

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

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THE HOLY QUR-ÂN

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NOTES

A Remarkable Confession.

While reviewing the dogmatic Christianity of the present day we have invariably laid stress in these pages on two important facts, firstly, Jesus Christ never claimed to be the founder of a new religion, but "he was a Jew like other Jews, and a Rabbi like other Rabbis." Secondly, it was the pagan influence of the Romans that gave a new turn to the simple teachings of Jesus and introduced the doctrines of the Trinity and Son-worship. We are glad to note that the ministers of the Church as well are now making open confession of these points. Dean Inge has written an important and instructive article on "Modernism in Religion," a few passages of which will be read with interest, as they simply echo our own views. On the origin of Christianity he says :—

Christianity, for the historian, is a great river which had its headwaters in Palestine, but received affluents from all sides. Its Founder appeared to His contemporaries as "the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee." He followed and far surpassed John the Baptist, who revived the old prophetic tradition after a long interval. The function of the prophets had been to preach moral, including social, reform, to denounce idolatry and oppression, to warn their countrymen that national vices must lead to national disasters, and to spiritualize and moralize religion, which was always in danger of becoming external and formal, under the domination of the priests and legalists.

These were the main topics of John the Baptist's preaching, and Christ took up his message where he left it. There is no evidence that Christ, during His ministry on earth, attempted to found a new institutional religion. His disciples in Palestine were content to remain orthodox Jews, who obeyed the Law, and, like many other Jews, expected the coming of the Messiah who was to deliver their country.

With regard to the second point, i.e. that Christianity borrowed its form and tenets from the paganism of Rome, his remarks are still more frank and lucid :

The greatest of all the crises through which Christianity has passed was its transplantation into the soil of European

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culture, which was the work of St. Paul's life. The Church then made its choice; it gained Europe and lost Asia. Compared with this momentous development even the Reformation was of secondary importance.

The Reformers believed that they were clearing away a mass of Pagan accretions from Christianity, and that they were returning to the original Gospel. They were really doing the first, but not the second. Latin Christianity was and is a Mediterranean religion. It is the form which Christianity had to take among the subjects of the Roman Empire. . . . Christianity was afterwards corrupted and mixed up with elements which have nothing to do with the original Gospel. Christ knew nothing of Greek philosophy; but the theology of the Church is built upon the speculations of the later Platonists, and on what the medieval schoolmen believed to be the doctrines of Aristotle.

The Roman Church is, as Hobbes said, the ghost of the Roman Empire; it is a great political institution, utterly unlike the "little flock" which Christ gathered round Him. Our duty, therefore, is to study the character and teaching of Christ, and to apply them to our modern problems, for which they will be found to provide a complete solution.

It is now for the Church and the whole Christian world to realize that they are following, not the religion of Jesus, but a set of dogmas which owe their origin to the heathenism of the old Romans.

A New Religion.

That Christianity has failed to exercise a wholesome effect upon the structure of humanity is an established fact. As a religion it has died a natural death, and there is no hope of its revival. That is why the thinking men of Europe are crying in despair, "Never has there been a more insistent call for a great leader of thought than to-day. The Church has not produced him—will Literature do so?" Sometimes the same cry of despair assumes somewhat hopeful and positive form in the words of S. P. B. Mais:

"We are waiting for a new Messiah, a new Revival, a new Religion; the time is ripe and poor humanity's arms are lifted up in prayer: *Lord, I believe: help Thou my unbelief.*"

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May we tell the seekers of truth that the Messiah, the Spirit of Truth and Light, came and passed away; but the Christians have not accepted him as the Jews did not accept the Messiah of Nazareth. The Holy Qur-án thirteen hundred years ago gave the good news that "surely the Truth has come and Falsehood has vanished"; but the pity is that the Christian world did not pay heed to this Gospel of Truth. The time is now ripe, and we hope that the civilized world will be able to find the New Religion it is crying for in the Natural Religion of Islam.

Simplicity and Trinity.

Mr. Charles Dawbarn, while discussing the difficulties of the missionary's task in Africa, has, perhaps unconsciously, passed a very unpleasant verdict against Christianity. He says:—

Perchance, also, a greater simplicity is needed in addressing the gospel to a primitive people. Thoughtful observers, both lay and clerical, have told me of the inroads made by Islam in the wavering hearts of the black races. And the reason, I find, is the greater adaptability of the Moslem faith. Polygamy is no bar to Mahomet's Paradise. The native intelligence is not assailed by the sublime perplexities of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The doctrine of vicarious sacrifice requires something more than earnestness to make clear to a child-like people. A real talent for exposition and zeal in acquiring the vernacular, as well as the native point of view, are essentials.

If we divest this passage of the unnecessary use of adjectives which represent only the subjectiveness of the writer and are used to defend and whitewash the dogmas of Christianity, it is an outspoken confession of the fact that Christianity is beyond human intelligence and lacks adaptability to human nature. We cannot agree with the writer that it is only "the native" intelligence that is "assailed" by the Trinity, because we see that the most civilized intelligence also revolts against it. It is, however, interesting to know that the perplexities of Trinity

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are "sublime," and we hope that no other perplexity in the world will usurp this epithet of the Trinity.

Colossal Ignorance.

How much Islam is misunderstood in the West can well be illustrated by the following letter, which has appeared in the *Illustrated Chronicle* to contradict certain misleading statements in regard to the Muslim faith:—

SIR,—In reference to the article in the *Illustrated Chronicle* of last Friday, entitled "Islam: Talks to Children," I think that it is a pity such an inaccurate article should be read by children.

To begin with, it says Islam is the religion of the Hindoos. This, of course, is quite incorrect. Hinduism is the religion of the Hindoos, and anyone who has lived in India knows that it would be the greatest insult to call a Mahomedan a Hindoo.

Then it goes on to say that Mahomet was a Jew. He was not, but an Arab of the Koreish tribe, and the Koran is written in Arabic.

Your correspondent says that Mahomet probably did not know of Christ—at least that is what I understand her to say; but this is so inaccurate that it does not seem possible that she meant it in that way.

Mahomet regarded Christ as one of the great prophets, next in rank to himself, and at Christ's second coming, and death—according to the Mahomedan view—a place is kept for his burial in Mahomet's own tomb.

One of the reasons for the dislike of the Mahomedans for the Jews is that they killed the prophet Christ. You will, of course, know these facts yourself, and I am only writing because I dislike misleading statements being given to children.

Yours, etc.,

A. KEYS.

ST. BEDE'S, BAMBURGH, August 22, 1921.

We are really thankful to the writer, who has endeavoured to remove most regrettable misunderstandings, which can be cited as the typical illustrations of colossal ignorance about Islam in the West. But we should not like to lose this opportunity to enlighten him on two points: (1) The Holy Prophet Muhammad did not claim to be superior to Jesus Christ in Prophethood; but on

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the other hand exhorted his followers to refrain from such invidious distinctions. This indicates the magnanimity of his soul and the largeness of his heart. (2) There is no "place kept for the burial of Jesus in the tomb of the Prophet."

The Conquering Crescent.

