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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
مُحَمَّدٌ وَصَلَّى عَلَیْ رَسُوْلِ الْکَرِیْمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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NOTES

Islam in Relation to Progress.

An interesting contribution in the *Rationalists' Annual* for 1928, entitled "Religion in Relation to Progress," contains, to our disappointment, a statement which reads :—

. . . Things are not so bad in Mohammedan countries, though the social conditions in Egypt, Turkey, Persia and large parts of Africa cannot be termed more than approximations to the civilized state. For much of this the tyranny of the supposed divine revelation given in the Koran is responsible.

We had thought that this kind of misinterpretation of historical facts was the sole monopoly of the clergy. We are more than disappointed at learning that the taint had affected the so-called Rationalist Press, from which we expect a greater measure of both intelligence and accuracy. We are used to statements of this nature from the Christian camp, and it is not seldom that we deem it not worth while to take notice of them. But the appearance of this Rationalist misinterpretation shows something of the range of the obsession with which not one particular class of men seems to be afflicted.

The writer takes the present-day condition of the Muslims as an index of the teachings of the Qur-án at work. Even so, a little acquaintance with the facts of history at once raises the question, How is it that, if the Qur-án is at all

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responsible for the decadent condition of the Muslims, they ever scaled such heights in the domains of science as they attained during the Middle Ages? The Qur-án was in existence in those days, too.

The causes of this misconception are to be found first in the study of the history of Christianity, which has so gripped the mind and imagination of students that they make no distinction between the teachings of Islam and of those of the dogmatized Christianity, which latter is solely responsible for their prepossession that all religion is inimical to the mental and material progress of mankind. Islam, as history amply bears out, has not retarded the onward march of the progress of mankind; it has, instead, furthered it. If the teachings of the Qur-án were directed to stultifying mental progress and emancipation of the mind, then Muslims must have groped in the darkness of superstition, illiteracy, and insane persecution for a longer period than even the Christian nations of Europe. Secondly, it is due to their carelessness in not carefully grasping those factors which determine and control the decline and fall and resurrection of nations. The gradual downfall of the Muslims ever since the latter part of the Middle Ages, touching its nadir in the beginning of the nineteenth century, is to be attributed more to the exhaustion of energy expended in the cause of learning than to the Qur-án or anything else. Nations, like individuals, grow weary and stand in need of rest in order to recuperate their lost energy. And it is at this juncture that the right guidance is required; for no amount of good and right teaching can regenerate an exhausted people.

A mere glance at the Qur-án will convince us of the wide range of subjects—air, agriculture, navigation, mineralogy, etc.—it deals with, and the nature of the verses and injunctions it contains will show that it exhorts us to use our understanding, that it inculcates the free play of the intellect in conquering the forces of Nature for the benefit of man, that its verses goad us constantly on an onward road, and that its teachings can be in the highest degree helpful to a people who understand, and has a fresh store of energy upon which to draw.

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Europe's Debt to Islam.

With this number we begin a series of articles under the above caption dealing with the cultural influences of Islam in the West, the articles being a translation from Dr. Gustav Dierck's German book *Die Araber im Mittelalter und ihr Einfluss auf die Kultur Europa's*. In publishing them our aim is twofold: first, to create in the Muslim a consciousness of his glorious past, which, in fact, is the bedrock of all progress; and secondly, to present to our Western friends an account of the Muslim past, thus rending the veil of ignorance cast on the minds of the average European by the patristic hatred for the Muslim and his culture. Mr. M. A. Majid, who has made the translation of the book available to us, tells us that it was three years ago that the late Dr. Khalid Banning, Ph.D., of Berlin, of much-lamented memory, suggested the translation of the book. Since then the importance of the suggestion was brought home to him by the wonderful verses of the philosopher-poet Iqbál in the *Rumúz-i-Bekhudí* and *Asrár-i-Khudí*,¹ which books have but one theme running like a red thread through them—the regeneration of the Muslims. The learned philosopher-poet is convinced that the only efficacious way for the Muslim to shake off present yokes, economic as well as political, lies in the fullest realization of his glorious heritage. The poet says²:—

When a person hath torn the tie of the past,
The comb of his intellect shall break.

The recipe for thy Being, O wise man! is the knotting together
of the present days (with the past) as in the binding together of the
pages of a book.

It is history that createth within thee the knowledge of thy own self.
It maketh thee conscious of the task, resolved for the struggle.
To the soul it is a shining vesture.
To the body of a people, muscle.

If thou dost desire life eternal,
Sunder not the string of the past from the present and the future.

¹ Translated into English (*Secrets of Self*) by Prof. R. A. Nicholson. London, 1920.

² *Rumúz-i-Bekhudí*, pp. 100-102.

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The first instalment, which appears elsewhere in these pages, is of supreme interest inasmuch as it presents to us a picture of the times when dogmatized Christianity was in its heyday.

Betting.

Ever since the taxation of betting has been taken in hand by the British Government, this so-called pastime has sprung into the public eye and compelled the Church of England to collect its forces to face the new social danger, and to promulgate some definite teaching on the subject. As usual, the Church has failed, as will be seen from a quotation which we take from a Christian denominational weekly. We have now and then animadverted on the subject, and would only repeat that the failure of the Church in not rising to the occasion is simply due to the fact that the Bible is silent on this evil, which fact has led the people to develop a mentality that will suffer no interference with this particular form of amusement—and sets authority at nought.

The excerpt reads :—

A CHURCH REPORT ON BETTING.¹

Two years ago the Church Assembly appointed a committee to inquire into the prevalence of Betting and Gambling. The report, which is now issued, is full of information which ought to convince all unprejudiced people that betting is widespread, that it is increasing, and that its effects are detrimental to the moral and social welfare of the community. Women and children are involved : “ in many streets 75 per cent. of the women bet,” and children are used as bookmakers’ messengers. The main cause is stated to be the craving for excitement and the want of a higher aim in life ; these are ministered to by increased facilities for betting. It is surprising to find that comparatively small importance is attached to the desire to increase income, or the effect of poor housing conditions. The chief form of betting is still, apparently, horse-racing. Football comes second, a very long way behind ; and greyhound-racing has a place in the list. The Lord Mayor-elect of Manchester characterizes greyhound-racing as “ a machine for the mass-production of gambling and betting.” There can be no doubt that here is a new form of grave social evil. *The Churches have failed, so far, to give plain teaching on the subject.*² Probably there are many preachers and teachers who have not thought

¹ *Methodist Times*, September 15, 1927.

² Italics are ours.—Ed. *I.R.*

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their way through it. This valuable report will help them, and we commend it to the study of our readers.

One wonders how "preachers and teachers could think their way through it."

Judas Iscariot and the Unreliability of the Gospels.

Since the eighteenth century much has been written concerning the unauthentic nature of the records in the Bible—a book which contains many slurs on the names of holy personages. But thanks to the researches of Biblical scholars, all such opprobrium is gradually being expunged and the holy personages concerned revealed to the world in their true colours. The first pioneer in this field of rehabilitation was Muhammad (on whom be peace), who denied certain episodes connected with the lives of the prophets of God—Abraham, Joseph, Moses—as recorded in the Bible; and, more especially in the case of Jesus and his mother Mary, effectually silenced the voice of slander.

Jesus is said to have gained only twelve disciples, one of them being Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. "This betrayer of all time"—to use the patristic phrase—is said to have sold the life of his master for a paltry sum of money.

For one brought up in the midst of Islamic teaching, Islamic ideals of respect for holy personages which credits them with supreme foresight and intelligence calculated to create a deep and abiding impression on their followers and on those who came in contact with them during their mission, it was wellnigh impossible to understand how one of his only twelve chosen friends whom, as the Gospels relate, Jesus entrusted with missions of great importance could have betrayed him. For such a confession amounts only to confessing that Jesus had not even the gift of transforming spiritual dross into gold. But men were compelled to swallow the Gospel version in the absence of better evidence. The world had always to wait till some circumstance arose and falsified the statements contained in the Bible, as in the recent discovery in the case of Judas. It has not only acquitted Judas of the charge made against him, but also throws quite

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a new light on the character of Jesus Christ. The discovery, if it detracts from the value of the Biblical records, certainly enhances in proportion the value of the character of Jesus Christ ; for it is incredible that Jesus was deceived in Judas. The *Sunday Chronicle* for September 11, 1927, says :—

Was Judas Iscariot really innocent of the betrayal of Jesus Christ ?

