

THE LIGHT.

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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.

ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE.

Writing on the Caliphate in the Mosle World (a Christian Missionary paper) Dr. Margoliouth thus ends his distorted version of the history of the Caliphate :

"If Western Civilization means anything, it means that no man may be subjected to disabilities because of the creed which he professes or adopts; Islam by its maxims subjects those who do not profess it to disabilities and those who abandon it to outlawry. How can any one who claims religious toleration demand that such a system should have a new lease of political power."

I am not here concerned with the correctness or otherwise of Dr. Margoliouth's claims for Western Civilization. Instances are not wanting in which men have suffered disabilities for coming over from Christianity to Islam. But Dr. Margoliouth would have done

well if he had added the word *colour* to the word *creed* in his claim for Western Civilization. Happily the learned doctor puts in a claim for Western Civilization and not for Christianity. Perhaps he knew that the statement would in that case be too absurd even in a Christian Missionary paper.

As regards his attack on the tolerance of Islam, he only gives vent to the bigotted and narrow views of the ordinary Christian Missionary. Religious toleration may have been adopted by Western Civilization as a measure of expediency but it was first pronounced as an article of faith by Islam. It is the Holy Qur'an which first laid down the broad principle: "There shall be no compulsion in religion." It is the Holy Qur'an which laid it down as a fundamental principle of Islam that a Muslim should believe in the prophethood of all the great prophets of the world: "And those who believe in what has been revealed to thee and what was revealed before thee." And again: "Say, we believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us, and in that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them." And still again: "There is no nation in which a warner has not passed." And lastly, it is the Holy Qur'an which required its followers to fight, not only for the maintenance of religious freedom for the Muslims but also for the Jews and the Christians and all worshippers of God generally. The Muslims were persecuted with all the severity to which religious persecution can go; they had to fly from their homes and the sword was then taken up by their opponents to annihilate them. It was at this stage that the Muslims were allowed by the Holy Qur'an to take up the sword in self-defence, but not only in defence of Islam and its places of worship, but also in defence of the places of worship of all other religions. Read the following: "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." Here the *cause of Allah* is not only the defence of mosques but also of churches and synagogues and even of the cloisters of monks.

Is there any other heavenly book in the world which contains any of these principles of religious tolerance? No one shall be compelled to adopt a religion; every religious reformer shall be respected and even honoured as a prophet of God; and every place of worship shall be defended. It is Islam which established these principles in the world thirteen hundred years ago, and the exponents of Christianity mean to throw dust into the eyes of the world by claiming every good for themselves and putting every blame on Islam even against the clearest facts.

MUHAMMAD ALI.

THE RELIGION OF PEACE.

A NATIONAL DEITY.

Like all other conceptions of the human intellect, the conception of the Deity has varied. The Israelites thought that they were the "only chosen sons of God" and the rest of the world was devoid of the divine light. The followers of the Vedas still hold that Arya Varta has been the only favourite resort of gods and has exclusively enjoyed this prerogative. This prejudicial conception of the Deity is in fact due in some cases to ignorance and in others to jealousy and hatred. The Jews, for instance, invariably hated the "Gentiles" who were, therefore, regarded outside the pale of God's family. The same spirit and national contempt is mirrored through the well-known passage of the New Testament in which Jesus is reported to have said that "it is not meet to cast children's bread before dogs." Here dogs stand for all people other than the Israelites and the word is evidently used in a most contemptuous sense. It is, however, one of the ironies of fate that the followers of Jesus who does not appear to have the least regard for this faithful animal now generally regard it as the noblest of the pet for its fidelity.

What were the feelings of the exponents of the Vedas who attribute this sort of Nepotism to the Deity? I cannot definitely say. Perhaps they were mingled both with jealousy and ignorance. The old Brahman religion was the primitive stage of Hinduism. The Brahmans were generally very rich in their sacred lore, but they knew little of the world. They thought that Arya Varta was the only sacred place, and

therefore it must be *the only place for gods*. This may be due to their ignorance. But the new turn which has recently been given to this religion by the late Pandit Daya Nanda has revealed the fact that there is a certain amount of the national hatred as well. He according to the Vedas considers India to be the Holy Land and therefore in his opinion it should not be polluted by the footsteps of others than the followers of the Vedic religion.

Thus the old Biblical religion and the Vedic religion as interpreted by the Brahmans and the Arya Samaj represent a tribal, a national Deity who is looking after a particular nation or country and is neglecting the rest of the universe.

