

Islamic Review

Edited by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, B.A., LL.B.

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THE HOLY QUR-ÂN

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. XI.

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NOTES

The Problem of the Vacant Pew.

Popular aversion to the Church has reached an alarming limit, and the problem What is wrong and where? is engaging the serious attention of leaders of thought in this country. The Archbishop of York, in his sermon at the recent Church Congress at Sheffield, made a candid admission that the Church of England has lost its power in the daily lives of the people. Though "religion attracts," observed the Archbishop, "the Church repels." This set the ball rolling, so to speak, and the question of questions, Why the Church repels, was taken up by a widely read journal, *Pearson's Magazine*, and addressed to a number of well-known people for a reply.

Mr. Wells' Indictment of the Church.

Of these, the finding of Mr. H. G. Wells, the famous publicist, is a scathing indictment of the Church. The Archbishop of York's assertion is true, he thinks, not only of the Church of England, but of the Church as such, whether Nonconformist or Roman Catholic, not only in Britain, but throughout the world. There is, to-day, a keen desire for a peace of mind and a courage such as only deep and pure convictions can supply. But the response of the Church to this growing demand is "confused, unconvincing, and unsatisfying." People anxiously ask: "What must I do to be saved?" Instead, the Church offers them "mysterious chants and motions and incomprehensible sacraments." So

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they feel repelled. "They are equally repelled," goes on Mr. Wells, "when he (the Churchman) embarks upon tedious explanations of the multiplicity and unity of the Deity."

The Terms and Trappings of Christianity.

The striking criticism winds up with the words :

Until Christianity sheds these priestly and theological encumbrances, it will encounter greater and greater difficulty in serving Him it claims as its Founder, the Son of Man. . . I think religion is larger than Christianity and will go on, a growing power in the hearts of men, though they cease altogether to call themselves Christians. I would suggest that Christianity sell all that it hath and follow after Jesus of Nazareth, that it scrap its theologies and organizations and, taking neither scrip nor purse, set out to find the lost Kingdom of God. . . . More and more people find it possible to follow the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth without any of the terms and trappings of Christianity at all—without, indeed, calling themselves Christians.

Five out of Fifty Bishops Speak.

Mr. Wells' impeachment was circulated amongst as many as fifty bishops, and one would have thought that, as soldiers of the Church, they would rush to put on armour—at least out of a sense of duty, if not of conviction—in defence of the Church. They were even invited to do so. But for five, however, they did not stir. One wonders whether the religious indifference of millions matters little to them. Rather, perhaps, they did not deem it Church-like to talk of religion in terms of human sense. The five that have replied say different things. One thinks it is the tremendous advancement of our age that has damped religious zeal. Another is not yet hopeless of things improving. A third emphasizes the need of placing "Christian charity" before Christian terms and trappings. A fourth—and he looks a true Churchman—rules that no one can find God without the help of the Church, and the fifth doubts whether the Church has really failed.

The Kingdom of God.

But to revert to Mr. Wells' diagnosis and prescription. We quite appreciate that terms and trappings constitute no part of religion. They may even tend, more often than not, to crush the very soul of religion under their weight. When asked, What is religion? the Prophet Muhammad did not point to any form or ceremony. "Glorification of the Lord and kindness to His creatures"—in these laconic words he summed up the true essence of religion. True religion

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is a thing wholly and solely of the heart, and so, in Islam, we have neither terms nor trappings, Church nor Churchman, sacrament nor sacerdotalism, the Lord's Supper nor the Holy Communion, no conundrums like Unity-in-Trinity, no intermediaries between man and God, no original sin, no atonement. So far, so good. That the Church must be shorn of these is just plain common sense. But what then? Mr. Wells, when he comes to this point—in fact, the crux of the whole matter—seems to take shelter under fine-worded abstractions. He would have us “follow after Jesus of Nazareth and set out to find the lost Kingdom of God.” Beautiful words! But do they, after all, carry us anywhere? They are expressions, vague, illusory; the only purpose they serve is, perhaps, to conceal Mr. Wells' dimness of religious vision to suggest some way out. Why, do not the very Churchmen whom the publicist so deservedly belabours re-echo, Sunday after Sunday, these same words? Mr. Wells has not improved upon the situation. The sore is there; all he does is to tell us to remove the dirty bandages around it. But that is no cure. Something more than empty phrases is wanted—something definite, something tangible to go upon. Where to find Jesus and his Kingdom of God—and how—is just the question. Unless you know how Jesus lived, or what he was like in his ways and dealings, you may as well follow a will-o'-the-wisp. After all, what you have of Jesus' life in the Gospels is at best too scanty to suffice as an example and an inspiration in our intricate daily life—it is unreliable withal. Whom to follow then? The Jesus of your own dream? And so have the Churchmen been following their own dream-Jesus, all through the ages. You must also clearly chalk out what you mean by the Kingdom of God. It must not be your own dreamland. After all, the Crusader had the same ideal before him, and so also the pious Inquisitionist—the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Where to Find It.

To us, the issue is plain enough. The Kingdom of God could be no other than the Will of God. God must be the pivot of all true religious systems, and the coming of His Kingdom must be the doing of His Will. Where to look for His Will? In the pages of the Old and New Testaments, which have changed so many forms? In their day they formed each a true expression of His Will, but that day is, unfortunately, gone long since. They have lost, as

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admitted on all hands, their pristine purity, and hence this mess of the whole thing. In having resort to them for "all truth" would mean clinging to your own will, not seeking His Will. If you mean to embark in right earnest on a quest after His Will, let not your own will stand in your way. Let the search be strictly impartial and let not inherited prejudices obscure the outlook. We wish the Christian world could give such unbiased thought to the claims of Islam. There are certain facts which no true seeker after Truth can afford to set aside light-heartedly. Islam alone, of all the world-religions, is an expression of His Will, to-day as on the day of its inception. "The Qur-án," observes a *Christian* writer, "is as surely the word of Mohammed as the Mohammedans believe it to be the word of God"—and this means a lot as to the purity of its text. Here is His Will, only if there be genuine desire to find it. Let it have a trial—a fair trial, free from all prepossessions—and take it from us that herein you will find that Kingdom of God which Jesus died to establish on earth. So we repeat what *Pearson's Magazine* says :

JESUS DIED—DO YOU CARE ?

Dean Inge Speaks Out the Plain Truth.

The name of Dean Inge and his momentous pronouncement in 1917 that Jesus appeared as a Prophet and never meant to found a Church of his own, are not unknown to our readers. A prominent figure in the Modern Churchmen Movement, the Dean continues to exert an immense force on the religious thought of this country. Addressing the Oxford Branch of the Churchmen's Union, he made some pertinent observations on the necessity for free, unfettered investigation of religious truths. *The Christian Life* reports him to have said :

Many Churchmen would say the place of the liberal movement was outside the door. Yet just think what would be the result if all expression of free thought had been stifled within the Church of England. The Church would now be committed to believe that the sun went round the earth ; that Heaven was a place which we might reach in an aeroplane when we knew the way ; that Hell was a place under our feet, and that, as the mediæval theologian suggested, volcanic eruptions were caused by over-population in the infernal regions—things which no educated people could or did believe. If these things were so, there would be no room in the Church of England to-day except for fools and liars. Modern Churchmen believed that the Church was called upon to face difficulties and solve them by unfettered inquiry. They did not believe authority or tradition had settled

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everything, or that we had only to accept formulæ drawn up in the early centuries, but that we must take into account recent developments in philosophy, history, and criticism, and, above all, natural science.

It requires nothing beyond the plainest common sense to see that this exactly ought to be the spirit of all honest quest after truth. But how many, we may ask, are there in the fold of the Church, nay, even among the keepers of the fold themselves, who are prepared to take that view? As the Dean aptly puts it, "outside the door"—that is the general verdict. Surely, little can be expected of a system that has tended to debase the reason of man and enthrall his conscience to such an extent. It may be a surprise to many that what the Dean has discovered in this age of enlightenment was, in essence, proclaimed in the Qur-án thirteen centuries ago, when the globe as a whole was enveloped thick in ignorance and superstition. This is how eloquently the Book puts the Dean's argument in a nutshell:

And when it is said to them, Follow what the Lord has revealed, they say: Nay! we follow what we found our fathers upon. What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way. (Qur-án, ii. 172.)

