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News and Notes

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Wilayat Ali—a Martyr for Christ.

A Story of Long Ago.

WILAYAT ALI was a proud and fierce Muhammadan of North India. He hated all Christian missionaries and their converts, and would gladly have seen them turned out of India or put to death. But one day in Agra he came to know an earnest Christian army officer. The two had many talks together about Christ the Saviour, and after several months of earnest enquiry Wilayat Ali himself became a Christian and was baptized.

Now he was eager to tell others the good news, and for a number of years he was to be seen preaching in the crowded streets of Agra and Delhi, and in the villages close by. Then, in the year 1857, came the terrible mutiny. One morning, as Wilayat Ali was preparing to go out to preach in Delhi, he heard that all the city gates had been closed, that the native troops had rebelled, and that the Muhammadans were robbing and killing all the Christians. He knew what must happen to him. His friends urged him to escape, but he refused. He sent his wife and family away, and then calmly awaited the arrival of the rebels.

Before long he was surrounded by soldiers on horseback and a number of excited mullas. The latter urged the soldiers to kill him at once, but before they did so, he was promised his life if he would consent to deny Jesus Christ and become a Muhammadan. He bravely and indignantly refused. They pointed loaded rifles at his breast and again urged him to forsake Christianity, but he replied, "No, I never will! My Saviour took

up His cross and went to God—I will take up my life as a cross, and will follow Him to heaven.”

Then the soldiers dragged him into the street and hustled him through the city, beating him repeatedly on the head and in the face with their shoes. Presently another soldier met them, and enquired the cause of all the noise. On being told, he at once raised his sword, and with one blow cut off the head of the prisoner. Wilayat Ali's last words were: “O Jesus, receive my soul.”

He had been known to be an earnest preacher of the Gospel, and as such endured bitter persecution for many years. It is said that once, while praying in public, a vindictive Muslim spat into his mouth!

It is not often that Indian preachers have been called upon to lay down their lives for the sake of Christ's Name, but think of the numbers that endure annoyance and persecution for His sake in their daily work. Remembering them let us pray that they be kept faithful to their high calling.

A learned Muslim reads the Life of Christ.

Some of his comments.

A WELL-KNOWN Muslim publicist, politician and protagonist of Islam, now dead, once had an opportunity to read, at his leisure, Paterson Smyth's *Popular Life of Christ*, and made on its pages copious notes, underscoring hundreds of its lines in blue and red pencil.

Having seen the original we have thought that it will interest our readers if we reproduce some of these notes by way of indicating this man's reactions to a presentation of Christ so widely read. His comments deserve a much more careful analysis than we are able to attempt in these pages, but for our immediate purpose selections from them may be grouped under several headings.

Before tabulating these we will set down a few impressions that the perusal of these observations has made upon us.

Paterson Smyth did not write this “Life” in order to convince sceptics or enemies of Christ, nor probably did it occur to him that it might be read by a Muslim, though he has more than one reference to Islam.

Much of this Muslim's mordant criticism of the documents and dogmas of the Christian Church reveal only too clearly that he has read (and to some purpose!) the output of the rationalistic press in the west. Quite clearly also, he has imbibed the anti-

Christian teachings of the Ahmadis, though not himself an adherent of that sect.

He reveals, albeit unconsciously, his inmost self in these comments of his. From start to finish, he is the complacent Muslim who does not, and will not, accept what the Christian Church has to say about her Lord and Saviour.

To proceed to his "comments:"

1. *On God and the World.*

Page 6. *P. S. speaks of the poor pagan men in that lonely world before Christ—the Muslim rejoins, "Why 'poor,' why 'pagan,' and why 'lonely'?" God had always been there! and He was always kindly."

P. 218. "It is the curse of Christianity that while making so much of the 'Son' it relegates the poor 'Father' to an obscure and even awful position." Cp. 256. "Pray why is God, who merely sent Jesus as a Prophet, a cold and austere Police Magistrate?"

P. 90. On the incident of Nicodemus—"The *spiritually-minded* man is the *only natural* man."

2. *On the revelation of God "in Christ."*

6. The Word became flesh—"but 'not God Himself surely.'"

21. Here is a stupendous happening (sc. Incarnation) beyond the grasp of thought—"Either that chasm is bridged over every minute of our life by our soul or it can never be bridged at all. God's method of working all his wonders is not to come 'in man's guise' but to inspire man with Truth."

26. The Incarnation of the Eternal Son—"what is there to prove it? You take the whole thing for granted. This is the most 'stupendous' thing!"

