reference to the statement of Muhammad Ali, in his *Muhammad the Prophet*, that Deut. 33: 2 is a prophecy concerning Muhammad:

"I fail to understand how these words are termed a prophecy referring to the Holy Prophet. A prophecy always refers to something that is to occur in the future. In the quotation all the verbs used are past tenses and have no reference to the future The person referred to had already appeared on the scene long before Deuteronomy was written, that is centuries before the advent of the Holy Prophet . . . It seems to me that by no process of mental gymnastics these paras can be said to contain any reference to the Holy Prophet. Am I right? [To this the Editor makes reply] "Past tense is used in prophecy very frequently. Some commentary may be consulted" (It would, indeed, need to be *some* commentary!)

* * * * *

A *Maulvi* of 35 years of age "is convinced that Jesus Christ alone is the Saviour and is anxious to be baptized as soon as possible". He knows Urdu, Arabic and Persian. But as there would be 'a great commotion' if he were baptized in his own city, the friend interested in him would like to send him away to the care of friends in a far-off station, where he can undergo further training of which he stands in need.

Is this the right course to take? Should we protect such from almost inevitable ostracism and persecution? More than once St. Paul's intimate friends felt obliged to carry him off into safety because the Jews plotted to kill him (Acts 9: 23-25; 29-30); but that was only because, *and after*, he had proclaimed and preached boldly that Jesus is the Son of God.

Your prayers are asked on behalf of this man and his Christian teacher, that holy boldness may be granted to the one and divine wisdom to the other.

NEW MEMBER.

Rev. S. N. Thorat

Ch. of Scot. M.

Poona.

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. L. Bevan Jones,
5, Egerton Road,
Lahore,
Punjab, India.