THE UNIVERSAL DEITY.

But the conception of Deity in Islam is quite different. It represents a Supreme Being, who is the Lord of all the worlds, the Creator, the Fosterer, the Nourisher and the Evolver of all the nations and the creatures, be they on this planet of ours or on others, above in the firmament of heaven.

Therefore a Muslim believing in such a Catholic Deity cannot have any ill-will against any other nation. He, as the very name of Islam indicates, is supposed to make peace with his Maker on the one hand and with His creatures on the other. This universal peace which is the ideal for humanity at present was actually brought about in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad among the wild tribes of Arabia which were constantly at war with each other. And the religion taught by him is meant to establish real peace throughout the world. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of every Muslim in particular and of every lover of peace in general to spread the Islamic principles in the world to unite the different factors of humanity into a peaceful compact of fraternity. The religion of Islam is the religion of peace and therefore it must be the religion of every peacemaker.

MUSTAFA KHAN.

MIRACLES :

HOW FAR THEY PROVE CHRIST'S MISSION.

The Gospels are full of the stories of the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, and in them, as in nothing else, is thought to lie the argument of his Divinity. Even the central fact in the Christian religion is a miracle: if Jesus did not rise from among the dead, the Christian faith

and the preaching of Christianity is in vain. Religious duties, moral teachings and spiritual awakening do not occupy the place which miracles do in the Gospels. The dead are made to rise from their graves, multitudes of the sick are healed, water is turned into wine, devils are cast out, and many other wonderful deeds are done. Suppose for the sake of argument that this record of the Gospels is literally true; what was the effect of this on the lives of those who witnessed these miracles? The miraculous in a prophet's life is needed to assure the people of the truth of his message and to convince the ordinary mind that being a possessor of extraordinary powers he must be followed in spiritual matters. The bringing about of a moral and spiritual transformation is admittedly the real object, the miraculous being only needed as a help towards the attainment of that object. The former at most may be looked upon as the means to an end, the latter is the end itself. The best evidence of miracles thus consists in the effect they produce, and the most important question for us therefore is that supposing Jesus wrought all the miracles recorded in the Gospels, what was the result? How great was the success he attained in bringing about a transformation? One Gospel tells us that Jesus was followed by multitudes of sick persons who were all healed; another says that many were healed. Now if either of these statements were true, not a single person should have been left in the land who should not have believed in Jesus. It is inconceivable that those who saw such extraordinary deeds done by Jesus Christ should have rejected him as a liar. They saw the sick healed and the dead raised to life and yet they all disbelieved in him as if not a single miracle had been wrought! And how strange that even the great multitudes that were healed do not seem to have been believers in Jesus, though the Gospels tell us that faith was a condition prior to being healed; for if even these multitudes had believed in Jesus he would have had a following at the time of his crucifixion far more numerous than he actually had, and sufficiently large to baffle the authorities. But what do we find? The following of Jesus is poor, not only as regards number, but also as regards its character. From among the five hundred that followed him he chose twelve who were to sit on twelve thrones, who were to be entrusted with the work after the Master, and these twelve showed a strange weakness of character, the greatest of them, Peter, denying Jesus thrice for fear of being treated harshly by the enemies, and not even hesitating to curse when he thought that a curse was the only means of escape. The others even durst not approach Jesus, while one of the chosen ones turned out to be a traitor. On an earlier occasion when Jesus asked them to pray for him, he found them all asleep. Often had he to rebuke them for having no

faith. Who was it in the world on whom the miraculous deeds of Jesus, if they were ever done, made an impression? The mere fact that Jesus was unable to bring about any transformation worth the name, and to make any impression either on his friends or foes, is a sufficient testimony that the stories of miracles were invented afterwards.

MUHAMMAD ALI.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Inamulla Khan, Fort Sandeman. What says Islam about pictures?

Answer.—Islam is a religion and deals with man's duties towards God and man. If pictures interfere in any way with either of these duties, they should not be used. But there are cases in which pictures serve a useful purpose without doing any harm to a man. There is nothing in the Islamic law against their use in such cases.