The following passage, in which an Indian priest of the Church of England has dealt with the spiritual conquest of Islam in India in comparison with Christianity, will be read with great interest:—

But there is another and a much more serious kind of disunion within the visible body of the Church, and this constitutes the greatest hindrance to its Missionary work. In the case of India, two great Missionary religions have been brought to it from outside, Christianity and Islam. By the time that Aurang Zeb, the last of the great Mogul Emperors, died (in 1707), almost one-third of India had become Moslem, as a result of five hundred years of the Moslem connection. Christian Missions to North India started about two hundred years ago, whereas in the south of India Christianity dates from very early times; yet, so far, the number of Indian Christians hardly exceeds one per cent. of the total population. Moreover, a vast proportion of the Christian community and almost all recent additions to it have come from what are known as the Depressed, or the Untouchable, classes of India. The present influx into the Church is almost entirely a social rather than a spiritual movement, and conversions from among the better and educated classes practically ceased some time ago.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.

It is generally believed that the spread of Islam in India was almost entirely due to the forcible conversions made by Mohammedan kings. This assertion, however, is only partly true. Perhaps an even more powerful reason for the rapid advance of Islam was its wonderfully practical and virile brotherhood. It is well known that once a man embraces Islam, all differences of race, nationality and class vanish. In India, instances are not lacking where Mohammedan negro slaves have risen to be Prime Ministers and have married the daughters of their Imperial masters. The Hindu idea of brotherhood, on the contrary, was, and still remains, narrow and almost entirely confined to castes and sub-castes. Hence it was not so much the sword as the wonderful brotherhood that Islam offered which led to such vast conversions.

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Orphans Entertained.

At the instance of Mrs. Muhammad, of Bombay, who visited us lately, the children of the L. & S.W. Railway Servants' Orphanage were entertained on Saturday, September 3, 1921. The following account of the function is quoted from the *Woking Herald* :—

... Early in the afternoon the following Muslim officials visited the Orphanage from the Mosque: Maulvi Mustafa Khan (Head of the Mosque), his secretary (Kh. Nazir Ahmad), and his colleagues Dost Mahommed, Mr. Abdul Haq, and Abdul Mohyi (of Arabia). Mrs. Howell and Mr. and Mrs. Burrows (Woking Muslims) were also present. The visitors were met by the Chairman of the Board of Management (Mr. D. J. Radmoore) and the Secretary-Superintendent (Mr. Arthur Smith), the members of the Ladies' House Committee, and the following members of the Board: Messrs. G. W. Bettridge, S. Stone, A. H. Read, J. Pearce.

A programme of sports took place on the Orphanage ground, the children competing for prizes given by Mrs. Pearl. The children who failed to win prizes at the sports had a dip in the lucky bran tub, from which many delightful gifts were extracted. A sumptuous tea was provided by the Mosque, the Woking Co-operative Society carrying out the catering, and subsequently the children greatly enjoyed a display of conjuring and ventriloquism given by an expert in entertaining.

Thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Pearl and the officials of the Mosque, the children will have cause to remember Saturday as one of the happiest days spent at the Orphanage.

The suggestion of giving prizes and toys after tea came from one of our British Muslim sisters, Mrs. Zahida Pearl, who organized and raised a subscription for it. She has now sent us the following letter for publication, thanking the subscribers :—

To the Editor of the ISLAMIC REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—As the organizer of the Sports and Toy distribution, following the Tea which was given to the children of the South-Western Railway Orphanage, I sincerely thank the following for donations amounting in all to £4 8s. :—Mrs. Nairulla, Mr. Khizar Tidemore, Mrs. Sharifa Howell, Miss Yandle, Mr. Habibullah Lovegrove, Mrs. Robertson, Mrs. Mubarika Rahmatullah, Mr. Khan, Mrs. Burrows, Mrs. Crompton, Mrs. Cole, Mr. Dost Mahommed.

Yours fraternally,
ZAHIDA PEARL.

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THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

By MASUD ALI VARESI

(Continued from p. 336.)

IX

GENEROSITY

FROM a humanitarian point of view, generosity ranks above all other virtues as a medium of seasonable gain to human beings. Generally speaking, the benefits accruing from it are obviously greater in its copiousness than anything else. The source of generosity is not restricted to wealth only. To lavish silver and gold coins in thousands on the needy is not the only form of generosity. Real charity and generosity embodies all charitable and good acts to others as best as one can. The gifts and blessings conferred on man by the Merciful and Bounteous God should, with open hands and without reserve, be extended to the deserving. A good heart has precedence to riches. A poor man who offers a piece of bread to a starving fellow creature is entitled to greater appreciation and deserves more honour and reverence than a millionaire contributing a few hundreds to a charitable cause. A poor charitable individual deserves and commands higher esteem and respect than a man of millions who may part with all his shining white silver and bright yellow gold in charity. The shower of thanks emanating from his countrymen and the world-wide reputation achieved by him are in themselves consideration for his deep and liberal purse. But, ah! the suffering but charitable man's generosity, humble as it is, is absolutely eclipsed by the large donations and tremendous contributions of the rich. The world, perhaps, never knows it. He himself probably forgets the fine act, and the starving and miserable creature whom

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the good is rendered to also, perhaps, does not realize its significance.

The generosity of our Prophet cannot, however, be compared with the modern contributions of Europeans and Americans rolling in unbounded wealth. The former's resources at once streamed forth as they came in hand. The latter's are stored, stocked, multiplied and remultiplied, gradually swelling into gigantic proportions till they find a loophole in their reservoir for a leakage only. But the philanthropic nature of the Prophet, based on real and undeniable sincerity, was so luxuriant in his everyday life that it was almost overlooked by its instantaneous, frequent and never-failing ebullition. Muhammad's (Peace be on him!) generosity has no parallel to be cited. It may be gauged by the tradition of Jabir bin Abdullah (Peace be on him!) that no needy ever received a negative reply from the Prophet (Sahihain-Mishkaat, page 442).

The Prophet never stored things for the future (Mishkaat, page 443).

The truth of this is perfectly borne out by the lucid and strong illustration that once a certain man begged of the Prophet for some goats. He had so many that the plain intervening two hillocks was filled in by them. In response to the request the Prophet gave all the goats at once to the man. This man went to the members of his community and addressed them thus: "O my nation, embrace Islam, for I swear by God that Muhammad (Peace be on him!) gives so much in charity that he does not apprehend his impending starvation" (Mishkaat, page 443).

Jabir bin Mutim relates: "When we were returning from the battle of Hunain with the Prophet, we reached a spot where some Bedouins begged of the Prophet, inasmuch as they burst upon him and pushed him back to a *Babul* (acacia) tree. In their attempt, the Prophet's sheet was entangled

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in the thorns of the tree. He stopped there and addressed them thus : 'Oh, please do give me my sheet. If I had camels numbering as much as the trees of this jungle, I would have distributed them all among you, and you never could accuse me as a miser or a liar or a coward (who hesitates in offering something in charity, or keeps back his promise, or lays by something at the shuddering fear of starvation)' " (Bokhari, page 396).

Abu Sa-eed al-Khudri (Peace be on him !) says : "Once some of the Ansaars asked the Prophet something which he gave them. They begged for more and more, till the Prophet gave them all that he had. Then the Prophet said, 'Whatever wealth or property I receive, I never store it against your wants. And undoubtedly, whosoever prays God to save him from the indignity of begging, God does save him. And whoever wants to get rid of anxieties for wants, God grants him his desire. And one who resorts to patience, God makes him patient. And no one ever received a better gift of God than patience' " (Bokhari, page 198).

