

THE LIGHT.

EDITED BY MUSTAFA KHAN B. A.

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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 Alarm-Signal.

The recent earthquake in Japan is said to be historically unexampled and unique in its kind. Through this unparalleled peril one, of the most advanced and civilized countries of the world has irreparably fallen from the summits of its glory to the depths of misery. Such an occurrence is, indeed, nothing but a striking lesson for those who doubt the fate of past generations to have met desolation, plague pestilence or destruction, as declared by the Quran!

The present age is given up to moral and spiritual degradation and is quite alien to the blessings of religion. It forms, therefore, the fittest field for the display of God's wrath manifested in the dreadful shocks like the Japanese 'upheaval.' But, still, how many are there to forsake

'their death-like sleep' and revive their faith in the almighty powers of God, at the alarm from heaven!

The mujaddid (the reformer) of the present century, the late Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, was deputed by heaven, to free the world from the yoke of evil. He predicted the occurrence of mighty and crushing earthquakes to harmonise with the immoral and non-Islamic state of universe. Though many belied and ignored him, yet to-day history stands magnanimous to verify the truth of his preachings and to certify the glory of his heavenly predictions. And though the majority heard him without response, yet his universal success is echoing through the whole creation.

Let, then, the whole world know that Japanese destruction is an alarm for the corrupt and a signal for the believers of the latest reformer, who call him an imposter. God, by His signs, not only makes us alive to the cause of piety and righteousness but, also, admonishes them who do not stand by the faithful and the virtuous.

God help the world to the right course! Amen!

What Islam made a Power.

H. G. Wells, while abusing every thing Moslem in his short "History of the World," could not help saying the following words:

“ . . . , there remains in Islam, this faith he (Muhammad) imposed upon the Arabs much power and inspiration. One is its uncompromising monotheism, its simple enthusiastic faith in the rule and fatherhood of God and its freedom from theological complications. Another is its complete detachment from the sacrificial priest and the temple. It is an entirely prophetic religion, proof against any possibility of relapse toward blood sacri-

fices. In the Koran the limited and ceremonial nature of the pilgrimage to Mecca is stated beyond the possibility of dispute, and every precaution was taken by Muhammad to prevent the deification of himself after death. And a third element of strength lay in the insistence of Islam upon the perfect brotherhood and equality before God of all believers whatever their color, origin or status. "These are the things that made Islam a power in human affair."

The Muslim mode of worship.

We read the following in the Islamic Review :—

Some free-thinkers object to our mode of worship and our adoring God. They do not see the necessity of doing so, if such they say, is the Muslim conception of God. The Muslim conception of worship is, however, quite different from others. Islam literally means submission to the Law. With us the forces of Nature are the laws of God, and in this sense of the word every free-thinker is admittedly a Muslim.

The Arabic word for worship is *Ibadat*, which has various meanings, the first being obedience, subordination to another's will. Secondly, it means some prescribed way or path, which, when pursued, brings a person to his destination. Lastly, it means the form which a person uses in order to express his willingness to follow that way—a form of worship.

In our prayer we make various gestures and movements. Do not physical movements intensify our feelings? Sometimes, indeed, the feelings themselves actually create physical movements: while on other occasions physical movements give birth and mould to special kinds of ideas: and if ideas and feelings are the mainspring of action, the object of our movements in prayer is obvious.

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The Crucifixion of Jesus.

The crucifixion and Jesus is the central doctrine of Christianity. The doctrine of "atonement," the doctrine of "Divine Sonship," the doctrine of "Jesus" being Saviour of the World," are all interwoven round crucifixion. That is why the Christian writers attach immensely great importance to it. Dr. Denny in the introduction of his book, the "Death of Christ," says—It is hardly necessary to prove that in the New Testament the death of Christ is the real subject. It is distinctly present to the mind of the New Testament writers, and they have much to say upon it. It is treated by

