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Correspondence of literary nature may be addressed to the editor. Short articles, letters and questions will also be welcomed. Non-Muslims are also invited to send questions to be answered.

NOTES.

A CONFERENCE OF MUSLIM MISSION IN GERMANY.

In the Muslim world for October 1921 we read the following :—

A conference of workers of the German Missionary Societies was held at Ueltonhagen, March 29 to April 3, where the following questions were discussed : How must we carry the Christian Message to Islam?—G. Simon. Islam as a popular Religion among Arabs and Nubians—J. Enderlin. The present situation in Moslem Missions—Dr. J. Richter. Personal experiences in Turkistan—Count Pahlen. The Oriental Church and Missions to Moslems—Mr. Ekmann. The Oriental Woman—B. Rohner. We hope to give our readers an account of this gathering later.

This shows how keen the Christian Missionaries are for the spread of Christianity in the Muslim countries. It is, however, regrettable that the Muslims are generally quite indifferent to the crying need of the propagation of Islam. Their religion is the universal religion and is meant for the whole of mankind. It is therefore the sacred duty

of the Muslims, to disseminate the Islamic truths, for which the world is yearning.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

In a series of queries put forward by a group of students, nearly all of them Muslims at a club meeting of the Y. M. C. A. in Constantinople, the following questions are very important and deserve the serious attention of the Christian missionaries :—

What kind of satisfaction will they (people) have in the Hereafter? What way does Christianity believe in that? The whole humanity believes in the sacredness of the prophets, whereas some holy books speak against part of the prophets. As this is a thing which cannot be put side by side with the merits of prophets, it seems that all these sayings are not true. In that case do such books not lose their sacredness? According to the justice of God a man must not be responsible for the sins which another man commits; therefore how would you explain the fact that all the men were held responsible for the sin which Adam had committed? Some religions divide man into two parts, spiritual and physical; how may this be allowed from the human equality point of view? The real Christianity orders men to treat one another with humility, kindness and softness. Why then are there but few Christians who do so?

Will any of the Christian journals including the so called "Muslim World" gather courage to answer these questions? If they are rightly answered, Christianity will be put to be very a hard test.

"THE SWORD OR THE CROSS."—

Dr. Zwemer is of those Christian missionaries, who have taken upon themselves the sacred duty of making Islam the butt of unfounded charges. He in his Pseudo Muslim World has invariably laid stress on the temporal conquest of Islam and has drawn the conclusion that Islam was spread at the point of the sword. Here is a fresh example of his theory :—

"The cross was apparently vanquished by the sword of Islam in its wide and rapid spread throughout the near East. Churches became mosques, Christians apostles to Islam; literature and architect bowed down to the genius of Mohammad and his successors; the Crescent displaced the Cross."

We think it is, the greatest calumny to charge Islam with brutal force. Those who have read the history of Muslim Kings and the annals of the missionary activities of the Muslim

merchants for the spread of Islam, will surely discredit the bold statement made in the above lines. We understand that Dr. Zwemer knows Arabic and has read the Holy Quran. If so, he must have come across the well known verse in which it has been laid down that the Muslims were permitted to take up sword for the sake of religious liberty and the defence of the Churches and synagogues. And yet the Christian Missionaries have got the audacity to say that "Churches became mosques," under the Muslim rule.

THE LIVING RELIGION.

I.

Religion in the West is only a lip profession. It has nothing to do with life. It is only a cloak to be put on on Sundays. The Christianity, which is the prevailing religion in the western countries has flourished in the West, because it has no practical bearing on life. The very principle of atonement which signifies that we have simply to rely upon the blood of Jesus has made Christianity very popular; as it entails no effort—no tangible change on the part of the follower. That is why the religion has got a very insignificant position in the high circles of society in Europe. But in the East, religion has been a potent factor in the civilization of the human race. With the Oriental the religion is life, not of this world only but of the next as well. The close contact of the European civilization, however, has brought about a change in the old religions of the East which had already lost their influence and ascendancy. Hinduism for instance was originally a religion based upon philosophy and life, yet in recent times the European civilization has affected it tremendously. The result is that politics have become the central doctrine of the Hindu community and the religion is thrown into background. At present Hinduism is only a lip belief; without any practical responsibility; so far so, that some time ago a very interesting question was raised as to the true definition of a Hindu; and leaders of the community decided that one who called himself a Hindu was a Hindu. This shows that the Hindu religion is only a profession. It is also an open secret that the Arya Samaj movement which was originated with the reform of the old Brahmanism has now entirely taken up a political position, and has forsaken the field of religion. Why is it so? Is religion a worthless thing? Is it more to be talked about? No; the reason is that these religions I mean Christianity and Hinduism have lost their influence. In other words, they are dead and have no signs of a life. That is why they are losing ground in the East and the West.

But there is a religion which inspite of its political down fall is still living; and will live for ever. It has still got the same attraction for humanity; which it had about 1400 years ago; it has still the same influence of moulding human character and making it noble and sublime? It has still got the same fascinating influence over those who follow it. What has made Islam such a beautiful religion is too vast a subject to be dealt with in an article of a newspaper. But we will consider in our next issue some of the salient features of this great religion which has contributed in a considerable degree to the progress of the world.

MUSTAFA KHAN.

OUR INTERCESSOR.

