

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE LIGHT.

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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.

Christian Missions in Mesopotamia.

A Christian Journal says :—

“Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D. D., sees in Mesopotamia to-day “the key-stone of the arch” of Moslem missions. In that region, where not only did Abraham hear God’s call but in which Islam arose, plans for future work are now being made in co-operation by the Southern Presbyterian Church, the Northern Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church in the United States, and the United Presbyterian Church. In this connection, Dr. Zwemer calls attention to the resolution passed at the

Pan-Presbyterian Council, Western Section, held at Toronto: “Resolved, That the Western Section of the Alliance in session at Toronto has been gratified to learn of a proposal for the establishment of a Mission in Mesopotamia, under the joint auspices of some of the Churches of the Alliance. The delegates to the supreme judicatories of all our Churches appointed at this meeting are requested to bring this enterprise to their attention, with our cordial commendation of it as a fitting expression of our common life and of the spirit of Christian unity that binds us together, and as designed to meet one of the most urgent needs now existing in any part of the non-Christian world.”

This gives us an inkling of the united efforts of the Christian Missionaries for the spread of their faith in the Muslim lands. The question is, Should the Muslims sit still and watch? The propagation of Islam is a sacred duty of every Muslim, and therefore all the Muslims of the world, while retaining the special features of their respective schools of thought to which they may belong should join hands for this common cause.

How Christians penetrated into Nigeria.

Nineteen years ago a young Irish doctor who went to Southern Nigeria to take up Government service, while travelling in the Owerri District, was set upon by the natives, stripped of his clothing and made to march, naked as he was, in the hot tropical sun to a large market-place some miles away. Here he was put to death. Early in the present year Bishop Lasbrey visited the stations of the Church Missionary Society in this neighbourhood and found eloquent proof of the change which a few short years of gospel influence had brought about. The Bishop visited a place which is less than a mile from the market where the doctor

met his tragic fate. No threatening mob of infuriated enemies escorted the white man on this occasion, but a band of earnest Christians, rejoicing that they were workers together with him for the "Kingdom of God." There are now more than 13,000 adherents of the Church in this district.

This shows the wonderful tenacity of purpose and the extraordinary perseverance which the Christians have got. If the Muslims cherish the great hope of spreading the light of Islam in the world far and wide, they should also exhibit such qualities. As a matter of fact the Muslims of the good old times were the embodiments of these heroic virtues, and the Christians have only borrowed these from them. The pity, however, is that now the Muslims are almost devoid of this chivalrous spirit.

THE LIGHT.

DATED THE 1ST DECEMBER 1923.

Islam—The Religion of Toleration. (COMMUNICATED).

Of all the religions of the world, Islam is preeminently the religion which assumes a most tolerant attitude towards other religions and a most respectful one towards the founders of these religions and the teachers of mankind. It accepts the truth of the prophets of all nationalities. "And every nation had an apostle" says the Holy Quran (10: 47). According to the Christians, prophets were raised by God only in a single branch of human family, *i.e.*, the Israelites. They, therefore, reject all non-Israelite Prophets as 'imposters.' Why should God forsake the non-Israelite in this way after creating them is a riddle. Jesus is reported to have said "All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers." (John 10:8). The Holy Prophet Muhammad always talked of the prophets that went before him with feelings of respect and love. He would often speak of Jesus and Moses as his two brothers. According to the Hindu religion, no prophet was ever raised by God outside the limits of India. This is clearly a very narrow view of religion. Islam is the only religion which gives a true cosmopolitan soul to its true adherents. The Holy Quran condemns idol-worship in the strongest terms, but it forbids the Muslims to abuse even the idols of other people. "And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance." (Holy Quran 6: 109). No other religion, within our knowledge comes up to Islam in its tolerance of other religions to this ex-

