

Missionaries to Muslims League

News and Notes.

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“INTERCESSION” IN THE QUR’ĀN

Some time ago we were camped in a village the *Khatib* of which had some time before become a Christian. Opposition was, therefore, to be expected. It appeared in the shape of a full-blown Maulvi, who dodged our footsteps, and—behind our backs—forbade the people to listen to our preaching. We soon discovered that the Maulvi was harping on one string, *vis.*, the Muslim doctrine of Muhammad’s intercession for all believers at the judgment day. As a matter of fact, wherever we went we were confronted with this doctrine as a final and sufficient reply to all our appeals. Mere denial upon our part was, of course, useless, so we resolved to interview the Maulvi and challenge his authority for his extravagant claims, which, I was persuaded, had no support in the Qur’ān.

It was, I need scarcely say, an interested and inquisitive crowd which gathered around us as the Maulvi and I met in the courtyard of a Muhammadan home of the village. I began the interview by disclaiming any desire to enter upon a controversy with him, and stated that I had come to ask where in the Qur’ān he had found it stated that Muhammad would be the only intercessor at the judgment day. For reply he opened his Arabic Qur’ān at *Surat* Bani Israel, at the 9th *ruqū* (verse 81 in Wherry’s edition of Sale), and read “‘Asa an yab’athaka rabbuka makāman mahmudan,” which Sale translates, “Peradventure thy Lord will raise thee to an honourable station.” This, then, was apparently, the strongest proof-text which the Muslim priest could produce. Needless to say, I expressed dissatisfaction with the answer, and asked what proof there was that the passage in question had any reference to intercession. For answer the Maulvi produced an Urdu commentary of the Qur’ān, and proceeded to read a highly coloured account of the proceedings at the last day when Muhammad would, by his intercession, secure the salvation of all his followers. I then reminded the Maulvi that I had not come to hear the opinions of the commentators, but to learn where, *in the Qur’ān*, it was clearly stated that Muhammad would intercede. The Maulvi, however, continued to reiterate his claim that the passage he had quoted was sufficient proof, and, so far as appearances went, he carried the people with him! He, at any rate, made no endeavour to produce a clearer passage, though asked to do so, and I took leave to presume that, in his opinion, he had quoted the strongest proof-text to be found in the Qur’ān in favour of the favourite Muhammadan dogma.

The subject of intercession is such a favourite one with Muslims everywhere that, as missionaries, we do well to make ourselves acquainted with the teaching of the Qur’ān on the subject. Such a study will have more than one surprise for those who have not hitherto given it serious attention. To begin

with, it will be found that the teaching of the Qur'an on the subject is hopelessly contradictory. In not a few passages it is stated definitely that there will be no intercession at the judgment day. In others it seems to hint that God will give "permission" to some men or angels to intercede. In yet another set of passages the angels are repeatedly spoken of as both interceding for men now, and at the last day, whilst in another place, if the Jallalain are to be believed, Jesus and Ezra will occupy the honourable position of intercessors. Limitations of space will not allow of any detailed treatment of the subject here, but the outline sketch given below will afford a basis for further study for those sufficiently interested to follow up the subject. For the convenience of missionary readers we quote from Wherry's edition of Sale.

There Will Be No Intercession

"Dread the day wherein one soul shall not make satisfaction for another soul, neither shall any intercession be accepted from them" (II, 47). "O true believers, give alms of that which we have bestowed on you, before the day cometh wherein there shall be no merchandising, nor friendship, nor intercession" (II, 264). "Preach it unto those who fear that they shall be assembled before their Lord. They shall have no patron nor intercessor except Him" (VI, 50). "What shall cause thee to understand what the day of judgment is? It is a day wherein one soul shall not be able to obtain anything in behalf of another soul" (LXXXII, 18-19).

These passages have been chosen from a large number of similar ones. In the first the Jews are addressed, in the second and third Muslims are addressed, whilst in the last the statement is generally addressed to all men.

The Angels Intercede For Men

"The angels who bear the throne of God, and those who stand about it, celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him, and they ask pardon for the true believers, saying, O Lord, thou encompassest all things by thy mercy and knowledge, wherefore forgive those who repent and follow thy path; and deliver them from the pains of hell" (XL, 7). "The angels celebrate the praise of their Lord, and ask pardon for those who dwell on the earth" (XLII, 3). "And how many angels soever there be in the heavens, their intercession shall be of no avail, until after God shall have granted permission unto whom he shall please and shall accept" (LIII, 26-7). "The day whereon the Spirit (Gabriel) and the other angels shall stand in order, they shall not speak (in behalf of themselves or others) except he only to whom the Merciful shall grant permission, and who shall say that which is right" (LXXVIII, 38).