This is a question which is at present agitating the minds of scholars since the discovery of a new chapter of the works of Josephus, the famous Hebrew historian.

The almost incredible statement is made in a new version of his work, *The Jewish Wars*, recently discovered in Russia, that " Pontius Pilate was bribed by the Scribes to condemn Christ. The name of Judas Iscariot, the arch-betrayer of all time, is not even mentioned by Josephus."

Such an amazing contradiction of the New Testament narrative has aroused the liveliest controversy throughout Christian countries.

The hitherto unknown version of Josephus, which was unearthed by a German Biblical scholar, and is in the ancient language of that country, has now been translated by an English divine, the Rev. Dr. Vacher Burch.

After recording the miracles of Christ as " wonders strange and powerful," and that it was generally regarded that He was not sent of God because He was opposed to the law, Josephus, in the relevant parts of the MSS., records that Christ was besought to cut down the Roman soldiers and rule over the Hebrews.

" But that He scorned," Josephus goes on, " and thereafter when the Jewish leaders got to know of it, they assembled themselves with their high priests and said : ' We are powerless and weak to stand against the Romans. But as also the bow is bent, we will go and tell Pilate what we have heard, and we will be untroubled.'

" And as for the Wonder Worker, he had Him brought before him. And when he had tried Him, he perceived that He was a doer of good and not of wrong, neither a rebel nor a striver after political power, and he set Him free."

The historian then says that Christ continued his good works, and once again more people gathered about Him and worshipped Him.

" The Scribes became filled with envy, and gave thirty talents to Pilate that he should kill Him. And, after he had taken Him, he suggested that they should themselves carry out their purpose. And they took Him and crucified Him according to imperial law."

It is declared by a growing number of eminent scholars throughout the world that this passage, if true, acquits Judas of the most shameful act in all history.

They point significantly to the interesting comparison which can be made between the statement and the relevant passages in the Bible. The Book says that Judas Iscariot received " thirty pieces of silver " (the shekels of the period), which would amount to about £4. Josephus mentions that Pilate received " thirty talents," a sum which is estimated to have been equal to at least £12,346.

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The obvious inference to be drawn from this discrepancy is that the great Roman procurator would naturally want a more tempting bribe than the poor Apostle. . . .

The Importance and Acuteness of the Race Problem.

The problem of colour is in the forefront of current controversies and the literature on the subject is extensive. The supremacy to which Europe attained in the early part of the nineteenth century incidentally gave rise gradually to a now sufficiently well-shaped theory of the superiority of the Nordic race—the Anglo-Saxon especially. Theories of this nature, with the change in world politics, are now proving mares' nests. The Anglo-Saxon eminence is losing its lustre not so much because it has faded as because the stars of other nations are coming into the ascendant. This change which is passing over the world has been well described by Iqbál in his *Payám-i-Mashriq*¹—Message of the East—when he surveys the present-day convulsion in India, whose veins are throbbing with the blood of new life :—

The Oriental has tasted the wine from the bottle of Europe ;
Small wonder if he broke his old vow.

His newborn intellect goaded him to find out a remedy
So that the blood in veins of him, who was a slave to fatalism, has
begun to leap.

Cup-bearer ! get thou not restless at the agitation of the intoxicated.
Tell me justly, who is it that has brought about the noise ?

The odour of the flower it was which, in the first place, led him to
the garden,

Otherwise Philomel had no idea whether or not there existed a
garden at all.

It is passing strange to find that not only ordinary men, but psychologists as well as eminent politicians have all subscribed to theories enunciating the superiority of one particular race, regardless of the danger of the clash of races which hangs over them like the sword of Damocles. So deep-rooted is the conviction all round, that even those persons who think it possible to arrive at a mutual understanding in respect of the questions raised by differences in religion, language or nationality describe the race problem as a chronic illness without remedy, for his racial characteristics are the only ones of which a man cannot rid himself, which he brings

¹ Lahore, 1924, p. 254.

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into the world at his birth and takes along with him to his grave at his death. This accounts, to a great extent, for the gloomy picture which a superficial glance at contemporary politics reveals to us. The mightier races are riding roughshod over the weaker races ; they adopt lines of policy determined by racial considerations. Never before was there expected such a mighty clash of races as now ; for the increase of the population of our globe, together with the decrease of all distances, points unmistakably to such a thing in the immediate future. The vastly improved means of communication, the contraction and shrinkage of the world, as it were, and the annihilation of space by wireless and aviation, all emphasize the truth in the statement made above.

Christianity and Race Antagonism.

Here we might pause to deal with Christianity in regard to the race problem. It is not in any carping spirit as regards the Christian system of life that we do so—for it is an open book to the world—but because contrasts, as an Arabic saying has it, sometimes reveal the true nature of things and thus help to realize and appreciate the more the beauty and force of an argument. Christianity, after its two thousand years of existence and evolution, has signally failed in softening the rough edges of the racial characteristics. Everyone who has been to the East, and even those in the West, will bear out the statement that the conception of a human brotherhood, a social communion that should transcend all geographical racial and national barriers, has not been realized in it. In parts of the world where the white races happen to wield political and military power there is to be noticed but one thing: haughty behaviour, self-assumed superiority and responsibility for civilizing the backward races—a euphemism for exploitation. The religion of organized dogmatic Christianity has not even so much as made an effort to soften the harshness which results out of racial differences, still less to have found a solution. It is common knowledge that the doors of all the vast areas of the world are closed down upon Asiatics, because they belong to a different race.

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Count Keyserling on Racial Problems in Islam.

In considering what Islam has done in this respect we would commend to our readers the views of Count Herrmann Keyserling, the well-known philosopher of modern Germany, as set forth in his book *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher*.¹ The Count, in speaking of India, has the following observations to make on the Islamic structure of society :—

. . . The national character always seems somewhat blurred wherever the crescent moon illuminates the landscape, which is particularly noticeable here in India, where the types are otherwise outlined so clearly. But its place is taken by a more universal and no less definite character : that of Mussulman. Every single Mohammedan whom I asked what he is, replied : " I am a Mussulman." Why has this religion alone understood how to substitute national feeling by something wider ? And by something wider which is not less strong and significant ? How is it that Islam, without a corresponding dogma, achieves the ideal of brotherhood, whereas Christianity fails in spite of its ideals ? It must be due to intimate relations between the underlying tendencies of this peculiar faith and the fundamental traits in the nature of its followers, *concerning which I am still in the dark*.²

The above remarks could well be supplemented by the following equally interesting, taken from another source :—

One of the most striking features of the Muhammadan world, which has been emphasized by many observers, historians, travellers and missionaries, is the feeling of unity in Islam which overleaps all the barriers set up by nationality or by geographical position. Islam has succeeded in obliterating race prejudice to an extent to which no other religious system in the world offers any parallel, and though, like other forms of the ideal of human brotherhood, Islam has failed to realize its ideal of the brotherhood of all believers, still the measure of its success is the more noteworthy feature.³

Although the Count has not been able to understand the secret, yet it would be ungenerous to assume that he had not seen the Qur-ánic verse which reads : " O you men ! surely We have created you of a male and female and made you tribes and families, that you may distinguish each other ; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful of his duty ; surely Allah is Knowing,

¹ London, 1925, p. 201. The German version appears under the title *Das Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen*. Darmstadt, 1920, p. 236.

² Italics are ours.—Ed. *I.R.*

³ " Europe and Islam," by Sir Thomas Arnold, in *Western Races of the World*, vol. v. Published by the Oxford University Press.

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Aware.”¹ It is for this reason that race antagonism does not exist in Muslim countries. A Muslim is never proud of himself as being “Chinese,” “Persian” or “Indian.” He is proud of his religious culture. The Islamic nations at the height of their culture and glory never thought of themselves as Arabs or Turks, but simply as Muslims. For them the difference between themselves and others was spiritual. They were Muslims, and others were non-Muslims. Muslims never despised, nor do they ever despise, any people for the colour of their skin. The Arabs in their greatest glory never despised a Spaniard or a Negro Muslim. An Indian Muslim, in spite of the racial differences between himself and the Negro Muslim of West Africa, never speaks contemptuously of his Negro brother in faith because he is a Negro or a Chinese.

