

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE LIGHT

EDITED BY MUSTAFA KHAN B. A.

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The object of The Light is to disseminate Islamic doctrines and to repudiate charges against Islam but the expenses incurred in getting out the paper being very heavy and the subscription being only a nominal one, we respectfully appeal to our Muslim brethren to send donations to help the Anjuman in making a free wide circulation.

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

NOTES.

The Revolt against the Church.

That the Church repels is a fact about which there are no two opinions. Churchmen, as much as laymen, are at one that something is wrong somewhere. What that something is has elicited various explanations.

Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, says the Church has failed because *it has become a civil service or a department of the national State instead of the ambassador of the Divine Kingdom.* Miss Maud Royden, the famous woman preacher, takes the present indifference of the people to the Church as a good sign of the times. The fact that they are not satisfied with what

the Church gives them shows their interest in religion. *They no longer believe that God is profoundly interested in such questions as apostolic succession or the age at which one is baptized, or the forms of words used by ministers of religion or the clothes they wear. They want a nobler conception of God.* Sir A. K. Yapp, the National Secretary of the Y. M. C. A., thinks it is organized and dogmatic religion that the people have lost faith in. *They are groping for something which many Churches do not supply.* The Rev. Dinsdale Young, the popular Westminster preacher, believes this indifference is due to the fact that the religion presented to the people does not meet their deepest needs. Mr W. L. George, the well-known novelist, believes *Christianity has been one of the noblest forces of civilization. It has educated mankind; mankind no longer needs its old master.* There are many hundreds of opinions on the problem which magazine aptly sums up in the words: *Ceremonial at the expense of Christianity.*

Professor Kay on Islam.

Professor D. M. Kay, D. S. O., D. D., delivered at Edinburgh an illuminating lecture on Islam. Of students of Islam and of Orientalists, there are quite a number in the West, but it seems Dr. Kay's grasp and insight have fallen to the lot of few. The vitality of Islam, observed the learned lecturer, might be measured by its success in persuading its adherents to abstain from the use of wine. Despite a climate that made thirst irresistible, the *Prophet formed a society of total abstainers which was numbered by scores of millions and had lasted for more than a thousand years.* And this, we might add, is a stage of ethical life of which the so-called modern civilization has but recently caught a dim and distant glance. A struggle to run "dry" has, of late, been going on across the Atlantic, but the success achieved has, at best, been indifferent; whereas on this side, the House of Commons is only now discussing the raising of the age-limit to eighteen, as if

what is poison at eighteen might become meat overnight. This is surely not a case where half-measures would do. *Total*—that is the one word to uproot the curse, and Islam did it at a single stroke. The growth and persistence, the loyalty of its adherents, and the intellectual revival that followed its first conquests, the Professor went on, *sufficiently refute the common error that Islam owes its success to the sword.* Nine years of contact with the Turks, in peace and in war, constrained him to testify that *Islam in action was potent for good, tolerant to other forms of religion, sober, honest, industrious.* Findings such as these are no small credit to the Professor's independence of thought, but his giving them utterance in an atmosphere of ignorance and prejudice is much more so. Honest study and appreciation, we believe, can do more than anything else to draw the worlds of Islam and Christianity closer.

THE LIGHT.

DATED THE 1ST JUNE 1923.

Muslim Rule in Spain.

(Communicated.)

"Cardova," says an old Arab writer, "is the bride of Andalusia. To her belong all the beauty and the ornaments that delight the eye or dazzle the sight. The long line of sultans form her crown of glory; her necklace is strung with the pearls which her poets have gathered from the ocean of learning, well knit together by her men of science." So did the Arab historians sketch the city of Cardova. Cardova, under the rule of such just and generous Khalifa as Abdur Rahman III, was indeed a capital to be proud of; and with perhaps no exception any city of Europe could be compared with her in the beauty of her buildings, the refinement of her life, and the learning of her inhabitants. When we picture to our minds the sketches and the records of Arabian writers, concerning the glories of Cardova on one hand and the barbaric ignorance and savage manners of the whole of the rest of Europe on the other, we can to some extent realize the extraordinary civilization of the Moors. To Cardova came from all parts of the world, students eager to cultivate poetry, to study sciences, to be instructed in divinity and law, to be trained in the art of war. In short it was the place and abode of eminence and distinction in all matters—social, religious, political, and educational. In its present state it is impossible to form any picture of the magnificence and the beauty of the

old Moorish capital. Its narrow streets of whitewashed houses convey but a faint impression of its once magnificent architectures. The palace Alcazar, in its ruins, still brings home to the visitors the idea of its greatness. The bridge, that still spans the river Guadalquivir with its seventeen arches, is still the object of wonder and delight to travellers. The great noble mosque, affords, to this day, a striking testimony to the engineering power and skill of the Arabs. The banks of Guadalquivir were bright with marble houses, mosques, gardens, in which the rarest flowers and trees of other countries were carefully cultivated. The Arabs introduced their system of irrigation, which the Spaniards, both before and after, have never equalled. The skilful gardeners of the sultan, selected and collected such rarest trees, plants and seeds that the gardens of Cardova were in no case inferior to the magnificent gardens of Damascus. The water by which these numerous gardens were supplied, was brought from the mountains (where vestiges of hydraulic works may still be seen) by means of leaden pipes, through which it was conducted to numerous basins, some of gold and silver, and to lakes, tanks, reservoirs, and fountains.