The first and second of these passages appear to speak of intercession as being exercised by the angels now, whilst the third and fourth point equally clearly to the judgment day. In this section, again, we have only given a selection from a large number of passages.

Permission Will Be Given Some One to Intercede at the Judgment Day

"They shall obtain no intercession, except he only who hath received a covenant from the Merciful" (XIX, 90). "On that day the intercession of none shall be of advantage unto another, except the intercession of him to whom the Merciful shall grant permission, and who shall be acceptable unto him in what he saith" (XX, 108).

See Sale's note on the first of these passages.

Jesus and Ezra Will Intercede

"They whom they invoke besides him have not the privilege to intercede (for others), except those who bear witness to the truth, and know the same"

(XLIII, 86). The exception comprehends Jesus, Ezra, and the angels, who will be admitted as intercessors, though they have been worshipped as Gods. (Baidhawi and Jalaluddin.)

In the course of twenty years missionary service in Bengal we have found no subject which appeals to Muslims more strongly than the great truth of Our Blessed Lord's present exaltation and High-priestly work at the right hand of God.

In the Christian Scriptures the two great requisites in an Intercessor, sinlessness and the ability to intercede *now*, are both so clearly exhibited in the Person of our Lord that the sincere Muslim cannot but be strongly influenced by a study of the many passages in which those requisites are set forth. If to the two mentioned above we add a third, *viz.*, the completed work of atonement on which to base His intercession, the appeal becomes still stronger.

We would urge workers among Muslims everywhere to keep well in the foreground this aspect of our Lord's work, as one which will find a ready response in many Muslim hearts. W. G.

"WHAT IS ISLAM?"

In several successive numbers of the *Islāmic Review*, the official organ of the Muslim Mission in England, a statement of the basic principles of the Muhammādan Faith has appeared under the heading "What is Islām?" In that statement the following passages occur:—

Allah is "free from passions and is indivisible, unpersonal. From Him all have come, and to Him all return."

The Qur'ān is described as "a book which has withstood the ravages of time, and stands to-day, after more than thirteen centuries, word for word and letter for letter, as it came out of the mouth of the Prophet Muhammad." It is "uncontaminated" and "uncontaminable."

We are told that in Islām "there is no intercession, no redemption, no saviourship. Every soul is responsible for its own actions. Islām points out both the ways—the one which brings to God, and that is good, and the other which leads away from Him, and that is evil. No one can carry the burden of the other. Sincere repentance secures forgiveness."

Original sin is repudiated in the following terms: Islām "does not lay down that human beings are born sinners, or that woman was instrumental in the 'fall of Adam.'"

The reader is further assured that "Islām encourages rationalism and scientific research." It "claims to be a rational faith, and undertakes to satisfy the reason and conscience both, so criticism is encouraged, and every effort made to answer questions satisfactorily."

Finally, the following "Declaration Form" is printed for the use of intending converts

son
"I.....daughter of.....of.....hereby
wife

faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I adopt Islām as my religion, that I worship one and only Allah (God) alone, that I believe Muhammad to be His messenger and servant, that I respect equally all the Prophets, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., that I will live a Moslem life by the help of Allah

"La ilaha ill Allah

"Muhammad al Rasul Allah."

Such is Islām, according to Khwaja Kamal Ud Din, and such is the declaration required of all who embrace Islām at his hands. One cannot help

wondering how many of the British converts to Islām, who so "faithfully and solemnly" promise "to lead a Moslem life," do actually carry out the enactments of their adopted faith. We wonder, for example, how many of them actually kept the recent Muslim fast, or how many, for that matter, perform the five daily prayers. Some of our readers will remember that the Khwaja was asked, in an interview at Lahore some months ago, whether British Muslims kept the fast of Ramazān. The Khwaja is reported to have replied as follows: "That is very difficult, increasingly so the farther one goes north, and the Qur'ān makes allowance for many exceptions. We cannot even be sure, in England, what the exact limits of Ramazān are, and of course, in case of sickness or other disability, we are excused." It is not difficult to read between the lines of the Khwaja's diplomatic reply, and we think it may be taken for granted that British Muslims do not keep the fast. Lord Headley, it will be remembered, in an address some time ago, boldly declared that many of the prescribed rules of Islām, intended for and adapted to the seventh century of Arabia, are not now to be regarded as a part of Islām.