And when it is said to them, Come to what the Lord has revealed and to the Apostle, they say: That on which We found our fathers is sufficient for us. What! even though their fathers knew nothing and did not follow the right way. (Ibid., vi. 104.)

The Nemesis of the "Civilized."

Statistics of births and marriages in some of the biggest towns of France, issued by the National Alliance for the Increase of French Population, shows an alarming fall in both. Decrease in birth percentage for 1921 stands thus: Paris, 12·8; Marseilles, 11·9; Lyons, 18·6; Bordeaux, 13; and Saint-Étienne, 13·6. The total number of marriages during the month of January for three consecutive years was: 1921, 5,963; 1922, 4,659; 1923, 4,228.

Here is one tangible result of the "civilized" life of the West. We should have emphasized the word "one," for there is quite a multitude of such. Hardly a day passes but the daily papers bring sensational news of a wife killed, or a husband poisoned, or a rival shot, of "separation," of divorce, of restitution of conjugal rights, of elopement, or of the suicide of some disappointed lover. And the worst of it all!—no news is devoured with greater gusto, so dissipated is the taste of the average reader.

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In this respect, America, a chip of the same block, fares no better, if no worse. Statistics given by the *New York Tribune* show that in the United States, out of a total of a million marriages registered there last year, no less than 250,000 ended in divorce—i.e. one out of every four.

Social life such as prevails here in the West could not bear a fruit other than it has done. You cannot sow the wind and expect a crop other than the whirlwind. "Eat, drink, and be merry," said Epicurus. "Eat, drink, and *don't marry*," says the product of modern "civilization"; for to him, or her, such a life seems to afford the maximum amount of merriness. "Christian love" has, to all intents and purposes, become synonymous with the lust of the flesh. Nemesis was sure to follow, and like a hydra-headed monster, it is already stalking in here, there and everywhere. Whither is this maddening civilization drifting—rather, being driven—in spite of itself? Towards its own grave, we are afraid, unless a miracle happens. And that miracle, if it ever comes, would consist in the wholesale overhauling of society and remodelling it on the lines of Islamic modesty, Islamic chastity, Islamic sobriety, and Islamic simplicity.

Muslim Charity.

Here in the West one hears quite a deal about Islamic "narrow-mindedness," Islamic "fanaticism," and of Christian "charity" and Christian "love." Amidst these clouds of ignorance and misrepresentation, however, may be seen, every now and then, a bright flash of a silver lining of Truth. And here is a typical instance of one such silver lining which appears in *The New Witness*. Describing the Mosque of Umar in Jerusalem, the contributor points out the sanctity of Mount Zion to the Jewish people—perhaps the most sacred spot on earth, next only to the Mount of Olives. It was on the summit of this hill that King David saw the Avenging Angel with sword outstretched over Jerusalem. Here did the King offer his sacrifice for the expiation of his sin. It was this very rock that Solomon preserved in his famous temple which was thrice destroyed—by Nebuchadnezzar, by Antonius, and by the Romans—and was finally rebuilt by the Muslims. Of this hill-top the Psalmist wrote: "The perfection of beauty . . . the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion." How this most sacred Jewish relic fared under the Christians and the Muslims respectively may well illustrate the spirit of each. This is what the writer says of its treatment by each:

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It seems absolutely incredible that the Christian dwellers in Jerusalem, during those early centuries of our era, should have known no better way of manifesting their contempt for the Jews than by heaping over this rock the choicest and most unsavoury filth of a not over clean city. Yet so it was. When the Caliph Omar conquered Palestine in 637 A.D., his first care was to have the piled-up filth removed, the rock thoroughly cleansed, and finally drenched with rose-water. Sixty years later, the Mosque, like some enchanted palace of the imagination, rose over it, and has protected it ever since through more than twelve centuries. Defiled by the early Christians, neglected by the Jews, restored to honour by the great Caliph, it has become the most sacred treasure of Islam. And it is under the great dome that soars above it, and the shining Eastern Crescent that surmounts it, that Mount Zion is still "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth."

How could Caliph Umar do otherwise? Islam enjoins respect for the religious susceptibilities of others, and Umar was a true Muslim. Among other things, Islam stands for freedom of conviction, and the best representatives of the Faith lived up to this principle. The Prophet himself, when a Christian deputation from Najran came to Medina to wait upon him, allowed them to hold their service in their own way in his own Mosque. History of Islam—unless surveyed with coloured glasses—will present, on the whole, an unbroken record of generosity and magnanimity.

No "Black"-and-"White" under French Flag.

In the occupation of the Ruhr, France happened to employ just a few detachments of her Colonial troops. Pro-German propaganda rushed to seize upon it as a God-sent opportunity. "Black troops!" arose the cry. Germans subjected to the blacks' domination! How abominable! Could there be a greater insult added to injury? Much was made of this molehill in the daily Press of this country as well. When, however, it was stated, on the other side, that these soldiers were as fair, if not fairer, than some of the "white" races of Southern Europe, there came forth an explanation still more stupid. These men, no matter from what part, and of what complexion, were "black" of heart. To put a stop to all this nonsense, France deemed it expedient to withdraw these troops, and in doing so M. Poincaré made it absolutely clear that his Government had chosen to do so "not because it wishes to refute the abominable calumnies, but because it considered it wiser at this moment to provide no pretext for a propaganda which has unfortunately reached friendly nations." And then, in this connection, the French Premier gives utterance to senti-

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ments we cannot but admire. As reported in *The Times*, March 10th, he goes on to say :

France has always considered her colonies as an integral part of the indivisible Fatherland, and dares not distinguish between the various races which live under her flag. In several of her old possessions she has even given to the native population the prerogative of French nationality, notably in the case of the Antilles, and I need not tell you that in the eyes of the Government of the Republic there are not two categories or classes of citizens. We have too great a consciousness of human dignity to set up such an artificial and unjust distinction.

The British Muslim Society.

The Society is making headway. Its At-Homes are becoming popular and are well attended. The hosts of the At-Homes, who are the members of the Society by turn, are very liberal in providing refreshments. Dr. and Mrs. Ahmad, who look to these arrangements, spare no pains in helping to make them satisfactory. These At-Homes, though social in their character, are somewhat different from the average At-Home. Here people come to listen to the music of the mind, which becomes materialized in the form of some speech from the Imam of the British congregation or some other speaker, and not the music of the concert-hall. The Society has been created to further the progress of Islam and disseminate its literature in its true character. The body is of a religious character, and Islam has always laid down clear demarcation in different functions made to satisfy human demands.

Propriety of occasion and opportunity is the lever of morality and ethics. Nothing in itself is evil ; it is its misplacement that makes it so. A blessing becomes a curse if inopportune in time and place. Music is not in the bad book of Islam ; it is a fine art, and has been cultivated by one class of people in Islam. But religion and its observances, from an Islamic point of view, are too sacred for it. Anything which by its abuse is likely to excite lower passions and kill high morality has been placed outside the scope of religion in Islam. It is all very well, and it may be desirable in other respects and a real blessing to humanity, but religion is too serious for it.

Islam has reformed evil occupations of the human mind. Arabia was not without its festivities and jollifications, but they created occasion for excesses and abuses. The Holy Prophet kept those festivities, but purged them of such things which were likely to give birth to undesirable things.

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Our day of pilgrimage at Mecca was an old institution attended with intemperate habits ; it was allowed to remain, but it was given a religious character.

If the British Muslim Society has eliminated music from its At-Homes, it has only done what befitted its name. The At-Homes begin with the usual meeting and greetings, healthy talks and laughter, while the guests are refreshed from time to time, but the final stroke gives it a religious tone. The President, Lord Headley, concludes the function with a beautiful prayer which comes from his heart and goes to the heavens with the hearts of the guests. The Secretary, Mr. Lovegrove, is very energetic and has in a way resuscitated the Society, which had no practical existence before.