But it should not be understood that it was this verse alone which enabled the Muslim “to blur the national character”; for beautiful homilies and idealistic platitudes are a no less uncommon feature of the religious books of the world other than the Qur-án. All religions as well as Islam claim to have, as their ideal, the establishment of a world-brotherhood of man. Every seer, every sage, every prophet, seems to have foreseen it. And it is along these lines alone that the world will have to travel to find its ultimate salvation.

The Training Ground for eliminating Racial Antipathy in Islam.

The secret lies in the institution of Prayer, as conceived by the genius of Muhammad, culminating in the institution of the yearly Pilgrimage to Mecca. Let us, therefore, now proceed to view the part played by them in the social life of a Muslim.

In the daily prayers all racial and tribal differences of Muslims are wiped off, because they learn to stand shoulder to shoulder in brotherhood. It is not essential to offer the daily Prayers with the congregation in the Mosque. But the Prophet regarded such an act as highly commendable, inasmuch as it brings into contact different members of the community

¹ Holy Qur-án, xlix. 13.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

living in the same quarter of a town. But, realizing that it is not possible even for the most zealous members of the community living in one particular quarter of the town to attend the Mosque of that quarter, the Holy Prophet Muhammad took a further step and made the attendance at the congregation once a week obligatory on every Muslim ; for he wanted to make the social contact, already made feasible by the daily Prayers, closer and more effective and to learn something of the reality of Islamic ideal that all men are brothers and equal in the sight of God. The weekly Friday congregation¹ requires all the Muslims of any one quarter of the town in which they reside to assemble. This was enough to bring together the Muslims of one quarter, to give them the polish which we get only when we come into touch with others, yet even this was not sufficiently comprehensive. He therefore instituted the two yearly congregations, where it was enjoined that Muslims of many quarters of the town should come together. But neither did Muhammad stop at this. For although the daily Prayers as well as the weekly Friday Prayers and the two yearly gatherings—'Idu 'l-Fitr and 'Idu 'l-Azhá—were effective and comprehensive enough, they were not cosmopolitan, catholic and international in character. Consequently, in order to pave the way for a world-brotherhood which was destined to come about by the ever-growing shrinkage of the world, he developed the two yearly congregations into an international gathering to take place every year at Mecca. This marks the highest stage of social evolution in Islam—nay, in any other system of the world.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

By R. LISSAN

THE sacrament of confirmation follows the rite of baptism in serial order, when the subject attains to the age of reason, in the case of a person born into the faith of the Church, in

¹ Holy Qur-án lxii, 9-13.

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fulfilment of the promise made by the sponsors, or the opportunity or expediency, in the case of a convert. It is conferred for the purpose of giving grace, which every true follower of Christ is supposed to need in order to lead a life of perpetual warfare calling for a courageous profession of his faith and to enable him to overcome timidity and weakness. Its name means, and its aim is, to confirm and strengthen, and it is claimed to have been instituted by the Lord, Who enlists Christians in His spiritual army, and strengthens them by special grace to profess their baptism courageously before the world.

The event mentioned in the Bible as the descent of the Spirit or Paraclete in the form of cloven tongues of fire, the Pentecost, was the confirmation of the Apostles in their mission and work.

In the middle of the fourth century, St. Cyril of Jerusalem spoke of the existence and origin of the sacrament, and counselled the postulant to seal his soul; for the Holy Ghost would give him the seal at which evil spirits trembled. This savours of a magical rite, as does the rite of baptism. He says to the catechumen: "Christ received the Holy Ghost under the form of a dove, so shall you; after coming up from the pool of the sacred streams, be anointed with visible chrism, the emblem of that wherewith Christ was anointed (i.e. the Holy Ghost). Beware, then, of supposing that this chrism is nothing more than an empty symbol, for, as the bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Ghost, is mere bread no longer, but the body of Christ, so also, in due proportion, this holy ointment is no more simple ointment, nor (so to say) common, after the invocation, but the gift of Christ, and by the presence of his Godhead it causes in us the Holy Ghost. It is symbolically applied to your forehead and your other senses, and while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the Holy and Life-giving Spirit. Once you have received this unction, be careful to preserve it unspotted and without reproach. It will teach you all things; it will be the spiritual preservative of your body and the safeguard of your soul."

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He further says at length, of which quotations I give : " Having been baptized unto Christ, and put on Christ, ye have been made conformable to the Son of God. . . . Being therefore made partakers of Christ, ye are properly called Christs, and of you God says : Touch not My Christs or anointed. Now, ye were made Christs by receiving the emblem of the Holy Ghost, and all things were in a figure wrought in you, because ye are figures of Christ. . . . In the same manner, to you also, after you had come up from out the pool of the sacred streams, was given the unction, the emblem of that where-with Christ was anointed, and this is the Holy Ghost, of whom, also, the blessed Isaias, in his prophecy respecting him, says, in the person of the Lord : ' The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor.' . . . Moreover, you should know that this chrism has its symbol in the old Scriptures. For what time Moses imparted to his brother the command of God, and made him high-priest, after bathing in water, he anointed him, and Aaron was called Christ, or Anointed, from the emblematic chrism. So, also, the high-priest raising Solomon to the kingdom, anointed him after he had bathed in Gichon." ¹

This clearly shows beyond any doubt that the rite of confirmation was not instituted by Christ, but had existed from Jewish times, and it will be shown that it had also a so-called " pagan " or " heathen " derivation and correspondence.

In the anointing, olive oil only is used, with the addition of a little balm, and in the rite the forehead, ears, nostrils and breast were touched with the chrism by means of the thumb of the right hand ; no instrument must be used, because the sacrament consists essentially in the imposition of hands.

The idea that seems to underlie confirmation is that it strengthens the newly baptized, and enables him courageously to profess his faith ; but, as usual, here as well the magical elements creep in. For St. Cyril of Jerusalem further styles the effect of the chrism of the Holy Ghost the seal which

¹ *Oxford Translation of the Fathers, Catechistical Letters of St. Cyril.* London, 1924. Catechism XXI : On the Mysteries.

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causes devils to tremble ; the uses of seals or sigils is, and was, familiar to every magician of the early and Middle Ages who practised ceremonial magic.

In baptism we were supposed to be made God's children, and well-washed ; in confirmation we are made His soldiers, and made strong. The outward and visible sign—the laying-on of hands—varies in different rites. In the East the child is anointed immediately after baptism, but in the Anglican and Roman Churches the procedure is somewhat different. Chrism is used and there is the usual laying-on of hands. The words used at the rites somewhat vary, but all agree that the sacrament gives inward and spiritual grace, which is the Holy Spirit, conferring on the recipient understanding, wisdom, counsel and godliness.

The sacrament of confirmation is for those that have been baptized and come to years of discretion, and the sponsors are reminded at baptism that they are to take care that the child comes to receive confirmation. The practice in the ancient Church was that everyone, infant or adult, should be confirmed directly after baptism, confirmation being regarded as the completion of baptism, and it is now so regarded in the Eastern Church. In the sixteenth century it was definitely severed from baptism in both the Anglican and Roman forms, when it was conferred at the age of from seven to ten years, but now at the age of from fourteen to sixteen.

Its nature seems to have been that of a seal, as originally conceived in the early Church, and there is the possibility that it may have preceded baptism in some places.¹ The different Eastern rites—Maronite, Armenian, Egyptian, etc.—vary somewhat in their usage and interpretation, and were for the most part fixed in their present form in the fourth century or soon after.

In the Roman Church the usage is to regard it as the second rite in the sevenfold order, and it was enunciated as early as the twelfth century by St. Otto, Bishop of Bamberg (A.D. 1139), in addressing the newly baptized in Pomerania. He said : " The second sacrament is confirmation ; that is,

¹ Hastings's, *Encyclopædia*, " Confirmation," p. 2, sec. 3.

