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Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

SHA'BÁN, 1345 A.H.

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No. 2

NOTES

Clergy Shortage and Prayer Book Revision.

Captain J. W. D. Barron, Secretary to the Church Association, in an interview, according to the *Morning Post* of December 16th, ascribes the dearth of clergy in the Church of England to the "chaotic condition" of the Church itself. He says: "Likely candidates hesitate to enter the ranks of the clergy, because of the uncertainty as to the future character of its teaching." He instanced the proposed revision of the Prayer Book as a case in point, and went on to say:—

If the revision is carried, we shall have one Prayer Book permitting what is expressly condemned in the other, and yet both will have to be regarded as the official voice of the Church of England. Mass vestments are permitted in one book, the Mass is strongly condemned in the other. The same thing applies to the Reservation of the Sacrament. The inadequacy of stipends and attempts by the Bishops to get more power into their own hands were other deterrents to men who might contemplate taking Holy Orders. The Bishops are striving to secure greater powers both in regard to finance and patronage. This means, in many cases, that to gain preferment the clergy have to become the creatures of their Bishops. This is repugnant to men of character and conviction, who do not necessarily agree with every act and thought of their Bishops.

The above is illuminative. The Church, according to the dictum said to have been laid down to St. Peter, is "a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail," and yet

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it would seem that the rock is not proof against internal disintegration. In Nature we find that rain wears away a rock, and so it seems that the rock of the Church is being worn away by the rain. The Church claims to have inspired teachings and books, communicated by inspired Prophets and guides, and yet the very essentials of that teaching are being modified to the point of actual change. The rock is becoming sand, if the Church cannot agree within itself on the basic principles of its doctrines. The tendency of the Bishops to grasp at power and patronage is not precisely in harmony with the teachings of the Master, who taught simplicity and gave as the counsel of perfection : " Sell that thou hast and give to the poor."

There are certainly things in the Book of Common Prayer which would be better away. *The Ceremony of the Purification of Woman*, commonly called " Churching," is no credit or compliment to the feminine sex. It is a relic of mediæval days and of the early Fathers of the Church—Tertullian and others—who vilified woman. Of course the " Gateway of the Devil " would need to be purified, particularly as, according to some of the Fathers, this sex " had no soul " ; and that after giving to the world the crown of maternity. Islam does not agree with, nor even countenance, such ideas as are an insult to the dignity of womanhood. Muhammad says : " Paradise lies at the feet of thy mother," and does not style her the " instrument of Satan." Neither does Islam regard woman as an unclean thing to be purified with candles and mummeries after she has performed her mission of maternity and manifested the supreme glory of the Creation on the physical plane.

New Testament and Politics.

We have now and again animadverted on the teachings of the Bible in their relation to the social side of life. We have pointed out what a painful meagreness, verging on silence, there is on many a point whereon guidance and light are essential for the well-being and smooth working of the different component parts of a society. This deficiency of the Bible,

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brought to the fore by the recent general strike and the coal dispute in England which was its immediate cause, was emphasized very strongly by the failure of the attempt of the leaders of the Church to bring it to a speedy end. The strike happily terminated, not as a result of the intervention of the Church, but of the assertive might of common sense. The social convulsion which England had to experience was inevitable and was the immediate result of the teachings of a book which condemns the rich and holds out promises of every possible conceivable felicity to the poor to the exclusion of the rich. Such teachings can hardly be expected to evolve a well-balanced society.

We read in the *Evening Standard*, November 23, 1926, in an article entitled "New Testament and Politics," whence we borrow the title of this note, a few heart-searching truths and straight talks :—

The Great War dealt a severe blow to what Dean Inge calls institutional Christianity. The Pope, who held absolute sway over Austria and Bavaria, said not a word. The Lutheran clergy loudly and gleefully supported the war. The Church of England maintained a dignified reserve, praying for the living and mourning for the dead. The Church of Rome, it is true, claimed a great eagerness on the part of the dying to receive her offices. That does not count for much, and reminds one of the soldier crying, "O God, if there be one, save my soul, if I have one." It remains that a great many plain people asked, "If Christianity cannot prevent a war like this, what is its practical effect on life?" . . .

Wages are based on the ability of an industry to pay. But in modern practice, ethics have invaded "the ancient solitary reign" of economics. As soon as you begin to talk about a standard of living as right or wrong for this class or that, you are mixing ethics with economics, though ethics are not the same thing as Christianity. Lord Hugh Cecil, who is courageous as well as religious, raised this issue in a little book, entitled *Conservatism*, published some ten years ago. "Political principles must conform to some standard of right and wrong." Agreed; but what is that standard to be? Lord Hugh Cecil answers, like the Holy Alliance: "Christian morals as revealed in the New Testament."

To what department of politics is the standard of the New Testament applied or applicable? To foreign politics? To taxation? To tariffs? To labour questions? To the laws of contract, conspiracy, or divorce? *The New Testament is not concerned with this world, but the next.* [Italics are ours.—ED. I.R.] The New Testament

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knows nothing of expediency ; its ethics are based upon Divine command. Politics are very much concerned with this world, and with no other ; the art of government is based on expediency. Lord Hugh admits that the direct teaching of the New Testament in matters of State is "slight and even meagre." Take Socialism, some of whose advocates loudly claim Christianity as their authority. "There is not a line of the New Testament," writes Lord Hugh, "that can be quoted in favour of the enlargement of the function of the State beyond the elementary duty of maintaining order and repressing crime." Christianity is essentially and intensely individualist, and invites its followers to segregate themselves from the State and all its doings. Poverty is blessed and riches are cursed in the New Testament. Is that the view of the new partitioners of goods ? Are we not told by the modern Socialist that more money and better houses must be given to the poor ? Socialism is the better distribution of the goods of this world, here and now, and is the very negation of Christianity. What are we to say to a Samaritan Chancellor of the Exchequer who declares that he will compel the rich to assist the poor, and that he can spend their money better than they can themselves ?

Lord Hugh Cecil is too acute not to see the impossibility of applying his standard to the modern world. He disapproves of the existing organization of commerce and industry. "The competitive system is certainly not a Christian system." But he cannot help recognizing that the root of competition is the fact that human beings prefer their own interest to that of their neighbours. Finally, he escapes from his own mesh by asserting that Christianity has no concern with Socialism and Individualism, which are "a question of political machinery." But in so escaping Lord Hugh Cecil withdraws the whole field of modern politics from the purview and jurisdiction of Christianity. The modern statesman's difficulty is that while institutional Christianity has lost most of its authority over conduct, vague sentiment and the extension of the franchise have suffused economics with ethics. Religion and politics are not *in pari materiâ*. It is well that statesmen should be reminded of the consequences of their actions by reference to an ethical standard ; though just what that standard is or ought to be it is not easy to say. It probably may be described as the code of conduct recognized at the time by the educated men of civilized countries.

It is the laws and methods—well-defined and clear—dealing with the relations between man and man that are all-important ; and if a book fails us in this respect, what use, we may ask, has it for us mortals who, fortunately or unfortunately, have to pass our days in the midst of our fellow-men ?

Decay of the Churches and Applied Religion.

In connection with the above, the following leaderette from the *Daily Express*, November 23, 1926, will be found

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well worthy of serious thought for such as feel concerned at the present-day decay of the Churches :—

SERMONS AND PEOPLE.