In the same way, Hakeem bin Hizam says : "I begged of the Prophet for something which he granted to me. I implored for more and he gave it to me. Then he addressed me thus : 'O Hakeem, certainly, this fortune is sanctimonious and approved of. Whoever takes it without greed, God blesses it. But no blessing approaches it when it is demanded and received out of avarice. Its case exactly corresponds with one who eats and eats but is never satisfied. And certainly, the man who giveth is better than the one who taketh.' 'Never, never, I swear by God, I shall beg of any one for anything whatsoever till my last breath but from you, O Messenger of God,' I replied. It is accordingly stated that after the death of the Prophet, Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar, during their Caliphate, desired to give something to

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the Hakeem, but he never accepted the gift and maintained the dignity of his promise to the full" (Bokhari, page 884).

Many facts like this can be collected together, for the Prophet's generosity knew no bounds and was not confined to any particular time or season. It was a brilliant illustration of the blessings of the Eternal God. It was a running generosity. It never stopped and nothing could check its crystal flow. It is accordingly related by Abu Huraira that the Prophet exclaimed on many occasions that if he had gold in weight and size like the Ahd mountain he would be only pleased to distribute that all before the expiration of three days, and he would reserve only so much for himself as would contribute to the liquidation of his debts (Bokhari, page 321).

His desire, however, never remained unrealized. God gave him many chances which he utilized to the full. On some occasions he received large sums of money, but whenever he got up from his seat he was empty-handed. Accordingly, once the governor of Bahrain submitted to him one *lac* and ten thousand *dirhams*. By the approach of the evening he distributed them all. Once he received ninety thousand *dirhams*. He kept them all on a mat and distributed them to anybody who called on him and expressed his want. Eventually the whole amount was exhausted (Shafa, page 50).

His highmindedness and his philanthropic nature can best be appreciated by the fact that there were occasions when some one came and begged of him when he was penniless. He never felt the slightest reluctance to run into debt and thus remove the want of the indigent. Usually he had to borrow money on such occasions. It is related that a certain man went to him and begged of him for something. He had not a single *pie* with him then. He told the poor man that he (the Prophet)

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had nothing with him, that he would go and purchase things on his (the Prophet's) responsibility, that he (the Prophet) would pay the amount whenever he (the Prophet) would receive some money. Thereupon the great Umar told the Prophet that Allah put him under no obligation at all for things which were beyond his power. Umar the Great wanted to explain to the Prophet that it was no good to run into debt for others, to bear the responsibility of others uselessly, and to be humbled by creditors for the sake of others, that the Prophet did himself give alms whenever he was possessed of something, that under the circumstances, when he was penniless, it was absolutely useless to run into debt. The Prophet kept silent. He was rather grieved at the remark. His compassionate nature would not allow anyone to be grieved and feel the effects of chill penury. In the meanwhile one of the Ansaars exclaimed: "O Prophet, do give by all means to the poor man. Don't fear that God would keep you penniless." The Prophet smiled at these words, pregnant with thorough reliance on God and resignation to His will. His very face blushed with pleasure at the idea (Shafa, page 50).

It must be borne in mind that the Prophet's generosity was never ill-adapted. The fact was that all the Muhammadans who had accompanied him in his flight from Mecca had left their property behind. It was only with the greatest difficulty that they could effect their exodus. Now to the Ansaars (Muslim friends residing in Medina) they were not very wealthy men. Medina, at that time, was inhabited by Jews also. This community, as a matter of fact, given to high usury, dominated others in business and trade. Moreover, the Arab blood and their deep sense of self-respect would never allow them to resort to beggary without cause. Apart from it, the Muslims were inspired

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by a sense of high character and they looked upon begging as most dishonourable, especially when they had something to live upon. At the same time, all the Muslims were closely conversant with one another's circumstances, and whoever attended the Prophet's association to beg for help, he was decidedly a poor man and in real and earnest need of the required help. The Prophet, under the circumstances, could not help extending his generous help to them. Accordingly, he exclaimed once: "Certainly, I am a cashier who distributes, and Allah is the Provider" (Bokhari).

The Prophet never expected gratitude or return for the good done by him. He, however, looked upon begging as a discreditable thing. Moreover, a respectable man has to feel a great shame when begging, and his attitude on such occasions is extremely humble. Considering these facts, the Prophet endeavoured to weaken the burden of obligation he rendered to others by some means or other. He would often purchase something from a certain man in need and then return the selfsame thing to him as a present. It was merely the beauty of his generous nature. Otherwise, the act in itself does not weaken the weight of the obligation rendered. It was simply a civilized form of the Prophet's deep courtesy and a compassionate display of his noble heart. It was a fine and kind way of honouring the feelings of others, saving them from evident humiliation, and showed the exalted and softening trait of the Prophet's character.

Jabir bin Abdullah narrates: "I accompanied the Prophet in a battle. My camel was tired and it remained behind. In the meanwhile the Prophet came. He asked me how I was faring. I submitted to him that my camel was tired. He beat the animal once with a strap of leather. It began to walk rather more quickly. Then both of us

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rode on conversing together. He asked me if I was willing to dispose of my camel. I replied in the affirmative. He purchased the camel from me. He reached his destination earlier than I, and I reached the place when the sun had become strong. I tied the camel at the door of the mosque. He saw me and questioned me if I had reached just then. I submitted in the affirmative. 'Leave the camel there, and get into the mosque to say two *Rakaats* of prayer,' instructed the Prophet. When I had done with my prayers, the Prophet ordered Hazrat Bilal (Peace be on him!) to pay the price of the camel. I took the cash and walked out. He called me back. I feared lest my camel was to be returned. In fact I disliked it very much. When I came in again the Prophet told me that I had already received the price of the camel, that I should keep it with me and take the camel away at the same time" (Bokhari, page 282).

Hazrat Umar had an analogous experience. The son of Umar narrates: "We were accompanying the Prophet in a journey. I was riding on a young camel of Hazrat Umar. I could not manage the animal, and it ran ahead of all other animals. Hazrat Umar scolded me for that, and ordered me frequently to remain behind. But the animal would by no means tolerate it. It was restless. The Prophet's attention was attracted. He asked Hazrat Umar, 'Umar, are you willing to sell it.' 'It is yours, O Prophet of God,' responded Hazrat Umar. 'No,' said the Prophet, 'sell it to me.' Hazrat Umar sold the camel to the Prophet. The Prophet gave it to me then and there, and said to me, 'O Abdullah, this camel is yours, now do as you like'" (Bokhari).

Praise be to Allah! What a noble and perfect example of liberality is this! The beauty of this philanthropic deed makes the value of the thing gifted a hundred times greater. This is real generosity.

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Another most elaborate instance of the Prophet's generosity lies in the tradition of Hazrat Ayesha (Peace be on her!). She says: "When the Prophet was suffering from death-illness, he received some *dinars*. He at once distributed them all. Only six remained, which he gave to some of the Mothers of Muslims (i.e. some of the Prophet's wives. They were and are called the Mothers of Muslims). But he could not sleep. At last he asked those around him what he had done with those six *dinars*. He was informed that he had given them to such and such of his sacred wives. He at once sent for the *dinars* and distributed them at once. Thereafter he slept with ease" (Tabaqaate-ibn-e-Saad, Juzve Sanee, Qism-e Sanee).

These illustrations should not, however, lead one to arrive at the conclusion that the Muslims in general are thereby ordered to do exactly the same. For it is obvious that no person in the world can resort to so much reliance on God and exercise so much self-sacrifice. It was a unique characteristic of the Prophet. The Qur-án-e-Shareef therefore makes its pronouncement on the subject thus: "And do neither tie your hand absolutely to your neck nor stretch it altogether as to sit despondent so that all (others) might call you evil and scold you" (Bani-Israil, Ruku 3).

