

THE MOSLEM WORLD

A quarterly review of current events, literature, and
thought among Mohammedans and the progress
of Christian Missions in Moslem lands

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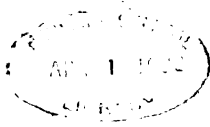
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EDITORIAL

VANQUISHED YET VICTORIOUS.

“Ours is not a conflict,” said St. Paul, “with mere flesh and blood; but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world—the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare.” The Apostle, Paul, was not superstitious, nor a slave to the animistic beliefs so common in his day even among the Jews; but he was ever conscious of the reality of two great spiritual forces constantly engaged in desperate conflict for the souls of men. The Evangelists, especially Luke, as Harnack shows, have depicted the life of Jesus from the Temptation onward as an uninterrupted conflict with the devil. The history of missions in its spiritual aspect is the continuation of this conflict. Whether among animistic tribes in Malaysia and Africa, or among the Brahmans of India, or the Buddhists of Japan, or in Moslem lands, every faithful worker has been conscious in a greater or less degree of this struggle. Face to face with these unseen powers prayer is not a pastime, but such a wrestling, a warfare, an agony of soul for the salvation of others, that the Apostle of the Gentiles characterized it in his case as birth-pangs till Christ came to His own in the heart of his converts.

Turco-Armenian, Turks and Arabs, the Syrian Questions, etc. It would seem that the greatest of misfortunes for Islam would be to have its interests bound up with those of Turkey. PERCY SMITH.

An Introduction to Mayhayana Buddhism. By Dr. W. M. McGovern, London. Kegan Paul. pp. 233. Price 7/6d.

This work is designed to supply the average cultured reader with a brief and simple guide to Buddhism, with special references to the Chinese and Japanese phases. It is a general sketch, not a detailed study of the main features of the religion, and concludes with a Short History of Buddhism and Buddhistic Sects, and a survey of Buddhistic Literature. S. M. Z.

Bahai, The Spirit of the Age. By Horace Holley. pp. 211. Price \$2.50. Brentano's, New York, 1921.

We are faced on the cover of the book with this sweeping assertion; "Progressive people of all types and classes recognize the Bahai Movement as the long-awaited World Religion." The truth of this statement depends wholly on the definition of "progressive people." If the comparatively few ill-balanced Americans and Europeans who have become the followers of Abdul Baha are the progressives, then and only then is the declaration true. Such exaggerated assertions as this are the Bahais' chief stock in trade from Teheran to San Francisco; and this book in this particular is a sample of all Bahai literature. Let us give one example.

Speaking of the Bab, the so-called forerunner of Baha'ollah, (to use the orthography of the book), as "the first of the three Cosmic Points, which determines the plain of reality" (whatever that may mean), the author launches out into this magnificent claim. "To that Point converged the History of all peoples, the progress of all nations. For this Point Paul became a witness. For this Point Plato became a witness. For this Point the pyramids were measured; the Zodiac hung to girdle time. Of this Point Buddha meditated under the tree of Spiritual wisdom. Before the emanation of this Point, History was naught but unintelligible chaos, without being, without ending, without purpose, without progress, without form save only as a secret to a few." And all this we are asked to take on the word of—whom? The principle is a simple one. If you will only speak confidently, earnestly and insistently enough some one will believe you, no matter what your claim.

This book also illustrates a second characteristic of all Bahai propaganda,—a cool indifference to facts, or to speak more frankly, a deliberate misstatement of facts. Of this too we can give but one example. We are told that Baha'ollah was "a forty years' prisoner in a vile Turkish dungeon." The facts are these. For two years he was confined in barracks at Acca; he was restricted to his own home for nine more years; and for the rest of the time until his death he lived in a palatial residence, called Bahja, which he built for himself outside of Acca. In this period he had the freedom of the country, and was in no sense confined. These facts have been so often pointed out that the misstatement we fear is deliberately put forth to win the undeserved sympathy of the uninformed.

A third characteristic of Bahai literature seen in this book to perfection, although we believe the author is a son of the West rather than of

the East, is the absurdly mystic and meaningless phraseology with which its thought is clothed and concealed. The Truth, which is to enlighten the world is nothing but a fog, the Water of Life is as unfit to satisfy the thirsty soul as a mirage in the desert.

The greater part of the book is given to the attempted illucidation of the "Cosmic Trinity." Truth, Will and Love, which are manifested in the three Points that fix the Plain of Reality,—the Bab, Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha; and to Bahai messages to Christianity, Judaism, Science, Politics, Christian Science, New Thought and Theosophy. The message to Christianity is a brazen effort to arrogate to Baha'o'llah the prophecies of the Old Testament regarding Christ, (such as Isa. 9:6; 11:1-4; 35: 1, 2), and many passages in the New Testament, which are allegorized without rhyme or reason. The opening sentence of this chapter is "Nowhere in the world today is such reverence paid to Christ, such devotion felt for the spirit of Christ, such fidelity of thought and action rendered the teachings of Christ as among the followers of Abdul Baha." This is palpably untrue, when we remember that to the Bahai, Christ is a back number, his teachings out of date, and his claim to be "the way, the truth and life" superseded.

We wonder that any one can read this book without realizing that Bahaism has to offer the hungry soul nothing but a stone.

ROBERT M. LABAREE.

Morocco That Was. By W. B. Harris. 333 pp., 25s. net. Blackwood, London, 1921.

The author was *Times* correspondent in Morocco for something like thirty years, and as such came into frequent and intimate contact with the court, especially the last sultan Mulai (i. e. Prince) Abdul Aziz, and also with the chiefs and their retainers among whom he moved freely, aided by the fact that he went unarmed and had an intimate knowledge of Arabic and the local dialects. It is a pity that a practised writer should not have spent a little time in straightening out the narrative and avoiding repetitions and misspellings such as Ghraïlani for Jilani or Gilani the great saint of Bagdad. But the story that he tells, though a very sad one, is exceedingly interesting and is set forth with the impressionist *verve* of an able newspaper correspondent.

The Filali sultans of Morocco are *sharif* or noble, that is direct descendants of Mohammed, and their dynasty dating from the seventeenth century has been one of the minor claimants to the Califate. Mulai Abdul Aziz came to the throne in 1894 at the age of twelve. By the time he was twenty he desired to assert himself, and we are assured by the writer that he was "thoughtful, intelligent and desirous of doing well" but the multitude of good resolutions effectually paved his path to perdition. The way was made easy for him by his viziers, who liberally used the ill offices of European traders to keep the monarch diverted from affairs of state by a constant supply of costly novelties. The court of Morocco became the happy hunting ground of the commercial traveler. Fireworks, motor cars, menageries, jewelry and a score of other hobbies filled the palace domains with stacks of discarded valuables brought at immense cost to the inland capital through roadless country. At length the treasury was empty and the regiments, starved save for loot, and unpaid always, revolted. The struggle between French and German influence became more and more acute after the