The Month of Fast.

As a rule it is incumbent on every Muslim of age, male or female, to observe, each year, one full month as the Month of Fast. The lunar month fixed for the purpose is known as *Ramazan*, beginning this year, in this country, on APRIL 19th and ending with MAY 18th. *Absolute* abstinence from *all* eating, drinking, smoking, and sex-relations, from early dawn (say an hour before sunrise) till sunset—this makes one fast. The night interval between these hours is free from these restrictions. Those, however, physically incapable of undergoing the strain, through age, illness, or otherwise, are exempt. Those on journey can postpone them until they are at home, when they have to make up all the fasts thus missed.

Summer School of Theology.

A Summer School of Theology, we are informed, will be held this year at Oxford from August 6th to 17th. About forty lectures will be given under the general title "Aspects of Contemporary Theology." The subject will be treated in connection with Philosophy, Psychology of Religion, Biblical Study, Comparative Religion, and current movements in Sociology, Science, and Literature. Lectures start on the evening of August 6th in the Trinity College Hall. The list of lectures includes names of prominent figures in the sphere of religious thought. The school is open both to men and women at a fee of £1 for the whole course. Communications may be addressed to the Rev. Dr. Carpenter, 11, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford.

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

BIGOTRY is born of prejudice, and the favourite food of prejudice is fiction. Whence it comes about that, while the truth that lurks in proverbs is often elusive in its catholicity, that enshrined in the aphorism "Give a dog a bad name and hang it" is at once transparent and profound.

Human nature is ever ready to welcome allegations of evil with a secret zest, while tales of well-doing must have full measure of most reasonable proof before acceptance; which brings us to the fundamental and lamentable position that a malicious fiction, so it be hoary enough, may possess all the weight and ten times the glamour of well-established but beneficent fact. Grotesqueness is no drawback, nor is improbability an obstacle.

Christianity in its first days suffered much in this respect. That the early Fathers of the Church slaughtered and consumed infants for their food on occasions of solemnity was a well-founded and popular belief with the Roman in the street, and probably deterred many of the milder sort from giving a favourable ear to the teachings of a new faith, in other respects unobjectionable enough.

The Jews of the Middle Ages bore a like reputation—as the melancholy story of St. Hugh of Lincoln testifies—yet in both cases the matter was fiction pure and unalloyed, smelted from the abundant ore of prejudice.

Jews and Christians alike have contrived to live down the stigma foisted upon them by a too imaginative prejudice. Even the atheist, in all his schoolboy blatancy, would hesitate to-day to bring a general accusation of cannibalism against the adherents of either creed; yet, on the other hand, it is not strange that the prejudice against Islam—which culminated in the Crusades—should still prevail in Christian England, and be kept alive by (among others) the

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selfsame fictions which served to fire the untutored zeal of the Crusaders.

And truly Islam has suffered much from distortion and misrepresentation at the hands of prejudice, which has not hesitated to supply a variety of picturesque, if wholly irrelevant, detail to support what must seem to many its deliberate perversion of the weightier matters of doctrine and conduct.

Muhammad's coffin, for example, suspended, with no visible support, 'twixt earth and heaven, has become, without question and quite as a matter of course, one of the stock similes of our language—though the Prophet never had a coffin, and his mortal remains rest beneath the Arabian sands. This is a fiction without religious or other significance of any sort. Yet here it is.

The essential simplicity of the Muslim ceremonial has not been permitted to baulk the imaginative zeal of prejudice, and to this day there are many, even among educated Englishmen who ought to know better, who vaguely, and without malice, confuse the Muslim impartially with the Hindu and Parsee, and believe (in so far as they give the matter a thought—and here lies the root of the difficulty) that Suttee and fire-worship are integral parts of the Faith of Islam; while in the mind of the ignorant Briton, be he of town or country, a Mosque is as often as not a place of skeletons and all ghoulish things—the scene of horrid incantations and secret mysteries.

The Muslim conception of the world to come is still presented by prejudice to a credulous (because, alas! indifferent) public as a state of perpetual fornication on the grand scale; and it was long a fixed belief, and one that still lingers among the free and enlightened electors of this great country, that Muslim soldiers could not be induced to fight, or any Muslim to venture his life, were it not in the sure and certain hope of an eternity of sensualism

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in which houris and green couches play a magnetic part; and that it was their expectation of such an everlasting wallowing that led the soldiers of Saladin, and in later days those of Mustapha Kemal, to victory.

The man in the street, doubtless with hazy notions of King Solomon at the back of his mind, still associates polygamy first and foremost with Islam, regarding it as, at once, the foundation and keystone of the Faith.

The intelligent masses of our land are still convinced that the old Turkish Empire was the scene of perpetual massacres, State-organized and methodical, of innocent persons for the sole and sufficient reason that they were Christians, and those who trouble to think deeper than football results and the prospects for the Grand National, are inclined to suspect the more enlightened rulers of Angora of a disposition to carry on the work, because it is part of their religion, and a duty laid upon them by the Qur-án. This annual is a particularly hardy specimen, and there is scarcely a newspaper in the land—with the honourable exception of the *Morning Post*—which does not, from time to time, give approving currency to the ever-popular fiction.

And lastly, the mediæval conception of Muhammad as Anti-Christ dies hard. The saints of the Middle Ages, in the placid calm of their monastic cells—wrapped in a celestial ignorance of all earthly things, including as often as not matters of fact—wrote glibly of the Prophet as “false Muhammad,” and of his followers as the “infidels, unbelievers,” heathen and false Paynim (always “false” be it noted); and even now to the hordes of half-educated intellects that modern education has equipped adequately enough for the battle of “business,” the name of Allah stands in the same frivolous category with Apollo or Odin, Bacchus or Aphrodite, or even the Mumbo-Jumbo of the African negro—bearing no relation

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whatever to the One God Whom Muslim, Jew and Christian alike adore. This, then, is the position : that Islam to-day is, to the unthinking of England, as it was in the days of Edward III, under the selfsame cloud of mediæval monkish superstition and prejudice—an ignorance as profound as ever, a darkness which may be felt in any serious conversation anywhere with any average man.

But, it will be said, Time does not stand still, though superstition may, and generally does ; and the mind of man has grown quicker through the centuries, awake and alert, eager to question and criticize, ready to decide for itself what is, or is not, worthy of all men to be received ; hence, with but little trouble, such absurd and mischievous conceptions as I have enumerated may be removed. And yet, on the other hand, Education, with its largest and most popular E, aided by the comfortable counsels of pseudo-science and surface-philosophy, would seem to have convinced the mass of average mankind that there is really nothing nowadays, in a religious sense, particularly worth believing. It is all, we are led to infer, a matter of opinion. Some may believe one thing, and some another ; “ they are born so, and will please themselves ” (as a nineteenth-century philosopher has it). There is no harm in it, but it does not really matter much one way or the other.

The whole difficulty lies in the prevalent spirit of indifference—a lukewarmness to which that of the Church of Laodicea was as a burning fiery furnace—a spirit created by a utilitarian educational system—conceived in shallowness and administered mechanically—which can boast, as its immediate achievement, the apparent stultification of the Divine Purpose, the stunting of the spiritual aspirations of mankind. Until this indifference be shattered and interest awakened, the average Englishman will be quite content with his mediæval fictions on the subject of

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Islam, secure in the conviction that it really does not matter much one way or the other.

Nevertheless there are many who have not bowed the knee to Baal, many who are seeking earnestly for the higher things—to whom the utilitarian world is woefully insufficient—who see in Christianity the one substantial spiritual effort to raise the world of men—even though to many it may seem an effort that has failed.

It is with such that the beginning must be made.

Pamphlets can do little, for the pamphlet is a thing discredited since advertising became a science. Books may do much, and indeed books are a first essential. A series of books, for example, on popular errors in connection with Islam—authoritative and not too popular in style—might well be of service. But until the requisite interest is aroused the books will lack readers; and to arouse that interest among thinking men, prejudice must first be removed; and whether in books or on the platform, it must be demonstrated that between Christianity as it should be and Islam as it is, there is no great gulf fixed, whether of creed or ethics.