tent. According to the Holy Quran, no religion is devoid of good. It blames the Jews and the Christians for denying all good in each other, notwithstanding that they are both followers of the Old Testament. It says "The Jews say The Christians do not follow any thing (good) and the Christians say The Jews do not follow anything (good), while they recite the (same) book." (2: 113). Islam does not arbitrarily narrow the sphere of salvation by making it attainable only by believers in a particular dogma. Salvation according to the holy religion of Islam can be attained by resignation to the Divine will and by doing good to God's creatures. The Holy Quran is very clear on this point. "And they say None shall enter the garden (of paradise) except he who is a Jew or the Christians. These are their vain desires. Say, bring your proof if you are truthful. Yea! whosoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good to others, he has his reward from his Lord and there is no fear for him, nor shall he grieve." (2: 111, 112). It may be added here that state of salvation is generally expressed in the Holy Quran by the words, "They shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve." According to Islam salvation is not the monopoly of one nation. There are various verses in the Holy Quran which strike at the root of the idea of a favoured nation whose members alone may be entitled to salvation. It says, "Surely those who believe and those who are Jews or the Christians and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve." (2: 62). Again it says, "To every nation we appointed acts of devotion which they observe" (22: 67). "For every one of you did we appoint a law and a way" (5: 48). These verses give us another proof of the principle of toleration and equal religious freedom inculcated by the Holy Quran. In another passage we have the following very remarkable injunction. "Let there be no compulsion in religion." In the face of this wholesome commandment it requires a special degree of impudence to urge that Islam spread at the point of the sword. The above verse from the Holy Quran gives the complete lie to the deliberate misrepresentation concocted by some Christian Missionaries to vilify the faith of Islam—that Islam was spread at the point of the sword. Compare this injunction with the following Biblical orders "Slay ye every one of them, take not one of them alive." The view, therefore, that Islam is intolerant, has grown partly out of ignorance and partly out of interested motives. The Holy Prophet Muhammad

had a catholic vision. Abraham, he said, was a Muslim. "Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was an upright man, a Muslim" (Holy Quran 3: 66). Thus Muslims lived even before the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The Jews and the Christians have been called upon by the Holy Quran to accept the broad principles of religion. It says "O followers of the Book! come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and that we shall not associate aught with Him and that some of us shall not take others for lords, besides Allah" (3: 63). The Holy Prophet described himself as 'mercy to mankind.' Jesus, on the other hand, is reported to have said "Think not I am come to send peace on earth. I am not to send peace but a sword—I come to send fire on the earth." Islam wants its followers to preach its doctrines by peaceful means. The Holy Quran says, "And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and these it is that shall be successful" (3: 103). This verse directs the Musalmans to have always among them a missionary party whose only object is the propagation of Islam. As regards the methods of preaching it says "Summon men to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and kindly warning." "Dispute with them in the kindest manner." These passages speak for themselves. The Holy Quran says "Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say! Our Lord is Allah, and had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Might." Thus in the Holy Quran the object of Jihad (religious war) is declared to be the protection of cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques. Could toleration go further. The lives of the Muslims are to be sacrificed not only to stop their own persecution by their enemies and save their own mosques but to save cloisters, churches and synagogues as well.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Value of Time.

DEAR SIR,

1. There are various kinds of wealth with which you may be blessed by God, viz.:-

- (i) wealth of money ;
- (ii) wealth of health ;

- (iii) wealth of knowledge ;
- (iv) wealth of power ;
- (v) wealth of time ; etc., etc.

2. Of these, time is the most valuable. Nothing can come up to it in usefulness. Every moment of it is precious. So, you have to be very careful as to how you use it.

3. If you happen to lose money, you can not only make good the loss but earn a good deal more by your industry, and keep the wealth in your possession as long as you like by exercising a little prudence and economy.

4. If your health gets bad, you can become hale and hearty again by following the rules which medical science lays down.

5. If you may be lacking in knowledge, you can make up this deficiency by availing yourself of the educational facilities which are in existence in your country.

6. If you happen to be deprived of your power, you can regain it by removing the defects which brought about the misfortune.

7. But it is different with time. Once it is lost you cannot get it back, try as hard as you may. You must keep pace with it if you wish to achieve success in life.

8. Time is fleeting. It does not wait for any body, be he a king or a coolie. It never moves to suit the convenience of individuals. You must, therefore, make the best use of it while it is with you.

9. Now I shall tell you how to utilise time to your advantage. First of all, thank God for having given you this inestimable thing. Have faith and trust in Him, and Him alone. Do not look to any one else for assistance. This faith and trust in your Creator will give you courage and strength which will enable you to overcome all difficulties.

10. You should, in gratitude for this gift of God, be good to His creatures. Acquire knowledge of His Commandments and of the secrets of His universe, and impart this knowledge to your fellow-beings. Give every body his dues. Avoid cruelty to animals. Do not keep thinking of your own comforts. Live for others; help the weak and the aged; the poor and the homeless, the sick and the suffering; and the widows and the orphans, irrespective of colour, creed and race; and do all that you can to make them happy.