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the anointing with chrism on the forehead. This sacrament is necessary for those who are to conquer, to wit, that they be protected and armed by the strengthening of the Holy Spirit, as they will have to fight against all the temptations and corruptions of the present life. Neither is this rite to be deferred until old age, as some suppose, but it is to be received in the vigour of youth itself, because that age is more exposed to temptation.”¹ Yet, nevertheless, vagueness prevailed regarding the nature and definition of this sacrament, and later a decree of Pope Innocent II, in A.D. 1204, outlined the main points on which stress was laid by theologians. But in the Council of Florence (A.D. 1138-45) a decree to ensure uniformity was issued by Eugenius II, when the nature and matter of it was defined as being chrism—oil and balsam—and the ceremonial words, as now.

The Council of Trent, in reviewing the sacramental doctrine, declares it to be “truly and properly a sacrament,” and “one of the seven, all of which were instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is clear enough in its claims, but it leaves many questions open, as nothing is said as to the time and manner of its institution by Jesus. But do we find any reference or illustration of its adoption, or use by him, in the Bible? Priestly interpolation and pious frauds are one thing and religious truth another, as everyone who has studied the results of modern biblical research and criticism knows.

In dealing with the proofs, which are beyond any question, we find that confirmation was *not* introduced or originated by the Christian Church or Jesus, but had existed long before the Christian era; numerous authorities could be quoted, some even within the Church itself. In dealing with this we are again thrown back on to the rite of baptism, between which and confirmation as early practised in the Church there was no severance and little distinction, as shown in the preceding article.² One rite corresponding with Mithraism, the forerunner of Christianity, will be quoted here: “There are only two rites of the Mithraic mysteries which bear marked

¹ Pertz, *Monumenta Germanica Historici*, xxii. 753. Berlin, 1873.

² *Islamic Review* for January, 1928.

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resemblance to the sacraments of the Catholic Church. After the ritual ablution, which acted as an expiation of sin, the soldier received a mark on his forehead, probably made with a red-hot iron. This may be simply like the sign of the cross at baptism, but it can also be compared to the marking of the forehead with chrism at confirmation, according to the practice of the early Church.”¹

Another important matter in baptism is the primitive mode of its administration. The concurrent testimony of early documents and monuments favours nude triune immersion.²

The early Church was enthusiastic about the sacraments and took care to prepare the catechumen for their proper reception. The author of *Monumental Christianity* deplors the coldness and neglect which characterize not a few Christian bodies, which suffer a whole year to go by without a single baptism. Can infidelity and rank atheism go further than that? Is it any wonder that New England Puritanism has turned to Pantheism and Scepticism?

One passage from Tertullian may be mentioned which favours the view that the early Christian Fathers had a belief that the sacrament of baptism was ancient and pre-Christian. He says: “When the people as free men escaped the violence of the Egyptian King by crossing over through water, it was water that extinguished the King himself with his entire force. That figure is most manifestly fulfilled in the sacrament of baptism. The nations are set free from the world by means of water—from the devil, their old tyrant, who is left behind overwhelmed in the water” (De Pap. c. 9). Augustine also speaks of it, in the same way, a dozen times or more. Bede, in his exposition of Exodus xiv., says, like the rest: “The Red Sea signifies baptism, consecrated by the blood of Christ, the rod which touches the sea is the cross of Christ received in baptism,” and also: “Moses first baptized in the cloud and in the sea, as a type and a figure.”³

A curious custom prevailed in the primitive Church of

¹ Patterson, *Mithraism*, p. 54.

² Lundy, *Monumental Christianity* (New York 1882), p. 383.

³ Lundy, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

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baptizing the dead, in which some living person took the responsibility. Paul alludes to it in 1 Cor. xv. 29, but neither condemns nor approves of it. This custom is apparently done for the idea of a bodily resurrection in the flesh. It is clearly a substitute for the so-called "pagan" lustration and prayers for the happiness and welfare of the dead, and strengthens the evidence of a non-Christian origin for this sacrament.

Lundy, speaking of baptismal frescoes, says: "The catechumens plunged themselves in the sacred stream and swam about. It was a real washing, a thorough cleansing." The orthodox Greek Church, inheriting the ancient custom, plunges the naked infant three times into the font, at each time pronouncing the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The annual sacred bathing of the Palestine pilgrims in the Jordan is the same now as in the time of John the Baptist, and the same in the sacred rivers of India.

It is a custom far older than Christianity, and was universally prevalent. John the Baptist simply adopted and practised the universal custom of sacred bathing for remission of sins. Christ sanctioned it, and the Church inherited it from his example. Tertullian says: "Well, but the nations who are strangers to all spiritual powers ascribe to their idols the power of impregnating the waters with the same efficacy as in Christian baptism. *So they do*; but they cheat themselves with waters that are widowed" (without the power of the Spirit).

A further remark made by Tertullian seems to clear up the whole matter as to the relation and connection between baptism and confirmation: "A man having been let down into water and dipped between a few words rises again, not much, if any, cleaner, than as the incredible consequence of eternity. . . . Then the hand is laid on us, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit through this benediction. Shall it be granted possible for human ingenuity to summon a spirit into the water and by the application of hands from above to animate their union into one body, so as to produce spirit (hydraulic organs are here referred to), and shall it not be

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possible for God, in the case of His own superior organism (man) by means of hands to produce a sublime spiritual harmony? ” And to complete the matter as to the imposition of hands in baptism, he again says “ that the right of giving it, the high-priest, who is the bishop, has, then the presbyter and deacons, yet not without the authority of the bishop, for the honour of the Church, which being preserved, is kept.” The imposition of hands, or the application of the unction also spoken of, must have been confirmation and the last act of the baptism itself, and so the Greek Church in its substitute has an unction, and the Lutheran, by the imposition of hands allow confirmation by others of the clergy than bishops, while the Latin Church and Churches in England and America restrict it to their order.” ¹

This virtually settles the question, but we will give a few further proofs to show that confirmation existed prior to the Christian era and with peoples with whom the preachers to all nations had not come in contact. “ Herrera says that the people of Yucatan (a part of Mexico) call baptism regeneration, and that it is administered to infants at three years of age. The parents prepare them for it by fasting and retirement ; confession is used and unction on the forehead, or confirmation.” ²

Doane, in his *Bible Myths*,³ writing on baptism and referring to Yucatan, also says : “ The giving of a name to the child, the marking of him with the cross as a sign of being a soldier of Christ, followed, at fifteen years of age, by his admission into the receiving of confirmation, prove that the two institutions are identical ; but the most striking feature of all is the regeneration—consequent forgiveness of sins, the being ‘ born again.’ ”

Sufficient evidence exists to prove that the sacrament of baptism-confirmation was not instituted by the Christian religion, but existed in an elaborate form widespread and remote in time and place from the region of origin of Christianity.

¹ Lundy, p. 386.

² *Ibid.*, p. 390.

³ New York, 1908, p. 323.

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM¹

(The Arabs in the Middle Ages, and their influence
on the Culture of Europe)

By DR. GUSTAV DIERCKS

(Translated from the German by 'Abdū'l-Majid, M.A.)

I

The decline of the Roman Empire. Christianity and the Germans. Fundamentals and intellectual seeds of the mediæval and the modern culture. The mental decline in the Christian countries before the appearance of the Arabs.

WHEN we wish to attempt to study the Middle Ages, it is necessary to call to mind the state into which the ancient age had sunk by reason of the decay of its vitality. This process of disintegration had paved the way for new organisms. Therefore, in our attempt to appraise the influence of Muslim culture, we must look well before we leap. In other words, we must consider the causes that led to the decline of the ancients and to the downfall of the vast world-empire of the Romans. We should also examine all those factors which manifest the *zeitgeist*—the spirit of the times—of the early centuries of our era, and those which fostered it: for nowhere in the cultural history of mankind is there to be found a gap. Everywhere a continuity of evolution is noticeable springing from the simplest seeds, growing into most perfect organisms, and then dying away once more. Everywhere we see a close connection between cause and effect. Every phenomenon, every new factor, posits for its appearance certain preliminary requisites, which are its cause. Every plant postulates for its growth its soil, and it will only thrive in a place where the necessary conditions congenial to its flourishing are available. Just as Christianity did not originate in an unprepared soil, but was the product of the contemporary *zeitgeist*, and could only support itself and develop itself because of the coincidence of its ideas with those prevalent at that time, so also in the case of Islam, the circumstances of its origin influenced its

¹ A translation of *Die Araber im Mittelalter und ihr Einfluss auf die Kultur Europa's*, by Gustav Diercks, Leipzig, 2nd Edn., 1882, pp. 1-10.