them as a subject of central and permanent importance to the Christian faith, and it is incredible that it should have filled the place it does fill in the New Testament had it ever been regarded as of trifling consequence, for understanding the acceptance or the preaching of the Gospel." The reader will easily see the attitude of the Christian mind from these lines. Instead of *proving* something, a Christian propagandist is ready to take things for *granted*. He is apt to build up his faith simply on the vague, indefinite, and the supposed attitude of the mind of the New Testament writers. As they *seem* to attach a great importance to the death of Jesus it is *established* that the subject is of permanent importance to the Christian *faith*. We should not enquire into the circumstances that led to make the event important; we should not pause to think and compare the whole bulk of the book in which the event is narrated with the place it has occupied; but we should simply rush to the conclusion that as it has happened to fill a considerable place, it must have a profound significance capable of being a foundation stone of our queer dogmas. Such is the logical reasoning of the Christian propagandist. It is true that the event of "death of Jesus" or "crucifixion" is narrated with full details in the Gospels and it has filled a considerable space. But what is the reason? In this connexion we must have two considerations in mind. First, the Gospel is a small book; and its writers had no material to enlarge the bulk of it. The life of Jesus as narrated by the Gospel writers, is short and eventless; and naturally they were inclined to make the best use of the only one interesting event—"the crucifixion." Second, the very nature of the event demanded that it should be given a paramount importance. The Jewish animosity with Jesus culminated in his nailing to the Cross and this event furnished them with an argument against the claims of Jesus. There is a verse in the old scriptures that one who dies on the Cross, will suffer a cursed death. The Jews were, therefore, anxious to crucify Jesus to falsify his claims on the authority of old scriptures. Therefore the "death on the cross" in the case of Jesus is not simply

a passing event in his life ; but a stumbling block to the Christian faith. It gives an argument in the hands of the Jews against Jesus. Therefore, the Gospel writers and the commentators thereof were naturally bound to give full details of it to afford food for meditation to their readers. Thus if the event of the Cross is described with full details in the Gospels, it is not because the chroniclers were anxious to make it the basis of a new dispensation, but all what they wanted was to bring the event in full light to give every possible facility to the readers for clearing their master's position which was made dubious by this event. The far-fetched theory, that Jesus suffered a cursed death for the sake of humanity ; that he redeemed us of our inherited sin by his blood, affords a typical illustration of the poor attempts that are made to explain away the event of the cross.

One more attempt of this sort is made in a recent issue of the *Moslem World* by Mr. E. E. Elder. His explanation of the cross is both interesting and novel. He has tried to explain it from a Muslim point of view ; and wants to seek support of the Holy Quran for his conclusion. He has quoted at length the views and the explanation of the Muslim commentators, who hold that Jesus was not crucified ; and that it was somebody else in his resemblance who was crucified. Yet he frankly admits that the point of dispute among them is the identity of the person crucified. It is stated in a number of accounts that " he was a disciple," Tabri quoting from Ibn Ishaq " gives his name as Sargus. Buidawi says that " he was a Jew named Tanus." Ath-Th'alabi says " that the name of the Jew, who was made to look like Jesus and was killed, was Pallayanus." Another tradition from Wahb states that " the likeness was cast upon Judas ;" and another authority gives his name as Ashyu, a rabbi of the Jews.

There are two general opinions about the person who was crucified ; one that he was a disciple, and the other that he was a Jew. Tabli, however, commenting on the mass of traditions which deal with the question of the cross says that " likeness was cast upon all of those who were with Jesus."

From these conflicting opinions Mr. E. E. Elder derives the conclusion that they are all incorrect, especially when the name of the person upon whom " the likeness was cast " is not given in the Quran. It will be well to quote here a few lines of his article to denote the line of his argument :—

Now the words *Shubbiha Lahum* (شبه لهم) which are translated by Rodwall, They had only his likeness ; and which Palmer renders " But a similitude was made for them " are very ambiguous. On this vague phrase is built the mass of Moslem tradition dealing with a person who looked like Jesus and who was crucified in his stead. The *Shubbiha Lahum* (شبه لهم) is rare indeed. The literal meaning is He (or it) was made a resemblance to them " The Moslems often say the subject of the verb is the person who was crucified in Jesus' stead. But there is no mention of him here or elsewhere in the Quran. It seems obvious it cannot refer to Jesus. It certainly must refer to something that has been mentioned. Now the phrase could be translated. "It was mere a resemblance to them, or more fully it was made a misunderstanding—a perplexity to them."

Evidently the correspondent of the " *Moslem World* " has taken into consideration the one interpretation of the Quranic expression, which suited him most ; and which in his opinion made the " crucifixion " an established fact. But there is another correct interpretation of these words which strikes at the root of the Christian Faith. (*To be Continued*).

Correspondence.

EID QURBAN IN BERLIN.

II.