In the statement of principles, quoted above, one of the most striking departures from the teaching of orthodox Islām is that relating to Intercession. As is well known, the doctrine that Muhammad will intercede for Muslims at the Judgment Day is universally held by orthodox Muslims. It has little, if any, basis in the Qur'an it is true, but the Traditions are full of the most descriptive accounts of Muhammad's intercession at the great assize, and these are implicitly believed by the orthodox.

Kamaluddin, on the other hand, tells us that "there is no intercession, no redemption, no saviourship. Every soul is responsible for its own actions. . . . No one can carry the burden of the other. Sincere repentance secures forgiveness." One suspects, however, that this statement is made for the benefit of his English converts and enquirers only, for in the notes of the new English translation of the Qur'an published by his party in India, the following occurs: "According to the holy Qur'an and the traditions, this privilege of intercession will, on the Day of Judgment, be granted specially to the Holy Prophet. The truth is that intercession there must be, but with the express permission of God. Only he who will be permitted to do so will intercede, and only those in whose behalf permission for intercession is granted will be interceded for and forgiven" (pp. 41, 42). Further comment upon this is unnecessary!

"THE FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH FOR THE MOSLEMS"

The following letter has been received from Miss A. Van Sommer, the Hon. Secretary of the "Fellowship of Faith for the Moslems." We are sure the members of our League will appreciate the gracious invitation to become, whilst on furlough in Great Britain, honorary members of the Fellowship, and we trust that many of them will be able to unite with Miss Van Sommer and her friends at their gatherings for prayer on behalf of the Muslim world. We specially hope that the gathering at Swanwick next summer may find a large number of our members, then on furlough, present to exemplify in a concrete way the spiritual unity of the Fellowship and our League. We hope it may be possible for us to give early intimation of the date of that meeting in the pages of *News and Notes*. Miss Van Sommer writes as follows:—

"DEAR MR. GOLDSACK,

"We lately had a gathering of 'the Fellowship of Faith for the Moslems' at Keswick, and one of the resolutions passed was to invite all members of the

Missionaries to Moslems League in India to be honorary members of the Fellowship when they are in England, and to ask that their addresses may be sent to us, so that we may be able to invite them to any of our gatherings. Will you kindly convey this resolution to your members. We now number close on 500 members, and purpose to meet at Swanwick one day next summer. We hope that as many of your members as possible will join us on that occasion. . . .

"I remain,

"Yours very sincerely,

"ANNIE VAN SOMMER."

NOTES

Christian Missions in Turkey

Never in the history of Modern Missions to Muslims has the outlook seemed so dark as that which faces Protestant Missions to-day in Asiatic Turkey. The Turks seem to be out-Heroding Herod in the blind fury of their hatred to everything Christian. With them the grand educational work of American Missions for more than half a century counts for nought; and a blind unreasoning hatred is leading them to seek the destruction of that which stands for all that is best and noblest in the Turkish Empire to-day. Hitherto sentiments of prudence and wisdom have operated to prevent any drastic interference with the missions of neutral states, and, as a result, American Missions in Turkey have throughout the period of the war enjoyed more or less freedom to continue their work. The latest reports, however, would seem to indicate the abandonment of this policy for one of definite anti-Christian intolerance. From the *Missionary Review of the World* we learn that the Turkish Government is, in many places, expelling the American missionaries and seizing their property. Already the missionaries have been driven out of Marsovan, Sivas and Caesarea, and the mission property in those places has been seized by the Turkish authorities under the pretence of military exigency.

President White, of Anatolia College, who has been in Turkey since 1890, and is at the head of an institution with 400 students, describes how on May 10th of this year the governor of the city, accompanied by the principal military authorities, requisitioned all the buildings of the mission, whether hospital, schools, or residential quarters, for military purposes, and ordered the departure of all foreigners to Constantinople. In seizing the mission hospital, where over 500 Turkish soldiers had been treated gratis under Red Cross auspices! the Turks took all the furniture, instruments, drugs and supplies.