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growth and left their mark, if not on the whole of mankind, at least on a considerable portion thereof

Tillage and the rearing of the cattle formed the basis upon which the Roman State was founded. The sword had to protect and strengthen the State; and when it came to be wielded by strong men, as the Romans themselves were, the result was that province after province fell into their hands. About 240 B.C. Rome had acquired such a power and had become so conspicuous in the world that no other State was in a position to withstand or impede the political system practised by the Romans. All further expansion of the Roman Empire was only a logical result, a corollary to the power which they had attained.

Now, what were the causes which brought Rome to such a high pinnacle of glory and worldly prosperity? They were: the simplicity of their customs, sobriety, contentment, moderation, a strict education and military discipline, coupled with a sure instinct for what was beneficial and of practical use for their purposes.

The nucleus of the working capacity of the Romans was their physical strength, which the above-mentioned characteristics (often called "the Roman virtues") sublimated and sustained. If these qualities became corrupted, or sapped, or if the Romans forsook them, their strength disappeared as well. If any untoward influence limited or adversely affected their working capacity, the results of the Roman activities became uncertain as well. If, therefore, on the one hand, the Roman Empire expanded and became possessed of fertile provinces, then, on the other hand, the very nature of this change exposed the Romans all the more to the corrupting influences which riches bring in their train—influences which are especially powerful over people brought up in indigence and amid the hardships of toil. The officials of the State and the army contractors who had made themselves rich in the provinces had invested their capital in immovable property, by purchasing large pieces of land. The peasant class was thus demolished. Consequently the petty independent landlords were replaced by tenants, leaseholders, while the

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peasants were either converted into slaves or supplanted by such. Exactly in the same way free craftsmen were replaced by bondsmen. The result of this process was that the middle-class went completely out of existence. Industrial diligence and tillage, which were, in sooth, the bedrock of the Roman culture, disappeared; the people found satisfaction in wars or in idleness, leaving it to the prominent men and the State to take care of them. The provinces delivered and supplied them with all the necessities of life. Consequently the Italian fields could be turned into parks which announced in eloquent terms the fact that the capital depended in material things on the provinces, and how the whole of Italy consumed everything and produced nothing. Soon after, even the military service was felt to be a burden by the Roman citizens, and the size of the armies from now onwards was supplied by the provinces. Thus disappeared gradually one of the old Roman customs, although men like Cato strained every nerve to bolster it up.

It was in Sicily that the Romans first came in contact with Greek culture. This contact was rendered yet closer when in 146 B.C. Greece was converted into a Roman province, and Greek art, Greek literature and Greek culture generally were converted into the handmaidens of Rome, though, indeed, it was more than two centuries ago that the flourishing period of Greek civilization had passed away. The Greeks themselves had succumbed to the corrupting and destructive influence of the Orient which they had conquered, and it was this influence above all others which corrupted the Romans and broke their power. They found enjoyment in the refined and exquisite pleasures of Alexandria and the Orient, and abandoned themselves to these pleasures the more completely in that they were formerly accustomed to simplicity.

Now, if we regard the contact of the Romans with the Greeks from the point of view of literature, we find ourselves face to face with a phenomenon of the very highest importance. The Romans, being devoid of idealism, being thoroughly barren, practical men, had up till now not felt any necessity for occupying themselves with belles-lettres. They could, there-

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fore, not create a literature of their own. It was first through their acquaintance with Greek literature that the Romans were roused to an interest in letters, and, even when the foundations of a Roman literature were laid through the agency of freed- or bond-Greeks, we find Roman literature in its later developments followed closely the Greek patterns. While the valour and the sword of the Romans lent a new form to the world of those days, the spirit and the artistic ideals of the Greeks, which to a certain extent combined themselves with the love of justice and equity and the practical nationalism of the Romans, supplied its inspiration.

But, in proportion to the degree in which they conquered the globe, the Romans sank lower and lower in the scale of morality. The well-meaning doctors, the true patriots, professed to find the salvation of society in the upkeep of the old Roman virtues, in the sustenance of the economic, social and State fundamentals, but, although they tried to work on these lines, they were unable to combat the spirit of the times. They could not retard the development of the germs of disease which, becoming more active, brought the colossus of the Roman Empire to meet its disruption and decay. Conditions had completely changed since the time the Persians had waged wars against the Greeks. Since those times, the horizon of the Greeks had been extended, the national limitations had been thrown overboard, new viewpoints and new ideas had sprung to life from the close contact of many peoples with one another. Since the time Alexander the Great led his expedition against the East, and had helped, unknowingly of course, the rise of the concept of cosmopolitanism, since the time he had made Alexandria his capital, which city forthwith became a market not only for the material products, but also for the mental culture, of the then known world—it was at this time the mind of the world had taken another flight. The idea of the unity of mankind, the concept of universalism, rose to supremacy in the mind of the world at that time. It put a fresh face upon the intercourse of the world. It pointed out new paths to the collective culture of the world, and set up new aims. It was from

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Alexander, from the Hellenists and in particular from Alexandria, that this movement emanated—a movement which gradually caught all people of culture and was destined to be of great importance in the development of nations. The Romans were not only affected by this movement towards the unity of mankind, but, during the time that their world-empire was building, they were more than ever its carriers and intermediaries. In all the domains of general culture the effects of the spirit of the times were to be noticed, the most important for the history of the world being the religious circumstances which took shape from the contact of all nations. If, on the one hand, we find that in Rome extraneous religions had struck their roots about the time of the Punic Wars, on the other hand we find that, with new conquest, with the penetration of each fresh cult, the reverence and awe cherished by the Romans for their old gods gradually disappeared. Besides, in Rome every kind of religion of the world-empire was represented—the religions of the conquerors and the religions of the conquered; the masses, therefore, were at sea to know which gods to adore. The extraordinary tolerance of the Romans in matters of belief, so long as the interests of the State were not jeopardized, was, in no small measure, responsible for the spread of the foreign cults. In the place of faith and belief there appeared amongst the lower classes the grossest superstition resulting from an admixture of various religions, while amongst the higher classes, even if the tinsel of piety was still preserved, scepticism or absolute indifference was the rule. Moreover, the rites of the cults degenerated into hollow shams and empty forms which afforded no inward satisfaction, but served to stimulate senses only.

Socrates and his pupil Plato had deflected the philosophizing spirit into new channels. The idealism of Plato and the realism of Aristotle had marked out the ways which philosophy had to tread in future. Whereas the pre-Socratic philosophy had made matter the especial object of intellectual examination and study, Socrates diverted the mind into the domains of ethic, of the mental and the abstract, thus helping reason to its proper place. The post-Socratic philosophy had

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to follow the lines already chalked out for it, and in the end culminated, on the one hand, in complete scepticism and, on the other, in the most sublime idealism. Simultaneously every conceivable effort was made through the combination of the Greek and the Oriental philosophies in the hope of arriving at a satisfying goal. All adaptations, nevertheless, were of no avail. They all ended in smoke. One sole dominant idea was manifest in all the systems: the groping after a firmer and a surer hold which would save one from the mental pain which arose from a crying need of belief. In order to win a substitute for the bitterness of life, recourse was had to a flight into the realms of the metaphysical and transcendental. Not only did the mentally developed souls feel a great degree of instability and uncertainty, but the masses also were filled with disgust at the prevailing conditions. They were impregnated with an aspiration for the better. Nay, one perhaps could say that it was especially in these classes of society that such feelings found a foothold; because to the slave, to the poor, who did not expect anything from life, the hope for a better hereafter came as balm. He softened and alleviated his pains through the bright imaginations of his exalted mind, through practical philosophy which the itinerary preachers taught and instilled in him, and also through a simple human morality, which had for a basis the human teachings of the Cynic and Stoic philosophers and preachers.

