

El Azhar were greatly interested in this translation when I showed it to them. An earlier translation in Javanese character is mentioned by Brill.

In 1908 the Rev. William Goldsack, a missionary of the Australian Baptist Society, undertook the translation of the Koran into Bengali. It was a bold but strategic venture on literary lines, and has already had great effect among intelligent Moslems. The Koran printed in this fashion (see facsimile) with Christian comment and the explanation of difficult passages, can well be made a schoolmaster to lead Moslems to Christ. One may hope that this method will find imitation in other mission fields and other languages. Efforts in this direction are sure to meet with opposition, as was the case with Turkish versions.

In the days of Abdul Hamid a translation of the Koran into Turkish would have been an impossibility, owing to Moslem prejudice, yet during his reign copies of the Arabic Koran with Turkish Commentary in the margin, were freely published. A beautiful edition of such a Koran was printed at the Bokharia Press, Constantinople, A.H. 1320. After the declaration of the Constitution, the translation of the Koran into Turkish was begun simultaneously by different writers. It aroused not a little stir in Moslem circles, and the undertaking was opposed by those of the old school. The earliest translation that appeared was entitled "Terjumat el Koran," by Ibrahim Hilmi, and was printed at Stamboul about two years ago. Another translation appeared in the Turkish bi-monthly, *Islam Majmu'asi*, edited by Halim Thabit. The translator signed himself *Kh. N.* So far only thirteen numbers of this journal have appeared. The Director of the Khedivial Library at Cairo, who showed me the magazine, expressed his opinion that the enterprise had been stopped by the Turkish Government, and feared that all copies of the paper so far issued would be confiscated and destroyed. Ahmed Effendi Aghaieff, in the *Jeune Turc*, advocates these translations as a necessary religious reform, a sign of the times, and as the only way to reach the masses with the truths of Islam. He wrote :

“ We must begin this (translation) at once, and show the people that it is possible to reach the authentic foundations of our religion. First in rank of these is the Koran. Till now the ordinary Turk read this, committed it to memory, said his prayers and had his communion with God, absolutely without understanding the sense and content of what he read or prayed. Naturally his readings and prayers made no such impression on his heart and soul as we should expect from the reading of a holy book and the recitation of a prayer. Reading and prayer were both mechanical ; here was one of the principal causes of the impotence of religion as an educational force, and this obstacle must be removed.

“ It is this thought that has led to the translation of the Koran into Turkish ; and the remarkable thing, and that which shows how ripe the time is for this enterprise, is that the translation has been begun in quarters utterly at variance with each other in their tendencies. An entirely new religious era is opening in Turkey. We can already foresee that it will be big with beneficent results for the country ; and the country is so ready for such work that the protests against the translation have been remarkably feeble and have not even attracted general attention.”

The hope expressed in this editorial, however, was not realised. Neither of these translations have so far been completed, the Sheikh-ul-Islam himself having forbidden all translations of the sacred Arabic text into Turkish. Even an appeal to the Grand Vizier, we are told, met with no response. There is no doubt, however, that after the war those who have begun this translation will complete it. The spirit in which it was undertaken is well indicated by Ibrahim Hilmi's preface, from which we translate two paragraphs as they appeared in the *Aegyptische Nachrichten* (Cairo) in a review of the work :

“ To confer a favour upon my countrymen, I have decided to translate the noble contents of the Holy Koran into simple and smooth Turkish. It is true that earlier Turkish Commentaries on the Koran, or Korans with explanatory notes, have appeared, but all these works were published in obscure and classical style, and

did not give the meaning of the text clearly, so our Moslem brethren received little benefit from them. In my youth I learned the whole Koran by heart and became a *Hafiz*. Even now I can recite the Koran with the right intonations, but nevertheless I did not understand hardly a single phrase; and this is the case with hundreds of thousands among the Moslems. They have spent their youth in learning the proper recital of the Koran, have even learned it by heart, but of the meaning of the Holy Book they understand nothing. The foundations of our faith are unknown to them.