The assembly of the faithful entered the Mosque to say their prayers. The prayers were led by Imam Shukri Effendi. The worship was preceded by a soul-stirring sermon delivered by A. Idris, a Bukharan gentleman of high standing. The congregation appreciated it very much and listened to it with rapt attention. The prayers and service being over, the faithful arose to greet one another and wish one another facility, happiness and peace. The ceremony exercises a very far reaching influence on the hearts. Ours is a brotherhood which is indeed real, sincere and practical. Islam can bring together and hold together the various nations of the world. The European nations in the West are deadly opposed to each other. They are doing their utmost to wipe one another out of existence. They have

driven Germany into a very bad corner. Germany's case is very pathetic. Its pangs are unbearable. But England and France are too callous to be moved. Christianity has proved an utter failure in the West. It has shown that it has no such thing as even a semblance of brotherhood. To these forlorn nations of the West the Muslim demonstration of a real, practical and universal brotherhood, is an object lesson. It is a wonder of wonders how Islam can weld together nations of different colours and climes. This universal Brotherhood of man owes its organisation to the magical power of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, May Allah shower His choicest blessings on the soul of this benefactor of humanity who gave us such an institution which is indeed a wonder for the Western mind. In this institution lies the real strength of the Muslim world. The enemy knows it; and the enemy fears it tremendously. This is the nightmare which haunts the enemy in his dreams. This is why he condemns it as "pan-Islamism". "This is the creation of to-day," "This has been brought about by the modern Muslim agitators". These expressions reveal the workings of his mind. The enemy betrays himself. He tells us that he is afraid of this institution of universal brotherhood in Islam. The Muslims should be thankful to God and His Holy Apostle for this wonderful and most useful organisation which came into existence over thirteen hundred years ago and which threatens the enemy most and which is undoubtedly the greatest secret and source of the strength of Islam. Europe felt its force when Richard waged crusades against Islam, and Europe felt again its inherent force when Lloyd George threatened the existence of Turkey. Let the Muslims of the world avail themselves of the blessings of this organisation and once more retrieve the ascendancy of Islam, our faith, most excellent!

The brotherhood then made for a restaurant where the Turks had invited the whole assembly to dinner. A very capacious hall and its side rooms accommodated the gathering. The hall was very tastefully decorated for the festive board. The photos of Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha, His Majesty Amir Aman-Ullah Khan,

and Zaghlul Pasha forming the most conspicuous part of the decorations. Before the dinner was served, several speakers addressed the assembly in turn on the pressing needs of the Muslim world. The speeches aroused a good deal of enthusiasm and were punctuated by hearty acclamations.

The feast being over, the brotherhood returned to town to join an entertainment given by His Excellency Ghulam Siddiq Khan on behalf of His Majesty the Amir of Afghanistan. This brought the functions of a day of excitement to a close, when everybody retired with his spirits revived, with his convictions strengthened, and with vivid impressions of the achievements of Islam, the most fitting religion for suffering humanity.

Yours fraternally,

SADR-UD-DIN.

26th July 1933.

Giesebrechtstr, 5 Berlin

Questions and Answers

Malik Gulzar Kayani:—

Q. 1. Who are the ten most popular men in India at present in your opinion?

A. This question has nothing to do with religion; what is the criterion of your "popularity?"

Mr. Muhammad Ali Arab:—

Q. 1. Is it permissible to go as a pilgrim to the Holy land and Karbala and Najaf?

A. There is no harm in it; rather Muslims are expected to travel in the world. The "pilgrimage" that is enjoined by Islam is of Kaba, the sacred house at Mecca.

Q. 2. Are there Christians among the Arabs?

A. Not at present I believe.

Q. 3. How many sects are there in Islam?

A. There are many sects in Islam; but as a matter of fact they are simply different schools of thought; as they concur on fundamentals.

Q. 4. If I am *Qadlyani* (Ahmadi) can I say my prayers in the mosque of Shias or Sunnis?

A. Yes, the mosques should be open for the worship of Allah.

Q. 5. Which of the various sects of Islam is on the right course?

A. Ahmadiyya Section of Lahore.

Q. 6. Is it written in the Quran that Muhammad is the best of the prophets.

A. Yes, Muhammad has been described as *سَفِيحُ الْمَذْنِبِينَ* i.e. the last and the most perfect of all the prophets.

Q. 7. What is the meaning of *سَفِيحُ الْمَذْنِبِينَ*?

A. It means the intercessor for sinners. The word intercession, however, should not be misunderstood. In Islam intercession is through practice, i.e. one combines himself with the Holy Prophet in holy life, the prophet becomes his intercessor i.e. his sins are forgiven.

Q. 8. Should we weep and cry for Imam Hasain?

A. It is but natural to feel for human sufferings; but to mourn an event of 13 hundred years with artificial tears is simply repugnant to refined taste.