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THE

ISLAMIC REVIEW

RABI-UL-AWWAL—RABI-UTH-THANI, 1343 A.H.

VOL. XII.

OCTOBER 1924.

No. 10

NOTES

Al-Haj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

The news that Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din is not after all to visit England to deliver, in person, his long-expected address at the great Religious Conference to be held in London in September, will come as a profound disappointment to persons of all shades of religious thought. As the accredited champion of the Holy Cause of Islam in England, and indeed in the Western World, there is no living personality better qualified to expound its tenets to those who have ears to hear. As a man of affairs and a practical man, one who, while striving ever after the highest, fully recognizes the hampering limitations with which our mortal life is set about, and the inevitable discouragement which a sense of these must needs engender, no one is better qualified than he, to urge and inspire. As one who has long resided in the West, whose knowledge of the West and Western ideals and points of view is extensive enough to show him just those essentials on which the two opposing hemispheres can and must eventually join forces, in spite of the oft-quoted prophecy of Mr. Kipling, there is none better qualified to meet the doubter half-way, as it were; to refute and explain respectively, the slanders and the misunderstandings which still, in the minds of so many educated Englishmen, seem to becloud the beauty of our beloved Faith. And lastly, to all who know him, as one who regards religion as a thing inseparable from daily existence, who in his life and conduct,

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selflessness and sacrifice, is a living example of the practical reality of Islam as a vital controlling influence in the lives of men, there is none better qualified than he to breathe reality into what might too easily degenerate into a mere academic discussion of theological abstractions welcome neither to God nor man—to set the spirit of Life stirring in the Valley of Dry Bones.

The Conference Craze.

A cynic has observed that the most dispiriting sign on the religious horizon, at the moment, is the number of Conferences about Religion which are constantly being held. If, he said, people would practise it more and confer about it less, some practical and beneficial result might be looked for with confidence.

To explore avenues which can lead nowhither, or search for formulæ which when found satisfy no one, since no one has the slightest intention of being satisfied thereby, is all very well in the world of politics, though the net result may be to bring politics into ridicule. In the world of Religion, however, such processes are wrong. It matters little whether politics become ridiculous or not, because there is always something inherently ridiculous in them; we feel they are a game, and, however grave the issues with which they purport to deal, not really to be taken too seriously. That such should ever become the popular attitude of mind towards Religion would be a world-calamity.

Still, in the world as it is to-day, such Conferences being regarded popularly as an aid to religious endeavour, and a stimulus to religious thought, it would be shirking a very obvious duty if any recognized leader stood aside and refused to participate, simply because, in his own personal opinion, they were likely to do more harm than good. Because the path of duty seems unpromising, there is no reason why we should abandon it, and it is needless to say that so pusillanimous a point of view would be utterly foreign to the nature of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

Muslim Unity.

As to the precise reasons which have prompted him thus to withhold his presence, it will suffice to say that while Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din has, with Muslims the world over, stood strongly for the essential Unity of Islam, the organizers of the Conference apparently have thought fit to represent

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our Faith as divided sharply into three camps—with suggestions of schisms in the background, as innumerable as those of Christendom.

This arrangement was only made known to the Mission authorities at the eleventh hour. For Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din to have appeared in person to deliver his Address would have amounted to a public acquiescence in the theory of the disunion of Islam, a theory to demonstrate the falsity of which he has devoted his life. On the other hand, to withdraw his Address altogether, would be to leave, at the eleventh hour, a serious gap in the Conference programme, and cause no little inconvenience to the Conference Authorities, who, after all, have doubtless acted quite innocently in the matter. It has been arranged, therefore, that his Address shall be read by another; but it is greatly to be deplored that the Conference proceedings should have been thus definitely settled without first ascertaining the feelings of those who had been invited to take part.

Usury or Interest ?

“ O you who believe ! do not devour usury, making additions again and again, and be careful of your duty to Allah, that you may be successful ” (Holy Qur-án, iii. 129).

A difficulty seems to have arisen in the minds of some of our brethren in India and elsewhere, as to how far the Qur-ánic injunction against usury is to be applied to the ordinary everyday conditions of modern business life. Is usury identical with interest ?

A sum deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank yields an infinitesimal amount of interest. Is it a sin for a Muslim to take it ? Deposit accounts in Banks yield a remuneration to the depositor, in its insignificance, out of all proportion to the benefit derived by the Bank from the use of the money ; should the depositor, being a Muslim, accept it ?

Money is invested in shares, say, in a Railway Company, which pays a dividend of 7 per cent. May a Muslim lawfully (in the religious sense of the word) accept that 7 per cent ?

The shareholder, the depositor, and the person who entrusts his savings to the Post Office, are not “ making additions again and again.” All they are doing is to place their money (incidentally for its safe keeping) at the disposal of certain corporations or institutions, and to receive an adequate or, as in most cases, a totally inadequate, recompense for the convenience they have afforded.

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A usurer is one who takes advantage of his fellow-man's necessity to enrich himself unduly. A. goes to B. and borrows £50, on condition that in two months' time he pays to B. £350. That is usury. But depositors in Banks and the Post Office, and shareholders in Companies, cannot be considered to have anything at all to do with usury. If it be otherwise, these are cases where the usurer loses (if anything), and his victim gains; which is absurd. Such transactions in the ordinary way of business or trading, are quite apart from the objects of the Prophet's exhortation, which is simply and solely directed against those who are eager to make an unrighteous profit from their fellow-men.

The Spirit of the Law.

We are continually driven to deplore the fact that so many of our brethren are content to ignore the spirit of the Law of Islam, and to pin their faith to the letter, often wrongly understood. If, however, a Muslim has, in spite of all that has been said, a lurking doubt as to the rightness of his action in taking and using such interest or dividends as we have suggested, then, it may be asked, why let Bank or Post Office reap the benefit of these ill-gotten gains? Take them if you will, but devote them to charitable purposes. And that is well enough. The truth of the matter is, that the modern method of keeping money—in Banks and the Post Office—is one from which both the usurer (in this case the depositor) and the other party (Bank or Post Office or Company) derive mutual convenience, and the question of usury does not enter in. We are inclined to wonder that it ever should have done so.

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By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

(Continued from p. 287, Vol. XII., Nos. 8-9.)

Forgiveness.

Forgiveness is first among those qualities which we exercise for doing good to others. Instead of seeing offenders punished we forgive them. Islam does not recommend unconditional pardon, or non-resistance to evil on each occasion. Reclamation and mending are its chief aim. If they cannot be

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attained without harsh measures, it allows them. "The recompense of evil is evil proportionate thereto, but if a person forgives and amends thereby, he shall have his reward from Allah." ¹

But in the case of evil coming from our inferiors, the Book not only recommends forgiveness, but the showing of liberality to them, provided it may bring reclamation. "They are the doers of good," it says, "who master their anger and do good to them." ² Al-Qur-án does not recognize every manifestation of pardon as a high morality. Harmlessness or inability to revenge a wrong is not forgiveness. If only non-recompense of evil meant forgiveness, many of the lower animals show it. The cow, the lamb and other animals may be described as meek. But the quality can properly be claimed only by those who show mercy when others stand at their mercy. They suppress anger and vengeance when they have power to wreak it. Al-Qur-án does not allow forgiveness if it leads to evil consequences.