The Rev. Arthur Goldring, a Devonshire rector, has just published a book in which he says that 24,000 sermons are delivered from Church of England pulpits every Sunday, and that, as far as it is possible to judge from outward evidence, this tremendous outburst of religious oratory has no appreciable effect on those who listen to it. With a praiseworthy gift for compromise, he divides the blame between the preachers, for lack of fervour, and the hearers, for lack of faith, but it is debatable whether it would not be more just to absolve the hearers altogether. Sermons have made commendable progress since the days of the aged cleric who, for the sake of apparent variety, preached in the morning with his false teeth in and repeated the sermon in the evening with his false teeth out. But are they, in the main, still close enough to the everyday lives of the people? The clergyman who deals with applied religion rather than theologies, he who talks with the people rather than at them, will find that he has little cause for complaint. And, what is more important, his congregation will be in the same position.

We could wish that the *Daily Express* had sought for practical and applied religion elsewhere than in so-called Christianity. "The New Testament is not concerned with this world, but the next." Islam is the only religion which has succeeded in intertwining the worldly with the religious, so that there is no gap between what a man does and what he believes. For example, to a Muslim, his formal daily greetings are a religious duty, which illustrates the manner in which the whole fabric of the social and worldly life of a Muslim is permeated by his religion, and proves that it is in Islam alone that applied religion is a reality.

L. Krehl, editor of *Al-Bukhārī*, says of the Qur-án, in his *Das Leben des Mohammad* (Leipzig, 1884) :—

There is given a complete code of creed and morals, as well as of the law based thereupon. There are also the foundations laid for every institution of an extensive commonwealth, for instruction, for the administration of justice, for military organization, for the finances, for a most careful legislation for the poor; all built up on the belief in the One God, who holds man's destinies in His hand.¹

Could the same be said of the Bible?

¹ Quoted by Hughes in his *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 1027. London, 1895.

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The Real Cause of the Decay of Churches.

Ours is an age full of contrasts. If, on the one hand, the whole of the Church is deluding itself with bright prospects and inebriate with fantastic vistas opened up to it by the "Calls," on the other hand, in the very same Church, we find much talk of dearth of clergy and general decay. This display of duplicity on the Church's part may appear puzzling to many of us. It would have been reasonable to expect the Church first to put its house in order before dissipating its energies elsewhere. In the Church there are men who are hard at work endeavouring to stay the collapse of the tottering edifice by drawing attention to the real cause of its decay, which is the fact of its being a piece of veneered paganism. This class of men, happily, are not pursuing the ostrich policy, nor, unlike their fellow-clergymen, are they deluding themselves into the belief that their position is secure by hiding their heads under the sand of the "Calls" as is the method of the bird already alluded to; which, they say, by concealing its head in the sand of the desert persuades itself into the foolish belief that as it cannot see the hunter, so it cannot be seen by him. Again, there are men who see the fate of the Church as an accomplished fact. For example, Mr. H. G. Woods, the Principal of Woodbrooke, who was, it may be recalled, one of the promoters of the "Questionnaire" on Religious Belief, says

positive Christianity has lost its hold on the majority of more highly-educated persons, and that it is only a question of time before it ceases to retain the allegiance of the majority of Englishmen.¹

While pronouncements of others like Dr. Barnes,² by way of diagnosis of the widespread drift away from the Churches, and the reason for their decay almost read like the accusations of Faustus against Augustine in the words—

¹ *Christian Life*, October 23, 1926.

² Dr. Barnes said "various types of reaction, products of desperate dives into the past, flourished; magical sacramentalism, Second Adventism, and Spiritualism were variants of primitive beliefs whose day was passed, and each of them was a symptom of religious decay" (*Catholic Times*, September 24, 1926).

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You have substituted your agape for the sacrifices of the pagans ; for their idols your martyrs, whom you serve with the very same honours. You appease the shades of the dead with wine and feasts ; you celebrate the solemn festivals of the Gentiles, their calends and solstices ; and as to their manners, those you have retained without any alteration. Nothing distinguishes you from the pagans except that you hold your assemblies apart from them—¹

it seems that although they perceive the danger ahead, they cannot summon sufficient courage to endorse the opinions of Mr. Woods. The Modern Churchman, no doubt, has succeeded in fumbling to the root cause. But this is not the entire truth. For even if we were to cut away the accretions—the paganism—which are enveloping the sublime teachings of Jesus Christ, we are still left wondering how the serious gap between the worldly and the religious is to be spanned—a gap which, let it be remembered, is to be traced at once to the shortness of the ministry and the loss of the pure teachings of the Great Nazarene.

Marahatti Encyclopædia and the Holy Prophet.

Last year the attention of the compilers of the *Marahatti Encyclopædia* was drawn to certain blasphemous statements in the article on Muhammad. The first voice of protest was raised by the “*Maarif*” of Azamgarh, and the firm attitude taken by the Marahatti-speaking Muslims, along with the efforts of His Holiness Mulla Táhir Saifuddin Sáhib in bringing home to the editors the gravity of their offence, not only because it was jarring to Muslim sensibilities but also because truth demanded the revision of the pronouncements, are worthy of record. The Chief Editor cited for his defence that notorious tissue of lies known as Margoliouth’s *Mohammed*. Our readers will doubtless recollect it was on this very masterpiece of distortion that we printed an article from the able pen of Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi in the March-April and the May numbers of last year. Our readers, of course, know what value to attach to all evidence based on the authority of the book by Margoliouth, which is a fine example of how to play havoc with literary decency.

¹ Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. i. p. 310. London, 1921.

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It is a matter of great gratification to learn that the Chief Editor has expressed his regret, and announced his decision to issue a corrigendum. We hasten to congratulate the Editorial Staff on the common sense which has been the main deciding factor in arriving at this decision, and the spirit of goodwill thus shown by them in respecting the sentiments of their great sister community. This atmosphere of mutual understanding will bring its own rewards and we are confident that the Editorial Staff will have no cause to rue its step. Though doubtless the mischief done cannot be completely undone, nevertheless Muslims will appreciate the action taken.

Over and above the fact that the Chief Editor has acquitted himself honourably by having performed his moral duty, a consideration of still greater importance is the paving of the way towards the demolition of the idol of the so-called European authority, which his step will hasten; for it is fairly well known that certain European Orientalists have not infrequently taken advantage of their connection with European seats of learning to conduct a disgraceful propaganda against Islam and its Great Founder. Professor Margoliouth is one of the luminaries in question, and it is not surprising to find that, with the advance of knowledge, the false lustre of the tinsel of such men is being exposed.

Woking Muslim Mission Staff.

Mr. R. Lissan, who had been associated with the Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din for the past four years in connection with the work of the Mission, at the London Muslim Prayer House and the Mosque, Woking, is leaving us by reason of ill-health. We shall miss in him not only a conscientious, sympathetic and able friend, but also a Muslim selfless worker whose services the Mission could ill afford to lose, especially at a time when its activities are growing in importance day by day. We wish him success and happiness in whatever walk of life may be his.

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WOMAN IN ISLAM

By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

(Continued from Vol. XV, p. 30)

BEFORE Islam, Woman was treated as a chattel. No religion or civilization has as yet raised her to the status that should have been her birthright. She was regarded as an evil but necessary appendage, and she received the worst treatment of all from Christianity. The story of the Temptation in the Book of Genesis, and the basic principle of the Church creed taken therefrom, damaged her position tremendously.

