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News and Notes

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The Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies, Lahore.

THE FUTURE OF THE SCHOOL.

“THE Committee of Management of The Henry Martyn School is convinced that this institution is of the greatest value to the Christian enterprise at this most critical time in India. But it is compelled to recognise the fact that, on its present budget, the School, having used up all its reserves, will be faced within a year's time (i.e., by March, 1938) with a deficit of at least Rs. 2,000 unless the necessary financial assistance is forthcoming.

It is, therefore, resolved that, the School be continued until 31 March, 1938, on the understanding that immediate steps be taken to acquaint Missions and Churches in India, Great Britain and America, with the fact that the School needs at least Rs. 6,000 (£460, \$2,300) more per annum.

Unless definite assurance of this additional income be received during the next twelve months the Committee will be obliged regretfully to advise the closing of the School at the date mentioned—a catastrophe it does not at present wish to contemplate.”

From time to time we have brought to our readers' notice the serious financial situation of the Henry Martyn School and we now reproduce above the resolution of the Committee. It was passed in March last and after the lapse of some months financial support amounting to about half the figure required has been promised from the West. We know that we have the good wishes of numerous friends and that there are many who would regret the closing of such a chapter of adventure for the Kingdom of Christ in India. Indeed, we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the Christian Church in England and America will ultimately allow a retreat of this character.

Nevertheless we would take the opportunity to point out that this winter may be the only chance for intending students to take the regular course at Lahore, so we earnestly hope that any who have had it in mind to take advantage of what the Henry Martyn School can give will make an effort to join the School in October.

The Editor.

The Turkish Press.

PROF. Lootfy Levonian has put all students of Islam, in its modern setting, greatly in his debt by his collection of cuttings from the Turkish Press between 1932-1936. In his foreword he says :

“The movements indicated in these extracts will refute such conceptions as :

That Islam is incompatible with progress ;

That Islam has no inner vitality to adjust itself to the requirements of modern life ;

That Islam is rigid and static and cannot change ;

That the strength of Islam lies essentially in its political power.”

As an illustration of the new views held by responsible writers in the press we select one from *Fikir Hareketleri*, dated April 12th, 1934, entitled ‘What is Islam and who is Muslim.’

“To-day Islam is understood as the religion of Muhammed and the person who has accepted the religion of Muhammed is regarded as a Muslim. Whereas if we examine the Quran we find that this conception is altogether wrong. In the Quran we find the term Muslim has not been confined to those who have accepted the religion of Muhammed.

In Sur. vi. 164, we read : ‘My prayers and my worship and my life and my death are unto God, Lord of the Worlds. He hath no associate. This am I commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.’ The Turkish Commentary (*Nur al Bayan*) changes the last sentence and reads, ‘I am the first who obeyed this command.’

In Sura iii. v. 17, we read : ‘The true religion with God is Islam and they to whom the Scripture had been given, differed not till

after "the knowledge" had come to them and through mutual jealousy. But as for him who shall not believe in the signs of God—God will be prompt to reckon with him.' Again in verse 79 we read: 'Whoso desireth any other religion than Islam, that religion shall never be accepted from him, and in the next world he shall be among the lost.'

If these verses are taken alone and explained superficially, it is clear that Muhammed is the first Muslim. Allah also says that there is only one religion, namely Islam, and the followers of other religions shall not be accepted by Him. Consequently Islam is the religion of Muhammed, and all other religions are false. And our commentaries give this explanation. For example Hulasat al Bayan explains: 'By Allah the only perfect and accepted religion is Islam. After the rise of Islam there is no other religion more acceptable than Islam! And Tafsir ul Bayan says: 'The religion acceptable by Allah is Islam brought by our Prophet.'

But this interpretation is nothing but a false play on words. In many sections of the Quran the terms 'Islam' and 'Muslim' have been used, but our commentators in place of actually using them, have used instead other terms as "obey" or "submit" or "resign". They have used the term "Islam" and "Muslim" only in those sections which refer definitely to the Muslims.