Whilst outwardly the glory and grandeur of culture kept pace with the successes of the Roman weapons and shone more brilliantly than ever, whilst the love for pomp was indulged in in an increasingly greater degree, the mental and the corporeal troubles of the organism of the Roman Empire spread faster than ever and hastened its approaching downfall. Thus collapsed that symmetrical edifice, and there was need of fresh elements to prevent its complete demolition. These young unvitiated, undepraved healing powers were provided by Christianity and by the world-conflict, century-long, provoked by the Teutons, who, while dealing destruction and ruin on all sides, at the same time created a new state of affairs. Here, indeed, begins the struggle of the Christian

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religion, which in its origin is very simple and easy to comprehend, with the philosophies and religious systems of the Roman world, which lay buried under the burden of scepticism and mysticism. Here begins the struggle between the Romans and the tribes of the Teutonic branch of people which hurled themselves from the North. They were by nature wild and barbaric in comparison with the weakened Romans. But the very strength of their capacities and the pure, untainted nature of their customs, while bursting in upon the Roman Empire with destruction, at the same time brought a panacea. Thus in conjunction with Christianity, the Barbarian invasion helped to lay the foundation of a new order in the world.

Repeatedly we notice in the history of mankind the phenomenon that the spirit of the times gives birth from out of its own self to that which the world needs. Similarly, Christianity was the child of those days in which the alleged birth of Jesus Christ is said to have taken place. The sources of this new religion cannot be ascertained historically ; for neither the contemporary literature nor that of the later period down to the second century offers any certain and definite accounts or details of the founder and of the beginnings of Christianity. They are, as a matter of fact, wrapped up in the mythical darkness with which fiction has surrounded the one who, in accordance with the mental development of those days, prepared in Palestine the way for a reformation of the stiff and orthodox Judaism which had passed into formalism ; for he, like Buddha, preached truly humanitarian moral teachings understandable even to the least developed mind ; for he indeed preached anew the doctrine of love for one's neighbour, a standard of conduct upheld by all humanists, and he made the Kingdom of God to be the end and reward of this earthly life. Jesus was a man, and wished the good of his fellow-beings.

The soil in which these splendid teachings, because of their very simplicity, could strike root was, as we have already seen, lying close at hand throughout the Roman Empire. The oppressed looked forward cherishingly to a Saviour in consequence of the Messiah conception which had gone forth from

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the Zoroastrian Persians. They expected that he would free them from their mental and physical ailments. And the philosophical schools had exerted themselves to give substance to the idea of such an ideal figure. The teachings of the Jewish humanists could not, although they alone dovetailed into the then national circumstances, satisfy the spirit of the times which reigned supreme in the whole of the Roman Empire and breathed forth the ideas of internationalism, of cosmopolitanism and of universalism. To meet these demands the Jewish teaching had to undergo a corresponding change.

And here it is that we notice for the first time coming to light the great difference between the ancient age and the age which succeeded it. In the ancient age every people was one complete self-contained national entity, animated by a stiff inelastic particularism and an inordinate self-estimation, and behaving very proudly and coldly towards everyone else. From the very moment since Alexander had first broken through the national limits, the ideas concerning the unity of mankind gained importance in order to assume from now onwards the sovereignty for ever.

Whilst the real disciples of the Jewish reformer, in the national-Jewish sense, developed his teachings and within the Jewish societies worked for them, Paul educated on the Greek lines accommodated the selfsame teachings to the philosophies of the stoics and the cynics and in part to the Alexandrian syncretism, which combined the mysticism of the Egyptians with the supernaturalism of the Persians, with the monotheism of the Hebrews and with the idealism of the Platonists, and made itself especially palpable in the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

The Christian-Pauline teaching spread rather rapidly ; partly because of its relationship to the Stoic philosophy and partly owing to the great tolerance of the Roman Empire. The great Jewish societies in the large towns facilitated its spread, although, as natural, the disciples, in the first place, belonged to the poorer and lower classes of the populace. The oppressed, the poor, the bondsmen, the unhappy and the discontented—these it was who, in their misery, seeking

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after consolation, lent their ear to the new teachings before anyone else.

To give a picture of the development of the Church would be too lengthy a matter, and indeed out of place here. We would therefore content ourselves with emphasizing a few important factors which are relevant to the subject-matter of these pages.

The teachings of Jesus Christ, coupled with the occultness of the mysteries, gained in importance all the more because they did not demand subscription to any cult. Their importance was likewise strengthened by the streams of asceticism which welled forth soon after from the East and especially from Egypt, and were combined with fanciful and visionary ideas of the Kingdom of God in the life hereafter. These ideas paved the way for a contemptuous attitude towards the life in this world, and roused a longing for the future life. Thus was developed an inclination to abandon the world, and also a tendency to revolt against existing circumstances. This latter tendency often assumed a character dangerous to the State. Martyrdom was often courted by the fanatical uncouth, uneducated Christians, by their breaking, or running counter to, the laws of the State. If any such movement ever assumed very great dimensions, it was small wonder if the whole of the new institution had to pay a toll and had to suffer all sorts of persecutions for the recklessness of an individual. The cult which was thus gradually built up was in itself largely responsible for the unfavourable opinion which the heterodox entertained concerning the Christians. For the *agapæ*, the brotherly or sisterly kiss, the anthropophagical semblance attached to the conception of enjoyment of the blood and the flesh of Jesus Christ were blameworthy as far as the non-Christians were concerned. They were unable to comprehend the symbolical meaning lying behind the outward forms, and false ideas were thereby aroused.

In proportion as the Christian teachings won respect, power and acceptance, their representatives began to put on a presumptuous attitude. At the same time, the circumstance that Christ had not bequeathed any precise and formulated

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teachings, and had not left behind anything written, also had its effect. From the very beginning the society had split into two parts—the so-called Jewish Christians and the heathen Christians—engaged in mutual warfare. Naturally matters did not stop at this schism ; every fundamental dogma gave rise to obnoxiously revolting quarrels. The efforts which Christianity made to reconcile and to connect itself with other religions and with the Greek philosophy had opened up, in consequence, a still broader gulf. The result, therefore, was that, in the third century, the original disunion had given birth to a considerable number of sects which in reality perverted the humane teaching of love for one's neighbour into terrible and gory persecutions of each other. Every society, every sect, believed itself to be in possession of the true revelation, and around the most conceivably insignificant differences in the definition of terms, in the interpretation of the teachings of Jesus Christ, arose quarrels which set the whole of Christendom in commotion, and called forth fratricidal wars, not to mention all those hateful and obnoxious word and pen battles and curses which the bishops hurled against each other.

(To be continued.)

ISLAM—A RATIONAL FAITH¹

By C. A. SOORMA, LL.M.

“ Guide us Thou, O Lord, on the straight path. Guide us in the way which will lead to Thee, and bless us with Thy love, which is Thy essence, and free us from everything which may keep us back from Thee ; direct us in the way in which we may see none but Thee, hear none but Thee, love none but Thee.”—THE HOLY QUR-ÁN, chap. i.

WHAT is faith ?

Faith is that inherent power in man which enables him to distinguish between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil. Once you deny this latent power in man, then you knock the bottom out of all religious belief. In fact, the very existence

¹ Being the text of a lecture delivered before the British Muslim Society, London.

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of religion is based on an assumption that this power exists in man. Once an Arab went up to the Prophet, and asked :—

“ What is faith, O Prophet of God ? ”

“ Faith,” replied the Prophet, “ is that which enables you to appreciate your good deeds, and condemn the evil that is in you.”

If we accept this inherent power in man to be true, then one may ask : “ Why are there so many religions ? Why is there so much diversity of beliefs ? ”

To this Islam gives a unique answer ; for see what the Qur-án says :—

“ At first, mankind professed but one religion (and when afterwards they began to create differences) God raised Prophets among them who brought to the Believers the message of His mercy and kindness, and to non-Believers the threat of severe chastisement, and gave them Books so that all their differences be removed and unity be produced.”

Again it says :—

“ There is no tribe in which a Prophet had not been raised —there is no nation in which a Reformer was not born, and for every country a Prophet was sent to show them the right path.”