Historians tell us marvellous things about the sultan's palaces. Their splendid gates opened upon gardens and rivers and gave entrance to the great mosque. One of these palaces was called "Damascus" in memory of the old home of the Oneyyads. The beauty of this palace can be best estimated from the words of a poet:—"All palaces in the world are nothing when compared to Damascus, for not only has it gardens with the most delicious fruits, and sweet smelling flowers, beautiful prospects and limpid running waters, clouds pregnant with axomatic dew and lofty buildings, but its night is always perfumed, for morning pours on it her grey amber and night her black mask." Another palace worth the name was Ez-zahra, after the name of one of the wives of Khalifa Abdur Rahman III. In order to bring home the idea of the beauties and wonders of this "City of the Fairest"—Madinat-Ez-zahra, a few remarks of an Arabian author will suffice. "The running streams, the limpid waters, the luxuriant gardens, the stately buildings, the magnificent palaces, the throngs of soldiers sumptuously attired in robes of silk and brocade, moving to and fro through its broad streets; the crowds of judges, theologians, doctors, scientists, poets, philosophers,

historians, all walking with becoming gravity through the magnificent halls, and ample courts and palaces,—are some of the beauties, natural as well as artificial, contained within the precincts of Ez-Zahra. The daily allowance of meat given to the sixteen or seventeen thousand servants and pages in the palace was about twenty five thousand pounds. Similarly the daily allowance of bread for the fishes in the pond of Ez-zahra was twelve thousand loaves and a huge quantity of pulse.....” Such a description as given by the Arabian writers, orators and poets have exhausted the mines of eloquence in their description. All who saw them owned that nothing similar to these could be found in the territories of Islam. Travellers from distant lands, men of all ranks and professions in life—princes, ambassadors, merchants, theologians, poets—all agreed that they had never seen in the course of their travels, anything that could be compared to these palaces.

The city of Cordova was full of grand buildings, among which were counted more than fifty thousand houses, of aristocracy and official classes, more than hundred thousand dwellings for the common people, seven hundred mosques, seventy public libraries, nine hundred public baths. (Just for the sake of comparison if we look to the medieval Christians, we find a striking contrast. A Christian lady recorded with pride the fact that up to the age of sixty, she had never washed any part of her body, except the tips of her fingers. While dirt was characteristic of Christian sanctity, the Muslims were careful in the most minute particulars of cleanliness). Among the great architectural beauties of Cordova, the great mosque held the first place. There were nineteen arcades from east to west, and thirty one from north to south, twenty one doors for the worshippers to enter in; 1,290 columns supported the roof. The pulpit was constructed of ivory and choice woods. Four fountains ran night and day, for washing before prayer. Hundreds of brass lanterns illumined the mosque at night.

Such were the beauties of the palaces, the gardens, and the mosques of Cordova. If we come to the higher matters, we find that the mind was as lovely as the body itself. Her professors and teachers made her the centre of European culture. Every branch of science was studied here. Abu-ul-Kasim was a notable surgeon of the eleventh century, and some of his operations coincide with the present researches. Ibn-Zohr, a little later made

numerous important medical and surgical discoveries. Ibn Beytar, the botanist, travelled all over the East to find medicinal herbs, on which he wrote an exhaustive treatise. Averroes, the philosopher, formed the chief link in the chain which connects the philosophy of ancient Greece with that of medieval Europe. In short—Astronomy, Geography, Chemistry, Natural History, all were studied with ardour at Cordova. If we come to literature, we find that there never was a time in Europe when poetry became the hobby of every body and when people of all ranks composed excellent Arabic verses.

In Arts again, Andalusia held an excellent and an unparallel position. Such buildings as the “City of the Fairest,” the “Mosque of Cordova,” and “the huge bridge of Guadalquier” could not have been erected, unless her workmen had been highly skilled craftsmen and expert engineers. Silk weaving, pottery making, glass blowing, Ivory carvings, were all practised in the Moorish Spain.