Goodness.

"God commands to do good for good, and to do good without recompense and in the way we do good to our kindred; God forbids exceeding the limit of justice and doing good on wrong occasions." ³ Though Al-Qur-án speaks highly of charity, it nevertheless places some restraints on its exercise. It disallows charity to the extent that it may impoverish its doers, nor does it allow charity proceeding from evil sources: "And when they spend, they are neither extravagant nor niggard and keep the means." ⁴ Bestow alms from the good things you have already acquired; do not aim at what is bad that you may spend it (in alms).⁵ Make not your charity worthless by laying obligations upon those you have relieved, or by injury and reproach.⁶ The servants of God feed

¹ Al-Qur-án, xlii. 40.

⁴ xv. 67.

² iii. 133.

⁵ ii. 267.

³ xvi. 90.

⁶ ii. 263.

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the poor, the orphans, the bondsmen, and say, We do so to please God; we seek not recompense nor thanks.¹ They give alms in prosperity and in straitness,² secretly and openly.³ Al-Qur-án names also the persons to whom alms should go: "The poor, the needy, the collectors or distributors of alms, the newcomers in faith when in need, the captives, those in debt or in trouble, those furthering God's cause, the wayfarer."⁴

Courage.

Courage should not be confused with the fearlessness of a soldier or of a hunter who is habituated to danger. True courage can be displayed only in redress of wrong. "The truly brave are those who stand firm and behave patiently under ills and hardships;⁵ their patience is only for God, and not to display bravery.⁶ When men gather against them and frighten them, this increases their faith; they say, Allah is sufficient for us, and is the excellent Protector.⁷ Be not like those who march from their houses insolently, and to be seen of others, and turn away from God's way."⁸

True courage does not lie in the insolent ostentation of bravery, but in patience and steadfastness in resisting passions, and standing fearlessly to support good and avert evil. It is not the daring dash of a savage, but the unbreakable courage of a virtuous man.

Truthfulness.

Abstaining from falsehood is good, but it is not a moral quality if it incurs no harm. It becomes high morality if we stick to truth when life, property and honour is in danger.

"Shun ye the pollution of idols, and shun ye falsehood."⁹ "They shall not refuse to present themselves when summoned; and conceal not true

¹ Al-Qur-án lxxvi. 8, 9. ² iii. 138. ³ xiii. 22. ⁴ ix. 6.

⁵ ii. 172. ⁶ xiii. 22. ⁷ iii. 172. ⁸ viii. 47. ⁹ xxii. 31.

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testimony, for he who conceals it has a wicked heart.¹ When you speak, be true and just, though the person concerned be your kinsman. Stand fast to truth and justice for Allah's sake though it may be against your self or parents or near relative, be he rich or poor.² Be upright for Allah; let not hatred of a nation incite you to act inequitably.³ The men of truth and women of truth have a rich reward.⁴ They enjoin truth and steadfastness upon each other."⁵

Patience.

None of us is without troubles; we have to taste sorrows and sufferings and submit to misfortunes. But it is only when the loss is suffered with total resignation to God, that patience becomes a moral virtue. "O you who believe! seek assistance through patience and prayer;⁶ surely Allah is with the patient. We will certainly try you with somewhat of fear, hunger, loss of property, lives and fruits. Give good news to the patient who, when misfortune comes, say, Surely we are for Allah; to Him we shall return."⁷

Sympathy.

We labour under a wrong notion of sympathy. Race and colour prejudices prompt us to wrong others in the interest of our own people. We exercise our patriotic spirit in the same way. This psychology arises from natural impulses witnessed even among the lower animals. A raven's call brings thousands of other ravens together against their foes. Al-Qur-ánic injunctions on the subject are very useful. "Sympathize and co-operate in good and pious matters, and do not co-operate for evil and malice.⁸ Slacken not in your zeal for the sympathy of your people. Do not advocate the fraudulent nor plead for those who defraud one another."⁹

¹ Al-Qur-án, ii. 283. ² iv. 135. ³ v. 8. ⁴ xxxiii. 35.

⁵ ciii. 3. ⁶ ii. 153. ⁷ ii. 153, 155, 156, 157.

⁸ v. 2.

⁹ iv. 104, 105, 107.

Divine Revelation.

Virtue for virtue's sake is undoubtedly a great consolation, a strong incentive for leading a moral life; but strength to face hardships in the cause of righteousness comes only to those whose belief in God's existence reaches the stage of certainty, i.e. to whom God appears and speaks as He did to those in olden days. Islam promises this: "Those who strive for Us, we will certainly guide them to our ways."¹

These moralities, when observed properly, enable us to receive the Divine Revelation. First, angels begin to invite us to good actions and take us under their care. Do we not feel sometimes inclined to do good voluntarily and shun evils, as if inspired by some unforeseen agencies? The inspiration comes from angels. "God sends down angels with inspiration on whom He pleases.² . . ." The angels become encouraged if we follow them. They become our guardians; we receive Divine Revelations through them from time to time. "As for those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved; receive good news of the garden you were promised. We are your guardians in this life and the hereafter; you shall have therein what your soul desires."³

This is the third stage of our uplifting, called *Mulhemah*—the Inspired. This brings the soul on its road to perfection.⁴ The Divine flame from within kindles and consumes all dross. We walk in its light; Allah listens to our cries and answers our prayers by the words of His own mouth. "Call upon Me," God says, "and I will answer your prayers."⁵ "If My servants ask thee concerning Me, tell them that I am very near to them; I listen to the supplications of the supplicator; seek Me with

¹ Al-Qur-án, vi. 163.² xvi. 2.³ xli. 30.⁴ xci. 7, 9.⁵ xl. 60.

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prayers, and believe in Me, so that they may proceed rightly.”¹ The assurance coming in some tangible form, we feel in God’s company and become steadfast in the hardest ordeals. Temptations die and cravings for virtue increase; struggles are passed and won, and the soul begins to rule the flesh.

It is the fourth stage of the spiritual progress; carnal desires come within proper bounds; evil disappears, and virtue becomes man’s food. “O believers! God endeared the faith to you and impressed its beauty and excellence upon your hearts. He made unbelief and wickedness and disobedience hateful to you and made your heart averse to evil.”² “Truth came and falsehood fled; verily falsehood had to flee.”³ Man forgets himself in God’s love; his life is solely for the Master.⁴ He steps automatically on the right path. “Yes, whoever submits entirely to Allah and is the doer of good, he has his reward from his Lord; he shall have no fear nor shall he grieve.”⁵

Here we pass from the moral into the spiritual order. The passion of Mine and Thine dies; we hold our acquisitions as a trust for others.⁶ With no race or colour or family distinction, we live for God and His creatures. “The lover of God sacrifices his life in His way and receives His pleasure as his price.”⁷ In the hardest afflictions they look to God, saying: “O Lord! Give us in this affliction contentment of mind that may give us patience, and our death be upon Islam (i.e. total resignation to God).” And God says: “For them are good tidings in this world and in the hereafter.”⁸

These are the fifth and sixth evolutionary stages of our soul. We reach the door of heaven on this very earth: “Thou soul at rest, return to thy Lord, pleased with Him and He pleased with thee; enter among My servants and enter into My paradise.”