Here we see one of those great characteristics of Islam which entitles it to rank as a rational faith. Unlike other religions which emphasize their own secular teachings to be true and all others as absolutely false, unlike the teachings of other creeds which cannot penetrate this foggy, shadowy realm of human differences, Islam offers a sound and a rational explanation. It admits that differences of climate, temperament, environment, and political, sociological and economic causes have led to the production and multiplication of diverse beliefs, yet in Nature there is room for only one true faith, and that is Islam. It claims that the religion of every true Prophet in its pristine glory was none other than Islam, and that the message which has been handed to us from the time of Adam to the time of Muhammad was identical in every respect. Just pause for a moment and reflect what this means. It means this : that the scope of this religion in the true sense of the word extends as far back and is as wide as humanity

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itself, the fundamental principles always remaining the same, the accidents changing with the changing needs of humanity.

Even the very term "Islam" is not without immense significance. It was neither invented nor chosen by the Prophet, for the Holy Qur-án says: "Surely the true religion with Allah is Islam"; and elsewhere it says: "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion."

What then does Islam really mean?

It means two different things. In the first place, it means, according to the Qur-án, one who has made his peace with God. Peace with God implies complete submission to His Will Who is the Source of all purity and goodness. Secondly, it means peace with man—with humanity, as a whole—since the doing of good to one's fellow-man is made obligatory by Him. How beautifully the Qur-án speaks:—

"Yea, whoever 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."

In other words, Islam is truly a "Religion of Peace."

Let me now quote to you another passage from the Holy Qur-án to show why Islam is entitled to our respect and obedience:—

"This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard against evil; those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend benevolently out of what We have given them; and who believe in what has been revealed to you, and that which was revealed before you; and they are sure of the hereafter" (ii. 2-4).

The key-note of the above passage is to be found in the fact that mere belief in Islam counts for nothing if not carried into practice; for notice that emphasis is laid on the practical aspects of the faith—guarding against evil; keeping up prayer and giving benevolently out of the wealth bestowed upon man. This is the opening passage of the Book, and here we find, expressed in the clearest language, firstly, the truth of previous revelations, and secondly, the necessity for charity and goodness. There is no picturesque language, no

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parables, no apparent contradictions, as one regrets to find in the New Testament. Clear as the light of day, the message comes to us, and reason at once accepts it as true. Again, the principles enunciated above are taught in some form or other by all the religions of the world—belief in God, the Unseen; Divine revelation and the life to come, and the practical injunctions to pray, and to give. Great, then, though the similarity is between Islam and other faiths, in so far as the above principles are concerned, yet its chief merit lies in its conception of the Divinity which we now propose to analyse.

God in Islam is known by various names, the commonest being *Allah*. But the term that is most expressive is *Rabb*. The connotations of the term *Rabb* are so numerous that it is difficult to enumerate all. However, we may say that *Rabb* indicates the Creator, the Cherisher, the Nourisher, the Sustainer, and the Destroyer. These are the attributes which are to be found in Nature, those eternal laws which govern the universe. Again, Islam asks us to believe in One single God, Who is above all tribal and national gods. The God of Islam is not the God of any particular nation, so that He should look after their needs only, but He is described in the opening verses of the Qur-án as *Rabbu 'l-'Alamin*—"Lord of the Worlds." This means that this conception enlarges the circle of the brotherhood of man so as to include all nations of the earth and thus widens the outlook of human sympathy. Unity is the foundation of the Islamic conception of the Divinity which it emphasizes so often; for instance, observe how clearly the unity of God is stated in the following verses :—

"Your God is one God; there is no God but He, the most Merciful. In the creation of the heaven and the earth and the alternation of night and day and in the ship which saileth on the sea laden with what is profitable to mankind, and in the rain-water which God sendeth from heaven, quickening again the dead earth and the animals of all sorts which cover its surface, and in the change of winds and the clouds balanced between heaven and earth—are signs for people of under-

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standing ; yet some men take idols beside God and love them as with the love due to God " (chap. xiii.).

Any attempt to introduce a plurality in the Godhead is severely chastised by Islam, and the Qur-án abounds in the history of those nations who had betrayed the teachings of the Prophets sent to them by setting up false gods beside God—the stories of the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Jews and the Christians all show how much they had strayed from the true path.

" Modern Christianity—we may even say Christianity apart from the Platonism with which it was pregnant during the first five centuries—is of the most material character," says Syed Ameer Ali in his *Life of Mohammed*. " It does not recognize a God apart from human conceptions ; its deity is intensely anthropomorphic and personal." Compare it with the idea of God as laid down by the school of Averroes (Ibn Rushd). Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism*, says :—

" The pantheistic writings which flowed from the school of Averroes reviving the old stoical notions of a soul of nature, directed attention to the great problem of the connection between the worlds of matter and of mind. The conception of an all-pervading spirit ' which sleeps in the stone, dreams in the animal, and wakes in the man,' the belief that the hidden vital principle which produces the varied form of organization is but the thrill of the Divine Essence that is present in them all "—this belief is the keystone of the deep mysticism which pervades Islam, and which no other faith has ever even remotely preached.

Every chapter opens with the beautiful tribute of *Ar-Rahmán* and *Ar-Rahím*, and the English equivalents of the Beneficent, the Merciful, convey a very imperfect idea of the deep and all-encouraging mercy of God. In Islam, the Book of Nature is constantly drawn upon to prove the unity and the mercy of God—of how in the diversity of the laws that govern the universe one is at once struck by a Uniform Principle which regulates them. The uniformity of Nature conclusively proves the unity of the Maker or Evolver. Here there is no conundrum as to Trinity in Unity and Unity in

ISLAM—A RATIONAL FAITH

Trinity—a puzzle which neither reason nor dogma can satisfactorily explain. From the very canvas of Life, of Nature herself, Islam gives you proof—ample proof—as to who and what God is. The picture is clear, definite and rational. It is symmetrical, harmonious. Viewed in whole or in parts—from any angle, if you like—the light of reason cannot perceive any defect in it. It is eloquent and, above all, convincing.

What does the Qur-án say about Man himself? Listen to these verses :—

1. “ We have created man in the most *noble* form.”

2. “ Verily, We have bestowed upon man great honour, and provided for him on land with animals and on water with ships (to travel) and gave him the best of food to eat and enjoy, and, surely, of all our creations We have ranked him first.”

These two verses prove that man is born *sinless*—and not *in sin*, as Christianity would have us believe—and above all, he is spoken of as possessing great innate qualities of progress and perfection. Islam believes that every child born in this world is innocent and pure, and makes no distinction between a child born of Muslim parents and one born of non-Muslim parents. In the event of the child's death, both return to their Creator, sinless and innocent. Again, in Islam, no earthly baptism is necessary for the child to be received in human circle, as every child is stamped with the glory and purity of creation. A bundle of flesh and blood, it is a miracle on which the Qur-án lays great stress, for it says :—

1. “ There are signs on earth for believers to understand, and, verily, within your own self, there are signs which you do not see.”

2. “ Whatever there is on earth and whatever there is in the sky, verily, He has created of His mercy, and He has made them serve you so that you may be benefited, but only for those who reflect and understand.”

So you see that the doctrine of Original Sin and the necessity for an Atonement by the crucifixion of the “ Son of God ” does not arise under Islam at all. Man's salvation is in his own hands. Born sinless, equipped with many

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physical, mental, moral and spiritual attributes, his destiny is his to shape. He does not need any intercessor—*anyone else's sacrifice*—for the forgiveness of his sins. “Those who believe and *do good*,” says the Qur-án, “for them the Lord has a rich recompense.”

To a superficial observer, “the most distinguishing characteristic of the Qur-án is the curious and inconsistent manner in which it combines the existence of a Divine Will (which not only orders all things, but which acts directly upon men and addresses itself to the springs of thought in them) with the assertion of a Free Agency in man and the liability of intellect,” writes that great jurist, Syed Ameer Ali. “It seems inconsistent at first sight that man should be judged by his works—a doctrine which forms the foundation of Islamic morality—if all his actions are ruled by an all-powerful Will. The earnest faith of Muhammad, in an active, ever-living Principle, joined to his trust in the progress of man, supplies a key to this mystery. To Muhammad the fundamental laws of Truth and Nature which seem innate in the moral consciousness of Humanity—are the essence of Divine ordinances. They are as much laws, in the strictest sense of the word, as the laws which regulate the movements of the celestial bodies. But the Will of God is not an arbitrary will ; it is an educating will, to be humbly obeyed as much by the scholar in his walks of learning as by the devotee in his cell. One hour's contemplation of the works of the Creator, one hour's conscientious study of the principles which regulate the phenomena of the creation, is more acceptable to God than seventy years of devotion and prayer.”