179. "The only way a man can know God is to judge of Him by what he sees in Nature, including his own, the highest and best thing in Nature. But to call this a man-made God is as wrong as to call any manifestation of God like Christ Jesus, God!"

334. "The Lord of the Universe never was a man and He was and is omnipresent."

3. *The Virgin Birth.*

27. Whoso loosens men's belief in the Virgin Birth of the Lord is loosening the keystone in the doctrine of the Incarnation—"Of course! It is because you insist on the Divinity that you kept

* The page references are to Hodder and Stoughton's 7th large Oct. Ed. March, 1923, *i.e.*, a later edition than the one on which the comments were made,

up the fiction of the Virgin birth. They must both go, but *Divinity first.*'

29. "First the Divinity then the Virgin birth and then the second proof of the first !!!"

32. The most incredible thing in the whole universe to believe—"Credo quia incredible!"

32. "The easier to believe would have been a birth out of *nothing* in the presence of witnesses after due notice. *That* would have been God's work."

33. "Nothing has satisfied me so much as this naive confession of a believer in the Deity and the Virgin birth of Jesus, of the hopelessness of the position of such believers."

4. *The Divinity of Christ.*

72. "If Son of Man is the favourite title of Jesus, why not believe that he did not want to be misunderstood as God by the term Son of God?"

182. "There is *no* evidence that any of the 12 took Jesus to be divine."

198. "Even if they *did* call him 'Son' of God it is clear they meant only a human Messiah."

253. P. S. says, "Some in our day express doubt whether Jesus ever definitely claimed to be Divine. The mob with the big stones had little doubt what He claimed, and it frightened them. There was something in Him that overawed their superstitious minds. They dropped the stones, staring stupidly at Him, and Jesus walked through them and went out of the city." The Muslim's only comment is a large question mark in red pencil.

259. His miracles involved a great strain—"How can *strain* be reconciled with *Divinity*? If Jesus had in life the limitations of *humanity* then the *miracles* cannot be reconciled. He is neither man nor God!"

311. P. S. asks: Who are we that we should understand the deep secrets of the Almighty? We know that the Crucified One was the eternal Son of God—"Ignorance and its admission in one sentence and cocksureness in the next !!!"

316. "You may read *anything* after having read "divinity" in the ill-reported words and doings of one of the most *human* beings on God's earth. It is this *damnable irreverence*, 'this pitiful ambition of the fool' to put his own wildest and most fantastic imaginings into the words of one of God's messengers that has ruined the chances of the teachings of Jesus, on whom be Peace."

219. P. S. We do not know what He taught them—"They do not know, they *admit* and yet they must assert that he taught

he was God! No evidence that even one man believed him to be God."

130. P. S. After 2,000 years this Nazareth workman is thought of with awe as Almighty God—"No, he is not. Every day people are getting disgusted with the Trinity and either openly rejecting it or just dropping it quietly."

It will be noticed what capital the Muslim made out of unguarded phrases used by the author. There is much of it scattered over the pages, e.g., on p. 315, speaking of the Atonement P.S. says, So we find our *Lost Chapter* in the life of Jesus—"Hurrah for the Discovery! There is not one word of Atonement even of the living followers of Christ, in the Gospels." On p. 317 P.S. writes, We take up again the story on this earthly side—"Yes, you had better, and don't meddle with heaven and hell!" On p. 112 speaking of England's *eighth* Crusade, P. S. says, England has won—"NOT the LAST!!! *Our* Armageddon tarries! This time *all* Islam will combine—*insha'llah*—against the Pagan."

5. *On Christ's character and teaching*

48. P. S. But all His life it (O.T.) was the Bible of His education, the Bible of His ministry. He took for granted its fundamental doctrines—"But not the whole of it, in its fabricated and corrupt form, surely?"

60. Was Jesus' temptation then a mere sham fight?—"A soul is none the less sinless if temptations arise therein and are successfully resisted. Subsequently they cease to arise too, on account of such resistance. Humanity is sinless if it does not sin. Prophets are *all* sinless, but they are human enough to feel the temptation occasionally." (cp. 61. "Prophets will *never* sin;" and 98. "The Prophets of God NEVER doubt"—re. John the Baptist.)

129. P.S. He actually took it on Him to forgive sins—"Could *never* have done that."

279. Jesus' lament over Jerusalem—"Is not this speech a prophecy of the compiler of the Gospel *after* the event.?"

294. Let the infidel and shallow critic carp at it (the cry on the cross) as weakness—"He *was* a man and a brother, but *not* GOD!" cp. 311 about the same—"Jesus could *never* have said that."