¹ Al-Qur-án, ii. 186.

² xlix. 7, 8.

³ xvii. 83.

⁴ ix. 24.

⁵ vi. 163.

⁶ xxxiii. 72.

⁷ ii. 203.

⁸ x. 65.

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Ponder over these words. They explain Muslim paradise; service of God is paradise.

At this stage man becomes a willing instrument in God's hands. He merges in Him and subordinates his judgment to His will, and says, as Muhammad said: "My prayers and my sacrifices, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."¹ Here God becomes his limbs and joints, as Al-Qur-án speaks of Muhammad: "The hand of the Prophet which is above their hands is the hand of God."² "Whatever thou castest, not thou, but God, has cast."³ God becomes closer to us than our neck-vein.⁴ "He engraves faith on our heart with His own hands and strengthens us with His Holy Spirit."⁵ Man's soul reaches its zenith. The spirits of Allah breathed in man, as the perfection of his physical frame,⁶ comes to prominence. We reach the final stage, and the angels of God—the movers of the forces of Nature—fall prostrate to our will.⁷

People of the present day speculate about occult powers and hanker after abnormal achievements. Should these things be worthy of the notice of a Muslim who reaches this stage? He becomes equipped with Divine morals and reproduces God's attributes within human walls. Could we go farther if God becomes our limbs and joints? The world has produced such men, but some of them were mistaken for God. They were iron in the fire exuding heat and light, but resuming a normal condition when out of it. They showed Divine colours, but exhibited human infirmities. They did not possess two natures—Divine and human—but only one human nature, sometimes at its highest, and sometimes normal.

Imagine the condition when all struggles are over; all low passions—avarice, envy, rivalry, vanity, vengeance; vanished; every desire of the soul achieved; life a perennial spring, flowing with high

¹ Al-Qur-an, vi. 162.

² xlviii. 10.

³ viii. 17.

⁴ i. 15. ⁵ lviii. 22.

⁶ xv. 29.

⁷ ii. 38, 72.

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morality—chastity, honesty, meekness, patience, constancy, truthfulness, forgiveness, benevolence, sympathy and kindness to all creatures; man standing in full beatitude, as if in the presence of Allah.

Could there be a better conception of a blissful life? This is the Muslim paradise that opens in this life, while these very moral and spiritual conditions will become, after death, materialized in a form known only to God¹ to make us a heaven there. The paradise will be an embodiment of the spiritual blessings which advanced souls begin to enjoy here. Al-Qur-án says (to those lost in His love): "The Lord has given a drink that purified their hearts: They drink of a fountain which they opened with their own hands."² Their own good deeds will in that life assume the form of trees that will give unceasing fruits. To such a life men and women will have equal entry. "The dwellers of the gardens shall be on that day in happy occupation; they and their wives reclining in shade on raised couches; they shall have fruits and whatever they desire; Peace—a word from the merciful Lord."³ . . . The angels will enter in upon them, from every gate; peace be upon you because you were constant.⁴ . . . And we will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts.⁵ . . . Their cry therein shall be, Glory to Thee, O Allah; and their greetings in it shall be Peace, and their last cry shall be, Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."⁶ Other verses similarly show that perfect peace shall be the ruling order in the Muslim paradise, and its blessings purely of a spiritual nature. "And they shall say: All praise to Allah, Who made grief to depart from us . . . Who made us alight in a house abiding for ever . . . toil shall not touch us therein nor shall fatigue afflict us. . . ."⁷ Well pleased because of their own striving,

¹ Al-Qur-án, xxxii. 17.

² lv. 46.

³ lxxvi. 5.

⁴ xxxvi. 38.

⁵ xiii. 23, 24.

⁶ vii. 43.

⁷ xxxv. 34, 35.

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in lofty gardens wherein you shall not hear vain talk." ¹

Freedom from grief, fear, toil, and anxiety is the chief characteristic of Al-Qur-ánic paradise—a truth repeated again and again in Al-Qur-án. Could the idea of the spiritual paradise be better expressed? Undoubtedly Al-Qur-án speaks of gardens, trees, milk, honey, fruits and numerous other things; but these are not of this life; they are metaphorical expressions. Al-Qur-án is too eloquent on the point to leave any doubt: "A parable of the garden, which the righteous are promised; therein are rivers of water that do not alter . . . and rivers of milk . . . the rivers of honey . . . fruits.² . . ." Other verses say the same;³ that this all is an allegory; and for obvious reasons. If heavenly blessings are such, as the Prophet says, "as no eyes have seen, nor has ear heard, nor has it entered into man's heart to conceive them," they can only be conveyed by parables and examples.

(To be continued.)

THE CONFERENCE ON LIVING RELIGIONS WITHIN THE EMPIRE

A DECISIVE WORD ON RELIGION

REPRESENTATIVES of all the living religions under the Empire have been asked to say something on their respective religions. But the position seems to be a little anomalous in the light of modern research.

Sacred Books.—Almost all religions receive their inspiration from Revealed Books, and derive their doctrine from the teaching of such Scriptures. They give allegiance to them, inasmuch as they accept them as of Divine origin. But ours are different days. Scientific research has impeached the authenticity of almost all such books; they have been weighed

¹ Al-Qur-án, lxxxviii. 9-11. ² xlvii. 15. ³ xiii. 15.

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and found wanting. The verdict is so conclusive that even the believers of these books cannot dispute its finality. The Qur-án, however, is the exception, the sole exception, in the whole Sacred Literature to this sweeping judgment. It has remained proof against all corruption and interpolation. It keeps to-day its original purity, and has reached us in the same accents and stresses in which it was given to the Arabs at its revelation.

Divergence in Doctrine.—Almost every religion differs from the others in its doctrinal basis, though all claim to drink from the same Divine Fountain. Every person claims Divine Sanction for his articles of Faith, and he is quite justified in doing so. But if he derives his particular beliefs from a book that even in his own judgment in the light of the present-day research is of dubious character, how can they be held as sacred? How assume the binding force they seem to exercise on the followers of such a religion? The logic is conclusive. But some say that reason and logic play no part in the province of religion. It may be so. A man may entertain any belief he likes at the expense of his intelligence, if it comes from some sacred personality in whom he has every faith. But if the very record and teachings of such person is derived from a book that has admittedly been proved to be spurious in origin or inaccurate in its narration, how can such beliefs retain his allegiance? Let our Christian friends give a serious consideration to this problem. They are welcome to believe in whatever they think can be inferred from the sayings and actions of Jesus as given in the Synoptic writings. But if the said Scriptures are admittedly folk-lore, and in no case free from adulteration, how can their records be accepted? The premises are clear, and lead only to one incontrovertible conclusion. Every Christian must follow Jesus and believe in his teachings, but the record on which that

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teaching is based is entirely without support. Therefore the whole position falls to the ground.