To the above, by way of emphasis, we quote the following verse of the Qur-án :—

“And We have made every man's actions cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the Resurrection Day a book which he will find wide open.”

Clearly, then, freedom of will is a basic moral principle of Islam. Man is given the choice to do as he pleases. He is warned that if he disobeys the great laws of Nature then he will have to blame none but himself. “By your deeds, ye

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shall be judged," said the Prophet, and there is no denying the truth of this principle.

What does Islam say about the life hereafter? Let me quote to you a few verses from the Qur-án :—

1. " No soul knows what is in store for them of that which will refresh the eyes " (xxxii. 17).

2. " On that day, you will see the faithful men and the faithful women, their light running before them and on their right hands."

3. " O thou soul which art at rest, return unto thy Lord, pleased and pleasing Him ; enter thou among My servants ; and enter thou My garden of felicity."

The imagery of the pleasures of Paradise and the tortures of Hell was necessary for the comprehension of a people who did not possess the power of abstract and ideal thoughts. To his contemporaries, Muhammad can only appeal through their senses, and thus we find vivid descriptions of both Paradise and Hell in the Qur-án, and the true interpretation of it is so beautifully given by Muhammad himself in the following passages as related by the great Abu Hureira :—

" The most favoured of God will be he who shall see his Lord's face (glory) night and morning, a felicity which will surpass all the pleasures of the body as the ocean surpasses a drop of sweat " ; and again :—

" God has prepared for His good people what no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the mind of any one."

Can there, then, be any doubt as to the spiritual significance of the Qur-ánic verses? It is with the spirit, the *soul* of man, that Islam is so concerned with, as is shown by the appeal to his higher morality which is so frequently made by the Qur-án in almost every page, and it would, therefore, be in direct contradiction of the teachings of Islam if one assigned to these descriptive verses about Paradise and Hell an interpretation other than a spiritual interpretation.

I have thus tried to deal briefly with those fundamentals of faith which form the basis of almost all the great religions, and I have tried to place before you the Islamic conception

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of them, as viewed in the light of reason. There is nothing in Islam which I find I cannot accept as a rationalist—nothing in it which cannot be satisfactorily explained and accounted for. God, Nature, Man, Free Will, the Hereafter—I have briefly dealt with these, and I have proved my case from its very source, namely, from the Qur-án itself. Muhammad, born in the worst period of history, amidst a people notorious for their ignorance and barbarism, struggling to re-establish the true religion of Nature—Islam—has given us the finest conception of Man himself in the complex scheme of creation—his aim and purpose and place in the great Universe. He has taught us ideals based on practicable truths, laws adaptable and acceptable in every part of the globe and, above all, added a fresh stimulus and gave a new impetus to man's comprehension of the great forces of Nature. The world to-day—that vista of human progress and culture which is now so dimly perceived by all of us, that goal to which all are so eager to aspire—Perfection—a noble son of the desert gave to the world fourteen centuries ago. The greatest rationalist, the best friend of humanity, Muhammad has my humble respect and admiration. May the peace and blessings of God be upon him !

MAN IN THE QUR-AN

By SYED MAQBOOL AHMAD, B.A.

(Continued from Vol XV, No. 12, December, 1927, p. 461.)

19. "The gardens of perpetual abode which they will enter along with those who do good from among their parents and their spouses, and their offspring ; and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate. Peace be on you because you were constant, and excellent is then the issue of the abode. And those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder that which Allah has ordered to be joined and make mischief in the land ; as for those, upon them shall

MAN IN THE QUR-AN

be curse and they shall have the evil issue of the abode " (xiii. 23-25).

20. " Hell is before him and he shall be given to drink of hot water ; he will drink it little by little, and will not be able to swallow it agreeably, and distress (death) will come to him from every quarter but he shall not die ; and there shall be vehement chastisement before him " (xiv. 16-17).

21. " They shall have chastisement in this world's life, and the chastisement of the hereafter is certainly more grievous, and they shall have no protector against Allah. A likeness of the garden which the righteous are promised ; there flow beneath it rivers, its fruits are perpetual and its plentiness ; this is the requital of those who guarded against evil, and the requitals of the unbelievers is fire " (xiii. 34-35).

22. " And the devil shall say after the affair is decided : Surely Allah promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you promises then failed to keep them to you, and I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you obeyed me (Mark the man's choice and free will) therefore do not blame me but blame yourself. I can not be your aider now nor can you be my aiders ; surely I disbelieved in your associating me with Allah before ; surely it is the unjust that shall have the painful chastisement. And those who believe and do good are made to enter the gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them by their Lord's permission ; their greeting therein is, Peace " (xiv. 22-24).

23. " Surely those who guard against evil shall be in the midst of gardens and fountains (springs). Enter them in peace, secure. And We will root out whatever rancour is in their breasts—they shall be as brethren, on the raised couch face to face. Toil shall not afflict them in it, nor shall they be ever ejected from it. Inform my servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful, and that my chastisement—that is the painful chastisement " (xv. 45-50).

24. " Therefore enter the gates of hell, to abide therein ; so certainly evil is the dwelling-place of the proud. And it is said to those who guard against evil : What is it that your Lord has revealed ? They say : Good. For those who do good

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in this world is good, and certainly the abode of the hereafter is better ; and certainly most excellent is the abode of those who guard against evil, the gardens of perpetuity they shall enter them ; they shall have in them what they please. Thus does Allah reward those who guard. Those whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying : Peace be on you, enter the garden for what you did. They do not wait aught but that the angels should come to them or that the commandment of your Lord should come to pass. Thus did those before them ; and Allah was not unjust to them, but they were unjust to themselves. So the evil consequences of what they did shall afflict them and that which they mocked shall encompass them ” (xvi. 29-34).

25. “ And if Allah had destroyed men for their iniquity, He would not leave on the earth a single creature, but He respites them till an appointed time ; so when their doom will come, they shall not be able to delay it an hour, nor can they bring it on before its time ” (xvi. 61).

26. “ Whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did ” (xvi. 97).

27. “ And we have made every man’s action to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open. Read your book ; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day. Whoever goes aright, for his own soul he go aright ; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray ; nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another, nor do We chastise until We raise an apostle. And when We wish to destroy a town, We send Our commandment to the people of it who lead easy life, but transgress therein ; thus the word proves true against it, so We destroy it with utter destruction. And how many of the generations did We destroy after Noah ! and your Lord is sufficient as Knowing and Seeing with regard to His servant’s faults. Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to Him therein what We please for whomsoever we desire, then We assign to him the

MAN IN THE QUR-AN

hell ; he shall enter it despised, driven away. And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer ; as for these their striving is recompensed. All do We aid—these as well as those—out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined. See how We made some of them to excel others, and certainly the hereafter is much superior in respect of degrees and much superior in respect of excellence ” (xvii. 13-22).

28. “ And say : The truth is from your Lord, so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve ; surely We have prepared for the iniquitous a fire, an enclosure of it shall encompass them about ; and if they cry for water, they shall be given water like molten brass which will scald their mouths ; evil the drink and ill the resting place. Surely as for those who believe and do good, We do not waste the reward of him who does good work. These it is for whom are the gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow ; ornaments shall be given to them therein of bracelets of gold, and they shall wear green robes of the silk and thick silk brocade interwoven with gold, reclining therein on raised couches ; excellent the recompense and goodly the resting place ” (xviii. 29-31).

29. “ Say : Shall We inform of you the greatest losers in their deeds ? These are they whose labour is lost in this world’s life and they think that they are well versed in skill of the work of hands. These are they who disbelieve in the communications of their Lord and His meeting, so their deeds become null, because they disbelieved and held my communications and my apostles in mockery. Surely as for those who believe and do good deeds, their place of entertainments shall be gardens of paradise, abiding therein ; they shall not desire removal from them ” (xviii. 103-108).

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