“There is One God” says the Muslim daily, regularly and without fail.

“I believe in One God” says the Christian—daily too, when he thinks of it.

Here is the common ground on which those who speak for Islam in these latter days of Western civilization—of doubt and heart-searchings—may take their stand as preachers of the new Gospel for which the world has waited over-long. And by this Gospel, wherein Islam living shall contrast boldly with a Christianity that is dead; wherein example shall be set against example rather than precept against precept; the clouds of prejudice—stagnant anachronisms in an age of little faith—shall be dispersed.

RUDOLF PICKTHALL.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE PEACE OF THE WORLD

THE League of Nations is a blessed legacy of Professor Wilson, who announced universal democratization as the main aim of the entry of the United States into the Great War. His Fourteen Points, which, it would seem, were never meant to take effect, even by their framers, were consigned to oblivion as soon as their object was attained. America wanted a big army and a big navy; she could not get them without exciting opposition from Japan and other Powers. In other circumstances she could not have hoped to justify her conduct, but the Great War was an opportunity—and she jumped at it. Her selfish motives, as usual, were clothed in ideals and her craftiness posed as altruism; but she did not send her children to shed their blood on the battle-field for more than one year; she came to help to give the final stroke, and emerged from the war a great naval and military Power. Oil-fields and commercial instincts move humanitarian principles; but the world has become wise enough to see the camouflage.

The war has proved to be a turning-point in the history of the world. Just as the French Revolution gave birth to modern republican ideas in their primary form, the Great War has opened the eye of the world to the necessity of universal democratization. The present conditions of the world are worse than those that created the last universal conflagration. Unrest and dissatisfaction are everywhere. India, Mesopotamia, Syria, South and East Africa, each and every place is a hotbed of trouble, and things are growing worse in Kenia. Equality of treatment between Indians and Europeans is the bone of contention. The Law Assembly in India have unanimously passed a resolution requesting the Viceroy to move the Home Government for the equal treatment of the Indian with the English people in East Africa. It means that India has formed a united front

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to secure equality for her fellow-countrymen, and if the demand fails to rouse a sympathetic echo in the Colonial Office here, the fact may well be made a pretext for aggravating racial prejudice, which, unfortunately, is already high in India. If Indians are fellow-subjects in the Empire, their claim cannot be slighted.

Such a demand, on the face of it, constitutes of itself a downright charge against the humanity of the West. It does not ask favours, it claims a birth-right. Can a nation boast of true culture and civilization if it be not willing to award equality of treatment to other members of humanity?

Shortly after writing the above lines we received, from Lord Headley, copies of the following cablegrams :—

ZANZIBAR.

BARON HEADLEY London.

Overcrowded mass meeting all Asiatic communities including Arabs Hindus Indian and African Muslims held under my Presidency resolved condemning most indecent blasphemous attack by Shaw Holy Prophet Islam and requested Governor Kenya take immediate action prevent recurrence such publications inflict deterrent punishment its author who has only too well succeeded his contemptible but deliberate aim wounding deepest religious feelings many millions His Majesty's Muslim subjects by insulting their beloved Prophet and slighting Holy Faith.

TAIBALLI RAJABALI, Barrister,
Chairman Mass Meeting.

MOMBASA.

BARON HEADLEY LN.

Whole Muhammadan population highly excited feeling greatly injured over Reverend Shaw's letter addressed you dated 30th ultimo appearing *East African Standard* third instant blaspheming identification their Holy Prophet Muhammad with Belial described embodiment darkness unrighteousness missionaries taking part politics strengthen white settlers and encouraging racial and religious hatred thus doing immense and irreparable harm please move Colonial Office stop such blasphemous articles European settlers pray approach Church societies stopping missionaries interfering politics and others religions.

RASHID BIN LOOD,
Chairman Mass Meeting.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Is it possible to imagine anything more outrageous—and at the same time more hopelessly impolitic—especially at a time when the one thing the world needs more than any other is peace—peace based on the only practicable foundation—to wit, mutual goodwill and understanding? Is this man, miscalled missionary, a servant of Him who taught “But I say unto you, Love your enemies”? People complain of the failure of “Foreign Missions.” It is men of the type of Mr. Shaw that are the cause of it, and their name is legion, for they are many.

It may be, of course, that Mr. Shaw was labouring under a delusion. The days are past and gone when missionaries made a patriotic bid for the martyr’s crown by offending the religious belief of others; whereby a pretext for war might be occasioned and fresh jewels of conquest glitter in the British diadem. There is nothing more to be added to the Empire, in the way of territory, in Mr. Shaw’s part of the world; and if his object was to create occasion for the use of machine-guns for the purpose of crushing the legitimate aspirations of the coloured races in East Africa, he is mistaken. The only harm he will do is to the British name—to British prestige. We quote Lord Headley’s letter to the Duke of Devonshire (*The Times*, March 10, 1923), which puts the case clearly enough:

YOUR GRACE,—Permit me to draw your attention to the highly injudicious and inflammatory language now being used by a clergyman of the Church of England respecting the Muslim faith. The indiscretions in question, though at present confined to East Africa, are far-reaching and are now known all over the world. The gentleman in question is the Rev. W. H. Shaw, and I am sorry to have to inform you that he has so far forgotten himself as to liken our Prophet Muhammad to Belial in a letter addressed to me and appearing in the *East African Standard*.

You will, I feel sure, agree with me that insulting language and vilification of a sister religion—Muhammadanism and Christianity being identical in the great essentials of duty to God and one’s neighbour—are in the last degree undesirable. Part of our creed is that there shall be no compulsion in religion, and anything like insulting other religions is unknown amongst us. In common with

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many of my brother Muslims, I may be able to laugh at the unwise vapourings of this most un-Christian enthusiast, but it is quite possible that others of our faith may be influenced for evil and in a direction we should all deplore.

The world is too small nowadays for anyone to be unaware of what is going on in any part of it, however remote. Every action, such as that of Mr. Shaw, awakes an echo in India, and the Colonial Office cannot afford to disregard Indian feeling in the matter.

There is another point. Mr. Shaw must dismiss altogether from his mind the idea that he is under the protection of a Christian Government. The Home Cabinet is from time to time, as occasion demands, held up to admiration by its supporters as the greatest Muslim Government in the world; and on that ground alone the Muslims have every right to claim redress.

The Religious and Ethical Branch of the League of Nations in England is anxiously seeking a way of securing peace and goodwill between the inhabitants of the Near East, who profess different faiths. The Committee has requested Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, the Imam of the British Muslims, to give them the benefit of his views.

Now here is something for the Committee to grind its teeth on. Why extend its activities to foreign countries when there is so much to be done nearer home?

The Imam has suggested—and very rightly—that they should consider the case of India first, and afterwards British territories generally.

British dependencies are becoming hotbeds of racial prejudice and bitter feeling. This should be their first concern.

The Christian missionary brings trouble wherever he goes; and Mr. Shaw is not a solitary example of scurrilous writing. There are Indian outpourings of Christian writers every whit as disgraceful. It

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was well said, thirty years ago, by the Rev. Rajab Ali, an Indian Christian, that if ever there is another Indian mutiny it will be due to the scurrilous writings of the Christian missionaries against Islam.

We can always retaliate. We can produce a similar, but more cogent, type of literature if we want to. We did it once, and the missionaries of India were forced to stop their pestilential mischief for a time. We can do it again; but in the interests of peace there are better means. We appeal to the Bishop of Kensington—the head of the Religious Branch of the League of Nations—to take up the matter personally and exercise his own influence on the societies engaged in foreign mission work; to warn them to put a stop to firebrands of the Shaw variety.

Muslims are very touchy on matters of religion, and will not tolerate libels so gross and shameless.

