

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE LIGHT

EDITED BY MUSTAFA KHAN B. A.

Vol. I. No. 25.

DECEMBER 16, 1922.

Annual Subscription Re. 1.
For Students As. 8
Foreign countries, 2s.

The Light is published twice a month, on the 1st and 16th.

All business correspondence and applications should be addressed to THE MANAGER of The Light, Ahmadia Buildings, Lahore. The subscription is strictly payable in advance, would-be subscribers are requested to send their subscription with their applications. The paper is not sent per V.P.P. Subscription may kindly be remitted by M. O. or postage stamps.

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Correspondence of literary nature may be addressed to the Editor. Short articles, letters and questions will also be welcome. Non-Muslims are also invited to send questions to be answered.

THE LIGHT.

Dated the 16th December 1922.

Miracles of the Holy Prophet.

(Continuous).

It has been universally admitted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the most successful of the religious personalities. Wonderful reformations, which he brought about within the last twenty three years of his life will always stand unique in the history of the world. At the time of his advent, the Arabs were the most degenerated people on the surface of the earth. They had no political relations with other countries of the world. They chiefly subsisted on the product of their own land which unfortunately was not very

rich. Their main food stuff was dates and camels' meat. The country was devoid of mineral wealth and natural wealth and natural beauties. Nothing in it was inspiring or elevating. The people were peevish, warlike and uncivilized. Perhaps the scorching heat of the country made them pensive and irritable.

The population was divided into various flocks and tribes, which travelled all the year round, staying at irregular intervals wherever they saw a tract of fertile land to give fodder and grass to their goats and camels which formed their chief wealth. Morally, the Arabs, were at the nadir of degradation. Gambling, idolatry, drinking, adultery were very common among them. They were constantly at war with each other. Even the most trivial things in social matters, a joke or taunt, could have caused a series of endless skirmishes resulting sometimes in the destruction of the whole tribe. Poetry was their hobby; yet it lacked refined ideas and touching pathos. It was chiefly used as an instrument to rouse the martial spirit.

Such was the state of society in which the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) was born. He lost his father, before he saw the light of the day. After 8 months his mother too died; and the doubly orphaned baby was left to the care of his grandfather, who also in his turn died soon. Thus Muhammad had no opportunity of receiving proper care and no chance for education and training.

He had no parents to teach him manners, and the society in which he moved was altogether corrupt. He therefore could learn nothing from it. Yet he was not only himself the most civil in his habits; but he also became the teacher of the whole world. He converted the wild children of the Arabian desert into a most civilized nation ruling over a great part of the world. The Encyclopedia Britannica considers Muhammad as the most "successful of religious personalities"! I think the very birth of such personality in the environments alluded to above is the miracle of miracles. It is often said that it is society that produces great men. But in the case of Muhammad society has nothing to contribute to the genius of the greatest of men. The climatic conditions of the country were not such as to have any elevating influence on the human mind. The sandy desert of Arabia, extending over hundreds of miles, and presenting a dreary scene of mountainous land-scape cannot in any way infuse one with high aspirations. Muhammad was brought up in these environments, without paternal care, yet he was the greatest man, the profoundest thinker and the most perfect law-giver. The religion which he brought gave a tone to the dead society of Arabia and made it a powerful nation which spread the light of truth and learning all over the then known world. The reformation he effected was complete in every sense. He eradicated the deep-rooted evil of society. Drinking was the chief vice of the Arabs and it was through Muhammad's teachings that the whole country gave it up at once. It is said that when the divine revelation prohibiting the use of alcohol was announced, the people of Medina broke into pieces vessels full of old wine, which flowed into the streets of the city like the water of an abundant rain. No law, no government can bring about such a rapid and perfect change in a coun-

try. The history of the world can afford no illustration of such a wonderful change. Is it not superhuman? Is it not the greatest miracle? It has no resemblance with trickery or mesmerism which can be worked out both by the good and the bad. On the contrary it shows the great moral force of the Holy Prophet and establishes the truth and the righteousness of his mission. If Prophets are sent by Allah to guide the people to prepare them for working out their own salvation, Muhammad is assuredly the greatest of them, because he has been pre-eminently successful in bringing about the salvation of mankind. He saved Arabia from the curse of immorality, discord, illwill, hatred and tribal animosity; and welded together the different elements of the society into a solid compact of fraternity. His religion has still got the unique influence of moulding human character and is potentially capable of bringing about the universal brotherhood of man for which the world is longing.

