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BY

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Dr. K. P. Thail, the famous Thiya leader who formally declared Islam on August 30, at a great meeting specially convened for the purpose at Cochin. Along with him 32 of his comrades also made their declaration of Islam. The converts include several ladies. Dr. Thail was given the Islamic name Kamal Pasha.

**The Late Mr. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's
Views On
THE REVIVAL OF ISLAM
THROUGH
THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT**

A veil has been cast over the true nature of the Ahmadiyya Movement, partly through the excessive claims made by the Qadian Section and partly through the abusive writings of its opponents. Judged by its work, it is not difficult to see what the Ahmadiyya Movement really stands for. In a nutshell, it is a movement for *the revival of Islam*, a movement which aims at carrying the true message of Islam to both the Muslim and non-Muslim. As a Muslim brother who is not an Ahmadi, once wrote:—

“To me the difference between an Ahmadi and a non-Ahmadi is this—the former is a Muslim, out with his sleeves tucked up to propagate Islam far and wide, and the latter is an on-looker, a shirker of his duty to Islam.”

(“The Light,” Oct. 1, 1936).

The late Mr. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall has rendered immense service to the cause of Islam, and not the least of these services is the bold expression of his views, which reviewing “The Religion of Islam,” on what the Ahmadiyya Movement had done for the revival of Islam. We reproduce his review, which was one of his last writings, as published in the Islamic Culture for October 1936 :

The Perfect Polity*

Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore. His literary works, with those of the late Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din, have given fame and distinction to the Ahmadiyya movement. In our opinion the present volume is his finest work because it is free from the sectarian comments... .. and because it is... ..in perfect English... ..It is a description of Al-Islam by one well versed in the Quran and the Sunnah who has on his mind the shame of the Muslim decadence of the past five centuries and in his heart the hope of the revival of which signs can now be seen on every side. Without moving a hair's breadth from the Traditional position with regard to worship and religious duties, the author shows a wide field in which changes are lawful and may be desirable because here the rules and practices are not based on an ordinance of the Quran or an edict of the Prophet, and should be altered when they cease to meet the needs of the community. Such a book is greatly needed at the present day when in many Muslim countries we see persons eager for the reformation and revival of Islam making mistakes through lack of just this knowledge.

The author undertook to write the present work with the idea of refuting the false views about Al-Islam put forth by a non-Muslim. As he tells us in his Preface :

*"The Religion of Islam." A comprehensive discussion of the Sources, Principles and Practices of Islam. By Maulana Muhammad Ali, M. A., LL. B., Ahmadiyya Buildings, Lahore.

“‘The Religion of Islam’ is the name of a book written by the Rev. F. A. Klein and published in 1906. It was through the courtesy of a friend that this book fell into my hands in the year 1928. He had read it with pain, he said, on account of the distorted picture of Islam which it contained, and he suggested that I should write a comprehensive work containing a true picture of Islam and dealing in detail with its teachingsThe multifarious duties which I had to perform as President of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam were a great hindrance, but the call of duty overcame these difficulties and I set to work immediately after going through Klein’s book, and the work is now being published under the same name.”

In point of fact—and this is largely true of all Muslim ‘Missionary’ publications—the book will appeal to Muslims—more than to non-Muslims. Though the author is at logger-heads with a large portion of fiqh, he is himself a faqih (though a very large-minded one); his arguments are the arguments of fiqh and his style is the style of fiqh. It is a style quite different from that of Christian polemics and can only be appreciated in the West by the few who have already made some study of Islam. To Muslims, on the other hand, the style is familiar and will seem appropriate, while the subject-matter is of overwhelming interest.

We do not always agree with Maulana Muhammad Ali’s conclusions upon minor points.....but his premises are always sound, we are always conscious

of his deep sincerity; and his reverence for the Holy Quran is sufficient in itself to guarantee his work in all essentials. There are some, no doubt, who will disagree with his general findings, but they will not be those from whom Al-Islam has anything to hope in the future.

He begins with a description of what he calls the "sources" of Islam—the Quran, Hadith, Ijtihad, Ijma'a. Here he is already at cross-purposes with the European critics who pretend to find "sources" of Islam in other religions or in ancient folklore. Then follow chapters on Faith, the Unity of God, His Attributes, Angels, Revealed Books, Prophets, Life after Death, Predestination, Prayer, Zakat, Fasting, Pilgrimage, Jihad, Marriage, Property, Inheritance, and so forth; from which it will be seen that the book is indeed comprehensive. Each chapter is a complete treatise, showing learning and research. Those on Qadr, Angels and The Life after Death should be studied to observe the difference between the rational views of a devout traditionalist and the views of so-called rationalists. We are tempted to quote from the chapter on Ijtihad (freedom of thought), which is the crux of the whole problem of revival:

"The great mujtahids not only applied their judgment to new circumstances, but they also differed in their principles of jurisprudence, which shows that none of them considered the others infallible. If they were not infallible then, how did they become infallible

after so many centuries when the mere lapse of time necessitated new legislation to meet new requirements? That the Holy Prophet opened the door of Ijtihad is only too clear, that he never ordered it to be closed after a certain time is admitted on all hands: but even the great Imams never closed that door. Neither Imam Abu Hanifa nor Malik nor Shafi'i nor yet Ahmad ibn Hanbal ever said that no one after him shall be permitted to exercise his own judgment, nor did any one of them claim to be infallible: neither does any book on the principles of jurisprudence (usul) lay down that the exercise of a man's own judgment for the making of new laws was forbidden to the Muslims after the four Imams nor yet that their Ijtihad has the same authority as the Holy Quran and the Sunna. Ijtihad was a great blessing to the Muslim people; it was the only way through which the needs of the succeeding generations and the requirements of the different races merging into Islam could be met. Neither the Holy Prophet, nor any of his Companions nor any of the great mujtahids of Islam, ever said that Muslims were forbidden to apply their own judgment to new circumstances and the everchanging needs of a growing community after a certain time; nor has any one of them said, what in fact no one could say that no new circumstances would arise after the second century. What happened was that the attention of the great intellects of the third century was directed towards the collection and criticism of Hadith. On the other hand, the four Imams rose so high above

the ordinary jurists that the latter were dwarfed into insignificance, and the impression gained ground gradually that none could exercise his judgment independently of the four Imams. The impression in its turn led to limitations upon *Ijtihad* and the independence of thought to which Islam had given an impetus. Being thus restrained by a false impression, the intellect of Islam suffered a heavy loss and the increasing demand of knowledge being brought to a standstill, stagnation and ignorance took its place."

Maulana Muhammed Ali personally believes—and there is nothing unorthodox in the belief that the mercy of Allah will eventually pardon all mankind. He bases his belief upon the saying of our Prophet which concludes with the words:

"Then Allah will say, The angels have interceded and the prophets have interceded, and there remains the Most Merciful of all merciful ones; then he will take a handful out of the fire and will bring forth from it a people who have never done any good." Our author adds: "The handful of God cannot leave anything behind."

The work is well-printed and handsomely got up, a credit to the Lahore publishers; and there are far fewer misprints than are usually to be found in English books printed in India. We recommend it as a stimulus to Islamic thought. To use an old-fashioned word it is an edifying book.

AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHAAT ISLAM

Missionary Work Among Untouchables

QUARTERLY REPORT

(From 1st August 1936 to 31st October 1936.)

Mian Bashir Ahmad M. A. our missionary at Aleppey is carrying on the work of the propagation of Islam among untouchables in Travancore in full operation with the Aleppey Anjuman, the Lajnatul Muhammadiyya. The movement towards Islam among the untouchables was so general that the state authorities—Travancore is a Hindu State—had to issue hasty orders against Mian Bashir Ahmad and some other workers prohibiting them from making speeches within the limits of certain districts. But even these prohibitive orders had little effect and the movement towards Islam continues as strong as ever. About 250 people have already embraced Islam. One very satisfactory feature of these conversions is that the vast majority of the converts is literate, among the 112 whose names have been received in our office there being no less than eighty literates. Mian Bashir Ahmad was at Lahore from 25 to 27th October on his return journey to Aleppey after a month's leave, and both he and Mrs. Arifa Bashir are very hopeful regarding the future of Islam in Travancore.

Another encouraging news in this connection is the conversion to Islam of the famous Thiya leader Dr. K. P. Thail, whose statement regarding the future of the untouchables, given in Mr. Gauba and Maulana Muhammad Yaqub Khan's visit to Travancore has proved so true. He set an example for his down-trodden community by openly accepting the ennobling message of Islam, and joined the world-wide brotherhood along with 32 of his comrades in a meeting held at Cochin on the 30th August under the presidentship of Sheikh Abdullah Gandhi. We have not the least doubt that Dr. Thail's bold step will give a great impetus to the movement for Islam in Southern India.

The movement among the Sansis in the Punjab has for the present come almost to standstill. This is due to the internal strifes among the Muslims which are so prevalent in the Punjab. The Musalmans here are engaged in the all-important task of expelling Muslims from the fold of Islam, and the work of bringing others into it has very little attraction for them. The Ulama are excusable for their narrow-mindedness but even the Muslim press and Muslim leaders find the greatest pleasure in turning Muslims out of the fold of Islam, and this process of splitting is known as unification in the philosophic language of our reputed leaders while the non-Muslim does not know what is Islam and who is a Muslim. Only the other day, the Muslim members of the Assembly had to hang down their heads in shame when a non-Muslim member remarked

in reply to Sir Muhammad Yaqub's claim—"everybody knows who is a Muslim." :—That is why columns of the Punjab press have been full through one party trying to prove the other party is not Muslim." Our only fear is that some people are trying to carry this rumour even to far-off Travancore.