But what of the Christian meekness and humility which is supposed to have left such an indelible mark on Western civilization? We hear a lot of Eastern narrow-mindedness, but if the Western teachers of morality—and Mr. Shaw among them—cut such a sorry figure, where are we to look for large-mindedness? The world will know no peace so long as wolves assume the garb of shepherds and, grotesquely incredible as it may seem, delude the very elect of the flock. But here again we do but see once more the superiority of Islam over Christianity. The Qur-án forbids a Muslim to speak evil of other religions; it commands him, on the other hand, to extend to the prophets of other faiths the same respect he cherishes for the holy Founder of Islam. Nay, the Book goes further even than this, and teaches Muslims to believe in the Divine Origin of each and every religion in its original purity, and to accept its Messenger as his own Prophet. Could there be a better basis for peace in a world of jarring creeds?

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Say : We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord ; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit. (The Holy Qur-ān, ii. 136.)

And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance. Thus have We made fair-seeming to every people their deeds ; then to their Lord shall be their return, so He will inform them of what they did. (Ibid. vi. 109.)

For the consideration of the Colonial Office we quote below a few lines from *The House Divided* :—

If a diplomatic conscience leads you to discountenance Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's work on the Congo—out of consideration for Belgian feelings, and leads Germany to threaten dire things against a periodical (in Persian) published in Berlin and called *A'zad-i-Sharq*—out of respect for your feelings, can it not influence you to take some step towards stemming the rising flood of misleading, anti-Islamic literature, disguising a not too scrupulous propaganda—out of sympathy for our feelings ? Misinterpretation we can understand, misunderstanding we can make allowance for, but for misrepresentation there is seldom, if ever, justification or excuse.

There is little edification for a nation or individual in reading fictitious accounts of the shortcomings of another. For the last ten years I have read of the manifold evils of Islam in current English literature ; evils of which I had never heard, whose existence I had never so much as suspected before coming to this country ; and in the Faith of Islam I find no trace of them at all. I am constantly receiving inquiries about them, and I can only reply that they do not exist—and, so far as I am aware, never have existed. Muslim readers of such productions become irritated, and sometimes annoyed—and, on occasions, angrily indignant. Neither the English stage nor the English cinema is free from this unfortunate tendency. "The Auction of Souls"—that exotic blend, nicely adjusted to the popular taste, of mendacity, ribaldry and blasphemy—is running a prosperous course in the provinces, until and unless perhaps the authorities see fit to intervene—a step which, from motives of diplomacy, and apart altogether from the outraged feelings of Muslim British subjects, may yet suggest itself on the analogies I have quoted.

The world cannot hope to see any peace unless those who claim to control the destinies of the nations forthwith set their house in order—scrap the present mechanism of worn-out ethics, and set to work on principles of humanity.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

If the League of Nations was created to further the political ends of Western States at the expense of subject-races—as is, indeed, suspected by some—it will, in a very brief space of time, prove a fiasco; but it can do immense service to the human race, and banish war from the world, if it tries to find out and remove the real causes of unrest. Selfishness and aggression lie at the bottom of all the trouble.

Religion came to restore equality between man and man. This was the mission of Jesus, though he could not express himself so definitely as did Muhammad. How can Christianity save the world, if the Western nations, while they profess the Christian faith, nevertheless, through their conduct and treatment, expel others from the circle of humanity? Islam in this respect, too, has risen superior to Christianity. Muslim belief in the unity of God cannot have substance unless equality between man and man is restored. Democracy is the offspring of Islam. Islam kills all racial prejudices and levels down all creed and class barriers. It has succeeded in welding black and white into one harmonious whole.

The Western world may or may not become Muslim, but it will have to become Muslimized in its dealings with the rest of mankind if it desires to maintain its ascendancy, without disturbing the general peace. Islam literally means "Peace." Does not the religion claim this name with justice, when it so emphasizes the equality of mankind, which is the only road to Peace?

The God of Islam is the Creator, Maintainer and Upbringer of all races and nations, without distinction or difference, and not a tribal God of the Bible. A Muslim has to serve and worship such a Universal God. His belief in the unity of God cannot receive a stronger blow, a more bitter insult, than where the rights of man are violated and attempts made to secure domination of one class of

people over another. "The ruling of the people," as the Qur-án says, "will go to those who are fit for it in the eye of the Lord." Profession, in this or that religion, carries no weight in His dispensation, but fitness to rule others, under the teaching of the Qur-án, is the ability to rule for the benefit of the ruled. Can anyone claim to rule for the benefit of the subject-races if he denies to the latter what he claims and reserves for the benefit of his own people? Here is something for the League to think upon.

THE FIRST LADY UNIVERSITY CHANCELLOR

WESTERN mind is stuffed with all sorts of stories as to the position of woman in Islam. These erroneous notions have been repeatedly dispelled in these pages. The exalted personality of Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jehan Begum Saheba, the Ruler of Bhopal, is, however, even to-day a standing rebuke to all such tale-mongers.

At the helm of one of the foremost Indian States, Her Highness has been guiding the destinies of her subjects with exquisite skill of statecraft and with true motherly affection. Her reign has spelt bliss and prosperity to hundreds of thousands. But what exalts her head and shoulders above others lies in some other direction. It is as a patron of learning that she, the only woman-ruler in India, stands alone among her brother-rulers. Her interest in this sphere is not confined to her own State. There is perhaps no part of India where her munificence to encourage learning does not extend. She has to her credit a considerable share in the educational upliftment of Muslim India as a whole.

But there is yet another distinction of Her Highness, which, we think, should show the candle to the so-called advanced West. There is but one central University for the whole of Muslim India—

FIRST LADY UNIVERSITY CHANCELLOR

the noted Muslim University of Aligarh, where students flock not only from all parts of India, but also from Afghanistan, Persia, and Arabia—and of that one University the reins are entrusted to Her Highness, as the Chancellor, the one Lady Chancellor throughout the world and, we believe, the first. In this capacity, her recent speech at the Convocation of the University was an illuminating pronouncement. We hear tall talk of Western advancement, of Western culture and, above all, of Western sense of chivalry. Yet, it seems, it is still haunted by a lingering relic of the Church instinct that of woman came sin on earth, and therefore University precincts are too sacred for her. Aligarh—that Cambridge of the East—allots its highest pedestal to a lady; but here, at this Cambridge of the West, the nerve-centre, so to speak, of British intellectual life, the door of ordinary membership has been closed to the fair sex. As *The Times* correspondents put it, women are “still outside the University.”¹ In this respect the West must turn for inspiration, as it does for its religion, to the East.

Her Highness's laurels in the field of letters are no less bright. Her writings are mainly devoted to the amelioration of the condition of her own sex. On all the female questions, engaging the attention

¹ SIR,—The Ordinances concerning women students which have just been passed by the Senate of Cambridge University have been represented in some quarters as a great advance for women, and as conferring on them nearly all the benefits that they have long desired. Will you allow us the hospitality of your columns in order that we may correct this misapprehension? The new Ordinances grant to duly qualified women the right to use the letters B.A., M.A., M.Litt., and Ph.D. after their names, and to wear academic dress; they also secure to students of the women's colleges the right to attend University lectures and to receive teaching in University laboratories.

The first of these privileges will certainly be of value to women in the teaching profession, and the second no less certainly places women students in a more satisfactory position. But it is still true that Cambridge, in the words of the Royal Commission is “the only University in the country where neither women

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of the world to-day, Her Highness speaks, of course, from first-hand knowledge, and upholds the Islamic point of view with force, accuracy, and lucidity. Obviously, her voice on these vexed and knotty problems must carry the weight of authority. Her Highness is a voluminous writer and has a long list of books to her credit in Urdu, the tongue of the soil. Of these, one (*Muslim Home*), which draws a vivid picture of the sweet relations reigning in a Muslim's home-life, was lately translated into English and has already made a mark for soundness of views and force of expression. It was read on an extensive scale throughout the English-speaking world.

To the long list there comes, now, another useful addition, which has also been rendered into English. *Al-Hijab*, Her Highness's recent book; covering 212 pages, small 8vo, will, like its predecessors, meet, we are sure, with a splendid reception. The work is based on the authority of the Qur-án and the Prophet's sayings, and contains a wealth of scholarly research. Inspired as the work has been by sympathy and love, it contains, here and there, irresistible appeals to the Muslim womanhood, for whom it is meant. "I hope," says Her Highness, "those sisters and daughters of mine who still retain Islamic traditions and feelings of modesty, and honour and respect the tenets of their faith, will read this book with care and attention," and concludes with the fervent prayer: "I rely on the sincerity of my intention, and

students nor women teachers have the status of membership of the University, and where the teachers, however well qualified, are not eligible for posts or offices in the University, and are excluded from all share in discussions on the organization of teaching."