Let us examine the following verses:

Sur. ii. 129. "They say moreover, "Become Jews or Christians that ye may have the true guidance.' say: 'Nay! The religion of Abraham, the sound in faith; he was not one of those who join gods with God!'"

Sur. xxii. 77. 'And do valiantly in the cause of God as it behoveth you to do for Him. He hath elected you, and hath not laid on you any hardship in religion, the Faith of your father Abraham. He hath named you the Muslims.'

It is clear from these verses that the Jews and the Christians say that they belong to the religion of Abraham, and that they have been given the name 'Muslim.' Therefore Muhammed cannot have been the first of Muslims. Muhammed and his men have been following the former religion of Abraham.

Again Sur. iii. v. 89 "say, God speaketh truth. Follow, therefore, the religion of Abraham the sound in the faith, who was not one of those who joined other gods to God.' Sur. xvi. 124. 'We have moreover revealed to thee that thou follow the religion of Abraham, the sound in faith. He was not of those who join gods with God. Sur. vi. 163. Say 'My prayers and my worship and my life and my death are unto God the Lord of the Worlds. He hath no associate. This am I commanded and I am the first of the Muslims.'"

After reading these verses, we understand the true meaning of Muhammed's word concerning his being the first Muslim. He was the first Muslim among the Arabs. He was not the first who brought

Islam into the world. The Quran says that there were Muslims before Muhammed, namely, the people of Abraham.

Again, Sur. ii. 125. "When His Lord said to him (Be a Muslim) he said, 'I resign myself to the Lord of the Worlds'", Sur. ii. 126. 'O our Lord! Make us also Muslims, and our posterity a Muslim people; and teach us our holy rites and be turned towards us for thou art He who turneth, the Merciful.' Sur. ii. 126. 'And this to his children did Abraham bequeath, and Jacob also, saying, 'O my children! Truly God hath chosen a religion for you; so die not unless ye also be Muslims.'"

Our commentators have translated those words of 'Islam' and 'Muslim' by such terms as 'resign' and 'obey'. Whereas the verses state clearly that Abraham was Muslim, and that he commands his posterity to be Muslims and to die Muslims.

According to the Quran even Solomon was a Muslim. In his letter to the Queen of Sheba he says (Sur. xxvii. 31) 'Set not up yourselves against me but come to me (submitting) Muslims.' Joseph also was Muslim. Sur. x. 73. 'And if ye turn your backs on me yet ask I no reward from you; my reward is with God alone, and I am commanded to be of the Muslims.' That Moses was Muslim is clear from Sur. x. 84. "And Moses said, 'O my people, if ye believe in God then put your trust in Him—if ye be Muslims.'" Even the Egyptian sorcerers who believed the miracle of Moses, were Muslims: Sur. vii. 123. 'And thou takest vengeance on us only because we have believed on the signs of our Lord when they came to us. Lord, pour out constancy upon us and cause us to die Muslims.' Even Pharaoh himself desired to become Muslim but he was not accepted, Sur. x. 90. . . . "When the drowning overtook him, he said, 'I believe that there is no God but he on whom the children of Israel believe, and I am one of the Muslims.'"

The Quran is also explicit in stating that the people of Jesus are also Muslim. Sur. iii. 45. 'And when Jesus perceived unbelief on their part, He said, "Who are my helpers with God?" The Apostles said "We will be God's helpers! We believe in God and bear thou witness that we are Muslims." Sur. v. III. "And when I revealed unto the Apostles, 'Believe on me and on my Sent One' they said, 'We believe and bear thou witness that we are Muslims.'" Sur. xxviii. 53. And when it is recited to them they say, 'We believe in it for it is the truth from our Lord. We were Muslims before it came.'"

If all the ancient prophets and their people are Muslims, it becomes evident that Muhammed was the first of Muslims in the sense that he was the first among the Arabs. In fact in Sur. xxvii. 93. We read that Muhammed was commanded to be 'one of the Muslims,' which means that there were Muslims before him. He is the first Muslim among the Arabs.