X

SELF-SACRIFICE

Self-sacrifice is the reflection of generosity. Generosity consists in the practical assignment of something to some one else. It is not, however, essential to do so in the case of self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice would make itself conspicuous where a man gives precedence to others over himself, and waives his rights, desires and aspirations in favour of others, even without making any material allotment. For instance, when a candidate withdraws his

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application for a post in favour of some one else whom he considers more capable and better entitled than himself, he exercises self-sacrifice. Now it is plain that this act does not come within the category of generosity. Self-sacrifice has a superior claim to generosity in a way. Generosity may consist in something that does not affect the donor, but in the case of self-sacrifice it is indispensable to suppress one's personal rights and legitimate desires to the good and prosperity of others.

The fundamental principle of the Prophet's life was self-sacrifice. His greatest mission in life was prophetic. It was therefore incumbent on him to give up all worldly comforts and materials of luxury, to discard all the advantages of this mortal cosmos and external gains, and to sacrifice all these for his nation and country and for the everlasting betterment and eternal evolution of mankind. We have a bright and most convincing instance in the fact that he flatly refused the riches and pomp offered to him by the Quraish of Mecca in consideration of his keeping aloof from precepts and sermons. He did not feel the slightest reluctance to suffer all the atrocious hardships and ignominious treatment of his enemies merely for the well-being and amelioration of his fellow-beings in the world. Is there any nobler illustration of self-sacrifice than this ?

Apart from the instance of self-sacrifice referred to above, there are many facts which serve our purpose. It is related by Suhail that a woman brought a knitted sheet with beautiful borders to the Prophet and said, "I have knitted it with my own hands and have brought it myself in order to clothe you with it." He was in fact in need of a sheet at the time. At the same time, it was usual with him not to reject the humblest present. He accepted the sheet accordingly. Having wrapped it round him as a substitute for trousers in private,

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he came out. A certain man liked it immensely, and asked the Prophet to give it away to him. He at once made over the sheet to the man. Other men scolded the man and said to him: "Thou hast done a great wrong. The Prophet was in great need of a sheet, and so he wore it. Thou tookest it from him notwithstanding the fact that it was known to thee that he does not refuse a request." The man answered, "God is my witness that I have not taken it for my use. My sole object in asking for it was that I should keep it for my coffin." Accordingly it transpired as the man wished (Bokhari, page 170).

Abu Huraira relates: "A certain man came to the Prophet and said, 'O Prophet of God, I am hungry.' The Prophet sent word to his *Ahle-Bait* (relations) if there was something eatable. No one had anything to eat. Thereupon the Prophet asked if there was anybody in the assembly who could keep the man as a guest for the night and thus entitle himself to the favour of God. Hearing this, one of the Ansaars got up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I am willing to do so.' Consequently he took the man with him to his house, and addressed his wife thus: 'The Prophet has sent a guest, do all that you can, and bring what is available.' 'God knows that there is nothing with me except what would suffice for the children to take at night,' answered the wife. 'Never mind, if the children cry for food, lull them to sleep. Come along. Extinguish the lamp, and let us sleep to-night without food,' answered the man. So they did. When the host went to see the Prophet the next morning, the latter communicated to him the good tidings of the pleasure of Allah, for the following revelation was made on the host's liberality: 'And they prefer those who make a flight, to their desire, although they may suffer from it' " (Hashra). (Bokhari, page 725).

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One is baffled at the thought that a few days' association with the Prophet had made the inhabitants of the desert so dutiful and self-sacrificing. A splendidly noble and dignified change was wrought in their hard nature. Just fancy a poor man with nothing to eat but what was preserved for the evening meals of his children, coming forward with the greatest pleasure to entertain a guest and keep himself, his dear wife and beloved children deprived of food! He belonged to a nation notorious for selfishness and black heart. But the wonderful revolution in his nature was brought about by the Founder of Islam. He would suffer and starve, but would never entertain the idea of breaking his guest's heart. The idea was most repugnant to his feelings. Can the history of the world point out a similar illustration? There may be instances of a lower order than this, and no one can deny their worth, but the following event connected with the battle of Yarmuk is noticeable and deserves every possible appreciation.

Hufaiza says that in the battle of Yarmuk his paternal uncle's son fell wounded. He went out in his search to provide him with drinking water. He searched and searched, and at last found him in the agony of death. He beckoned to him asking if he would take it. He replied in the affirmative. He was just going to help him to drink it when a voice, slow but painful, broke on his ears from somewhere close by. Hufaiza's brother would not take it unless the gentleman suffering from the excruciating pain took it first. He went there and found Hisham bin Al-aas lying wounded. He was about to give the water to him when in the meanwhile he heard sighs from a different direction. Hisham asked him to attend to the man first. He went there accordingly and found the third martyr dead. On his return he found that Hisham had expired. When he went to his cousin, he found him already

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having breathed his last (Kilid-ul-Qur-ân, page 64, with reference to Himat-ul-Islam).

Other examples of other nations may be cited by the opponents of Islam, but I would emphatically ask them to compare the details of these facts in their sombre, radiant, ethical majesty. It may be an individual case elsewhere. Here there is the blessed trinity at one and the same time out of a small band of pioneers raising their sword in self-defence for the cause of truth. The importance of the highly critical time should not be at the same time overlooked. It is really strange that Islamic events of this nature are kept back by Christian writers from the anxious world in search of truth. Let it be remembered that such facts were *not rare* in the adherents of Islam. Such high qualities had been nobly engrafted in the nature of Arabs after their embracing Islam. It is a plain truth that these three were not the only men who fell in the battle referred to above: that others must have also groaned. But from the general high qualities, absorbed and assimilated by the followers of the new faith and which were quite extinct before they were proselytized, it may be inferred that numberless examples should have been furnished to posterity if all the ennobling events were placed on record. The fact is that the Founder of Islam had inspired them with a unique and novel spirit of self-sacrifice within his followers by his own living and practical example, so much so, that every one of them left no stone unturned to emulate one another in order to walk in his footsteps. None of them was by any means inferior to, for instance, Sir Philip Sydney or other non-Muslims whose tales of self-sacrifice and high qualities are sung in glowing tributes and bright phraseology and which form the best piece of Christian literature. Why were such facts in the Muslim circle of those days not put on record?

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It was not done for the simple reason that they were so frequent and common that little importance was given to them, and they were held to be a part and parcel of a Muslim's duties.

Hazrat Umar says that a certain companion of the Prophet received fried head (of goat probably) from somewhere. He thought that a friend of his was very poor and so better entitled to the present. It was accordingly sent to him. He also thought that a certain friend of his stood in need of help. It was sent to him. The third man thought the same and repeated the handing over of the present to a friend of his (Al-Huquq wal-Faraiz).

These facts may look strange, but the consideration of the real fountain-head of this training removes the wonder. We have to infer from this that those who follow the doings of the Prophet can do so. And those who do not follow his example practically do not realize the beauty of high qualities. The Prophet was very particular in quite minor things, and he advised others to be scrupulous about them. His stretch of courtesy in observing self-sacrifice should be taken to heart. Once he was going in a jungle. There was another gentleman with him. The Prophet dug a place and took out two tooth-brushes (of some root or wood). One was straight and the other was curved. He took the curved one for himself and gave the other to his companion, who offered him the straight one, but he did not take it, and said, "Whoever keeps association with some one, for however short time it may be, he shall be held accountable on the day of judgment whether he performed his duty in association" (Al-huquq-wal-Faraiz).

This is self-sacrifice, and the lessons to be gained from these facts deserve our utmost attention and regard. As Muslims it is our duty to follow the Holy Prophet.