A few days back while going through some Christian Literature against Islam. I came across an article entitled "Our Intercessor." In order to give the reader an idea of its contents, I give below an extract from it:—

"1. Mere repentance (*Taubah*) and asking forgiveness (*Istighfar*) cannot be of any avail in alleviating one's punishment.

"2. Mohammad cannot be our Intercessor, because he is plainly stated in the Qu'ran as sinful (40: 55 and 48: 2) and one who was erring and going astray (93: 7)."

This is in a nut shell the Christian contention against Islam.

These objections, however, are not new ones; but the Christian critics are too fond to repeat them over and over again. As a matter of fact such blunders are due the ignorance of the Arabic Language. In order to understand a passage of a foreign language to its true sense, a thorough knowledge of its idioms and modes of expression is indispensable. One who does not possess it is bound to make serious mistakes.

Another reason for their misunderstanding is not taking the meanings in the light of the context and in consistence with the other statements of a similar nature.

As regards the first objection it has arisen purely from a shallow and a superficial knowledge of the Arabic words *Taubah* and *Istighfar*. The word *Taubah* itself gives us the philosophy of repentance. The root meaning of this word is to return; and hence it implies a perfect change in the course of one's life. Mere utterance of certain words is not at all what is called true repentance. It must be accompanied by an actual change for the better. Mere lip profession is of no avail. It must be followed by good deeds.

Similarly the word *Ghufar* (from which *Istighfar* is derived) means, *the covering of a thing* to protect it from dirt. The word also carries the idea of forgiveness, but the dominant idea is that of protection. It includes both kinds of protection:—(1) protection from the commission of a sin and (2) protection from the punishment of one already committed.

Another word which has led many missionaries to wrong conclusions is *Zaib* (fault or sin). This word has a very wide significance. It applies to all shortcomings resulting from inattention, incapacity and frailties of human nature. It differs from *Ism* (the exact word for sin) in being unintentional, whereas sin is intentional.

The fourth word which serves as a foundation for such charges by the Christian missionaries is *Dall* (lost). The Arabic language is so extensive that a single word carries hundred and one different meanings according to the context and the measure which it follows. For instance the word *Dall* undoubtedly means one erring and going astray, but the lexicologists also give its meaning as one who is perplexed and hence unable to see the true path; one whose soul yams for the right course, but needs other's help for it. It also signifies one who has almost lost himself in the pursuit of some object.

If the Christian critics keep in mind the various significances of these words and interpret them according to the context there can be no possibility of such unwarranted objections. But their ignorance and prejudice are the source of the whole trouble. The Holy Prophet has been repeatedly spoken of in the Qur'an as purifier of others; and history bears an ample testimony to this statement. Yet the Christian writer under the influence of his biased mind does not like to see the facts; and wants to take refuge in the sinister meaning of these words which have got various shades of significance.

The hostile critic will for instance, intentionally interpret the word *Dall* as "one has gone astray" instead of "one who has lost himself in the search of truth"; and will ignore the fact that the first meaning is not in keeping with the other attributes of the Prophet. He cannot be both a "purifier" and a "sinner." It is therefore, necessary for the critics of Islam to equip themselves with the adequate knowledge of the Arabic language; and thus not to make the religion a bait of their own ignorance.

SH. MUHAMMAD ABDULLA.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question 1.—Are all the religions the same in fundamental principles?

Answer.—Yes; so far the divine origin and the basic principles, which are not governed by the considerations of space and time, are concerned, all religions must concur. The apparent differences among the various religions are due to human ingenuity or to human interpolations. As there has been only one God so there has been only one religion since the birth of the world; and that is Islam. That is why if we take out the common factors of all the religions, they constitute the principles of Islam. Christianity and Hinduism for instance believe in the plurality of gods; yet they believe in the *unity* as well.

Question 2.—Can a man attain salvation by following his own religion?

Answer.—Salvation means the spiritual bliss, which depends upon the evolution of soul. A man can attain salvation to the degree to which his soul has been evolved by his own conduct of life. But the most important question is, is there any other religion except Islam which has promulgated a complete code of life and which thus ensures the perfect salvation for those who live up to it.

Question 3.—Which is the true religion that exists on the face of earth?

Answer.—Islam which is the natural religion of humanity.

Question 4.—Is not Jesus Christ a prophet and will he not offer prayer behind Imam Mahdi.

Answer.—The question evidently relates to the second advent of Jesus Christ; but perhaps the enquirer has ignored the fact that Jesus Christ, who lived some two thousands years ago among the Israelites, died a natural death and therefore cannot come again to the world. The prophecy about the second advent of Jesus Christ has already been fulfilled in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian who was a reformer or Mujaddid and not a prophet, and said his prayers behind another Imam.

Question 5.—Where is Heaven and Hell?

Answer.—Heaven and Hell are not the names of particular places. They only represent two different states of the human soul. One of perfect happiness, and the other of distress and affliction.

Syed Kareem Bakhsh *Question 1.*—What do you mean by the word *Dajjal*.

Answer.—Literally it means a group of people who are devoted to spread mischief and deceit.

Question 2.—What is the difference between you and the Ahmadées of Qadian.

Answer.—The main difference is that we believe the late Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

of Qadian to be the Reformer or Mujaddid: while those who belong to the Qadian party believe him as a prophet; and hence all the Muslims except Ahmadis to be *Kafir* or outside the pale of Islam.

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