In dealing with the status of Woman, Islam and Christianity stand poles apart. The one has raised her from the lowest possible depths to a level equal to that of man, at a time when her degradation knew no limit ; the other thrust her back to thralldom at a time when she was beginning to emerge from it under Roman civilization. This civilization was struggling to raise her status when Christianity came like an icy blast and nipped the efforts in the very bud. The statement, though historically accurate, will surprise many amongst those who are accustomed to listen to the very different story told by Christian writers. But if even Jesus does not seem to concern himself about the female sex, and if those who immediately followed him—and have since been looked upon as the builders of the Church, and filled with the Holy Ghost—did nothing to improve her condition, while their words and actions brought every odium on her ; and if Christian States have continued this treatment for centuries, and, indeed, until recent days, when Woman began to assert herself, how can they declare that Christianity brought an honourable position to Woman ?

The Hebrew Law was unfavourable to her. The Divine command, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," had the effect of reducing her to the position of a chattel in the house, and so she was, in Judaic society. On the other hand, it must be remembered that Jesus did not

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come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. Whenever something appeared to him as an abuse of the Law, he expressed his disapproval of it, and tried to reform it. But in the case of Woman his silence shows that the idea of ameliorating her lot never occurred to him, though the self-indulgence of his tribe was peculiarly damaging to womankind.

If Paganism supplied the idea of a suffering Deity and of a crucified Saviour, and the sad event in the life of Jesus favoured their incorporation with Christianity, the legends of the Temptation in Genesis served as a beautiful connecting link between the two. It inspired the story of the Fall of Adam, and through him, the fall of the human race—a theory absolutely, and now admittedly, unknown to the Jews, but initiated by the writers of the Pauline literature to strengthen and explain the Pagan theory of redemption through blood. To that extent it acted well, but it was of no service to Woman. The whole blame of human perdition, by reason of this first sin, was laid at her door: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." Woman consequently could not be in the good books of those who took these expressions as the Word of God and believed in the theory of the Fall of Adam. This explains the cruel attitude which the Early Fathers and the real builders of the Church adopted towards Woman, following, as they did, in the footsteps of St. Paul. In fact, her disgrace at the hands of these Fathers was the true and logical sequel to the Christian beliefs, of which the following is an illustration: "Do you know," says Tertullian, when addressing Women, "that you are each Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age; the guilt, of necessity, must live too. You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that tree; you are the first deserter of the Divine Law; you destroyed as easily God's image."

The Christian apologist of modern culture, while he sees in it mediæval savagery and wantonness, cannot rationally deny that "the pious aspersions" of the Father were not without justification. The logic was simple and true. If it was believed that sin was a heritage and eternal condemnation its

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price—and so it is believed till to-day—then eternal condemnation has come through Woman; she opened the door of all human sufferings. She is “the organ of the devil,” “a scorpion ever ready to sting,” “the poisonous asp,” “the malice of the dragon.” These are some of the blessings that Woman received from persons of exalted position in the Church, such as St. Bernard, St. Anthony, St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, and St. Paul, who seem to me to be at the bottom of it. His personal¹ grudge against the sex, in consequence of his suit being rejected by a Jewish young woman, the high priest’s daughter, perhaps, was responsible for it. Say what you will, if “sin in nature” is the foundation-stone of the sacramental religion, which Christianity has become—the principle of atonement and of the divinity of Christ are mere corollaries of it, then Woman deserves all that has been said by these Fathers. Present-day culture may not tolerate it, but her real redemption lies only in exposing the falsity of these beliefs. And was not the Holy Prophet, even on this very point, the real benefactor of Woman, seeing that he gave the lie to this crude theology, and took exception to the theory of sin in nature? He declared that every child was born sinless, and that in the case of the Temptation, man and woman were not respectively the tempted and the tempter, but both of them equally suffered and were equally deceived by the evil agency.

Just at the time when the Christian Church was so outrageously trampling on womanhood, and the rest of the world was treating her no less cruelly, Muhammad came to save the situation. He raised Woman to such a height as she had never dreamed of before—a height which leaves her nothing higher for which to strive.

While the Christian Fathers were harping on the slogan that woman was made for man and not man for woman, Muhammad told the world that woman was the twin-half of man, in commenting upon the Qur-ánic verse, that revealed in the following words the great truth that man and woman had come from the same essence and were one and the same

¹ Epiph. *Hæ.*, xxx. 16, p. 14. *Islamic Review*, vol. xii, p. 232.

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in that respect : " O people ! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two, many men and women ; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, by whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship ; surely Allah ever watches over you." The Qur-án gave the name of *mohsina* to Woman, which meant that she was neither the " organ of the devil " nor his gateway, but a *rocky fortress against Satan*, a lighthouse of virtue and continence that alone can save man from shipwreck while tossing among the stormy waves of passion. The Bible says : " Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," but Muhammad says : " Woman is the sovereign of your house." St. Paul may say : " Let the woman learn in silence, without subjection, for I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence " ; but the Qur-án contradicts him when it says : " Woman has like rights with those of man—the same is due to her as is due from her." She is not " a scorpion ever ready to sting," but " a garment of man as he is her garment " ¹ ; she is not the " instrument of iniquity," as these Christian Fathers call her, but, in the words of the Qur-án,² a fountain of love and affection. Let Jesus say to his mother : " Woman, what have I to do with thee ? "—put whatever construction you like on these words and come with any explanation you please, people in Christendom even to-day reflect this utterance of their Master in their actions—the affluence of sons go hand in hand with the indigence of mothers in the West—mothers are discarded and disregarded—but a Muslim leaves no effort undone to pay all respect and reverence to his mother, because his Prophet Muhammad tells him : " Paradise lies at the feet of a mother." Happy marriage may be a lottery in the West, as some assert, but it makes a wife, in a Muslim house, the dearest of friends, a counterpart of man susceptible to all healthy and salutary influences. It could not well be otherwise, seeing that we are bound to obey the Master who says :

¹ Qur-án, ii. 187.

² *Ibid.*, xxx. 21.

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‘The best of you are they who behave best to their wives.’ Again he says: “The best of you before God and His creation are those who are best in their own families, and I am the best to my family.”

“One of the disciples inquired of the Apostle as to what treatment should be meted out to a wife. He answered: ‘Give her to eat when you eat yourself, and clothe her when you clothe yourself; and do not slap her on the face nor abuse her, nor separate yourself from her in displeasure.’”

“Give your wife good counsel, and do not beat your noble wife like a slave.”

“Admonish your wives with kindness.”

“A Muslim must not hate his wife; and if he be displeased with one bad quality in her, then let him be pleased with another which is good.”

Just a quarter of a century after the time when the council of Christian Fathers at Meccan were discussing whether any female could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and with great difficulty they had come to the conclusion that she might enter into Paradise, but that she would have to be sexless, the Qur-án brought the gospel to her in the following words:—

“Enter into Paradise, ye and your wives delighted.”

“But whoso doth the things that are right, whether the male or female, and is a believer, whether male or female, they shall enter into Paradise.”

“Whoso doth that which is right, whether male or female, him or her will we quicken to happy life.”

When the world was doubtful whether any spiritual advancement was open to Woman at all, the Qur-án taught the following: “Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember—

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Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward." ¹ It is only utter ignorance of Islam and blind prejudice against it that comes to the surface when our adverse critics assert that Woman, under Islam, does not possess a soul. It hardly needs any elaborate discussion to refute this piece of foolhardiness. If a Man possesses a soul, Woman must possess one also, seeing that both are, according to the teaching of the Qur-án, of the same essence.