THE HOPE OF HAPPINESS

THE HOPE OF HAPPINESS

THE whole world is eagerly discussing ways and means of procuring a lasting peace and happiness for the human race, and it is rendered all the more ludicrous by the fact that there seems to be utter inability to grasp one supreme and all-prevailing truth—the utter failure of the creed which is termed “Christianity.” The nations of Europe are inventing a “League of Nations” which, it is hoped, will bind those who become members into some sort of unity. Let us be generous and wish it some span of life. What a pity it all is! It was the duty of the clergy to teach mankind to be brotherly and neighbourly, to bind the different nations together. What happened is a matter of history, and to-day we in the West are fully conscious of the lamentable failure of the Churches to contribute anything towards even religious unity among Christians themselves. It is therefore necessary to provide some sort of international legislation and a Court of Appeal for the countries of the League. Christendom is divided into innumerable sects, and it is here that we have a clear guidance in the Holy Qur-án :—

“As to those who split up their religion and become sects, have thou nothing to do with them : their affair is with God only. Hereafter shall He tell them what they have done.”

Sectarianism leads to narrowness of vision and promotes hatred and discord. Here is one reason for the failure of Christianity to unite even one continent. The spectacle of the late war must surely open the eyes of those who began to expect that if all nations became Christian wars would cease. Can it be possible that cultured, educated and enlightened people can sink back again into such a state of mentality as existed prior to 1914 ? Certainly not ! The real difficulty to-day is to combat that chronic disease which is so prevalent—that of “self-

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delusion." Some people persuade themselves that they can remodel the world once they make it Christian, but again comes to the mind the query, "What is Christianity?" If we go for advice to the clergy of any sect or persuasion they would tell us that their own particular beliefs were Christianity, and on going to another he would flatly contradict all this. Should the Catholics convert a people, then the Protestants will send missionaries to re-convert them, and each petty little division of Christendom will have its finger in the pie. This great, smug self-complacency needs to be severely shaken, this disease of self-delusion must be cured; and how is it to be done? It is necessary to arouse in the mind the thought that all is not well, that it is necessary to open discussion. Too long in the West has the idea prevailed that religion meant the particular brand of Christianity held by the denomination of any particular Church.

In the West to-day we find new creeds or half-faiths springing up like mushrooms. We have various kinds of "Higher Thought" and "New Thought" being invented and tried by people who have rejected Christianity and yet seem to be groping in the dark for spiritual light. Why is it that these well-meaning people do not see "an inch before their noses," but base all their "new" (?) ideas upon old and spurious doctrines? It seems incredible that people to-day, despite many material advances, are yet as babies in the field of spiritual science. There is a brake upon the wheel all the time, and yet they fail to see it, and that brake is the fact that they commence their investigations with the idea that "Christianity" and "Religion" are synonymous. A little thought or investigation would quickly dispel this fallacy, but the curious mentality of the Western world seems incapable of such an effort unless stimulated by a vigorous propaganda which must be upon an instructive basis. A religion is sorely needed in the

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West to-day, for to speak the honest truth, Christianity is dying, and people to-day are purely nominal believers in some cases, open critics in others. Let us not forget that Christianity has been all-powerful, supported by vast organizations of State and Church, and yet has surely lost all hold on the masses, who are uneasy, vaguely doubtful of what would happen if they held no faith, yet totally unable to accept the dogmas held before their eyes by the priests of Christendom. Religion is one of the most powerful factors in the development of the human race, and what is going to be the result of the loss of belief is to-day a great source of anxiety to many sincere thinkers. Oh! the pity of it all, when the great eternal Message is ringing through the world as clearly to-day as it did over thirteen hundred years ago from the burning sands of Arabia. Will these people not exercise a little of that great talent Reason with which God has blessed them? Will they not read, investigate, learn and understand the Revelation which was sent, not to the Jews or to any other particular race, but to the whole world? Forget for a while the training which has been received year in and year out, always through orthodox spectacles, and try to observe clearly with a mind unfettered by the chains of dogma. Those of us who have passed through this stage of investigation, and have accepted Islam, realize all that it means to be at peace with God, to be able to open wide the heart to all mankind, to enter upon a new vista, in fact a new birth and perfect peace. Islam is the solution of the world's difficulties, and may all mankind unite in worshipping the One God, and the brotherhood which will be established upon earth will last for ever.

MUHAMMAD HILL.

THE MUSLIM LIFE

"For God we are, and to God we go."—HOLY QUR-ÁN.

ON one of those commons which are the glory and the beauty of our Surrey County, with the health-giving pines overhead, the purple heather beneath our feet, the roots of old trees spreading everywhere like the teachings of Islam, and the dark green trees in the background completing a picture of natural loveliness, there stands a wooden enclosure, and as you pass within it and further on under a domed entrance, you come upon an inner circle, wherein lie the mortal remains of a number of Muslims who lost their lives as the result of wounds or disease contracted during the Great War. There is nothing very remarkable about these grave-stones: they are, like other Islamic architecture, severely plain and simple. But what strikes the spectator is that on each and all of them is engraved an inscription, first in Arabic and then in English, which precedes the name and description of the deceased: it is a text from Holy Qur-án which seems to me to sum up the whole philosophy of human life: "For God we are, and to God we go." It is the text which every Muslim calls to mind and lips as often as he hears of the death of anyone known to him, and, rightly interpreted, the text conveys deep consolation and comfort to the bereaved.

Yet it is often at such times of bereavement, when one is so stunned and prostrated by an acute sense of loss, followed soon afterwards by a dull, aching, void feeling, that the uppermost thought is that of restlessness, irritation, and repining, instead of entire resignation to Allah's will, which shows only too plainly the hopeless limitations of our poor human minds. Therefore I wish now, while we are gathered here quietly together, with our eyes and ears closed to all but communion with the Unseen, to turn your thoughts to this text, so that when the

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inevitable time of loss and bereavement comes to each of us in turn, we may recall it with a sense of comfort and familiarity as the welcome greeting of an old and tried friend: "For God we are, and to God we go."

When first we behold the constant miracle of human life, and view the delightful attraction and appealing helplessness of babyhood, we wonder what will be the outcome of the little life just born: what is the design and purpose of its creation. Behold in this verse the answer to the question! And as day by day the human life expands, and the mind is faced by fresh problems of existence, moral and material cruxes that need deep and thoughtful consideration for their right solution, this text is the guiding principle of our actions. We belong to Allah, we are in the world for His honour and glory, not our own. We are only the puny instruments of His holy will, and as regards the limited powers of free choice which we possess, we must use them in the full consciousness of our entire dependence on Him, recollecting what our ultimate end will be—return to Allah, Whose we are.

We, as Muslims, have even more responsibility than the followers of other religions, in order to let our light shine before men, as the prophet Jesus (on whom be peace!) instructed us, since to us has been vouchsafed the latest revelation of Allah, through His prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessing of God be on him!); a revelation denied to those who pin their faith to the older and less reliable scriptures, corrupted and muddled up as they have become by the passage of time and the unwarrantable interference of interested parties.

Our personal life is the only true test of our religion. Those who associate with us at home, at work, and at recreation mark our behaviour day by day, more than we ourselves have any idea of, and well for us if their judgment of us is summed up in

the words : " This man [or, this woman] walked with God." The Muslim's religion differs from that of others, inasmuch as it forms a part of our daily life, instead of being practised only once a week as in the case of so many Christians, and by it are regulated many details of our home and family and business, and by these things the world will judge us. What is needed is that we should dwell always in the perpetual Presence of the Unseen Allah, and hold close and intimate communion with Him as with a familiar friend, on whom we can rely for guidance at every moment of life, teaching us to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. Let us try to elevate our domestic and business relations in accordance with this principle, recollecting that when at last " to God we go," we shall be " only remembered by what we have done."