The women are still outside the University, and a woman with the title of a degree will not be a graduate of the University.

B. A. CLOUGH,

Principal of Newnham College.

BERTHA S. PHILLPOTTS,

Mistress of Girton College.

(*The Times*, March 7, 1923.)

NEW THOUGHT MOVEMENT

therefore pray to God Almighty in all earnestness and humility that He may guide us, His humble slaves, to act upon His holy teachings and commandments ; and this is our last word and final prayer."

NEW THOUGHT MOVEMENT

CONCENTRATION OF MIND—SPIRITUALIST PHENOMENA—A BIG MEDIUM

THERE is nothing new in the world. The Western world has become disillusioned, and is only beginning to see religious matters as they really are. Like a man suddenly awakened from a sound sleep by some imminent and pressing danger, who flies blindly to the first place of refuge that comes in his way, and regards it as a new haven, so is the condition of the Western mind, which, freed at last from the shackles of the Church, jumps to the very first thing which seems to assure it of some new light and illumination.

The "New Thoughter," or disciple of the New Thought Movement, thinks that he has made a discovery ; that his mind is the Mind of God ; and that he himself is a potential God. We are all Gods, think some of them, and, after all, it is not a bad idea ; and if godhood becomes so common, Jesus, Ezra, and many other man-gods of the world, will very soon come to the common level of humanity.

The New Thought philosophy is, however, only a shadow of the Indian Vedantism in its advanced form, which teaches that everything in the Universe is God. If a dog, cat, or pig can be accepted as God under Vedantism, why not man, who has been accepted by various persuasions as an image of God ? The theory, though not without some leavening of truth, is, however, not altogether free from danger. In every stage of the development of religious thought, God has been taken to be the fountain of all good ; all that is best in the morality of any age is focussed in His Name. If the human mind be, in every case,

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a divine mind, then wickedness and righteousness may pass alike for godliness.

Vedantism, in conjunction with the theory of Maya, has tended to weaken the sense of responsibility and to enervate human zeal and activity. New Thought will do the same in the long run; seeing that the dangerous effect, for example, of such unqualified beliefs among the adherents of Christian Science is patent to all men.

Islam has, however, by teaching that everything has come from God and represents some phase of the Divine Mind, thrown a new and true light on the matter, and to make my point clearer, I shall have something to say as to the Muslim Sufi theory of Emanation, which was inspired by certain of the sayings of the Prophet and the Qur-án. "I love to express Myself," so says God in the words of the Prophet, "and I created the world." "God says," so says Muhammad, "Do not speak ill of the Universe, as I am the Universe."

These two sayings of the Holy Prophet solve the problem. God expressed and expresses Himself in the Universe; His various attributes became materialized and the world was created. The Sufis, like Mohy-ed-din Araby, hold that El-Ghaib—The Unseen, The Unknown—was the first attribute which became materialized in the beginning, and its colour was dense pitch-black, and out of that substance came light, which gave birth to all that is in the heaven and the earth. It is interesting to note that present-day scientific researches carry us to somewhat the same conclusion.

We are told that the first form of matter was very dark, and out of it everything comes; and that the said dark substance is the repository of most wonderful things, which gradually and inexhaustibly disclose themselves. We believe the same of God. Human knowledge cannot exhaust His Attributes, nor their working. The various forces or potential-

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ties of Nature are only materializations of the Divine Attributes. They assumed their first material shape in the form of something extremely attenuated and very dark, which in scientific phraseology has been called Ether. In another stage of evolution it becomes nebula.

The Qur-án speaks of seven circular zones from the ethereal to the atmospheric strata, popularly called the Seven Heavens, which are the seven stages of evolution; and at each stage the first form of matter has become grosser and grosser up to the atmospheric zone where it assumed the form of water; which, as rain, comes to our planet.

I do not here propose to deal with the creation of the earth; suffice it to say that the Qur-án and the sayings of the Prophet speak of some fiery gaseous condition of the earth in the beginning, which in course of time became water, which in its further development assumed the present shape of the earth.

The earth, it is believed in Islam, possesses all the potentialities of the Universe; in other words, the earth in itself is a miniature of the whole Universe and materializes all the known Divine Attributes of God. This is the interpretation of the sayings of the Prophet quoted above. "God says, Speak not ill of the Universe, as I am the Universe."

They were in the most refined form when they assumed the first form of matter—in the coarsest when they appeared in the form of earth. Now, again, began the process of refinement. It receives its start, as the Qur-án says, by the coming of the rains. Hidden forces of the earth are set stirring, and the various components of our planet, under a further materialization, assume the shape of various species of vegetation, from the products of which man was called forth, and everything appertaining to the earth accumulated in his body.

The human frame encloses the human heart, which in its form resembles the earth. It possesses

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everything of the earth, but in the most refined form. In a word, material things become sublimated into conscious things. Just as the bowels of the earth contain its various minerals, so the human heart, in its recesses, finds place for emotions and passions, which in their cumulative form have been called human consciousness. In this way the Divine Mind, which began to express Itself in ether, and its very clothing, became grosser and grosser, and again began to near its original condition in the form of the human mind. The human mind, therefore, has the germs of the Divine Mind. It is a materialized form of the Divine Mind, but not itself a Divine Mind.

A dog or a pig in some form works out the Divine Will, but neither the dog nor the pig is God. To be more explicit—take the working of the sun. The sun, on the material plane, is the primeval source of everything. Iron has come out of the sun, yet it differs in its qualities from the sun. It is cold and black, while the sun exudes heat and light. Iron is from the sun, but iron is not the sun. Similarly, the human mind is from the Divine Mind, but not the Divine Mind. Herein lies the difference between the human mind and the other products of Nature. While different components of Nature materialize partially different attributes of God, the human mind accumulates all the attributes of God, and is capable of giving expression to them. Just as gold or silver or some precious metal rests in the bowels of the earth in the form of rocky ore, so these Divine Attributes lurk in the recesses of the human heart—we call them “passions,” but they are passions in their first or natural condition. What we call lower or carnal passions are but the substrata of the Divine building.

Religion, if it be worth the name, must have come—has come—to convert the ore into burnished gold.

There is no hatred between man and his Creator that we should need a peacemaker to reconcile us

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to our God. But we do need a revelation that may enable us to arise from our nascent condition up to perfection. To imbue yourself with Divine Attributes, as the Holy Prophet says, is the ideal of a religious life. As the ore passes into various processes of purification and is purged of a large quantity of refuse matter before it becomes shining gold, or as a rugged uneven rock has to be subjected to the constant chisellings of a sculptor before it assumes the shape of a beautiful marble statue, so human consciousness cannot become Divine Consciousness by simply sitting in circles or concentrating its thought on this thing or that, nor by reciting a set of formulæ. That is mere farce. Sitting in a dark room where the holes and ventilators are plugged, to avoid any external agitation or disturbance, may help to secure concentration of mind; but what about the carnal passions, low impulses, and uncontrollable hankerings of humanity? Unless these are properly plugged out, all our efforts at shutting out material distraction come to nothing.

Sometimes we succeed in securing concentration of mind, and thus are enabled to exercise our will-power on others—which is the ideal, at present, of some of the modern Western religious movements—but it is not worth the time and labour spent on it. It is jugglery in a graceful disguise. I have seen wickedness and the gift of exercising the will-power of the mind going side by side; that is not the Divine Mind. Evolution means purification, and rising signifies detachment from lower things. Take the instance of any fruit—say an apple. It lies in the seed, it is buried in the earth, then it becomes a seedling, a tree with leaves, twigs, and flowers, and then fruit. In its final stage it has not the taste of leaves, wood, or clay, and yet it has passed through all these forms of matter. Similarly, germs of Divine Attributes, buried in the clay of human consciousness, have to pass through various stages

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of growth before they reach their perfection. Each stage of growth is different from the one before, leaving behind it most of the ingredients of the former stage. Imperfection at any stage means retention of something belonging to the lower stage. As an unripe apple has got the taste of the leaves in it, and a leaf at its budding has more of the nature of wood than it has at the stage when it gives place to flowers, so the human mind cannot reach to the precincts of the Divine Mind so long as it retains the characteristics of its animal state. If, by sitting in circles, or by concentrating the mind on this or that thought, a person is able to get rid of the evil hankerings and tendencies that are specially to be observed in Western society, he is on the road to the goal.