MARRIAGE ENNOBLED

Muhammad gave a new and noble meaning to the institution of marriage. He sanctified it by making it a channel for the working out of high morality and for developing that germ ² of love and compassion which is embedded in the human breast. The spirit of sacrifice is the backbone of all noble passions; and marriage gives a natural impetus to it, and brings it to the surface. After marriage, man and woman live for each other and for their children. They make every sort of sacrifice for their comfort. Thus family life widens the heart and broadens the consciousness. We learn to feel and do for others as we do for ourselves, and the greater the number of the family, the more occasion there is for this sort of moral discipline. I am inclined to think that polygamy, if carried on in strict observance of the Muslim Law, would be a great help towards that end, though it must needs entail many troubles and hardships. For a man to be equal in his love and in his treatment towards his several wives is a tremendous task of an arduous nature, and if a person succeeds, he is certainly not an average person. But if he is unable to do so, he commits sin, ³ under the Qur-án, if he takes more than one wife. And in this respect, Muhammad again proves an ideal personality. None of his wives had any complaint of his being partial to another. He was, on the other hand, surprisingly impartial in his treatment of all of them. And there is nothing carnal in the fact of his having so many wives. His was a most abstemious life of starvation and want—a life which could hardly have aroused passions. He was in the

¹ Qur-án, xxxiii. 35.

² *Ibid.*, xxx. 21.

³ *Ibid.*, iv.

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prime of his life when he married first, a widow of forty years. He did not take another wife until the Lady Khadija, his first wife, died. He was then fifty-two years of age. Then he married a virgin, the Lady Ayesha. At this time he was compelled to wage war against his enemies, which thinned the ranks of his friends, who gave their lives for him, leaving behind widows, who surely needed shelter and protection. Then it was that the law of polygamy was promulgated, to meet this necessity ; neither should it be forgotten that most of the widows who came under the protection of the Prophet as his wives had passed the age of connubial relations. There was no question of desire or of the flesh in these marriages. Rather, it created an occasion for the Prophet to show that a woman who possesses no personal charms has an equal claim on and should receive an equal share of all the regard and consideration of the husband—even if he be the husband of some handsome woman.

POLYGAMY

Monogamy should not be taken as a Christian verity. Polygamy was in vogue in Christendom only a few centuries ago, not only among the laity, but the clergy also. Every other religion and civilization has allowed it. Jesus undoubtedly was not himself a lawgiver, and did not say anything on the subject. But he followed the Mosaic law and was insistent on its observance. The law and practice of the house of Jacob encouraged polygamy, and that to an extent which must sound fantastic to a modern mind, seeing that a patriarch among the Israelites could afford to bring five hundred wives under his roof. Jesus tried, among other things, to reform the self-indulgence of his tribe, but polygamy did not occur to him as a matter for reformation, though freely practised by his own people. Monogamy was first made a matter of legislation in the West by the Emperor Justinian, a Roman and a pagan Jurist, but, like many other Roman virtues, it became something of a back number for many centuries under the onslaughts of Christianity.

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Islam came to reform the abuses of the world at large, and took notice of polygamy as well. It brought it under drastic restrictions, and made it next to an impossibility in ordinary cases. The institution, as such, was not without its use under special circumstances. A house with no children is a graveyard. The first marriage may prove barren for years, and if the wife is responsible for the misfortune, a second marriage would be the only thing in requisition in the case of those whose happiness remains incomplete without children. In India, such marriages take place often at the instance of the first wife herself. It was to meet such contingencies of an exceptional character that polygamy received countenance in Islam. If the females sometimes outnumber the males—and this occurs in and after a period of war—it furnishes another argument for bringing more than one wife under one roof, to ward off evil in its most heinous form. It was in the days of wars, when the number of women had increased in Medina, that the Qur-ānic verses allowing polygamy under certain restrictions were revealed. The sexual instinct is, after all, a life tendency, and cannot become extinct. The curbing of the passions is unhealthy, and the institution of celibacy has always and everywhere created a spirit of moral leprosy. Men and women are entitled, under the demands of Nature, to claim companionship of each other in lawful wedlock, but promiscuous intermixture is pernicious to society. Is not polygamy—carried on, of course, with Muslim restriction—the only remedy under such circumstances? We do not advocate it—we resort to it only by way of remedy; and Islam can dispense with it without affecting its tenets.

Europe has, since the war, been facing the same problem. The war has left women outnumbering men in the West to an appalling extent. Unmarried life is unnatural and unhealthy. It is a sin, if sin means anything and everything that is damaging to human progress.

But has Christendom been purged of polygamy? Marriage, in its bald form, is after all a connection of man and woman. Our interest in the coming generation and the consciousness of paternity gives sanctity to the institution of marriage.

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Take it in its initial form, and the Christian in the West would appear to be more of a polygamist than the Muslim anywhere. The latter, in very rare cases (and, moreover, in a legalized form), does that which the former does unscrupulously and in an illegal form. But what an irony of fate! The former action, so healthy in its consequences, is branded as an offence which the law calls "bigamy," while the latter, so flagrant and shameless in its methods, is practised with impunity, and the law takes no cognizance of it. Legislation should not succumb to sentimentality; its mission should be the betterment of human society and to contribute to the happiness of that society. There are two evils which the world, from the beginning, has never been able to remedy—the uncontrolled brutality of man when under the excitement of his passions, and the weakness of a woman when she has become a victim thereto; and what is the result? Bastardy for the child, misery and shame for the mother. Has religion or civilization, in this matter, schemed out anything to remedy this double evil? Muslim lands are free from it. Why should the innocent children, who were not consulted by their parents as to their being wrought into this world to a life of infamy, be debarred from inheriting the name and property of their fathers? England had, in a manner, to recognize "war babies," and thus give indirect countenance to polygamy. But that was a temporary measure. Humanitarian principles have come forward to provide "Houses of Rescue" and "Foundling Hospitals" to save these innocent victims of human depravity from misery and indigence, but what about the ignominy that stigmatizes their whole life and leaves their mothers in the lurch? Could they not have been saved from all this, if the mothers had been allowed by the law to hold the honourable position of a second wife, where the first marriage, for various reasons, could not accomplish the matrimonial purpose?

Polygamy was observed indiscriminately before Islam, as I said before, and there was no restriction as to the number of a man's wives. He could have as many as he wished. Islam regulated the number if special circumstances did

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unavoidably necessitate plurality of wives. There are certain contingencies in life where polygamy alone can check incontinence. The Muslim conception of evil is very vast. Islam regards it from various angles, and one of them is the hygienic angle. In connubial life, there arise occasions when man and woman should separate from each other for hygienic reasons. For instance, woman labours under certain disabilities, for a week, in every month. The days of pregnancy, and the time of suckling a child are further disabilities that would last at least for eighteen months. In the interest of the health of the child and of the mother, Islam strongly recommends that husband and wife should not share beds under these conditions. In this respect Muhammad advised us to exercise control over our passions, and suggested various ways which might help us, of which fasting was one. But in no case would he leave any loophole for misconduct. He would rather allow the husband to have the company of another wife than violate hygienic laws or pursue the course of incontinence ; and if we observe these injunctions strictly, the number of wives will come to four.

A special correspondent of the *Daily Express* who visited Nottingham recently says : " It is estimated that there are four women to every man in a population of more than a quarter of a million. On this estimate there must be about 200,000 women and girls and only 50,000 men. Four girls to every man ! It is an astonishing thought. Yet it is true. A walk around the crowded market and Long Row in the evening will convince the most unobservant stranger of this fact."

Referring to the beauty of the pretty girls of Nottingham, the correspondent says : " Nottingham is not the place for a susceptible married man. I am returning to London by the next train."