A man of the world, whose aim is to prosper in business and to acquire a competence, consider your whole existence, looking backwards and forwards, from a Muslim standpoint. Is material gain to be the be-all and end-all of your life ? To be sure, you do right to aim at success, so far as it is compatible with strict justice and generosity to others, to your employees and fellow-workers, but not otherwise. Our Muslim teaching of total abstinence from alcohol and from unwholesome meats will help you. Take an interest in developing the best brains of Muslims. Endow your sons and daughters with as good an education as your means will permit, so that they in turn will become a credit to Islam. Have a care for the sick and suffering in hospitals and institutions, as the generosity of Muslims in India is proverbial. Let others see that Muslims are as worthy and competent citizens as any can be. Our fundamental doctrine of human brotherhood will give you the cue to your relations with others. But the man who constantly abides in the Presence of Allah, the Holiest in the Heights, will invariably find that

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his feet are guided into the way of peace, and he will know just what to think, and to say, and to do as occasion arises.

O lady of earth, endowed with such plenitude of natural charms and virtue, do you think too much of life as a ceaseless round of pleasure and amusement, seeking to enhance your appearance by artificial means, and spending on dress what might be used for worthier purposes, or do you rather aim at following in the footsteps of Amina, mother of our Prophet (on whom be peace!), of Ayesha, his devoted and saintly wife (peace on her likewise!), and of all other godly women, who carried out the plain and simple precepts of our holy religion?

Are there any mothers amongst us to-day? Let them thank God for the sublime honour vouchsafed to them, and make the example of Muslim mothers a pattern for others, remembering the saying of the Holy Qur-án: "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."

Islam needs manly men and womanly women, not womanly men and manly women. Let each sex be true to itself, simple and natural in everything, and showing real helpfulness and comradeship.

The war has shattered many former ideals and institutions. Now let us, as Muslims, help to evolve new and better ones, founded on the brotherhood of men. We should try to secure greater intercourse between different nations, now that restrictions on travel are removed. We ought to take the part of the minority rather than the majority, of the weaker rather than the stronger, no matter whether or not we are on the popular side, so long as our consciences and motives are clear. Mankind everywhere is groping in the dark for God.

Far and wide, though all unknowing,
Yearns for Thee each mortal breast.

Let it be Islam's task to enlighten them as to the Oneness, the Omnipotence, the Omniscience of Allah. As one great Mother, she beckons to the

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different nations to take refuge under her wing, to follow in her steps, and to live the life of greater plainness and simplicity which is so imperatively necessary if the financial and moral equilibrium of governments is to be preserved amidst the maelstrom of post-war blunders and mismanagement.

Get hold of this essential fact, dear brethren and sisters in Allah, that Islam is not a sect: it is a universal religion into which were born every man and woman and child of all nations; and the essential, fundamental doctrine is so very easy to understand: that Allah, Lord of all life and death, Whose we are, and to Whom we go, is One; that all men everywhere are brothers in Islam; and that honour is due to all the prophets of Allah, especially to the last and greatest of the prophets, Muhammad (on whom be peace!). If you can realize this, you will appreciate, as you have never done before, the joy of living in this life so full of human interests, and meanwhile you will be able to develop more and more the inward life, until it expands into the perfect day of Paradise.

Meanwhile we have to fight against the forces of evil in this world, and they are many. We need strength and support from Allah, and He will give it to us if we humbly ask for it, as He gave it to other Muslims who have fought the good fight and gained their reward. Let us live each moment in expectation of the call: "O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased with Him, well-pleasing Him." Even in this life the Muslim who lives in perfect sincerity, truth and righteousness, may enter Paradise on earth, and achieve perfect unity with Allah: for Islam above and Islam beneath, Islam at warfare and Islam at rest, in Allah the Almighty, the All-Merciful, the Beneficent, the Compassionate, is one for evermore: "for God we are, and to God we go."

F. A. H. WILLIAMS.

ISLAM AND THE UNITY OF MANKIND

ISLAM AND THE UNITY OF MANKIND

IN the world to-day we find a general sense of unrest and dissatisfaction with ideas which for long have held the field unchallenged, and this applies with full force to the domain of theology. Religion is being, more than ever, tested to the full for its value as a guide to humanity. Ages ago, in the infancy of human development *Symbolism* played a great part, and the consequent rise of a priestly caste, who claimed alone to interpret the mysteries, shut out the greater mass of the people from inquiry and progressive investigation. So closely did the priests of ancient Egypt guard their cult that there existed practically two religions—one of the priests who held knowledge of the inner hidden mysteries, and the other as taught by the priests to the public at large. Ancient Rome and the Grecian Age contributed to the world of religion a vast amount of what to-day is termed — not “theology,” but “mythology,” but it is as well to bear in mind that at the period of these cults it was *theology*. Christianity came into being in the midst of these “gods” and “goddesses,” who reigned supreme in the minds of the people, and as it was impossible for the Roman mind to conceive the purity of the revelation brought by Jesus of the “One God,” it is hardly surprising that they paid more attention to the man himself than the Message he brought, hence his deification came as a matter of course. When the new Christian cult became established in the Roman Empire the priesthood naturally had to look to their laurels, and so they had to transform the simplicity of the teachings of Jesus into something which would enable them to retain their hold over the minds of the masses. The Pauline philosophy lent itself particularly to this object. Let us remember that Paul himself had never seen Jesus, but received his

instruction in the tenets of his doctrine secondhand from the disciples, who themselves were ignorant, credulous peasants. The mind of Paul, saturated with Hellenistic philosophy and the pagan cults, quickly realized the force of the reformed Judaism which Jesus taught, and it gave him a grand opportunity to attack the false notions fostered by the priesthood. Paul had a difficult task in that his presentation of the teaching of Jesus in its very simplicity would fail to interest the learned, who were accustomed to creeds wrapped about in philosophic mysticism, so he used language which, though possibly unintelligible to the disciples of Jesus, would be readily conceived by the educated people. It would seem as though at last the disciples realized the variations as taught by Paul, for he parted company with the community at Jerusalem and did missionary work alone. Of course we do not to-day accept without some reserve the so-called Pauline Epistles. Criticism is healthy, and has contributed much to a clearer vision and a deeper insight into those conflicting elements from which modern Christian theology came into being. To-day Dean Rashdall and Dean Inge in the Press are voicing sentiments which are being received by the West with mixed feelings, but the essential point to be considered is that humanity at large would respect the clergy more if they knew exactly what is the real belief of the priesthood to-day. It is a great pity that all those who long for truth seem to approach the subject of theology with orthodox coloured spectacles. They commence by thinking that *Religion* and *Christianity* are synonymous. I often prefer to use the term "*Christianism*" when dealing with the Trinitarian theology, as the Unitarians claim (and for my part I think them fully justified) that they teach "*Christianity*." So here we have at least two real differences of vital importance. How can there be any unity without criticism