6. *On Christ's miracles*

64. "I fear the Gospel writers have acted against the wishes of Jesus (Arabic sign for 'peace be upon him') himself in laying stress on his miracles. I feel certain he must have refused all such requests and must have contented himself with comfort and consolation and asking the sick and the ailing to assert their

own will—power to get rid of many ailments which only they fancied.”

78. “How much better would it have been to begin his ministry with turning *wine* into *water*! It seems the whole thing is later fabrication.”

79. About the same—“Having swallowed a camel (sc. Incarnation) they certainly should not strain at a gnat.”

124. “There was no ‘miracle’ about the nobleman’s son. Jesus knew that he was not dead, that’s all. God gave him the information.”

262. On reporting the raising of Lazarus to the Pharisees—“would *any* one care a tinker’s damn for the Pharisees, after seeing him whom they opposed bring the dead to life?”

7. *On the Crucifixion and Resurrection*

260. On raising Lazarus—“Absurd. The most stupendous thing was the crucifixion of one who could bring the dead to life. If that could be believed then ‘resurrection’ and ‘ascension’ are child’s play!”

261. “It is the bourn from which NO traveller returns—not even Jesus!”

262. “Who could dare hope to be able to kill him who raised the dead to life?”

308. “But God *did* save him. He did not *die* on the cross.”

310. “The whole story of the Resurrection . . . makes it most probable that Jesus was only fainting and not dead when he was removed, then recovered and was sent away by his friends and disciples.”

317. “How do you know that Joseph of Arimathæa had not rescued Jesus in a swoon from the cross and helped him to recover? So long as he was alive the disciples wouldn’t betray him and his rescuers, and after his natural death the story of ascension was too good to be given up.”

319. “There is enough in Jesus’ *willingness* to die on the cross. God and his disciples both took the will for the deed.”

“Not a single disciple has left a Gospel of his own writing and the well-meaning ‘fraud’ practised upon the Jews to save Jesus’ life after his wonderful recovery and very narrow escape, found its way naturally into the Gospels which are only collections of ‘popular beliefs.’ (There is a great deal of comment in this last strain, e.g., 104. “No chance of authentication of the oral, loose, and vague traditions without a chain of reporters.”)

321. “Nobody ‘saw him dead’ at the time when he was taken down from the cross, no properly qualified medical man whose evidence is before us. Nobody saw him *rise* from the

dead. Brethren in Galilee may have seen him alive, but that does not prove anything."

8. *Muhammad and John the Baptist*

66. P. S. interprets the temptation to do homage to Satan as perhaps to bring in His kingdom by force as Mohammed did—"Why can't you leave Mohamed (Arabic sign for 'Peace be upon him') alone . . . The possession of the kingdoms of this world is not only legitimate but necessary. Only it must not be the largess and bounty of the Devil, nor as the reward of homage to him. The Kingdom is God's and the righteous shall inherit it. They will not fight for it, but if they are not permitted to enjoy religious freedom, they will fight to regain that freedom. Mohamed left no injunction to his followers to fight for the world but only one to fight for faith. Whom are your kings and patriots following? Certainly *not* Christ and *not even* Muhammed, who acted on the defensive."

87. Christ was never angry at wrongs to himself—"Precisely the case with Mohammed." (Peace etc.)

161. P. S. says, and the Mohammedan or the heathen with the loving heart stands far higher in God's sight than the most orthodox Churchman without it—"May I humbly suggest that a 'Mohammedan' with the loving heart stands higher in God's sight than the most orthodox Christian *even with* it?"

328. Where P. S. quotes 'When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come'—the Muslim interprets, "That is Muhammed."

He makes similar claims in connection with John the Baptist.

56. "That Prophet, *i.e.*, the like of Moses mentioned in Deuteronomy, which if not fabricated must refer to Mohammed, the Last of the Prophets."

57. On John's disclaimer—"This seems so clearly an after-thought to magnify Jesus into 'Son of God.' If *that* was his *only* mission, he would like himself to be baptized by Jesus."

97-8. On the question of John in prison, to Jesus—"Does it not rather mean that John asked whether Jesus was the *Last* of the Prophets, 'Art thou *that* Prophet?' and the answer of Jesus suggest that he gives the good news of that *other*, the Paraclete, *wa ismahu Ahmad*, and his name is Ahmad (Peace etc.)"

We conclude our review with some general quotations which indicate his religious outlook.

150. "Individual Religion is the *negation* of Religion. No man can hope to be saved unless he is trying to save others as well as himself. That's the Islamic Doctrine."