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim Prayer House —III, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday at 1 p.m. **Sunday Lectures** at 5 p.m. **Qur-ân and Arabic Classes**—every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.

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PENITENCE—SOUL—ETERNAL BLISS

PENITENCE—SOUL—ETERNAL BLISS

By A. KHALIQUE KHAN, B.A., M.R.A.S. (Lond.)

THE fact that the word "Taubatun" signifies the repenting of sin—that is to say, the grieving for it, together with the confession of having no excuse for the commission thereof, and that, according to a tradition—"Alnamado Taubatun"—repentance is a returning from sin—is of deep significance. From the same root comes "Tawwabun," which applies both to a man who repents often, and also to God, Who extends forgiveness to His servant who returns to Him.

The Arabic word "Taubah" (repentance) gives us, in fact, the true philosophy of repentance. "Tába il-Allah" means "he retraced his steps to Allah," and in the moral sense "Taubah" implies a perfect change in a man's behaviour and a transformation, that is to say from the path of error to that of Truth; from the way of disobedience to that of obedience to the laws of Nature, and true resignation to the Will of God.

It does not imply only lip-profession or the utterance of a few words in a confession-box, but the actual moulding of character; the true guidance of the erring self, the cleansing of the blurred conscience—all of which are the true meaning of "Taubah" (repentance) in Islam, and the real object of any religion.

On the surface, penitence might be taken to mean remorse only—the biting of conscience; but in its deep significance it comprises three parts: a knowledge; a state; and action. Knowledge is the recognition of the great harmfulness of sin; and of the fact that sin is as a dark veil, hanging between man and the object of his love—God. If there is this recognition and realization, then a heartfelt grief overtakes a man for the loss of what he loves, and for the gulf that has widened between him and the object he longs to possess. Now this phase of the human mind perceives that it is the loss of its real object—the ideal of life; but as that loss is the direct result of its unnatural act, so it grieves over the act that caused it, and conscience is awakened to turn it back to its previous condition of innocence, before the actual evil occurred with

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all its baneful effects. When conscience upbraids, the will or purpose of action boldly steps into the arena, ready for the emotional struggle which is to battle with the previous sensation of pain. But we find that the will or purpose of action, that desires to act as an antiseptic in cleansing the mind of its consciousness of sin, has itself a strong connection with the past, the present and the future. So, naturally, we see that a single act of disobedience or sin and the eradication of its evil effect from the mind, must involve a revolutionary change in character and personality. One who was wicked yesterday has become good to-day. This mental transformation or sudden upheaval in character is, in Qur-ánic terminology, called "Taubatun Nusuh." It means there is no retrogression—no returning to sin at all, after such an evolutionary process has set in, leaving its permanent stamp on the human mind.

The connection of the will or purpose of action with the present, as stated before, is renunciation of the sin with which it has been associated. Its connection with the future is its resolve to abandon, till the end of life, the sin which caused such mental distress, the upbraiding of conscience, and the needless prolonging of the journey to our goal—God. Its connection with the past is to make amends for the past by reparation as far as possible, and by the performance of duty.

The first element, then, is knowledge—that sheds its beacon light on the path to future blessings, and that knowledge is not severed from belief and strong conviction. For belief is, in fact, admission of the truth that sin is a deadly poison, and the strong conviction that sets the mind the work to prevent that poison from spreading.

Every acid poison can be neutralized by a strong alkali, and so every sin can be washed away by succeeding good deeds, as said by the last Prophet—"Al-hasanato yuzhibnas saíáti." So, psychologically traced, knowledge, remorse, and resolve (connected with the present and the future in the renunciation of sin, and with the past in making reparation) are three separate elements implicitly conveying a single thought.

PENITENCE—SOUL—ETERNAL BLISS

The word "penitence," as stated before, is applicable to the whole idea—comprising the three elements of thought. The same meaning of the word "penitence" is conveyed in the verses of the Qur-án :—

" . . . Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allah is forgiving, merciful " (iii. 88).

" And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says, Surely now I repent " (iv. 18).

" Do they not know that Allah accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms, and that Allah is the oft-returning (to mercy) the Merciful ? " (ix. 104).

It is quite clear from the above verses that Islam is a religion of action, and if it have its theoretical side, which is belief, it is only to stimulate action ; for, in it, theory and practice go side by side.

Sin and transgression destroy the seed of good thought that stimulates good actions. A man given to a sinful state of life is tossed on a trackless sea of trouble, and burns in a hell of emotions ; this sort of worried state of mind is called by Al-Qur-án " Hūzn," for the mind is perplexed, the mental vision is blurred, and life seems to be a series of worries and breakdowns.

In sin, the mind is in a benumbed state of paralysis ; the discriminative power—the power to decide between right and wrong—is at its lowest ebb ; hope is turned into mirage ; stamina to face life and its concomitant trials is gone ; hence the rein of passion is let loose for further sin and aggression, till life is destroyed, and its noble ideal shadowed in dark oblivion.

(To be continued.)

TO OUR READERS

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A LETTER FROM LORD HEADLEY TO THE ASSISTANT-BISHOP OF LONDON

51, KENSINGTON HALL GARDENS, W. 14,
December 26, 1926.

MY DEAR BISHOP,

Thank you for your letter of the 23rd inst. I am aware that Dr. Ingram is away, but think it only right that you should know of the dispute between us, and I am sorry to think that no sort of explanation or apology has reached me for the extremely offensive statements which have appeared under his name in Miss Sawbridge's book.

It is now very many months since I made a formal complaint—couched in, I hope, most temperate language—concerning the un-Christian and vindictive passages contained in this book which the Bishop of London commends “to the Church and Nation.”

As you are now aware, I brought the matter before His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the following is an excerpt from my letter:—

“We (Muslims) never talk of our Lord Jesus Christ except with reverence and veneration, and we take it to heart when we hear the divinely inspired Prophet alluded to as ‘the false prophet.’ It can surely be no part of any Christian's duty to vilify the Founder of a great sister religion devoutly believed in by over 220 millions of the human race? I beg, therefore, that you will call on the Bishop of London to withdraw his patronage from this vindictive and scurrilous publication.”

The Archbishop wrote me a most kindly and non-committal reply, but did nothing so far as I know.

It is unfortunate that Dr. Ingram—for whose delightful and kindly personality we all have a great admiration—seems to have been led into believing all that the missionaries and others hostile to Islam tell him. He appears to have swallowed

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without much effort the made-up story of the "30,000 Christian girls forced into Turkish harems and languishing to be free"; but he forgets that anything he repeats of a misleading character gets copied all over the world as the Bishop of London's *ex-cathedra* dictum, and therefore correct in all particulars. But the truth must prevail, and, when it does, the Bishop will be found fault with for circulating that which is, after all, an ignoble attempt to discredit a faith which has stood the test of many centuries and which comforts and sustains so many millions of his fellow human beings.

Similarly with Miss Sawbridge's work, described as a "beautiful little book," the Bishop of London is now saddled with the responsibility of explaining how it is that he could possibly have put his name to such a vindictive compilation!

There are probably quite as many good and God-fearing Muslims as there are good and God-fearing Christians in the world, and it ill becomes the supposed followers of the gentle Jesus to try to spread trouble abroad by means of false statements.

Some Christians seem to assume that they have a prescriptive right to God; quite forgetting that He is *our Father also and directly approachable by the humblest Muslim without any intervention whatever from any source*. My Christian friends tell me that I must be damned because I don't believe in the dogmas as being necessary to salvation. But, as General Charles Gordon used to say, you never hear a Muslim say that Christians must be damned because they do so believe!