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of the fundamentals of the Christian system of Religion? It is obvious that *both* do not present the teachings of Jesus in their *true* sense. But, after all, is Christianity or "Christianism" ever destined to be the World-creed? It is hardly likely when to-day it has lost its hold over the masses, but might have been possible in the Middle Ages, when the Church was all-powerful. It is like a house which is gradually giving way owing to the weakness of its foundations; you may prop it up for a time, and so give it a further lease of life, but eventually it will collapse, and to-day we are conscious of this bolstering policy which is being adopted by the priesthood of Christendom. All things permitted to exist by the Creator have some purpose to serve, and when this is accomplished it is altered or swept away by that which is more beneficial for the human race. Allah is the All-Knowing, and in His hands we leave the future of Christianity. But does all this help in the perfection of the human consciousness? Did Allah intend a separate class—the priests—to have the monopoly of Divine Revelation, and to hold fast to it, only teaching to the people just as much (or as little) of the truth as they deem expedient? Is metaphysical juggling sufficient food to enable man to know his Creator? Is it not rather a deterrent to spiritual advancement? Allah intends that mankind shall *progress*, not *stagnate*, and so His revelation is for *all men*, not to a special caste. Another field for speculation is the growing desire for enlightenment upon the part of the average man and woman. Man to-day is not sufficed with a few assurances from a priest as in the past, but investigates for himself. Woman to-day is awake and keenly alert to the stigma which was placed upon her by the Christian story of Eve being the *agent* of the Devil, and as she is not asleep in the secular world, so she is critical in the religious sphere. Any attempt to discourage honest and open criticism

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will be fatal to the system which attempts it. We who are enlightened know that Religion is not a peculiar gift to any particular race. We know that God *did not* speak *only* to the Jews, that view of the Deity being narrow and set up by the particular race who regard themselves as the "Chosen People," to the exclusion of the greater part of humanity. God is the Creator, Sustainer, Evolver of the Universe, and the Cherisher of mankind, and is *not* the tribal Deity of the Jews or Christians, or any other race.

Believing in the theory of a "Chosen Few," mankind could not possibly become united. "But a remnant shall be saved" may be a text for the narrow partisan, but is not an actuality. How necessary it is for Christianity to be purged of all extraneous matter, leaving the real truths as enunciated by the Prophet Jesus. The conception of the Deity as preached by Judaism and Islam is a terrible blasphemy—may its originators be forgiven! The conception of the Creator in Islam is ideal. Allah is the Creator Who foreknew all our needs before we existed, and provided everything for the service of humanity before our existence. He it is Who renders all our actions fruitful. He is the Sustainer of us all, the Cherisher of the human race without distinction. How grand this is in contrast to the pitiable picture presented by blind partisans of some other systems. Islam brings the New Message that Allah is the Helper of us all, that He sent Prophets to all peoples, not to the Jews alone, that we are all His children, and to Him shall we return. Islam does not ask for belief in anything which is contrary to reason, on the contrary it is the Religion of Nature. In Islam one's outlook is broadened, so that instead of confining the revelation of the Creator to one petty race, one comes to realize that His benevolence extends to all His creatures. Buddha, Zarathustra, Abraham, Moses, David, Krishna, and Jesus all brought a message from the One Eternal

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Source of Truth. As the time required the presence of a Prophet to reveal the Truth to mankind, Allah sent him. Judging from the uncertainty which reigns even to-day as to the personality and doctrines of Jesus, does it not prove that it was very necessary to send into the world a Revealer of the Divine Will who should chase away the clouds of doubt and superstition, and bring to the earth a complete knowledge of the Truth? Let all those who to-day are struggling to free themselves from the shackles of false dogma and doubt study the teachings of the Holy Qur-án and investigate fearlessly. The Final Revelation from Allah clears away all the mists of theological mysticism, and gives to the world the healing Message of Brotherhood and Peace, which will bring all men together in a Divine Unity, and fully illuminate even the darkest recesses of a soul in the depths.

KHALID SHELDRAKE.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE PROBLEM OF SURPLUS WOMEN.

To the Editor of the ISLAMIC REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—I have nothing to say against a man or woman being a polygamist, but to suggest that a woman should be cruel enough, at this time of day, to bring into the world innocent babes for the purpose of war is *monstrous*.

I refrain from more, in the hope you will insert these few lines from a humanitarian who loves children, under whatever nationality they happen to have been born.

I am, yours truly,

CLARA GILBERT COLE.

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To the Editor of the ISLAMIC REVIEW.

SIR,—I always enjoy your bright and confident magazine, even when I disagree with its expressions. One view expressed therein is, however, so opposed to all that liberal thought stands for in England, that I must utter a word of criticism.

On page 307 you quote a report of an interview with the Imam of the Mosque, wherein he said: "England is to-day in the position of Mahomet after the battle of Ohod, and it can only make good the ravages of war by the adoption of polygamy. . . . By polygamy alone can the English race be replenished; in no other way can England's otherwise certain decay be arrested. Without soldiers you cannot go on; you must inevitably sink."

After that it seems superfluous to drag Jesus Christ, the prince of peace, into the discussion.

Now, as a student, and a friendly and sympathetic student, of Islam, polygamy has to me an historical validity and no corrupt connotation. Although I believe that the development of human society is and will be towards monogamy, I have no quarrel with any society that recognizes and practices polygamy.

That it should, however, be advocated in a country based upon the monogamic system, as if it were an essential feature of Islam, seems the height of unwisdom. And, above all, that it should be urged before an audience of war-plotters, as a means of creating fresh cannon-fodder, is a deplorable act, not likely to cause the enlightened truth-seekers of this country to credit any degree of inspiration in the spokesman of Islam.

Your worthy and sincere Imam, as a pronounced anti-Socialist, will not appreciate the arguments of the enemies of the late war, and of attempts to float new ones. Surely he knows, however, that even Tory newspapers and noted Tory politicians

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have openly expressed their desire for a long and durable peace? Perhaps the unfortunate new children, "born Moslems," will be ready for their consecration of blood, when our present feeling of horror is exhausted and forgotten?

I can only present in outline my arguments against the jumble of adoration, supreme beings, soldiers, and so on, that savours of the fifteenth century rather than of 1921. First, I entirely deny that "only" by the adoption of polygamy can an increase in the male population be effected. It is notorious that better conditions during the early years of the male children now born, would be sufficient to stop the excessive mortality of male children, and restore a balance. Secondly, I deny that any reduction of the population, either male or general, will produce "certain decay." Neither France nor Ireland has exhibited any signs of decay, with a stagnant or even a reduced population. Thirdly, I deny that "without soldiers we cannot go on." On the contrary, our finances prove that unless we stop the soldiering we cannot go on. The "social and economic disabilities" arise from vices of organization and distribution, not from absence of world-war armies.

I am, yours faithfully,

ARTHUR FIELD.

[ISLAMIC REVIEW :—We always welcome criticism, because it is a healthy sign of social life. Islam respects honest difference of opinion, as it is the very fabric of the human society. We are always benefited by the exchange of views, provided they are based upon goodwill and sound reasoning. It is in this spirit, and not in the spirit of any fruitless controversy, or mere verbal niceties, that we should like to remind the writers of the above letters of our words in the same passage, on which they are commenting, to the effect that "Our chief work is the removal of misunderstandings. For instance, it is urged against us that we reject Jesus Christ; that, in fact, Islam is anti-Christ. It is not." Further, the question of polygamy was discussed on the query—"Presuming these misunderstandings removed, how are you going to overcome the prevailing sentiment in this country

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against polygamy ? ” We are sure if Mr. Arthur Field had read the passage in question more carefully, he would not have arrived at the conclusion that we advocate polygamy as “an essential feature of Islam,” which he has been wise enough to call “the height of unwisdom.”