We conclude, therefore, that according to the teaching of the Quran Islam is the one religion sent by Allah through the various

prophets, and all those who have accepted this religion are Muslims. We have considered only the Muhammedans as Muslims and all the others as non-Muslims. This has been due to a complete misunderstanding of the Quran on our part. It is our fault."

"Muslim Women and Apostasy."

Under the above heading the following letter appeared in the Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, dated June 27th, 1937.

THE ONLY WAY TO DIVORCE.

SIR,—In your issue of June 9 there appeared an announcement about certain Resolutions and Bills to be presented to the Punjab Assembly by Mian Abdul Aziz. "The first Bill seeks to provide a definite law for the eradication of apostasy among Muslim married women in the Punjab. At present the mere allegation or declaration of a change of religion by a married woman is sufficient to dissolve her marriage. The new Bill seeks to change this law."

Women who read this announcement were horrified to learn that such a Bill could be brought forward in the very first session of the Punjab Assembly. The fact is, Muslim women at present have no hope of ever getting a divorce except by changing their religion, and now, as a Muslim contemporary says, "Mian Abdul Aziz wants to close this door also on her, which means that the only door left to her to get rid of a villain would be to commit suicide." Incidentally, all men and women have a God-given right to worship Him as their hearts and consciences dictate, yet this inherent right also is to be denied to Muslim married women in the Punjab. Surely it but confirms the contention of women that more seats should be allotted to them, when a man in this 20th century seeks to introduce a Bill which will thus wrong his own women-folk.

We expect better things though from other Muslim men in the Assembly and trust that Begum Shah Nawaz and other ladies will strongly oppose this Bill.

In the All-India Women's Conference, 1935, Muslim women claimed "that the right of divorce as conceded by the Islamic Law to Muslim women should be recognised by British Courts." If this were done, or if the Assembly passed a Bill of Divorce, then no Muslim woman would need so to demean herself as to pretend to change her religion, which she holds in high honour, merely to get release from some impossible situation.

We, therefore, appeal to the chivalrous men of the Punjab to champion this cause, for which they will gain the gratitude of good women of all faiths, for our cause is one, as has often been stated by the International Council of Women.

A WOMAN WHO SEEKS FAIR PLAY.

Book Reviews.

THE YOUNG MOSLEM LOOKS AT LIFE, by Dr. Murray T. Titus; 181 pp. including Glossary, Bibliography and Index. Published by the Friendship Press, New York. Price Rs. 2-12-0.

This survey of the kaleidoscopic changes now confronting Moslem youth everywhere has been prepared for the youth of America, but is dedicated to the Christian young people of the West. Dr. Titus is eminently qualified to relate the facts, estimate their significance, and voice the challenge inherent in the present situation.

He shews how both the social and spiritual aspects of Moslem life are being affected by the changed outlook; how "old authorities are being questioned and familiar restraints are being cast aside"; how desperate attempts are being made to retain the old order of Islam and at the same time reap "the material blessings of Western modern civilisation." The first four chapters deal with the foundations of Moslem faith and practice. Ch. 1., "In the way of Allah", in some respects the best of all, is a vivid account of how an orthodox Moslem youth sets out with his grandfather from Kashgar to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, encountering in his journey a new world into which they "did not fit". There follow accounts of Muhammad, the Islamic Faith and Religious Duties. Next, in *Home and the Family* we are shewn how new ideas regarding *pardah*, education, marriage, divorce and polygamy are beginning to influence Moslem youth. Much of the improvement to be observed "must be attributed to Christian ideals". (An error in proof-reading makes marriage to be *not* one of the requirements of a good Moslem, p. 93).

In the matter of *Politics and Religion*, more particularly, we see the impact and conflict of new thought, and the question is here debated, "can a person be modern and a good Moslem at the same time"? Our youth from Kashgar, another from Egypt, and the modern young man of Turkey appear as three very different types. In Turkey (as in Iran) "the political force of Islam is gone and the people are beginning to question even its religious force". And while there is still widespread zeal for the spread of Islam "Moslem missions lack a sufficient motive because there is at the heart of Islam no compelling love for man as man". In another chapter we are told how the young Moslem has inevitably imbibed age-old prejudices regarding Christianity; how while giving lip-service to Jesus he misses Christ's essential contribution to the religious life by eliminating the Cross.