What did Islam do for Christianity.

At the advent of Islam, the founder of Christianity and his mother were two of the most reviled persons in the history of religion. The Jews who were the people of the Book treated Jesus Christ as an impostor, and said the most unholy things about Mary. The Quran speaks of this attitude of theirs thus: "And for their unbelief and for their having uttered against Mary a grievous calumny." As against this attitude of the Jews, the Holy Quran described both Jesus Christ and his mother as two righteous servants of God, including the former among the great prophets of the world. All those words of praise which are met with in the Holy Quran regarding them are really an answer to Jewish calumnies. Mary is called a righteous woman, and Jesus Christ is spoken of as a word from God and as a soul from Him to refute the

grievous Jewish calumny referred to above and to clear Mary of impure conduct and Jesus of any impurity attaching to his birth. The words and epithets used about Mary and Jesus in the Holy Quran do not show that they were more than mortal, but that as mortals they were the righteous servants of God. Jesus Christ was a word from God because he was born in accordance with a prophecy and he was a soul from God because his soul was pure like that of all other righteous servants of God. In accordance with these teachings of the Holy Quran, 400 millions of Muslims believe today that the founder of Christianity was a prophet, and the voice of Jewish calumny has been silenced for ever. Christianity thus lies under the greatest obligation to Islam. No other religion in the world has done such immense good to another nation. The good done by Islam to Christianity is unparalleled in the history of the world.

What has Christianity done for Islam.

But how has Christianity repaid this great debt. It has misrepresented Islam for centuries and has spoken the vilest things about it. It has abused the Holy Prophet of Islam, its greatest benefactor, quite unblushingly. The evil done by Christianity to Islam is as unparalleled in the history of the world as the good done by Islam to Christianity. It is a sad contrast. And this attitude has not yet changed. Lest this attitude of Christianity towards Islam may be looked upon as an exaggeration, I quote here the evidence of a Christian writer. The Rev. John E. Merrill, Ph. D. writing in the International Review of Missions for October 1922, under the heading "The Christian approach to Moslems" says :—

"Historically, the preponderating attitude of Christendom toward Islam has been that of an enemy toward another enemy. It has varied from simple rivalry, through self-defence, to ridicule, condemnation and armed attack. Where Christians have been subject to the forces of Islam, it has been

covert. Elsewhere it has been open.

"Christendom has adopted this attitude upon a most inadequate basis of knowledge of Islam. After thirteen centuries how little intimate understanding of it we still have. Christians have been content to accept as fact any hearsay, especially when flattering to themselves and unfavourable to Islam. Moslem schoolboys, too, as these lines are being read, are being taught the religious, intellectual and moral superiority of Islam to Christianity, with the addition that the Christians know this, but because of obstinacy are unwilling to confess it. Christians may smile, but would do well to remember that time was when Moslem justice was superior to Christian justice and Moslem morality to that of so-called Christians, Christians themselves being judges, while Moslem lands were the refuge of those obliged to flee for their lives from Christian persecution.

"The traditional attitude of enmity on the part of Christendom toward Islam is self-condemned, because, in the first place, its judgments in condemnation of Islam are superficial.....

"The record of Christian opinion about Islam is full of misrepresentation. Even when the facts have been superficially correct, Christians have grasped at the worst as typical, and have not been disposed to attempt to understand the religious meaning of Islam in the thought of its founder and in the life of devout Moslems today."

In thus returning evil for good, well may the Christians feel proud of the doctrine of doing good to those who do evil to them.

Muhammad Ali.

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Manager.

Note:—We regret that owing to the editor's illness this issue does not contain answers to the correspondents' questions, which, it is hoped will be dealt with in the next issue, inshaallah.

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