THE JESUS OF ST. PAUL AND THE JESUS OF THE GOSPELS.—Undoubtedly these are two distinct personalities. They cannot be reconciled with each other. On the other hand, St. Paul cannot be accepted as an authority in those things in which he differs from the Master. Tolstoi had to reject the former for this very reason. But, taking it as it is, if the Pauline Literature itself is impeachable and cannot be traced to him under whose name it is passed, and is only a piece of pious fraud of the kind practised so frequently in the days of the ancient Fathers, what faith can be based on any teaching in it?

OTHER NON-MUSLIM SACRED BOOKS.—The rest of the world's Sacred Literature shares the same fate with the New Testament. The Pentateuch and the other books of the Old Testament, the Zendavesta of the ancient Persians, the writings of Confucius, the three *Baskets* of the Buddhistic faith, are all of them decidedly non-genuine in character. The most interesting part of it is, that most of the followers of these books hold the same opinion as to their authenticity. Under these circumstances one is at a loss to understand the psychology of such people. On the one hand they admit the non-genuineness of their own book, and on the other hand, whatever comes from their pulpit formulates mostly the teachings of these Scriptures.

HINDUISM is the most interesting of all. No one can define this faith, nor formulate its distinctive features. There are a thousand and one—nay, a million and one—sections and sub-sections under it, without any *via media* or common ground between them. Euphemistically the religion may be defined as an ocean that surrounds thousands of rivers, rivulets

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and streams flowing in courses divergent from each other. I may say it is a religion with no connotation and denotation ; with no community of faith, doctrine or tenet, among its various sections. There is no underlying common basis in its numberless ramifications : an atheist or a theist, a believer in Divine Revelation, or an unbeliever, a cow-worshipper or a beef-eater, a high moral character like a Vishnuite Hindu or a violater of all the laws of decency and morality—always on religious grounds—like a Shaktak or Bommarg Hindu ; a Unitarian or a polytheist, a believer in the Transmigration of Souls or a disbeliever in the said doctrine—in short, one may entertain any belief or have no belief whatsoever, if he is of Hindu origin, he is accepted as one of them by the other followers of that faith.

THE NEO-HINDUISM—A POLITICAL CULT.—The Hindu faith has assumed a new aspect and taken a new turn ; and this new inspiration is derived rather from politics than from its ancient literature. Nationalism is the motor-lever in its modern formation. An imaginary Home Rule with all non-Hindu elements—religions that had their origin from outside India like Christianity and Islam—eliminated or suppressed, is the basic principle on which the new cult has been built up. The various sects under the old faith are diametrically opposed to each other in their tenets—for example, the old Sanatan-Dharma and the new-fledged Arya-Samaj, the two well-known Hindu sects, have always been at daggers drawn, but the Neo-Hinduism would ignore these bitter divergences ; it would obliterate all that keeps a Hindu of any colour or class separate from the rest. Buddhism and Jainism are admittedly not sects of, but two different religions from, Hinduism. They have been so treated for centuries by others as well as by their respective followers. They differ from Hinduism in their basic principles. The only common bond between them

and Hinduism is that India is the birthplace of the three religions. This community of local origin has now been declared as the only article of faith necessary under the new dispensation, and the new cult would claim every such religion as part and parcel of itself. Again, proselytizing is a thing unknown in Hinduism, but the political needs of the coming Hindu rule in India would allow and adopt it, though contrary to all ancient writings and usage. Numerical strength is the chief thing to be attained. They must have it at any cost. But the curious feature of this new campaign of conversion to Hinduism, is the choice that is freely given to every new convert when he leaves his old faith, to identify himself with any of the existing creeds that happen to have had their origin within the frontiers of India. For example, the Arya-Samaj, a modern Hindu sect of recent growth, is the foremost factor in this programme of conversion. Till now they took pride in their notoriety for denouncing every other creed in the world, never sparing even the other sects of Hinduism. They assailed brother Hindus, and non-Hindus as well, in their abusive writings. Prophets and teachers were scurrilously libelled and grossly slandered. In a word, they would not suffer so much as the sight of any other religion or sect within the four corners of India, and wished to see the soil of India purged of all foreign plants. They were a political body from the very beginning, disguised in a religious garb, though so threadbare was the garment that the form beneath was easy of detection. Their present activities have, however, at last enticed the cat from the bag. Within the last two years they have entered with strenuous efforts on the campaign of conversion which they called Shudhi; but with changed tactics. Before this, they had hated with a malignant and genuine hate all other sects of the Hindus, but to-day they willingly allow the fruits of their labour to be claimed by any other creed that comes under this new definition

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of Hinduism. Sanatan-Dharma, the most ancient Hindu sect, and the most implacable enemy to the Arya-Samaj from the very genesis of the latter, now also evinces signs of sympathetic co-operation with the latter in the movement. The new political aspirations, in fact, have levelled down all religious differences, and transmuted enmity into amity. The strong Sanatan-Dharma, aversion against the admission of converts into its ranks—as was the case with the Israelites on the clear authority of the Scriptures—has now been totally set aside. The Samajist, on his side, when he succeeds in making someone a renegade from his own faith, willingly allows him to go to the Sanatan-Dharma section. It would be interesting to note here that the latter class consists of idolaters and stone-worshippers; while the Arya-Samajists claim to be monotheist, and take pride in image-breaking. This, in fact, has been the great cause of animosity and discord between the two. But to-day the whole atmosphere is changed. Religion has been sacrificed on the altar of *politics*. The whole Samaj exertion till now had been towards abolishing idolatry, but to-day, when the Samajist succeeds in changing the faith of a non-Hindu, he allows his new convert to go to the camp of the idolaters. The reason is obvious. The most influential class in India is idolatrous, and that class takes a lively interest in political activities. Wherefore the motive of all these exertions is purely a political one, i.e. to increase the number of Hindus in India, and to use this numerical strength, when attained, to their political advantage.

THE UNTOUCHABLES IN INDIA.—There are certain of the lower classes in India called Untouchables, who number millions. They are the aborigines of the country. They were driven to hill regions by the present-day Hindus in ancient times, and those who remained in the plain applied themselves to menial

avocations under their invaders, who did everything to grind them down. They were looked down upon and hated by these new-comers to such an exaggerated extent that their very touch was declared to be sufficient to pollute an average Hindu, let alone a high-class Hindu, who would avoid even the shadow of these people. This was more a political than religious attitude even in those days.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN INDIA AND THE UNTOUCHABLES.—The foreign Christian missions have been a total failure in the East. They were destined to be so. How could they carry such a book as a Gospel to other nations, when the book itself is of dubious character in their own estimation? In India the mission also failed. But its mission activities were diverted to the Untouchables, and there it has succeeded to some extent. Their example has now been followed by these Neo-Hindus. All of a sudden they want to bring these Untouchables to their side, more for census purposes than for religious.

NOVEL METHOD OF CONVERSION.—The astute Arya-Samajist has surpassed his Christian rival in his proselytizing tactics. The latter goes to his field of activities with his Bible, hymns, tambourine and cymbals. His songs and his playing of musical instruments bring the villagers crowding round him. It is more agreeable to the rustic ear than the preaching of the evangelist. His kind words, his theatrically charming manners and his shaking hands with the Untouchables mesmerizes the latter. It is something beyond their conception. Future prospects, more of this life than of that beyond the grave, in the form of social and financial advancement irresistibly induce him to accept the message of the white missionary. The rest is a matter of course. The Samajist has, on the other hand, conceived a simpler and plainer method, as he knows his countrymen far better.