As regards soldiers and war, we will only submit that so far war has proved itself a *necessary evil*; and until we reach that imaginary stage of civilization when there will be no possibility of war, we must have soldiers. That is why France, and as a matter of fact every independent country which is responsible for its defence, is anxious to keep sufficient military strength to ensure and preserve its safety.

Besides, motherhood is the glory and pride of the fair sex; and in the case of a teeming surplus of women, it is a question of great importance as to how they can have this glory and pride. The best system of “organization and distribution” cannot give a woman children and husband. It is a great problem of life, and should be solved in a practical way. The mere force of language and theoretical philosophy would not do.—EDITOR.]

REVIEW

The Arabian Prophet: a Life of Mohammed from Chinese and Arabic Sources is the title of a Chinese-Moslem work by Liu Chai-Lien, translated by Isaac Mason, of Friends' Foreign Mission Association, and Christian Literature Society for China, with Appendices on Chinese Mohammedanism, and Foreword by Rev. Samuel M. Zwemer, F.R.G.S., of Cairo (Luzac & Co., London: 1921. 10s. 6d.). We were led to peruse this work in the hope that one purporting to be an authentic Life of the Holy Prophet would contain at least some of the historical sense required to deal accurately and faithfully with this important subject, and we find, on the contrary, that it is simply a collection of fairy tales and impossible fables, mingled with terminological inaccuracies, which are quite unwarranted by the title-page of the book. To dignify a book which is fit only for the shelves of a juvenile library as a “Life of Mohammed” is creditable neither to the original author nor to the translator. Muslims have no need

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to embellish the Holy Prophet's life after the style of New Testament writers in regard to the Prophet Jesus, and if the promotion of true religion is the real object aimed at, an accurate presentment of historical occurrences verified by contemporary documents is the only safe course for any reliable writer to adopt, yet in this volume we have a series of farcical narratives which can only tend to throw discredit on religion in general and Islam in particular. The whole book from beginning to end is an insult to the intelligence of educated Muslims, and the spirit of "Christian" animosity in which the translator has performed his self-imposed task is revealed on page 264, where the Holy Prophet's character is summed up as "a strange mixture of sincerity and inconsistency; of benevolence and cruelty; of self-restraint and self-indulgence; of faith, doubt, and superstition."

Some of the tales related of the Prophet's infancy are almost too puerile for repetition: the following, on page 39, is surely evidence of an "unbalanced mind":

"In the year that Mohammed was born, all who were born in that year were males. All the old became young again, and white hair was changed to black; such wonders had never been seen before"—nor after—we should add, and "such wonders" leave us and our Faith still unmoved; but what can we think of the writer of such balderdash?

Yet we must inflict one more absurdity on our long-suffering readers. On page 204 we read:

"[A woman named Zeinab] took a lamb and steeped it in poison, then cooked it, and presented it to the Prophet; as he was beginning to partake of it the lamb suddenly spake in human language, saying, 'Apostle of Heaven, do not partake; I have been steeped in poison.'"

The translator appends his note:

"That a lamb should speak at all—like Balaam's

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ass—would be marvellous; but that an animal already dressed and cooked should yet speak is still more marvellous! This extraordinary miracle is accepted and is repeated in other books by Chinese Moslems.”

We would ask in reply, whether the translator was brought up on such books as *Grimm's Fairy Tales*? However much *he* may “accept” and “repeat” this “miracle,” neither we nor any decently educated Chinese Muslims, nor Muslims of any country, are likely to “accept” this terminological inexactitude. Our faith and belief is founded solely and entirely on the Holy Qur-án as revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

There are various wilful perversions on the subject of the Holy Prophet's domestic relations, which it is not worth our while to notice, as they have often previously been refuted, but we have something to say in regard to the astounding statement contained in the note on page 181, referring to the Prophet's marriage with Zeinab :

“The Prophet led Zeinab to believe that he wished to have her for his wife, upon which Zeid divorced her, and Mohammed married her, causing great scandal among his own followers.”

This statement is altogether wrong. Zeid divorced Zeinab in spite of the Prophet. We will quote from Syed Ameer Ali's standard *Life and Teachings of Mohammed* (1873), page 231 :

“Mohammed had married his devoted friend and freedman, Zaid, to a high-born lady of the name of Zaynab. . . . Proud of her birth, and perhaps also of her beauty, her marriage with a freedman rankled in her breast. Mutual aversion at last culminated in disgust. . . . At last [Zaid] came to the decision not to live any longer with her, and with this determination he went to the Prophet and expressed his intention of being divorced. ‘Why,’ demanded Mohammed, ‘hast thou found any fault in her?’

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‘No,’ replied Zaid, ‘but I can no longer live with her.’ The Prophet then peremptorily said, ‘Go and guard thy wife, treat her well and fear God, for God has said “Take care of your wives and fear the Lord.”’ But Zaid was not moved from his purpose, and in spite of the command of the Prophet, he divorced Zaynab. Mohammed was grieved at the conduct of Zaid, more especially as it was he who had arranged the marriage of these two uncongenial spirits. A short time after this Zaynab sent a message to Mohammed, saying Zaid had repudiated her, and that she looked for support to the Prophet. Under these circumstances Mohammed married her.”

So much for this hoary “scandal,” the outcome of a chivalrous action by a very noble, perfect gentleman (may blessing of Allah be on him!).

The statement attributed to Omar on page 262 was an impulsive and spontaneous expression of opinion, which originated in his deep affection for the Holy Prophet, just then departed this life, and was at once corrected by Abu Bekr in sublime and stately language :

“Everything perishes except God alone, and He is eternal.”

On page 198 we have what purports to be the translation of an original letter from the Holy Prophet to the Roman Emperor Heraclius, containing the statement : “Jesus did not die, but in reality he lives in heaven.” This epistle is before us in the original, discovered in the year 1858 by some French travellers in a convent in Upper Egypt, from which it was then removed to Constantinople to the Ottoman custody. It is identically the same as recorded in *the traditions*, and incidentally is a proof of their authenticity. It does *not* contain the passage quoted above. It would be interesting to trace the source of the interpolation.

On page 291, in Appendix III on Chinese Mohammedanism, we are told :

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“Jesus . . . was the son of Maryam, ‘the sister of Aaron,’ so that Maryam is sometimes confused with Miriam, and chronology is hopelessly mixed.”¹

Briefly, the reply is that “sister” in Arabic does not necessarily mean “sister” in English, that is, a sister born of the same parents. The Arabic and Hebrew languages, we need not remind our readers, contain various and different meanings of the same words, to an extent and degree which is quite foreign to poverty-stricken English expression.

We have indicated enough, we think, to prove to our readers that as a history of the Life of Muhammad this book under review is a hopelessly perverted and wilful distortion of facts, and totally unreliable therefore. It is translated by a member of the Society of Friends, a Christian sect who in many ways resemble Islam in their plainness and simplicity of living and their devout waiting upon the will of Allah. The book closes (page 306) with the translation of a Chinese Muslim prayer, with, as the translator says, “its beautiful devotional spirit,” and thus far, but no farther, we find “common ground” on which Islam and Christianity may meet :

“O God, Thy sinful servant comes confessing his sins, and with prayer beseeches Thee. If Thou forgive, I will thank Thee for the forgiveness ; if Thou forgive not, to whom can I turn ? ”

¹ The same question was raised recently in the *Westminster Gazette*, and was fully gone into in a reply published by the Maulvi Mustapha Khan, of the Woking Mosque.

F. A. H. W.

Amateur collector wishes to exchange stamps. Send or write to Jean A. Michaux, 15 Rue du Clos, Paris (xxe).