151. He quotes Quran, Sura 103, and observes concerning its contents: "All 4 elements necessary for salvation and in fact for *all* success: (1) Faith, as a foundation, (2) Good works as the superstructure, (3) Seeking salvation of others as well, cleansing the surroundings, and (4) Persistence in spite of failure."

206. On the statement that the chief condition of greatness in the sight of God is to have the heart of a little child—he quotes from the Quran (49: 13) "*inna akramakum 'inda' llahi atqakum*, "The most honourable of you in the sight of God is he who 'fears him most'. Fear=guarding against evil; guard one's duty to God."

Finally, on the last page on the book he wrote, "Jesus is a most loveable character and it is a wonder that these accretions of miracles and resurrections and ascensions, on which so much stress is laid, leave any chance for that loveable character to impress itself on us. The record of his sayings is fragmentary and they need qualifications almost everywhere. But even as they are they display a loving and peaceful nature that goes to the heart of things in search of religion, not getting lost in the petty unessential things of the ritual. Jesus was an antidote to the Jews and 'Judaism' (*not* to the teaching of Moses which alas is lost and much mixed up with the writings of scribes and priests.) But people are not content with that and *must* insist on the acceptance of their 'child notions' and other absurdities which are blasphemous and make the world lose sight of the essential things in the teaching of Jesus. That's why people are marching out of Christianity. Some openly and defiantly and most in a slinking indirect fashion."

The Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies.

Interim Report.

Lecture work was maintained throughout the four summer months at Landour. There was never any lack of students.

Weekly lectures were given as usual to first year Language School students and a special course for a small group in their second year.

In addition to the regular instruction given by the Staff, the main class, which this year included 5 Indian students, attended short courses kindly given by Dr. Murray Titus and

Rev. W. A. Zoerner. On two occasions Mrs. Bevan Jones addressed a group of 30 young women on the Religious Life of a Muslim woman.

During the year there have been published a revised edition of *The People of the Mosque*, and the 3rd edition, also revised, of *The Best Friend* (a Life of Christ for Muslim readers). Mr. Subhan has completed the Urdu translation of *Christianity Explained to Muslims*, in close collaboration with the Principal, and the Panjab Religious Book Society, Lahore, will have it on sale about the middle of December. Price, 12 annas.

After the New Year the Principal will visit several Church centres in the Panjab, while Mr. Subhan will be doing extension work in Bengal and Bihar. Mr. Sweetman plans to return from furlough in February, and will lecture in the Union Theological College, Poona.

It should be remembered that the School offers a few small scholarships with free accommodation, to enable Indian students to attend our courses of instruction. Application for these and for the enrolment of foreign missionaries should be addressed at an early date to the Principal:—

REV. L. BEVAN JONES.

Dr. M. T. Titus.

At its recent meeting the Literature Committee showed its appreciation of the services of Dr. Titus by passing the following minute :

“In view of the fact that arrangements are to be made in the near future whereby Dr. M. T. Titus, the Convener of this Committee, is to pass on his work to another.

WE DESIRE TO PLACE ON RECORD our deep appreciation of his outstanding services through his work on this Committee, in stimulating and directing the preparation and publication of Christian Literature for the Moslems of India.

From the time when Dr. Mott, in 1922, roused people everywhere to a new concern in this matter through the survey he organized of the available literature for Moslems, our friend and colleague has been most intimately concerned with all projects appertaining to this task in India.

One notable result of that survey was the inauguration, by the N.C.C. in 1923, of the Christian Literature for Moslems Committee, of which Dr. Titus became, and has throughout remained, the Convener.

Under his inspiring leadership workers in all parts of India have co-operated with zeal and success, so that to-day in over a dozen language areas there is available for Moslems, as never before, a liberal supply of literature specially adopted for their use.

Moreover, D. Titus has been a most efficient intermediary in securing, during the past seventeen years, the noble sum of over Rs. 50,000 from the American C.L.S. for Moslems. Without such generous financial assistance our best plans for meeting India's widespread needs could not have been carried out.

In this invaluable service Dr. Titus has invariably effaced himself and given unstintingly of his time and strength. It is impossible adequately to express to him our gratitude, yet we find real satisfaction in the assurance that what he has accomplished will itself be a lasting memorial to the zeal and devotion with which he has served the Cause of Christ in this land."

January Issue.

In accordance with our usual custom the January, number 1940, will be sent out by V.P.P. to members within the Indian Postal area who have not yet paid their annual subscription.

PLEASE NOTE.

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 Acting Honorary Secretary :—

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,
Lal Tiba,
Landour, Mussoorie,
N. India.