Once I was invited to a dance given by the Spiritualists, somewhere in Fleet Street. I could not understand what spirituality and conviviality could have in common with each other ; but curiosity carried me to the banquet, and there I was introduced to a remarkable medium, who had had the satisfaction of securing the conversion to spiritualism of a very well-known scientist. His emaciated, pale face, and his deep, dark, solemn eyes wistfully intent on far-off things, indicated some kind of ascetic pursuit in which the achievement of psychic power by mind concentration is the aim and purpose. He had come alone, which seemed suitable enough, for he appeared, first and foremost, a solitary, an Eremité, for whom a lodge in some vast wilderness would have been the correct setting. He became interested in conversation with me, and we had much interesting and edifying discourse ; but when the dance began, his face began to show signs of restlessness, his eyes, roaming over the large room, were searching everywhere for a partner ; but alas ! his appearance was against him ; even his will-power, if he possessed any, failed to attain fulfilment of his wishes. He

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could not, try as he would, will a partner for himself. After a few minutes, he lost all interest in the conversation, and had to request a friend to introduce him to some lady. The rest was a matter of course, and in a few minutes I found this same serious ascetic, who, a few minutes before, was talking of things behind the veil, drowned in the whirl of ordinary—I might almost say commonplace—joviality. I do not for a minute mean to imply that he was an impostor and deliberately and of set purpose deceived others. I can believe in some of his achievements; but he is a self-deluded man if he thinks that he is advanced in spiritualism. He may have abnormal powers of vision; he may be an excellent clairvoyant, but that is no proof that he is of any worth on the spiritual plane. By way of illustration, suppose a man has been brought up in a dark room which has certain curtains to keep out the strong sunlight; his eyes cannot bear the shock of sudden exposure to that sunlight, and he must needs go through various processes of discipline before his naked eye can fully face it; but if by accident, say, a gust of wind removes the curtains, and he stands suddenly in the full light of day, his eyes will become affected and lose their strength; yet he will see something, though in a disfigured form; he will describe to others in a closed room some new phenomena which he sees; he is quite genuine in his statement, but what he says is not a true account of the phenomena which were there. It is for this reason that all knowledge in the form of messages or phenomenal observation is in the highest degree defective and unreliable, and has hardly contributed anything new to the knowledge of mankind. If some earnest spiritualists say that they see or have seen a departed soul, it is a possibility; but as they invariably clothe these spirits in earthly colours, it shows, on the most lenient interpretation, that the sight is not clear, and that an untrained eye has become blurred by

being exposed to the strong rays of the sunshine—thus becoming disabled from seeing things in their real form. So their own imagination comes to their aid and makes up for deficiencies, and consequently these phenomenal observations smack overmuch of the earthly plane.

There is another drawback in the way of the Western mind. For centuries it has believed in a miraculous transformation of the human mind through certain beliefs. The Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, may have a deeper significance with advanced theology, but the belief that partaking of the Lord's Supper creates Christ in man, which means conversion of baser metal into something precious, relieves the mind of the hardships which otherwise would attend its spiritual growth. A "New Thought" may have lost his faith in his Church theology, but he has not divested himself of its legacies—"Believe in the Blood and all your sins are washed away" is still lurking in his mind in his new haven; he still believes that by certain beliefs, accompanied by forms and ceremonies, he can become God incarnate.

Every man, in the Muslim belief, is a partial God incarnate. Within the four walls of humanity he is vicegerent of God on the earth; he is His image. But the statue lacks animation, soul. We are statues, but statues are stone, lacking mobility, lacking life. Muslim Sufis inspired by the Qur-án have laid down a course of life which is a little hard to pursue, but not impossible and quite within the reach of humanity.

It is interesting to note that the same things which are the boast of the new movement in the West, on the spiritual plane, are the things which we are enjoined to shun, on the ground that they are lures and pitfalls.

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KARMA : A CRITICISM

KARMA : A CRITICISM

By HERBERT BLOODWORTH

(Continued from page 98)

For the wild guesses of Karma science has wisely substituted the law of cause and effect. Science—spiritual and physical—has discarded the clumsy, puerile, and immature conclusions embodied in the term Karma—which is about as true a representation of cause and effect as the filthy concoctions of Chinese “medicine” can be said to comprise modern pharmacy. Karma declares that earthquakes are caused by faults in man; science affirms that seismic disturbances are due to “faults” in the earth’s crust. The earthquake of San Francisco, for instance, seems to have belonged to the class of volcanic earthquakes, and the opinion may be held, based on scientific grounds, that had the city been the “New Jerusalem” it would have been destroyed—irrespective of the good or evil of its inhabitants. The law of Karma appears to have needed the support of the laws of Manu to make them effective! Certain it is the Brahmin lawgivers trusted more in their *own* invented rules of Karma (action) than in any “cosmic law” they may have dimly perceived.

The *Key to Theosophy*, for instance, has much to say upon Karma, but one looks in vain for any definite, verifiable facts supporting the astounding statements made concerning it. Much sophistry and special pleading, and much that, for all practical application, may be classed with bedroom texts and copy-book maxims are, of course, to be met with in its, otherwise, extremely interesting pages. On page 141 is given this typical case of Karma: “*It is in this rebirth, which is ready for it, a rebirth selected and prepared by that mysterious, inexorable Law (of Karma), that the sins of the previous life of the Ego are punished.*” This “Key” unlocks and

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reveals the hideous horror of Karma. Apply this, for instance, to the not infrequent case of infanticide. Such a birth for the little victim is, on the hypothesis of Karma, "a rebirth *selected and prepared—that its parents might murder it!*" The following questions naturally arise : Did the sin of the Ego of the murdered infant, committed, of course, in a previous life, consist in the infliction of Karma upon another Ego ? Did such other Ego merit that infliction of injury, as a result of a sin committed in its previous life ? If so, how far back does the original injury go ?

What Karma have the parents of this murdered child set up which must be administered to them in some future reincarnation ? Who will, under the direction of the Lords of Karma, inflict it ? When, and how, will the perpetuation of the wrong done, cease ?

Mankind is asked to believe that those heroic men and noble women who, because of their endeavour to advance science, reform, and religion, were imprisoned in loathsome dungeons, relentlessly persecuted, vindictively tortured, and brutally murdered with an ingenuity and ferocity transcending the inventive torments of a Buddhist hell, were malefactors and criminals in a previous life—hence their sufferings in this ! Mankind is asked to believe that the gross injustice they so nobly underwent and so heroically endured was but the "meting out of exact and impersonal justice—Karmic justice—to them." What a "convenient" doctrine for the unjust judge, the exploiter, and the oppressor of men ! Every fresh turn of the thumb-screw, every further stretch of the rack, every additional degree of heat of the fiery pincers, that tore, stretched, and crushed the tortured, quivering flesh, was but additional *proof* of deeper sin, further *evidence* of greater iniquity, and fresh *demonstration* of more heinous wickedness ! The enlightened sense of justice to-day, however, requires different "proofs," better

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“evidences,” and more conclusive “demonstrations,” before it can accept a teaching as thus presented.