Such was the condition of Spain under her Muslim rulers. She set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened state. Art, literature and science prospered as they prospered no where else in Europe. Students flocked from all parts of Europe.—France, Germany, and England—to drink from the fountain of learning which flowed only in the cities of Moors. Mathematics, Astronomy, History, Philosophy, Medicine, Surgery, Engineering, Poetry—were to be mastered in Spain and Spain alone. In the practice of war, no less than in the arts of peace, they long stood supreme. In short, whatsoever makes a kingdom great and prosperous, whatsoever tends to refinement and civilization was found in Moslem Spain, and under Muslim rule only; because we see her quite a different and new state, after the crusade of Ferdinand and Isabella. In the land where science was once supreme, the Spanish doctors became noted for nothing, but for their ignorance of incapacity. Where once seventy public libraries with their half a million books had fed the minds of scholars, such indifference to learning prevailed that there was not a single library in her new capital Madrid. The arts and industries of Toledo faded into insignificance. The land, deprived of the skilful irrigation of Moors, grew impoverished. The richest and most fertile valleys languished and were deserted. The beggars, faqirs and bandits, took the place of scholars, merchants, and knights. Such was the condition of Spain, when her Muslim rulers were driven away; with them

vanquished all her glory and fame. Such is the melancholy contrast offered by her history.

Correspondence.

"THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM."

Mr. S. P. Scott, the well known American author of the History of the Moorish Empire had addressed the following letter to the President Ahmadiyya Anjuman-Ishaat-i-Islam Lahore :—

Mr. Muhammad Ali,
President,
Ahmadia Anjuman-i-Ishaat Islam.

Dear Sir,

I have received and read with pleasure "The Teachings of Islam," by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which you were kind enough to send me and which only reached me last week. It is the best and most lucid explanation and commentary on doctrines of Islam that I have ever read. I am greatly obliged to you for sending it to me.

Yours truly,
S. P. Scott.

HILLSBORO, OHIO, U.S.A. }

April 16th 1923. }

Questions and Answers.

Mr. Faiz-ud-Din Ahmad :—

Q. 1. Is there any harm in taking photographs?

A. The legitimate use of a photo is permissible.

Q. 2. Is there any difference between Ahmadi and Sunni sect, if so, what?

A. No difference except that Ahmadi believe that the prophecy with regard to the second advent of Jesus has been fulfilled in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian.

Q. 3. Is there any harm in touching spirits, the stuff used for experiments in laboratories?

A. No.

Mr. Abdullah :—

Q. 1. Are the Vedas and Gita divine revelations, if so what is the proof?

A. The Quran says that every nation has seen its warner; hence India too must have received revelation. As Vedas and Gita are held in great reverence as divine books; we assume that these were revealed to the prophets who appeared in this country.

Q. 2. Should we believe that Siri Krishna was a prophet? If so, why?

A. We only think that possibly Krishna was a prophet because we believe according to the Quran in the catholicity of the divine revelation.

Q. 3. Was intermarriage with Persians allowed by any companion of the Holy Prophet? If so, why?

A. Yes, Hazrat Umar sanctioned the intermarriage with Zorustians (Persians) because he treated them as the "people of the Book," with whom, of course intermarriage is permissible according to the Quran.

Q. 4. Can a Muslim marry a girl of a Parsee family.

A. Yes; but he should try to convert her to Islam.

Q. 5. Is marriage of a Muslim permissible with a Brahmo lady who is unitarian and believes in the Vedas as revealed Book? Give reasons.

A. Marriage with the "people of Book" is permissible. If Vedas are taken as the revealed Book, marriage with ladies believing in it is permissible especially when they are unitarian.

Q. 6. According to the Holy Quran 24:31 and commentary thereon by Mauvli Muhammad Ali it is permissible for a woman to have her hands uncovered. What is meant by the hands here? Palms up to wrist or up to elbow? Is it not permissible to have the feet uncovered?

A. The original words of the Holy Quran are *لا يظن منكم* i. e. except that appears thereof, that is which is customary or natural to uncover. Women living in cities and going out for shopping only need not uncover the portion between elbow and wrist; while women doing agricultural work can, if necessary, keep hands uncovered up to elbow.

Q. 7. Is it permissible for a woman to walk alone in the market, or do railway journey?

A. Yes, women should be made, as far as possible useful members of society. But much depends on society we live in. Reform should be begun with men; who should abide by the Quranic injunction to cast down their looks.

Q. 8. Can a woman walk with a male friend, with whom her marriage is lawful?

A. No; such practice will result in moral depravity.

Important Notice.

The students applying for concession in the price of the English translation of the Quran are requested to note :—

(1) That the applications must be attested by the principal.

(2) That the applicant must make a declaration that the copy of the Quran for which he is applying is required for his personal use.

(3) That except the students whose poverty is attested, general concession for students is of Rs. 5/- only i.e. instead of Rs. 25, 20, and 15 the reduced price will be 20, 15, and 10 respectively. But the poor student can have it on half price.

The general concession for students in other books is 33 per cent; while for the poor is 50%.

SECRETARY,

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, LAHORE.