"This is the Catholick faith which except a man believe faithfully *he cannot be saved*"; the words are quite plain, but they convey nothing to my brain and even less to my heart.

With the compliments of the season,

Believe me, dear Bishop,

Very truly yours,

(Signed) HEADLEY.

To the Rt. Rev. Hubert Bury,

Assistant-Bishop of London.

THE RELIGION OF NATURE

By AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men ; there is no altering of Allah's creation : that is the right religion, but most people do not know.—Qur-án, xxx. 30.

THESE sacred words sum up the religion of man. They give quite a new conception of it. They neither speak of prayers nor of offerings nor of sacrifice. To please God or appease an angered Deity, or to create reconciliation between the Creator and the created are not the objectives of religion as set forth in the above quotation. It speaks of something quite different. It refers to our own nature and its various latent constituents. To work them out is our objective, and the way to work them out is the religion revealed to man from the Most High.

The religion of man is the religion of everything in nature, from nebulae to the material world, and from the material world up to humanity. Matter in its various combinations seems to possess inherent properties at each stage of its evolution. It awaits favourable circumstances and assimilates material necessary for its environment, to work out the wonderful things treasured in them. The light from a glow-worm through various specializations evolves into an electric arc. The noise of a cricket is developed into melodious music. A seed becomes a full-grown tree with flowers and fruit. In short, everything in Nature is a treasure-house of probabilities and possibilities. Each generation of science enriches our knowledge concerning the properties of things, and these seem to be inexhaustible. Should not we think the same of man ? After all, a genital seed is only a drop of water, but if we go a little further to spermatic conditions, it is of microscopic size, and that tiny thing, invisible to the human eye, contains within itself human flesh, bones, limbs, brain, consciousness, mind, and soul. If sperma has travelled up to the condition of a full-grown man, on the physical plane, it cannot be supposed to have reached its entelechy, especially when the

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human frame seems to possess consciousness and mind of an unimaginable growth. If every other thing in Nature is on its way to development, and must inevitably work out everything latent in it, man must come under the same rule. He is, in himself, a world—the universe in miniature. Everything in Nature became located in him and must work out its inherent qualities. If seminal matter or a clot of blood, the second embryonic stage of the seed, becomes evolved into a frame so wonderful as that of man, in whom matter reaches its climax in its physical growth, the same clot must bring its mental, moral, and spiritual capacities to consummation, too.

Physical growth in every organism progresses automatically. Every organic system possesses a sort of constructive ability that assimilates anything and everything that is beneficial to the growth of the said organism and rejects all that is harmful. The whole atmosphere contains food for everything in the earth. The bowels of the earth, similarly, provide universal nourishment, but what is useful for the growth of one organism may be harmful to the other ; nevertheless, the material for world-nourishment is a mixed mass and more or less the same. An orchard contains different trees. They receive the same sunshine ; they are irrigated with the same water ; they are enveloped in the same atmosphere ; and the same area of land provides them with the food they have to receive from the bowels of the earth. Yet they differ in shape, form, foliage, flower, and fruit. Fruits, in their turn, differ in taste, aroma, and properties. It is this same constructive ability that differentiates between the friend and the foe. It accepts from the common food that which is favourable to its growth and rejects what is baneful. The same working goes on in the human frame in its physical development. The stomach assimilates profitable things and spurns those that are harmful, and if a diseased stomach cannot perform its function properly, it means disease. Disease is only the remonstrance of human nature against the presence of some foreign element in the system, and medical aid comes to clear the system of the undesirable matter by means of purgatives and surgical operations. This working of the said constructive ability in

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our body is automatic. It is regular and systematic in its ways, but we seem to possess no such constructive ability for our mental, moral, and spiritual growth. We are decidedly inordinate in this respect, rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, get the same physical growth everywhere. It is a general rule; stunted or defective physical growth is an exception. But mental, moral, and spiritual growth is not automatic or universal. It needs special instruction and guidance. This universal observation shows that we lack constructive ability on the spiritual plane. The clot of blood in the womb progresses unconsciously, but when it gives birth to consciousness which is to develop when man enters into the world—because that seems to be the main object of his coming to life—he does not possess inherent faculties to go on the right lines. He is *inordinate* in this respect. The very first message which came to Muhammad, the Teacher of Islam, when the mantle of prophethood fell on his shoulders, disclosed this great truth. It revealed that, if the seminal use could be evolved into such an honoured form, that, by its action, material progress can reach its consummation in the human frame, the same end can be attained in the progress of his consciousness; but he is *inordinate* in this respect. He needs guidance, and God intends that he should. The first message, which I have mentioned, came in the following words: "Read in the Name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most honourable, Who taught (to write) with the pen, Taught man what he knew not. Nay! man is most surely inordinate, because he sees himself free from want."¹

What a truism, "Man is most surely inordinate, because he sees himself free from want." As long as his agency is not needed in his growth on the physical plane, he is taken for granted, but as soon as the question actually arises, his judgment and volition, if untutored, show inordinacy at each step.

Human consciousness is, indeed, a wonderful creation—a new creation, as the Qur-án says: "And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him a small life-germ in a firm-resting place, then We made the life-germ

¹ Qur-án, xcvi. 1-3.

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a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh, bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation." It is a collection of all animal consciousness—the dog, the cat, the tiger, the wolf, the cow, the lamb, the birds, the denizens of the sea have all been placed within the four walls of human consciousness; hence his lower passions. Whichever animal passion gets the better of his judgment converts him into that particular animal. His body is a moving zoo, but he is the keeper of the zoo, and he needs knowledge to control his animals and to make use of them with propriety. We need a religion which may enable us to tame all these animals (that is to say, our carnal passions) and make proper use of them.

Human consciousness has a variety of sides—active, emotional, mental, social, moral, ethical, spiritual, occult, etc. They are all gifts of God, and have their respective parts to play in the moulding of human character. In an evolved soul, the human heart creates a sort of commonwealth in which every side of human consciousness is looked after, every human passion is given fair play, and every craving of Nature is satisfied in a way complementary to and not at the expense of the other furniture of the heart. Religion comes to help us in this respect. God is the Creator of our nature. He has placed in us innumerable things. Everything in Nature is potentially perfect, and so must man be. But as every other thing reaches its perfection in the course of time, so must man. The whole work of God in creating a being like man will come to nothing if all his potentialities do not come to actuality. The object of the creation of our species would be nullified if we could not bring to the surface what is inherently reposed in us. Explore the various seams and recesses of your heart and see what enormous probabilities and possibilities we possess. Are they to remain dormant? Is there no way to bring them out? To think so is blasphemy. It is to pick holes in God's wisdom. What an invaluable treasure has science bestowed upon us. Everything that to-day is contributing towards our comfort and civilization has always existed in the creation of the Lord. It was created to minister to our needs, but ignorance stood

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between us and their utility. Knowledge and application have reaped us an inestimable harvest. It came within our reach through the cultivation of the mental side of our nature. The brute in man made healthy societies and governments when the social side of Nature was worked on right lines. What a millennium awaits us when the hitherto undeveloped sides of human nature come out as they really are. The last few years have given an insight into some occult things concerning man to materialistic Western minds. People have become disgusted with traditional theology in the West. Vacant pews and empty churches speak louder than human words against the inefficiency of the dogmatized faith. The Western mind has become awakened to finding out ways for self-realization. But the history of modern culture will show them that man, if left without Divine Light, is always *inordinate*. Modern science, which can mainly be credited with our present culture, did not come within human reach before Islam. The Qur-án came to give impetus to modern culture. It declared man the Lord of the Universe and vice-regent of God on earth.¹ It declared everything in the world was created to minister to human need. The Book also showed the way to reduce Nature to human service. Thus Divine Revelation came to guide us to our material progress. If we investigate the genesis of the laws of morality and ethics that at present govern human society, we shall find again Divine Revelation as the origin. In short, religion from God comes to work out our nature to its perfection, as the Qur-án says: "Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation: that is the right religion, but most people do not know."