2. Was Jesus (peace be on him) born without the agency of a male parent?

Answer.—The question does not relate to any vital principle of Islam. There are Muslims who answer the question in the affirmative and others who answer it in the negative. It is a question of the interpretation that may be put on certain words of the Holy Qur'an, and any two men may honestly differ as to that. For the Christians of course, it is a vital question. He could not be divine if he was born in the ordinary course of nature. But the Gospels contain statements which raise serious doubts as to the claim. Evidently Mary had other children, for the Gospels speak of the brothers and sisters of Jesus and of his being Mary's "first born" son, not her only son. They also speak of his being the carpenter's son. And even if he was born without the agency of a male parent, it is no argument for his being divine.

For Adam was not divine though he had no parent.

Md. Yaqub Ali, Datta para. 1. Is it idolatry to the Muslims to kneel and salute the feet of their superiors. If so, why so. If not, why not?

Answer.—Yes. The reason is that all men are born with the same faculties and powers, and all men are equal. We may respect and revere our superiors but we can only bow before God who is above us all and the Maker of us all.

2. Is it a sin to us to shave our beards?

Answer.—In itself the act is not one of much importance, but we should try to follow the practice of our Holy Prophet who kept a beard. We are better Muslims if we do it.

WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED.

Q. Was Jesus really crucified? A. Padre Professor while proving the death of Jesus recited the following from Qur'an 3:54 "When Allah said: O Jesus! I will cause you to die and exalt you in My presence and clear you of those who disbelieve.....Will you please bring the facts to light.

A. Jesus was undoubtedly nailed to the cross with two thieves on either side of him but he did not die on it. The very Gospels abound in facts which clearly prove that he escaped death on the cross. A few are as follows:—

1. He remained on the cross only for a few hours while death by crucifixion was always slow.
2. The two thieves taken down with him were still alive.
3. When the side of Jesus was lanced, blood gushed out, and it was a sure sign of life.
4. Even Pilate marvelled if he were already dead (Mark 15:44).
5. Unlike the two criminals Jesus was not buried but given over to Joseph of Arimathæa, who took all possible care of him.
6. After Jesus had risen from the dead he always appeared in disguise to his disciples which was quite unnecessary if he was in spirit. In fact he was fleeing for his life and dreaded being recognised even by his own disciples, who had proved totally untrustworthy, except in some safe quarter.
7. He was still a mortal with hands, feet, flesh and bones. And to convince his disciples, who always lacked in faith, said, 'handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.' (Luke 24:39.) He felt hungry and asked for meat and was given broiled fish and honeycomb by the disciples which he ate in their very presence.
8. If he was raised to heaven there was no necessity of his going thither *via* Galilee. He ought to have risen straight to heaven from the sepulchre, without taking the trouble of removing the heavy stone from its mouth, in face of his enemies. But all

through there is a veil of secrecy upon his disappearance which clearly shows that some human agency and not divine was at work, and its only purpose was to elude the enemies of Christ.

9. Before crucifixion Jesus prayed with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared. (Heb. 5:7).
10. Jesus when asked for a sign by the Pharisees said that no sign shall be given them but that of the prophet Jonas. But as Jonas remained alive in the whale's belly so should Jesus be in the bowels of the earth, otherwise the sign remains unfulfilled in Jesus.

The verse recited by your reverend gentleman certainly proves the death of Christ, but clearly contradicts the Christian belief of his death on the cross. The words, "O Jesus! I will cause you to die," in the above verse allude to the frustration of the designs of the Jews on his life and further pronounce that he died a natural death. In the phrase 'and exalt you in my presence,' the exaltation is after his death, just in the same fashion as the righteous are exalted after theirs.

GHULAM MUHAMMAD.

THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM

A solution of five fundamental religious problems from the Muslim point of view by late Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and author of nearly eighty works on Islam. It is now eleven years when the first edition of this book saw the light of the day and the Muslim as well as the non-Muslim public has highly appreciated this valuable work. The great popularity it enjoys is shown by the fact that in the original Urdu form it has run into several editions, and there is ever increasing demand for it. The English edition of the book had been out of stock for the last two years and the necessity of its reprint was being badly felt by the public. This new edition has just been out. It is due to the activities of the Ahmadiya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, Lahore, which is doing yeoman's service in the propagation of Islamic literature. It is printed, in an attractive handy form, on feather weight silver cross paper D/Crown 16 mo., 200 pages, wrapper bound price Re. 1-6-0, cloth bound lettered in gold on front and back price Rs. 1-12-0. It can be had from the Manager.

DAR-UL-KUTUB ISLAMIAH,

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