The Muhammadan Year

On November 28 will commence the Muhammadan month Safar. According to the author of the *Dictionary of Islam* it is held to be the most unlucky and inauspicious month in the whole year for in it, it is said, Adam was turned out of Paradise!!

Muslim Opinion on the Arabian Revolt

Our request for brief communications from members upon the attitude adopted by the Muslims of their respective spheres with regard to the Arabian revolt has not, as yet, brought a very gratifying response. Three letters, however, have reached us--one from Madras, one from Egypt, and the other from Eastern Bengal, Canon GOLDSMITH, writing from Madras, says, "They (the Muslims) seem obliged, out of loyalty to the Sultan of Turkey, which also

they are not permitted (by Government) to express too loudly, to deprecate the rebellion of the Sultan's Arab subjects. On this ground, therefore, they are against the independent action of the Arabs. Probably other considerations might make them sympathize with the Arabs, but conservatism dictates their siding with the Turks. However, very little open expression is given to their feelings."

The Rev. W. BARRY, writing from Comilla, in East Bengal, says, with reference to Muslims and the Arabian revolt—"Indifference is supreme, and not one in five of the Muhammadans seems to have heard of the revolt." The few who do know anything about it refuse, according to Mr. Barry, to discuss the revolt at all—with him. He, however, mentions a lecture which had been delivered in a neighbouring town by an educated Muslim, a Government servant, let it be noted, in which an appeal was made to the people to "regard the proclamation of independence by the Grand Shareef of Mecca as a move in the direction of *reform* of Islam. He outlined what every *Hajji* knows about the conditions that obtain for pilgrims to Arabia, and assured the people that it would certainly mean the suppression of extortion and roguery that beset the pilgrims, and also better travelling arrangements." Mr. Barry concludes a very interesting communication in these significant words—

"My talk this morning with the son of a *Hajji* here seems to confirm my own impression that the Muhammadans who know or say anything at all about the matter, do not take in the religious aspect of the move at all. The uppermost consideration is plainly stated in the most sordid terms—that 'Now, of course, Britain or some other European Power will take over the government of Arabia, and there will be proper management and control, and good roads, railways, telegraphs, etc.,' and, I added, 'Schools and colleges and various social regulations.' 'Yes,' it was cheerfully admitted, 'And why not?' I left it at that. Our people here are not far-seeing enough to take in the situation. They are perfectly satisfied with the upheaval, and take it as philosophically as they did the stagnant government of the Sultan of Turkey."

Mr. A. T. UPSON, writing from Cairo, says:—

"So far as they express any opinion at all, Egyptian Muslims view the Arabian revolt with complete equanimity. Most of us knew of its probability many months before it happened, so it was no surprise. The pilgrims are being allowed to go as usual (but to Mecca only, this time), thus tacitly recognising the rule of the 'Amir of Mecca.'"

BOOK REVIEWS

RECENT C.L.S. PUBLICATIONS.

Three booklets dealing with the Islamic problem.

1. *Aspects of the Redemptive Act of Christ*, by W. H. T. Gairdner, B.A., Christian Literature Society, Madras. Price, 2 annas.

This booklet essays to indicate some of the "numerous facets, or aspects" from which the great fact of the death of Christ may be studied. Some of these aspects are more simple, some more profound; but in the writer's understanding, none is unessential; rather all are contributory to a true comprehension of the central fact of Christianity.

Five aspects are set forth in order. Accepting the law that "death is the gateway of life," the argument shows that "principle, the *summum bonum*, God," is to be preferred before all else, even before physical life itself. This general law receives its supreme exemplification in Christ's preference of physical death to the abandonment of His highest aim.

The same method is followed in considering "Love unto death." This is "the greatest phenomenon of human life, especially when lavished on one who does not merit it nor appreciate its value." Again Christ appears to exemplify this, dying for the ungodly.

In the remaining sections the death of Christ is regarded, first, "as an act of Heroic Leadership," then "as overcoming death by meeting it," and finally, "in relation to the fight against sin."

Surely we are right in searching for light on the Cross from every possible source, so that we may come nearer to a true understanding of its significance. Surely, too, in our presentation of the Cross we should exhaust all the possibilities of suggestion and illustration. Here, in this little book, we are reminded of many points that may enter into our thinking and teaching, and preaching, and thus make us truer ministers of the Cross.

2. *God as Triune, Creator, Incarnate, Atoner.* By W. H. T. Gairdner, B.A. Price, 3 annas.