Any cult, creed or persuasion that does not come to the above mark through its doctrines and tenets is only a species of fetishism and unworthy of being called a religion from God.

¹ And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth one who shall rule (in it), they said: What! wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: Surely I know what you do not know (Qur-án, ii. 30).

HUMAN NATURE

HUMAN NATURE

By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

Certainly We created man in the best make. Then we render him the lowest of the low, except those that believe and do good, so they shall have a reward never to be cut off.—Qur-án xcv.

EVERY religion that was followed by any race did originally come from Divine sources. The kind and merciful God Who blessed man with so many physical boons would scarcely have neglected his physical requirements. If He equips us with various capacities, "It rests upon Allah to show the right way"¹ to their fulfilment. He creates² human capabilities, and would surely not leave man without some means of self-expression. Religion, in fact, came to guide us to self-realization. The same religion was given to every human race, though almost all other religions deny this human privilege to the followers of other persuasions. They claim Divine Revelation as the source of their religion, but they would not credit others with it. Like the Christian Church, they call the teachers of other religions impostors. Even Jesus has wrongly been reported, perhaps, in the Gospel according to St. John, to have styled the Divine forerunners as thieves,³ but Islam came with a salutary message in this respect. It declared that every nation⁴ before the advent of Islam had its Prophet and Warner from God. But the vicissitudes of time cruelly affected the Divine Message, and the teachings of the Divine Messengers suffered in its purity. Religion everywhere became degraded into a cult of ritual and ceremonial or became a creed of sacraments. Just as Judaism became merged in a system

¹ And upon Allah it rests to show the right way, and there are some deviating (ways); and if He pleases He would certainly guide you all aright (Qur-án, xvi. 9).

² These are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful (Qur-án, ii. 5).

We said: Go forth from this (state) all; so surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve (Qur-án, ii. 38).

³ John x. 8.

⁴ By Allah, most certainly We sent (apostles) to nations before you, but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he is their guardian to-day, and they shall have a painful chastisement (Qur-án, xvi. 63).

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of ceremonialism, under which the letter was preferred to the spirit, so the simple faith of Jesus gave way to religion of sacraments of pagan origin, and the main object of religion—the unfolding of self—was lost sight of. “At the appearance of Jesus, there were temples without end, dedicated to gods like Apollo or Dionysius among the Greeks, Hercules among the Romans, Mithra among the Persians, Adonis and Attis in Phrygia and Syria, Osiris and Horus in Egypt; Baal and Ishtar among the Babylonians and Carthaginians,”¹ and Quetzacoatl among the Mexicans. All these deities were sun-gods, and the story of Jesus and the faith foisted upon him by the Church as a religion of a “slain deity” repeat the same story. I have appended a brief account of some of these sun-gods to these pages of all these mythical conceptions of sky scriptures. It was believed that :—

- (1) They were born on or near Christmas Day.
- (2) They were born of a Virgin Mother.
- (3) And in a cave or underground chamber.
- (4) They led a life of toil for mankind.
- (5) They were called by the names of Light-Bringer, Healer, Mediator, Saviour, Deliverer.
- (6) They were, however, vanquished by the powers of darkness.
- (7) They descended into Hell or the Underworld.
- (8) They rose again from the dead and became the pioneers of mankind to the Heavenly World.
- (9) They founded Communions of Saints and Churches into which disciples were received by baptism.
- (10) They were commemorated by Eucharistic meals.

Thus it will appear that the Religion of Sacraments—Baptism and Holy Communion—is not a New Dispensation. Jesus, a true Messenger from God, who lived and tried to uplift his fellow-men and who still is loud in his message, “My God and Your God is One God,” “Do not call me good, for there is none good but One, that is God”² was raised to the

¹ Cf. *Sources of Christianity*.

² John, xx. 17.

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pinnacle of divinity and painted in the pagan colours of a Suffering God. No wonder if these pagan colours led some of the honest thinkers in the West to regard the "Sacred Hero of the Christian Gospel as only a mythical conception handed down from antiquity to the succeeding generations of men with a change in name and place, but retaining its pristine characteristic colours always."

The Christian world of the heathens was not without its Christs, and Jesus was made a representative character of the old order—a new centre of ancient traditions, a new sanctuary, as it were, which enshrines the legends of the old.

Such teachings can in no case contribute to self-realization. If mere belief in the blood of a crucified god, unattended by good actions, as Luther says, but accompanied with Baptism and partaking of Eucharistic meals, may be taken as sufficient for human salvation, there remains no moral impulse for man towards that hard life which is essential for the working out of what is good and noble in our nature. If such beliefs and ceremonies could not uplift the pagan world—and as the traditional Christianity is only a replica of ancient things—how can it help Churchmen in the West by the mere change of name and place in the story of their faith? What a pity! That religion of the noble Nazarene that came to demolish the paganism of Europe became a miserable victim to that same paganism! The history of Christendom bears ample testimony to this. Only a few generations of Christians after the Master maintained his traditions. The true Christian spirit at first dominated their lives, but when Pauline literature inspired the builders of the Church to incorporate most of the pagan cult, with some Messianic colours as its distinctive features, into Christianity, it began to walk knee-deep in blood. Real Christian life disappeared. I am not speaking of the mediæval days. The present-day Christendom is also devoid of true Christian elements.

It is quite natural if these beliefs that are alien to the teachings of Jesus led the Church, that to-day is passed under its name, to take a very low view of human nature, the story of the Fall of Adam and belief in its perpetual condemning

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effect—a story unknown to and not even hinted at by Jesus and to-day rejected by some of the so-called Christian Divines—was introduced into the Church beliefs to strengthen the theory of tainted human nature. Our nature, though potentially perfect at its inception, it is said, became tainted by an error of our first parents, and even to-day, though a great number of generations have passed, we bear the heritage of the sin—a belief falsified by everything in the Creation of God.

It was to contradict these false dogmas that the Qur-án said: “The nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah’s creation: that is the right religion, but most people do not know” (xxx. 30). Does not every atom or atomic combination bear testimony to it? Which thing in the Creation of the Lord is potentially imperfect? Which thing in His creation exhibits alteration in working out its properties? No element in any stage of its evolution discloses any taint. A seed of a tree is perfect at its inception. Some unfortunate circumstances may affect its utility and the result may be a defective tree, but various can be resorted to to restore it to its real worth. Even our modern seedsmen have found a way to treat defective seeds before they are planted so that they may then be relied upon to give good fruit. Such was the case with our first parents. If Adam did commit wrong, his repentance came to remove the consequence of his wrong. The Qur-án says the same thing. Adam was given a commandment; he forgot it under diabolic influence and committed sin, but without any intention to disobey the Lord.¹

Then came repentance and forgiveness, and God was pleased to give guidance to him and his children from time to time. We read the following in the Qur-án: “Then Adam

¹ And certainly We gave a commandment to Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination (to disobey) (xx. 115).