Furthermore, the exponents of this doctrine of Karma maintain that the social position of the individual in this life is the direct result of that individual's acts in a previous life. Buddha, they say, with unction affirmed, that “Men are poor because when before on earth they would covet and steal. Why now rich? Because of charitable acts in a previous life.” Another says: “Karma does destine that a man who has made wrong use of his wealth in one life shall suffer the pains of poverty in a subsequent one.” Such a theory of social ethics is, of course, very comforting, for the wealthy—salving the conscience. Also, the delicacy of the argument ought to be fully appreciated by the poor man, seeing that it does not say that the cause of his poverty in this life is because he covets and steals, but only that he did these things “in a previous life.” The law of libel is thus avoided—as also the consequent Karmic “damages.” To show how contemptible the accusation is when applied to any decent person, whose only crime is to be poor, let the case be that of the Poor Man of Nazareth. If, as Buddha is *alleged* to have said, “Men are poor because when before on earth, they would covet and steal,” then the Poor Man of Nazareth was, by that statement, if true, not only a covetous person but a thief! But if it be granted that God, by His beneficence, has bountifully provided everything that constitutes wealth, in the truest sense of the word, and that all this abundance is poured out, *full and free upon all alike*, irrespective of any merit or demerit, then it cannot, in the face of this obvious fact, be imputed to any man that he is poor as a result of acts of his in a previous life. Yet, notwithstanding all the abundance so lavishly bestowed by God upon man, the fact remains that there is a vast amount of poverty in the world—with all its attendant,

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consequent evils. The *real cause* of this is that some have selfishly diverted to themselves more of that abundance than is their rightful share. To hide this act they have fabricated, cunningly devised sophistries to camouflage their selfishness, and invented a system of society which perpetuates it. Such, too, is the caste system of Brahminical ascendancy, and the chief of these sophistries is their subtle, yet pernicious, doctrine of Karma.

The forces of Nature—of God—operate in man's mental, emotional, and physical being, and move him in multitudinous ways. Man exists only that the Universal may be made manifest in him, and not because of any acts of his. Man's acts, and their effects, are but *minor* perturbations in the major orbit of his being—God—in Whom he lives and moves and has his being.

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VARIOUS POSTURES AND GESTICULATIONS IN THE MUSLIM PRAYER

Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth : Our Lord ! Thou hast not created this in vain ! glory be to Thee ! save us then from the chastisement of the fire.—THE HOLY QUR-ÂN, iii. 190.

ISLAM—"with submission" as its literal meaning is—demands absolute obedience to Divine Control and implicit resignation to His Will ; in other words, complete devotion to God ; which means absolute divorcement from anything besides Him.

To wean a mind engrossed in wordly concerns from its average occupation is not an easy task ; for it must needs pass through various psychological stages before such a change can be accomplished. Complete devotion demands complete subordination of heart and soul to the object of our devotion. It

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means, disowning our own entity and merging it into that of the Other; prostrating our own will before the will of our Beloved, before we can attain to this stage of devotion. But we cannot do that unless our hearts are fully inclined in that direction. If our hands are engaged in other things, how can our hearts fully incline to one object? It means, therefore, that we must, as it were, fold our hands and refrain from every other thing—for every other thing must tend to distract us from our one object. This stage can be attained only when we have determined to renounce all other things, and wash our hands of them.

Consider the mentality that is engrossed in worldly concerns—can it divorce itself from them by lip-service, by the recitation of prayer and formula, and cut itself clear from its ordinary occupations and elevate it to that stage of devotion which means complete divorcement from the former things? It needs the regular inuring of the mind to a consistent course of discipline. If certain physical postures and specified physical movements go a long way to create different conditions of mind, then the form of Muslim prayer has been framed on the principle of this psychological phenomenon.

I have already spoken of certain stages through which a mind has to pass from its occupation in one thing to its devotion to another. To begin with, a man must leave the work he is engaged in; he must, as it were, wash his hands of it, he must renounce it, and fold his hands so that they engage no more in their previous occupation. These are the first four stages through which we have to pass before we completely divorce ourselves from anything. Then do we incline to the other side—to the higher things, which, however, cannot reach their perfection unless we lower ourselves in prostration before the object of our adoration.

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These seven stages become symbolized in the various essential things without which the Muslim Prayer is defective. There is a call to prayer from the minaret of the Mosque, and a Muslim must at once leave the work he is engaged in, and make ablutions, which means that he has washed his hands of his worldly concerns; then he stands before the Lord and raises his hands to his ears, which means renunciation of earthly things; then he folds his hands on his breast, as folded from other things, which is also an expression of love and obedience; then he inclines his body. The bending of the body must accompany the bending of the mind to God. When this is complete, he places his forehead on the earth, which signifies the prostration of his will to the Divine Will. Mental conditions become intensified by various physical gesticulations. One who does not realize the object of these movements in prayer, and who consequently fails to apply their teaching to his ordinary life, is only making a stage-performance of his devotion and a farce of his prayer.

The Muslim Prayer includes every movement of the body, and each movement in the prayer is accompanied by citing the name of God. It means that a Muslim at each movement in his life must remember God. An insensible person may jest, and ridicule us when we are at our prayer—unfortunately, ridiculing others is the only weapon with such—but he does the self-same thing before the lords of this world. He stands in an abject and slavish posture, before a man like unto himself, who, by chance, has become his superior; he bends and prostrates himself before him, and will do disgraceful things to please his earthly lord; and yet he has the audacity to play the part of a jester in attempting to ridicule those who bend before the admitted Lord of the man he acknowledges as master.

MIND IN NATURE

MIND IN NATURE

I HAVE been looking forward with interest to the final instalment of Mr. A. W. Malcolmson's reply to my letter, in which he intended to deal with the question of "Mind working in the whole Universe." Perhaps, as I have already suggested, other engagements have not left him time to attend to the matter; so perhaps I may be allowed to avail myself of the opportunity of indicating a few more points whereon he may meditate before completing his reply.

In his previous letter he confuses issues, introduces irrelevant matters, and seeks to enliven his subject, as he thinks—though in my opinion he destroys the whole significance of his argument—with sportiveness and jest. These things are not substitutes for arguments; they cannot convince any but those who are already convinced, but dare not bring their convictions under the searchlight of logic and truth.

To me the question has become simplified by his admissions in his last epistle. He admits that he is a slave to the law, like every other atom in Nature. He admits that the law rules the Universe, and indirectly admits that blind matter is not the source of the whole emanation, but that the source is something that has law inherent in its very nature, and which has been styled by Haeckel and other biologists as "Law-Substance." So far, however, we agree that the law predominates in matter, force, and energy.

I said, moreover, that the scientific world also believes in Monism and, therefore, in one design and one mind. Mr. Malcolmson was shrewd enough to understand the trend of my logic, and took the only course open to him—that of denying the existence of Monism in Nature; but he must know that the best brains of the pulpit to which he belongs—and Haeckel is one of them—have been compelled to believe in Monism.

Mr. Malcolmson, however, nothing daunted, seeks to substantiate his disbelief in Monism by referring

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to the inconsistent working of Nature. I admit that a hundred and one workings of Nature do involve things which to the average mind are inexplicably inconsistent; but the progress of scientific investigation and study has explained to us many things. What seemed absolutely inconsistent yesterday, is to-day inconsistent no longer, and I might add that to-day's inconsistency of conduct does not necessarily negate the unity of the source of that conduct. We observe two inconsistent things done by the same person, and we know, if we reflect, that it is either on account of our want of appreciation of apparently inconsistent actions, which are not really inconsistent, and which on further investigation prove to be consistent, or that it is due to the ignorance and thoughtlessness of the person who acts thus inconsistently. In both cases the one mind can give rise to two actions which are seemingly or really inconsistent.

Is not our own mind a wonderful repository of things which are absolutely inconsistent? Grief and happiness, pain and pleasure, laughing and crying, levity and seriousness, spring from the same mind; wherefore, the various inconsistencies in Nature referred to by Mr. Malcolmson as negating the theory of Monism, do not really help him. The question, as I have said before, has become simplified. Every biologist—every educated freethinker must believe in the predominance and rule of the law over matter. Monism may well be considered as another admitted reality borne out by a mass of complementary evidence; for every atom in Nature bears relation to every other atom.

If the working of the law in all human experience—as I have illustrated in my first letter—can only be traced to mind, why may not the same logic be applied in the working of Nature? True logic compels us to believe in the existence of a Mind that has given the law to the whole of Nature. That is "God in Islam."—KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN (*The Freethinker*, March 11, 1923).