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He goes into a Hindu village and invites the Untouchables there into a conference. He speaks to them of the social disabilities and communal ostracisms to which they are subject—the extent of which is undoubtedly beyond Western conception. The humiliation to which they have been degraded is more troublesome to them than their poverty. The Samajist promises them that he will remove it all. The Hindus, as a rule, do not believe in the community of stomach; they do not take their meals together and at the same table. Their religion does not allow them even to help themselves in the presence of the Untouchable, as his very shadow would contaminate the meal. To the Untouchable it is a matter of surprise and wonderment when he finds the Samajist inviting him to sit with him on the same level, and allowing him to smoke from the same pipe which the latter has used himself in the conference. This is a great privilege, the like of which the Untouchable could not even dream of, though he is also promised some pecuniary help. Such is the principal ceremony of conversion performed by people who pose as workers in religion. It reminds me of something which occurred centuries ago in the South-East of India. In the mediæval days of Christianity certain Portuguese missionaries came to India and landed somewhere in what is now the Madras Presidency. According to old Hindu notions, if water touched by a non-Hindu hand was thrown on a Hindu, he lost caste and had to make great penances and expend much money by way of expiation. This circumstance the new missionary discovered; and when some of the poor Hindus were bathing in a river, he also rushed into it and threw some water on the others in the stream. They thus became outcasts in the eye of their co-religionists, and as they could not afford necessary expenses by way of penance, they had no alternative but to join the faith of the missionary, seeing that the Hindus could not mix with them.

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Those were the old days, and the ignorance of the time was favourable to such practices. We live, doubtless, in days of culture and advancement, but the world is not without people of the older sort, and history may yet repeat itself.

RELIGION ON THE WANE.—It is not religious instinct, but political psychology, that has aroused the so-called missionary activity among the Hindus in India, even in contravention of their sacred writings, and in its consequences it must kill the religious sense. It will tend to materialism, which even now is getting the upper hand of the people. Hindu India is going through the selfsame experiences which the West has experienced in the last few centuries where the pulpit has been used more to formulate political and national aims than to promulgate religious truths; and the priest has been more a warden of statecraft, than a custodian of the layman's conscience. Hindu religion, till the last century, had been only ceremonialism accompanied with idolatry. And there is small wonder that it was so, when most of their sacred literature is saturated with it, while the Vedas—the Hindu revealed book—remained buried in a language not to be understood of the great majority and consequently susceptible to a hundred and one interpretations. No two sects under Hinduism, though receiving inspiration from the same book, could agree on its translation. But the present zeal in the religious field has become actuated by quite other motives, and the religion which was already a repository of rituals and formalities is surely crumbling down into politico-nationalism that demands the elimination of all non-Hindu elements from the country.

ISLAM THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE—MODERNISM IN THE WEST.—National rivalries and racial prejudices may not allow other people to come directly under

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the flag of Islam, but its teachings are prevailing in the world of religion and getting the better of it. Monotheism was extinct at the advent of the Holy Prophet—the whole world was drowned in the worst type of polytheism—phalacism, fetishism predominating in India in those days—but to-day it is the salt of religious life everywhere. Even the stone-worshipping Hindu of our times apologizes for bowing down to his images. The famous Mahatma Ghandi is a Muslim, as he says, in believing in the Unity of God, but if a stone from Narbada, a river in Southern India, reminds him of his God, he is Hindu in worshipping it. The Mahatma has not expounded his own faith. He, in a way, formulates the present Hindu religious psychology. A few more stages of evolution in religious ideas, and the pure monotheistic Muslim conception will obtain in Hindu sanctuaries and seminaries. It will be Islam, though under the name of some Hindu sect. The Arya-Samaj at its inception began its work for the Unity of God on Muslim lines. The founder of Brahma-Samaj, another Hindu sect, received his inspiration from Islam and based his teachings on the Qur-án. We see the same in the West. Jesus is not now God, but the reproducer of Divine attributes, in the eye of the Modernists—a newly-thought-of *via media* between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism. He has been divested of all that constitutes Godhood; he is no more One of the Three Persons; he is man, and not God, in every sense of the word, but with a unique capacity to reproduce Divine morals. This is the final finding of the various conferences of the Modern Church in England. The said Church is not alone in these beliefs. It represents the cultured mind of the whole of Christendom. The Church, however, has not made a discovery; it is a Muslim belief, but on general lines. We also believe that Jesus did reproduce Divine morals, but so did the other prophets of the world from Noah to Muhammad. In fact, every man under Muslim

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teachings is capable of doing the same. Religion came with the same object of enabling humanity to equip itself with Divine morals. Islam puts the same goal before every man, as the Prophet Muhammad says, and the Qur-án lays down rules and regulations for sublimating humanity to the borders of Divinity. But the Modernist of the Christian Church will not at present endorse this view. He would not condescend to allow this privilege to any other than the son of Mary. He will do so in the near future. It is too early, and at the same time it is too much to expect from him, seeing that he has so recently weaned himself from polytheistic tendencies. He has brought down his idol from the pedestal of Divinity, but he would not place him on the same level with the others, even though they may be the few chosen of God. Jesus therefore is unique in reproducing Divine morals, in the eye of the Modern Church. So says the best exponent of the Modern Church, the late lamented Dean of Carlisle. One, however, fails to appreciate the mission of Jesus, if this is the true point of view; and Jesus says something quite different from it. He invites others to follow him and to do even as he did. He exhorts his followers to walk in his footsteps and imitate him in every respect. If a true follower of Jesus cannot reproduce his morals that are Divine, his mission is of no value to humanity.

INDIVIDUALISM THE LAST VESTIGE OF POLYTHEISM
—MAN-WORSHIP.—This newly arisen mentality in the Christian Church is the last remnant of Man-worship. It hinders human progress and impedes mental development. The Qur-án removed the obstacle with one final stroke, when it put the well-known words in the mouth of the Prophet: "I am only a man like unto you"—a unique golden saying to uplift humanity. One of us, standing on the highest rung of the ladder of human culture and development as the Prophet undoubtedly was, and thence

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encouraging others to follow him and share with him in his achievements. This establishes true equality between man and man, and engenders a spirit of emulation in us. It creates zeal and enthusiasm, so that we may soar higher and even higher in the realms of progress. It suppresses tendencies of subordination and destroys the spirit of slavery; and if Islam has rightly been defined as the source and genesis of all healthy democratic ideas, it is because of this principle of equality. Individualism—i.e. to regard some man as possessor of qualities not open to others and therefore to reverence him up to the extent of worship—is a curse to humanity, and the sooner it is done away with the better it will be for the welfare of mankind.