The legend of Creation in the Book of Genesis differs from the Qur-án in this respect, but as the very genuineness of the Pentateuch has been rightly impeached, as Moses never wrote it, while most of the legends of the Book of Genesis are merely a hearsay account, we cannot attach any importance to the story of Adam given therein.

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received some words from His Lord, so He turned to him (mercifully). Surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy) the Merciful. We said, 'Go forth from this (state) all; so surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve.'

The Qur-ānic version of the story of Adam is quite compatible with the rest of the Creation. Everything is capable of acquiring defects, but every such defect can be cured. The theory of the Blood also confirms it. The Blood, after all, came to cure our tainted nature. But that God should wait for some 4,000 years for the remedy after the commission of the first sin is absolutely inconsistent with Divine economy. If the Blood of Jesus was the only cure for tainted nature, what induced God to allow the continuance of the taint until 2,000 years ago? What were those particular circumstances which kept the appearance of the "Grace" in abeyance for so many thousands of years? A high dignitary of the Church in London says that Christ will appear in the fullness of time. What does this "fullness of time" mean? The world has seen darker days than those of the time of Jesus. If the predominance of sin demands the appearance of somebody to remedy it, then the world was at its darkest at the advent of the Founder of Islam, when evil was rampant and virtue extinct.

In any case, if Adam committed sin and that sin tainted human nature, the Crucifixion should have taken place either immediately after the commission of the wrong or on the Day of Judgment, when Adam and his progeny shall have to stand guilty before God, Who may rightly say, "You deserve punishment, but out of My mercy, I crucify My own Son for your redemption." But if God wished to try us to see whether we can accept His grace or not, what can be said about those millions of people who pre-existed Jesus? They were also the children of Adam. They also were born with a tainted nature. How are they going to be saved? Again, what about the millions of people who have never even heard the name of Jesus? To-day the Church, rightly or wrongly, may say

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that the Gospel of Jesus has been preached in the four corners of the world. That may or may not be so, but it is a matter of less than a century. What about those who never heard of this Grace of Blood for the last 2,000 years, minus the last century? Are they to be condemned for not believing in a thing they never heard of? But if they, as well as those who lived before Jesus, are to be saved in some other way—say, through good actions—why can we not be saved without accepting a dogma that insults our intelligence? There is no change in the ways of the Lord. The ways of His providence are the same. The whole world from its very beginning has been given the same means of physical sustenance. Why this fickleness in spiritual matters? What does this Old or New Testament or Dispensation mean? What a mockery of theology! On one side we are asked to believe in the Omniscience of God, on the other we are told that the first covenant of God with man was that if man will obey His Commandments he will be saved. But the scheme did not work well. Man was found incapable of obeying His Commandments. God then repented of His first scheme and proposed a New Covenant of the Grace of Blood. Does this dogma do any credit to God and the author of this dogma? We can understand in the case of man, whose knowledge is defective. He makes his machine, he tries it; it does not work well, something is wrong. Then he thinks of another contrivance and perhaps succeeds. But is it right to believe the same of Omniscient God? What an irony of fate! Every creation of God is perfect, but when the Creator created His masterpiece, His scheme fell through. On one side we are told that the justice of God demanded punishment for the sin committed by Adam and the "Grace" came to pay the penalty. But is there any sense of justice if we are going to be punished for the sins of our first parents? What would be our judgment of a rule that proposes to punish the whole family or the whole tribe for the wrong of a member of it? If such a rule can rightly be called a tyrannical rule, could we not say the same of God? God Who demands punishment for the sin of Adam, from his children, a thousand generations removed. If that is the case, could not the

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Merciful God forgive us without any penalty? Has He not showered His blessings on us without any compensation? Do our actions deserve all the blessings around us? The world of nature and everything in it is indispensable for our life. It was created long, long before we came into existence. Why? It shows that Divine Blessings come to us without demanding any compensation. The very wording of the Christian's Lord's Prayer contradicts their dogma. "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." ¹ A man is said to forgive his debtor when he remits the debt and does not exact any compensation or return for his money from his debtor. According to his plain teaching of Jesus, we should expect the same of God. And we must believe in His ability to forgive us our sins without requiring from us the least compensation. The very wording of the prayer leaves no room for the doctrine of Atonement.

What a sensible message in this respect came to man through Islam in the Qur-án, "And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open: Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you, this day. Whoever goes aright, for his own soul does he go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray; *nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another, nor do We chastise until We raise an Apostle*" (xvii. 13-15).

"Praised Glorious God The revelation of the Book is from Allah, The Mighty, The Knowing, The Forgiver of the faults and the Acceptor of repentance, severe to punish, Lord of bounty, there is no God but He. To Him is the eventual coming" (xi. 1-3).

"He (God) said, ' (As for) My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please and My mercy encompasses all things ' " (vii. 156). What a truism! Every one to bear his own cross. No one to bear another's burden. We are liable to commit wrongs and to invite severe punishments thereby, but Allah

¹ Matthew.

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is the Forgiver of the fault and accepts repentance without anyone's intercession.

The whole question turns on our nature and its capacities. We, no doubt, are capable of sin, but we are also capable of resisting it. The error in Christian theology lies in mistaking capacity for nature. Nature is not tainted. It possesses an inclination towards wrong. It is abuse of our inclinations that germinates evil. But this is true of everything in Nature. A simple thing like water, which is a blessing, will play havoc, if uncontrolled. The fire that does so much good to humanity is capable of reducing whole towns to ashes. Everything that comes from God is for our good. It possesses certain properties which may be misapplied. Opium, which drugs our senses and numbs our faculties, has invaluable medicinal properties. Everything has its use and an occasion for it. It becomes a blessing—and that was the purpose for which it was created—if only we try and find out its use, its occasion and the right measure in which it is to be used. The Qur-án revealed this truth, when it said, "And He made the measure that you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure" (lv. 7-8).

In fact, God is the measurer of good and evil. Every measure of everything is for good. But what is good for A is evil for B. The food of a thorny shrub is the destroyer of a fruitful tree. It is in finding out the property of measure that brings forth all prosperity. It was to emphasize the importance of the knowledge of measure that the principle of good and evil measure was included in the Muslim articles of faith—*wal qadre khairehí min Alláhi ta'alá*—I believe in measurement of good and evil from God—in short, it is the mishandling or misapplication of things that is responsible for the world of evil. We need knowledge of these things. Science has come to check various diseases and disasters: the same is true of human nature; man is Nature's masterpiece; he is capable of soaring to the highest of the high, but he is also capable of going to the lowest of the low. His soaring or going down are the two same phases of the power of moving. Fire has been given a capability of exuding heat: it may cook a dish or burn a whole house. We have to find out how to

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control the element, and thus we can convert a seeming curse into a blessing. Similarly, we need knowledge of the nature of our passions. The world before Islam lacked the revelation of these truths, and the message came from the Lord in the following words: "Certainly We created man in the best make, then We render him the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward, never to be cut off. Then who can give you the lie after (this) about the judgment?" (xcv. 4-7).

BOOK NOTICES

The Ark of Refuge: A Way of Escape. By ION. (John Watkins, Cecil Court, London, W.C. Pp. 32. 1s.)

This interesting and instructive booklet directs attention to the increasing unrest that is manifesting itself in the social and theological world. The world of religion is in a state of turmoil and conflict, the old order changeth, the institutions of man are crumbling, and there is foreshadowed a new order, involving great changes and catastrophes, to be followed by a regenerated humanity.

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