This booklet definitely claims to be "a reply to Muhammadan objections, and an essay in philosophic apology." Four chapters are devoted to the abovenamed aspects of the Divine Nature.

In a small note such as this nothing like justice can be done to the contents of this unpretentious essay. It is concerned with those matters that are primary in our controversy with Islam. It deals, not with the petty, small talk of discussion, but with the immensities of God. There is something inspiring even in this very fact. Further, Mr. Gairdner does not shirk the objections that are raised to Christianity on the ground of its doctrine of God. They are boldly stated, and as boldly met. Throughout the whole treatment of the subject we feel that first things are put first. For instance, when discussing the question of the Atonement, great care is taken at the outset to differentiate once for all between the view which makes man's relations with God to be merely physical, and the view which defines them as moral. The whole matter of the Atonement is transfigured when we have grasped this difference.

The thinking is compact and often abstract. It is not a book for the ordinary Muhammadan student of Bengal. But it is replete with suggestions for the worker among Muhammadans. Sometimes a sentence embodies a thought that may be developed into an illustration and an argument. "Every earthly father is a parent; but not every parent is a father." "A man is more of a unity than a turnip." Does a father who wishes to impose his will on his children "carry a pistol into the nursery when he gives his orders"? Then the arguments set out, while sometimes beyond the man in the street, may be adapted for use in our teaching and our preaching. The practical value of the treatise will appear from a few instances of objections that are here met. "That the words 'Father' and 'Son' are unworthy of Godhead"; "That the idea of the Trinity is Tri-theism necessarily"; "Was God, or the Son of God, incarnate?" "The Incarnation involves attributing passivity and weakness to the Almighty Godhead."

We are glad to have read this stimulating book and commend it to others.

3. *The Muslim Fast.* By Anwar-ul-Haqq. Price, 1½ annas.

Within the range of the 20 pages of this pamphlet, first the teaching of Islam regarding Fasting and then the Teaching of the Christian Scriptures on the same subject are set out. In the first part care is taken to keep in touch with Muslim authorities. All quotations are given in the original as well as in English. This section ends with some quotations that show that both Muhammad and his interpreters were not blind to the fact that the fast of

Ramadan is of no value unless it be accompanied by abstinence from vain words and evil deeds. The second part of the pamphlet aims at showing that it is this feeling after the spiritual side of fasting that is emphasised in the Christian Scriptures.

The scheme of the book is very simple, and it could be put in the hands of a Muhammadan student with the confidence that he would catch the writer's main purpose.

H. S.

Khush Khabar, by Miss C. Williams. Bengal S. S. Union. Price, One anna.

This is an adaptation, with considerable additions, of the well-known *Rakhal Raja*, and aims at presenting the life of our Lord in simple Mussalmani Bengali, suited to the capacities of the ill-educated masses of Bengal Muslims. There is an illustration on every other page, and the book is divided into 47 short lessons, based upon the pictures which precede them.

Miss Williams has done her work well, and we congratulate her upon producing a book which, for many years to come, will carry its message of Gospel light to the women and children of Muslim Bengal.

W.G.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

Praise

"May I ask thanks for assurance given and signs shown of the Kingdom coming in North Kashmir."

Prayer

"For one in Baltistan who was baptised years ago, and asked me recently to solicit prayer of the Church for him 'as for a believer alone among ignorant and unbelieving'; and prayer for some recently called to work for the Kingdom in North Kashmir."

H. C. ROBERTSON,
Central Asian Mission, Mardan.

Prayer is asked for Elias and his wife, Phebe, converted Afghans, who who left Rangoon over a year ago for the North-West Frontier, with the Bible to give to their people. Pray that the Spirit accompanying the Word may be the power of God unto salvation to multitudes.

Praise for more enquirers in Rangoon, Burma.

H. M. N. ARMSTRONG.

Let us pray for all members of our League who are at present on furlough, that they may be given grace and wisdom for representing the needs of Islam to the home churches.

NEW MEMBERS

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|------|-------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 218. | REV. E. T. BUTLER, M.A. | ... | C.M.S., Cossipore, Calcutta. |
| 219. | REV. P. NOBLE | ... | Baptist Mission, Dacca, Bengal. |

Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (3s. 4d.). Members are requested to send news and requests for prayer to

Jessore, Bengal.

W. GOLDSACK,
Acting Hon. Sec., M. M. League.