Here and there Dr. Titus gives reasons why Islam and Muhammed do not suffice, and he excites our sympathy for the youth of Islam who need true friends who know of "the more excellent Way" of Christ, and declares that it will be only His true disciples, themselves living examples of His teaching, who will be able to meet this great challenge.

BEVAN JONES.

CHRISTENDOM AND ISLAM, by Dr. Wilson Cash, Secretary, C.M.S., London. Published S.C.M. Press, 196 pp. Five Shillings.

Being invited to deliver the 1936 Haskell lectures at Oberlin, U.S.A., Dr. Cash used the occasion to expound two convictions that have been in his mind for years, even before he left the mission field, *viz.*, (1) "that controversy is a futile line of approach from Christian to Moslem and Moslem to Christian"; (2) "that the only real line of approach . . . is one of a common quest for God and the sharing of the Christian experiences, found in Christ, with Moslems the world over."

His first five chapters are a survey of the contacts and cultures of the two faiths down the centuries:—Islam, an eclectic creed—The expansion of Islam and the shrinkage of Christendom—The contribution of Christianity to Islamic thought and life—The contribution of Islam to the making of modern Europe—the influence of Europe in the disintegration of modern Islam. His closing chapter on "The Christian answer to the Moslem quest," discusses the practical application of his main contention.

We are told once again how Muhammad had a false start as regards essential Christianity and that, whatever the reason, he cut the Cross out of his religion entirely by denying the Crucifixion. Matters were made worse, later, when for Moslem *jihad*, the Church launched its own Holy War, the Crusades, thus herself cutting out the Cross. (Again and again in these pages we have set before us the alternatives of force and love). Dr. Cash indicates other reasons, both in Islam and in the Christianity of those days, for the former's amazing success, and says outright that "the conversion of Constantine was a sheer disaster to the Church" because it made nominal conversion popular.

He goes on to show us the point at which Christianity was able to give of its best to Islam by observing that "the real spirit that has proved the strength of Islam down the centuries has neither been its military and political power nor the rectitude of its creed, but the mystic quest for God and the experience of God to which many attained." It is this that we to-day must look for and upon this we should seek to build up spiritual fellowship with Moslems. All may not agree perhaps with the author's main argument, and he himself admits that "it is unlikely that so other-worldly an ambition will capture the minds of any large number of people in this material age."

Nevertheless, Dr. Cash is emphatic that great as was Muhammed and great, too, his achievement, "he can never be the final goal of the spiritual aspirations of a people." Christ alone is that, and He only will ultimately satisfy both Moslem spiritual search and the quest of the Sufi.

A book to be strongly commended to missionaries new to the field.

BEVAN JONES.

Prayer and Praise.

Thou, the Creator of all truth and beauty, we would bring our thanksgivings for every book that in all the ages, the world over, has held something of Thy creation.

Grant that our debt to the Bible and other books may weigh upon us so heavily that we may not be content until that debt has been turned into a purpose, and men, women and children share our experience, and in turn say, 'Blessed by books.'

We ask Thee to bless all writers of creative books; all workers who put a book into hands that have never before held or possessed one.

These thanksgivings and desires we bring in the name of One whose life and teaching has been the inspiration of countless books, Jesus Christ, the manifestation of truth and beauty.

(From the *News Letter* of the A.C.L.S.M.)

LET US PRAY for the Missionary Conference at Landour during August that it may be guided in its discussion of 'The Challenge of Islam in India to-day,' and that there may be given as a result, new vision and stronger purpose.

LET US CONTINUE TO PRAY for God's help for the Henry Martyn School and for a solution of its difficulties.

NOTICE.

Please note the Editor's change of address.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscriptions 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 Honorary Secretary:—

Rev. J. W. Sweetman,
Lal Tiba, Landour,
Mussoorie, U.P., India.