11. Set in this way a good example to others. Teach them what you consider to be true and persuade to tell the truth on all occasions—that is, even they have

the risk of losing their lives. Impress on them the advantages of having patience in affliction.

12. The time spent in this way will secure you perfect peace of mind, happiness and prosperity, and bring you closer to your Creator. It will stand you in good stead in the next world also. But if you fail to use your time as indicated you will put yourself to an irreparable loss, and also incur the displeasure of God.

13. Read in this connection the following brief but interesting message which God gave to His humble servant Muhammad over thirteen hundred years ago:—

ولعصر ان الانسان لفي خسر الا الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصلحت وتواصوا بالصبر.

“Consider the time; most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience.”

Think and act upon these verses, my dear friends, before it is too late.

Yours truly,

(M. H. K.)

Questions and Answers.

S. Nazir Alam:—

Q. Please explain the parda system as prescribed by *Shariat* (the Muslim Law)? I think parda is not prescribed in such a strict form.

A. Yes, you are right. The parda as ordained by the Holy Quran is simply this that women “should not display their ornaments except what appears thereof,” i.e., except that which one discloses usually. This includes hands and face. In the time of the Holy Prophet women used to do all sorts of work.

Mr. Said:—

Q. 1. Is it a sin to cut human corpses to discover the cause of death? If so, what do you say about doctors who operate upon dead bodies?

A. No it is not; Islam is not the enemy of science; rather it encourages scientific research.

Q. 2. Is it not a sin to predict medically the death of a patient?

A. No sane doctor will tell the patient himself that he will soon die. But there is no harm in letting the relatives of the patient know and it is what generally happens.

Q. 3. Is not European dress, I mean tie and hat and all that forbidden for Muslim? If not, why?

A. No; but one should not always stick to European dress only. Islam is a universal religion and is not governed by things, which are associated with different climates.

Q. 4. Can you cite a Quranic verse showing that Islam is not opposed to science.

A. The idea that we should make scientific research and study nature permeates throughout the Holy Quran. The Holy Prophet is asked to pray in these words *رب زدني علما* O my God increase my knowledge.

Q. 5. We cannot attain perfect happiness in this life. Why?

A. Because this world is not meant for it.

Q. 6. Why do the Christians say that Jesus was son of God?

A. Please ask them. It appears that Jesus used the word in a metaphorical sense; the Christians mistook it for reality and thus built up the doctrine of sonship of God.

Q. 7. Can a Muslim marry a non-Muslim lady?

A. Yes, marriage with the people of Book is permissible.

Q. 8. Can a non-Muslim marry a Muslim lady?

A. No.

Q. 9. Is it true that the source of the Nile is in heaven?

A. No.

Q. 10. When will Imam Mahdi appear?

A. He has already appeared in the person of the late Hazrat Mirza Sahib of Qadian. Don't you know about the Ahmadiyya movement? If not, please get necessary literature from our book department.

Mr Ismail Ahmad:—

Q. 1. The Muslims believe in the intercession *شفاعة* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Does the Quran support it? On what ground this belief is based?

A. Intercession in Islam means co-ordination in actions. It is based upon the simple fact that a true Muslim who follows the Holy Prophet and leads a religious pious life must get salvation. The Holy Prophet becomes his intercessor through his own actions.

Q. 2. (a) Is not a game such as football, cricket or tennis unlawful in Islam? (b) Are these games contrary to the Islamic spirit?

A. (a) No; (b) No.

Q. 3. (a) Do the Christians believe that Jesus Christ had a father?

(b) What does this text mean “the book of generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David?” Does it mean that Jesus was the son of David?

A. (a) The Christians believe that Jesus was born of virgin Mary. (b) He, of course, was an Israelite through his mother. But this question may well be asked from a Christian.

An Appeal.

In view of a keen desire from our readers to see more reading matter in “Light,” our Society is considering the question of increasing number of the pages of the paper from January next. This proposal will necessitate a simultaneous increase in the subscription which most probably will be Rs. 2 and Re. 1 from Students. We are running the paper at a considerable loss as our sole object is to enlighten the educated community of Muslims on matters religious and to repudiate false charges against Islam. Our well-to-do brethren are, therefore, requested to help us with liberal donations in this sacred task.

MANAGER.