INDIVIDUALISM IN ISLAM—THE LAST PROPHET.—Islam is purely and absolutely principalism. It, no doubt, allows hero-worship, but that only for the purpose of arousing a spirit of emulation, and destroying any tendency to mental and moral servitude. But some Muslims, though few in number, have not as yet shaken themselves free from the curse of man-worship. Muslims believe that the Holy Prophet was the last of his race; and this for obvious reasons. The Word of God that came for human guidance from time to time through His various messengers did actually never remain after them in its real form. Its purity suffered and it reached posterity in an adulterated condition. But the Qur-án has kept its original purity, and came to us in the same words in which it was received by the Prophet from on High. Moreover, the life-records of almost all other prophets so necessary to serve as illustrations of truths, revealed to them, have not reached us in their entirety—in fact, we know very little of them; while everything of the life of Muhammad that was needed to elucidate the Qur-ánic teachings comes to us in black and white, in its original colours.

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These were the two main objects for which the blessed race of the prophets was raised. And if Divine economy does not admit of any redundancy, Muhammad must be the Last of the Prophets, and the Qur-án the Final Revelation on matters of guidance. Islam, however, has always produced men of the calibre of the prophets in its ranks who received Divine Revelation on matters other than those of Divine Laws. No epoch, in fact, has passed in the history of Islam that has not seen men of evolved spirituality. But they were not the prophets, nor did they lay any claim to prophethood. They neither brought any new law to humanity, nor did they prescribe any new course for man's moral and spiritual upliftment—an element most necessary to constitute prophethood, according to the teaching of the Qur-án. They themselves strictly followed Muhammad. They scrupulously observed all the law laid down for spiritual progress, in the Qur-án. Every one of them had a large following who still exist in millions, but, like Jesus, these Masters nobly invited everyone among their disciples to partake with them of the blessings they themselves enjoyed. Their followers could attain, so they said, what they possessed themselves, by following Islam. Some of the disciples obeyed the Master and reaped a rich harvest, but his own descendants, as a rule, could not face the hard course pursued by him. They lost the spiritual heritage, and could count on nothing but on their descent.

In spiritual attainments we find the same rule obtaining as we experience in worldly acquisitions. The sons of those who make long fortunes usually lead easy and lazy lives. They do not add anything to what they received from their fathers. They waste the property left by their ancestors. The descendants of these Masters of advanced spirituality and of saintly character and reputation, in Islam also, cut the same figure. They themselves usually do not

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possess any intrinsic worth, but they pose as inheriting the spirituality of their fathers or forefathers—a thing clearly disallowed by the Qur-án. Mentality or spirituality is not a matter of inheritance; it is an acquisition. But some think that they do inherit it also. They are either themselves dupes or they dupe others. They usually talk of possessing some occult powers, but always in accents of oracular ambiguity. They often speak of powers possessed by them which cannot be put to any clear or decisive test, one of them being that the Almighty accepts, and responds to, their prayers. They naturally hate other disciples of the Master—who chance to excel them in some of the qualities of which they boast. The ignorant among the following naturally evince more inclination towards descent than to real value and worth, and swarm around the former. Their adhesion to the offshoots of the old stock is natural, but it is further strengthened when their passion of attachment to the Master is played upon. He is glorified and extolled, therefore, by his descendant, in terms, indeed, he himself would not and could not allow others to speak of him. It pleases the ear of ignorance to hear that the salvation of the world depends only upon accepting their Master and not upon transmuting some good tenets and principles into good actions. In short, belief is given preference to action. The history of Christianity has unfortunately been the same. A man of Luther's attainments could not escape the fallacy. He would dispense with actions if faith was complete. Perhaps he was justified in doing so, as the concluding verses of St. Mark—which, however, have been admitted to be a subsequent addition—indirectly inculcate the same thing. They condemn to eternal punishment every such person who chances not to accept Jesus, even though the actions of the former be worthy of a prophet. This creates Man-worship. One may accept the message that Jesus brought

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from the Most High, but belief in his personality in the abstract is a thing beside the mark. Some of the descendants of the Muslim Saints hold the same opinion, and that only for their personal gain and aggrandizement; but the time is too advanced to allow of such individualism.

HOW AL-QUR-ÁN DESTROYED MAN-WORSHIP.—Man-worship cannot flourish in Islam, as democracy is the basic principle of all its tenets and doctrines. In Islam, democracy obtains in religion as well as in politics. It came to level down all man-made barriers of distinction: descent, caste, colour and riches. Islam opened every door of progress equally for every man. One could do what was done by another; we of course, need some right path to reach the goal. Prophets come to tell us of that path. They illustrate it also by their own example. But they were not raised by God to be idolized by others, much less by their followers. We do not obey them as men, but as messengers from the Most High. We follow the principles revealed to us through them. Hence we pay equal respect to all of them, as they all are equally the mouthpiece of God. The Muslim formula of faith emphasizes the same thing: *Lá-illaha-illallah—Muhammad-ur-Rasul-Allah*—“There is no other object of worship and adoration but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.” Worship in Islam does not mean recitations accompanied with certain gestures and gesticulations; such are mere symbols; they represent our mentality—our readiness to obey the Lord.

We really bow down to His message and prostrate ourselves to His commands; and as those commands came to us as a message through Muhammad, hence the inclusion of his name in the said formula. God raised up many prophets to bring His messages before Muhammad. But His Word became corrupt through human handling, and therefore could not be accorded

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complete obedience. A Muslim must particularize, therefore, the message he obeys. He does so by naming the Holy Prophet in the Declaration of his Faith. The Qur-án, whenever it enjoins a Muslim to obey the Prophet, refers to his capacity as a prophet. No other religion makes such clear distinction. Others say, "Obey me"; Muhammad says, "Obey the message." They all thus encourage Man-worship in some form or the other. Hinduism (in most of its sects), Buddhism and Christianity give clear countenance to Man-worship. Islam puts an end to all such polytheistic tendencies. It is pure monotheism. It is a religion of principles and tenets that helps us to work out our own nature and enables it to develop to its perfection. It must supersede, therefore, all other religions.

THE NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN THE WEST.—The general dissatisfaction with the Church-religion in the West has not only aroused the Modernist Movement within its own borders, but has also driven out a large number of its flock from the pale, who have formed themselves into many new religious movements which, however, cannot be called religions, as they do not take Divine Revelation for their source. They are man-made institutions that come to gratify such human hankerings as find no food within the Church in the West. But they will one day merge in Islam, as most of the tenets that are taught by these new creeds can directly be traced to Islam, with the exception of the theory of the Transmigration of Souls, which theory has taken the fancy of many, mostly among the women.

ISLAM MUST PREVAIL IN THE LONG RUN.—If a religion is pinned down to any locality or individuality, it must excite prejudices against itself, at least among such as belong to other races or countries. Almost all other religions have been named after the name of

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the Teacher or that of the locality in which he lived. This in itself naturally keeps others back from giving any adhesion to them. Islam is the only exception. Al-Qur-án directs people to be called Muslims; that means, those who submit to Allah. If God is a common object of adoration with all, no one who believes in Him can feel ashamed to be called Muslim, or be prejudiced against being so named. If the religion reveals such laws as will bring humanity to her goal, it will very soon become the religion of the whole world when people have become disillusioned by all that has been said in misrepresentation of Islam. Racial prejudices or some other reasons may keep many from coming openly under the flag of Islam, but one who really cares for a true religion cannot but be the admirer and upholder of the following, which is a very brief statement of Islam :—

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means : (1) Peace ; (2) the way to achieve peace ; (3) submission—as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus to maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHETS OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, i.e. the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-ÁN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, but, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book

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of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number : belief in (1) Allah ; (2) angels ; (3) books from God ; (4) messengers from God ; (5) the hereafter ; (6) the measurement of good and evil ; (7) resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress ; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in heaven. Existence after death is an image of the spiritual state, in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination ; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number : (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad ; (2) prayer ; (3) fasting ; (4) almsgiving ; (5) pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the heaven and the earth, the

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Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith is of itself insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS IN ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Men and women come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

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KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

BASHEER AHMAD.

THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM

HERE, in a world of hate and strife,
Where greed and cunning seem to rule,
And man's a tyrant or a fool;
Above the clash of suffering life
Loudly a call to Peace I hear—
Arabia's Prophet's words ring clear.

“Return to God—there is no God but He;
Resign your will to His; be pure, be kind!
’Tis thus alone that you true joy shall find.
Life's hectic pleasures mock Eternity;
But in submission to the Will Divine
Unceasing Peace and happiness are thine.

“Then serve God's people, and you serve their Lord:
By prayer, by faith, by pilgrimage you win
A victory over self, the world and sin;
’Tis thus that Allah truly is adored.
And a new world, where God is King, shall rise
And He shall wipe all tears from weeping eyes.”

F. H. ALDHOUSE.

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MUHAMMAD

A WESTERN ESTIMATE OF THE ARABIAN PROPHET

By J. A. SPROUL

THE *Belfast Telegraph* of July 15, 1924, contains an editorial headed "Mohammed," which is rather a surprising phenomenon to find in a metropolitan journal in this enlightened age. Before Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship* was given to the world, ebullitions of crass bigotry and misrepresentation were frequent. Carlyle is quoted and also Wells. Why Wells? There are historians of greater repute than Wells, who have written of Islam and its Prophet. Gibbons and Draper, for instance, who treated the subject with justice and impartiality; Washington Irving is another who has made the simple creed of Islam familiar to millions of Americans. Some writers, when dealing with religious subjects, remind one of some of our prosecuting attorneys who are over-anxious to make out a case, irrespective of guilt or innocence. Ireland itself has achieved an unenviable notoriety for the fierce zeal which animates its various Christian sects. The writer is a native of Northern Ireland, raised in the pious belief that Cromwell was the greatest hypocrite that ever disgraced a Christian land, and Muhammad the greatest and most shameless impostor who ever trod this earth.

One night, in San Francisco, a copy of Carlyle's great work reached my hand by chance. The night was spent in reading the contents. I can only compare it to Luther finding a copy of the Bible in his monastery. Carlyle did more than any man, in the course of centuries, to clear the memory of these two illustrious characters—Cromwell and Muhammad—of the foul slander and abuse heaped upon them. Carlyle made one mistake in saying "there is no

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danger of our becoming, any of us, Muhammadans." To-day the Muslims have their mosques in Paris, and close to London, and are growing faster than all Christian sects combined, especially in Africa, where so-called Orthodox Christianity has failed. In India they number a fourth of the population. In China they form a caste, superior in intelligence to the other creeds in that populous land. In the Philippines they are far above the other native tribes in hygiene, a fact which is proved by their immunity from the epidemics which sweep those islands.

The Irish scribe says: "The people who are becoming Muhammadans to-day became something else yesterday, and will become something different to-morrow." This statement is contradicted by historians, ancient and modern. The wonder has been that when men—some of whom were the Prophet's bitterest enemies—made the simple profession "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet," none of them ever relapsed; and no nation, no matter by what means converted, has ever left the faith. Egypt was the first Christian land, but only a few, comparatively, belong to the ancient Coptic Church.

Carlyle said: "Our current hypotheses about Muhammad, that he was a scheming impostor, a falsehood incarnate, that his religion was a mere mass of quackery and fatuity—the lies which well-meaning zeal has heaped around this man—are disgraceful to ourselves only."

Mr. Wells is quoted as describing the Prophet as vain, egotistical and tyrannous. The testimony of Mr. Bernard Shaw will be taken by many in preference to that of Mr. Wells—and while talking of the latter, why do not some of his Irish admirers give that gentleman's estimate of the founders of the Christian Church? He speaks of "Paul, the real founder of Christianity, a man of wider education but narrower intellectuality than Jesus."

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Draper says at the time that Muhammad began to preach the Unity of God "the Christian Church, through the ambition and wickedness of its clergy, had been brought into a condition of anarchy. Councils had been held on various pretences, while the real motives were concealed. . . . The election of a bishop was often disgraced by frightful murders." The Church had been torn apart by schisms. Among a countless host of disputants were Arians, Basilidians, Carpocratians, Collyridians, Eutychians, Gnostics, Jacobites, Marcionites, Marionites, Nestorians, Sabellians, Valentinians. Of these the Marionites regarded the Trinity as consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Virgin Mary. The Collyridians also worshipped Mary as a divinity. The Nestorians denied that God had a mother. The untutored but active mind of the young Arab, Muhammad, could not but turn with disgust from these bitter wrangling sects. He made frequent trading journeys to Syria. He was employed by a wealthy widow who entrusted him with the care of her Syrian trade. She was charmed with his capacity and fidelity and, as he is said to have possessed singular manly beauty and a most courteous demeanour, with his person also. She made her passion known through a slave, and for the remaining twenty-four years of her life Muhammad was her devoted husband. In a land of polygamy he never insulted her with a rival. A man who lives and honours one woman through the best years of his life, when passions are strongest, cannot after the lapse of centuries be insulted by the charge of lustfulness. Kadajah was the first to believe in his mission. She and Zeid, his freedman, and his young cousin Ali, were his first converts. Carlyle calls Muhammadanism a bastard Christianity. Such a definition is unfair and unjust. The man who rose above the Paganism of his native Arabia and the countless sects which distracted Christendom,

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and taught what!—the Unity of God—to Gibbon he was a Deist. Enlightened men in all lands now know that Christianity is a composite creed. The Jews, during the Babylonian captivity, had learned something of Persian dualism. To the Persians there were two great Powers, one of light and the other of darkness. Ahura Mazda is the Lord of Light; Angro Mainyush is the Prince of Darkness. A Virgin in due time would bear a son who would destroy the powers of darkness. Consequently this Christian tenet of the “Virgin Birth” is purloined from Persian dualism. The Jews, on their return from captivity, cherished the idea of a Messiah, but he was to redeem Israel and re-establish the fabled glories of David and Solomon. The pious Hebrews had no idea of a being who would redeem mankind. When Jesus came, some evidently expected him to develop into the expected deliverer, who would drive out the hated Romans.

Muslims believe that God has raised prophets, or teachers, in all lands and in all ages. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad are among the greatest of these. Some extend the list to include Buddha, Zoroaster and others who strove to enlighten mankind. Muslims recognize Jesus as one of the prophets, or teachers, sent by God; why do not our Unitarians recognize Muhammad as a true teacher? “A false man, never!” said Carlyle. The poet Pope realized that all religions were but one, when human weakness, ignorance and selfishness were swept away. Nationalism has been a powerful factor in holding mankind apart and tending to the glorification of tribal deities.

The American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, strikes a high note:—

Light of ages and of nations,
Every race and every time
Has received thine inspiration,
Glimpses of thy truth sublime.

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Always spirits in rapt vision
Passed the heavenly veil within,
Always hearts bowed in contrition,
Found salvation from their sin.

The various religions are but the efforts of finite man to unveil the Infinite. The Great Mystery of the primitive red man is the Infinite Intelligence in which we live and move and have our being. The efforts to build a religion on the mythical fall of man and the events which culminated in the tragedy of Calvary are no longer held by thinking men. Muslims have contended that the story of the fall and atonement "is an insult to God and man." In this they are borne out by the scientists of all lands. Man, instead of being the subject of a special creation in October 4004 B.C., has been on this planet probably five hundred thousand years. The ancestors of some of our farmyard mammals can be traced back in the rocks for millions of years.

A Pagan Emperor, Constantine, made a caricature of Christianity, the official religion of Rome. The simple teachings of the Nazarene were conspicuous by their absence. The greater the incredibility, the more credible it was. To believe an impossibility was a triumph of faith. "Credo quia est incredibile," said Tertullian.

The keen mentality of Muhammad saw through the deceptions and insincerity. He could not believe in a Mother of God, nor in three Gods being one. He was a Unitarian. There was but one God, the Almighty Creator of all things. To Muhammad He was Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

When Kadijah died, Ayesha became his wife. When his enemies drove him from Mecca, he took refuge in Medina. He and one follower were obliged to hide in a cave. They heard the tramp of the pursuers. "We are but two and they are many," said his companion. "Nay, we are three, for Allah is with us," said the Prophet.

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Then past middle life, in his fifty-third year, he reached the city of refuge. Still harassed by enemies, the Prophet turned soldier. In a few years he was master of Arabia. He returned to Mecca in triumph, at the head of a mighty army. He forgave those who had persecuted him and driven him forth an outcast, even the Jewess who put poison in his food, which eventually killed him, was forgiven. Ruler of a vast empire, he spent his declining years without any of the pomp and circumstances of an Oriental Sovereign. He still mended his own shoes and swept his own floor. Some of the widows of his early followers were taken into his home. This gave his critics an opportunity for scandal.

“We have nothing to learn from Mohammedanism,” is the parting shot of the Belfast journal, and that in spite of the recent “come back” of the Turks, and the discomfiture of Greece and her backers, which certainly was an eye-opener to certain pious gentlemen in London. There was a time when Europe—that is, Christian Europe—had plenty to learn of the Muslims. The splendid cities in the Moorish kingdom in Spain had paved and lighted streets, when the other parts of Europe groped in darkness through filthy thoroughfares. But hear Colonel Robert Ingersoll tell the story: In the tenth century after Christ, Saracen governors of a vast empire “established colleges in Mongolia, Tartary, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Morocco, Fez and in Spain.” The regions ruled by the Saracens were greater than the whole Roman Empire. They had not only colleges, but observatories. The sciences were taught. They introduced the ten numerals, taught algebra and trigonometry, understood cubic equations, knew the art of surveying. They made maps and catalogues of the stars, gave the great stars the names they still bear; they ascertained the size of the earth, determined the obliquity of the ecliptic and fixed

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the length of the year. They calculated eclipses, equinoxes, solstices, conjunctions of planets and occultations of stars. They constructed astronomical instruments. They made clocks of various kinds, and were the inventors of the pendulum. They originated chemistry, discovered sulphuric acid, nitric acid and alcohol. They were the first to publish pharmacopœia and dispensaries. In mechanics, they determined the law of falling bodies. They understood the mechanical powers and the attraction of gravitation. They taught hydrostatics and determined the specific gravities of bodies.

In optics they discovered that a ray of light did not proceed from the eye to an object, but from the object to the eye. They were manufacturers of cotton, leather, paper and steel. They gave us the game of chess. In their schools they taught the modern doctrine of evolution. They anticipated Darwin and Spencer.

The spread of true knowledge may in time unite the three great religions of the world—Islam, Buddhism and Christianity. Only ignorance and a belief in time-worn myth keep them apart. Draper said that Christianity in its contact with other creeds became paganized. Islam, on the contrary, became spiritualized.

Father of all in every age,
In every clime adored
By saint, by savage, or by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.

PRECIOUS GEMS

The best of men is he from whom good accrueth
to humanity.

* * *

Modesty paves the way for all virtues.

* * *

He dieth not who takes to learning.

MUHAMMAD.

CORRESPONDENCE

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To the Editor of the ISLAMIC REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—In changing the *venue* of the Conference from Wembley to the Imperial Institute I fear that the organizers have made something of a blunder. There is a world of difference between the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley and the Imperial Institute at South Kensington. The former has been in existence but a few months, but occupies by far the most prominent position in the world's limelight to-day. The latter, opened in semi-state by Her late Majesty Queen Victoria, to the blare of trumpets, an ode by the Laureate, and, if I remember rightly, a choral composition of the kind which Sir Arthur Sullivan—the then unofficial laureate of music and in his own line, a most worthy compeer of Tennyson, could do so excellently well on emergency—became at once a species of white elephant, which few ever dreamt of inspecting. And though it has, I believe, after a meritorious but dreary career, now been absorbed into the Nirvana of the University of London, its “drawing” powers have not materially benefited thereby, nor does the general public know, or care greatly, what it is all about. Perhaps the Crystal Palace would have been better. The holding of a Conference, which was supposed to be of Imperial significance, at the Imperial Institute sounds, verbally, appropriate enough, but inasmuch as the Imperial symbol for 1924 is Wembley, the *raison d'être* of the meeting seems to have been more or less effectually removed.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. BUTCHER DANIELS.

South Kensington, S.W. 7,

September 1, 1924.

To the Editor of the ISLAMIC REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—The Holy Qur-án forbids us to “devour usury”; that is, I take it, to receive money in addition to a sum lent.

If, therefore, I lend money to a brother Muslim, I am not justified in charging interest, however low the rate agreed, but must be content to receive back the sum lent, without any addition whatever. The same thing, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to the Post Office Savings Bank. I, in effect, lend money to the Government, and the Government pays me a small sum by way of interest. Am I justified in accepting it?

I have not been able to find a definition of usury in the Holy Qur-án, but I presume that we must take the word in its usual

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sense, which always implies harm to another. In taking the interest, I am only being paid by the Government for the use of my money. Surely I am doing no harm. Yet I don't know. In looking at the spirit of the law, we are often tempted to disregard the fact that the letter, too, should have its proper force. It is a dilemma, and I should be very grateful for your assistance in informing me as to the proper light in which it should be viewed.

I am, dear sir,

Yours, etc.,

MUHAMMAD AZEEM.

Sourabaya, Java,

July 19, 1924.

[Our correspondent's interesting query is fully dealt with in the Editorial Notes.—Ed.]

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