“Truly the Koran did not descend from heaven merely as a masterpiece of beautiful Arabic eloquence. Non-Arabic speaking nations have rightly expressed the desire to know what the book contains. Everyone cannot learn sufficient Arabic to understand the Koran, nor have they time to wade through twenty volumes of Commentaries. Since I have for a long time laboured in my native country with patriotic zeal for its intellectual and social reformation, I have now the special wish to give a version of the Koran in the language of the people. The translators have done their best to help all the readers, especially the youth at school, to a right understanding of the sacred text, and have, therefore, used simple language. The reader will not misjudge my religious object and my good intention in this work. Even when the Turk reads his Koran in Turkish he will not abandon the use of the original text and the commentaries. May God bless my undertaking and this new translation.”

To sum up the result of our investigation. The Koran has been translated into twelve European languages, and, not counting the polyglot editions, we have in these languages thirty-four versions (no less than eight in the English language alone). In Oriental languages we have been able to learn of some ten versions, and in the case of one or two of these the information seems doubtful. When we remember that this work of translation has, with a few exceptions, been the work of Western scholars, Orientalists and missionaries, the contrast between the Arabic Koran and the Bible, the

Book for all nations, is strikingly evident. And from the missionary standpoint we have nothing to fear from modern Koran translations; rather may we not hope that the contrast between the Bible and the Koran will be evident to all readers when they compare them in their vernacular? As long as orthodox Islam, however, retains its grip on the strategic centres of the Moslem world, it may be doubted whether the translations of the Koran made for Moslems by their own leaders will have any wide circulation. At Constantinople and Cairo the leaders still seem bound to discourage any translation of their Sacred Book.* We are told that at Lahore a well-known Moslem lawyer was recently speaking to his co-religionists in the Panjab on matters connected with Islam, and protested against this mistaken policy. "The reason why Christians succeed is because wherever they go they have the Bible and say their prayers in their mother-tongue; whereas we have wrapped up our religion in an Arabic dress. We should give the people the Koran and let them say their prayers in their own language." The only answer he received was, "Thou art thyself an unbeliever to say such things."

Cairo.

S. M. ZWEMER.

* Cf., "Al Manar," Vol. XVII., Part 2, p. 160 (against a Turkish version); and XVII., Part 10, p. 794 (protesting against a new English version by Kamal-ud-Din, Editor of the *Islamic Review*).

WAS MOHAMMED SINCERE?

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[By permission of the author, we give our readers a portion of his recent essay, "Mahomet fut-il sincère?" published at Paris, 1914 (Bureaux des Recherches de Sciences Religieuses). As a discussion of a subject which remains vital, we recommend the whole book to our readers. The article was translated by Miss F. J. Dupré.—ED.]

WAS Mohammed sincere? We limit the complicated problem of Mohammed's sincerity to the following points:

It is extremely important to be able to determine (a) how Mohammed understood his own responsibility, and (b) if he ever examined himself about it. A passage from the Koran (Surah v. 16) can give us light on the subject. At the last day 'Isa (Christ), who was asked by Allah if he ever attributed to himself divinity, answered thus: "If I have done it, Thou knowest it; Thou knowest the innermost secrets of my soul, and I do not know those of Thine. Dost Thou not know the hidden thoughts?" I wonder whether it is possible to avoid more lightly an embarrassing question. Mohammed found this method convenient. What is the use of proofs? "God has them; the Prophets only transmit a message" (Surah xlvi. 23).

Did Khadija's husband ever think of examining his own conscience?* Nothing proves it. But if he happened

* According to Caetani, "Annali dell' Islam," I., 200, he would have done so at the beginning of his career; he then is afraid to be the toy of an evil spirit. Tab. Annales I., 1150, 8, etc., I refuse to admit this interpretation suggested by certain texts of the Koran, wrongly interpreted. Cf., our "Koran and Tradition." So the Moslem traditionalists succeed in veiling the lack in the Meccan period. In the *Sira* the *horror vacui* has never been exaggerated. Like Moses and Jonah, Mohammed is said to have wished to escape from his mission. The traditions copy and make use of these Biblical stories.

to examine his own heart, he cannot have done so on the same principle at the beginning, in the middle, and especially at the end of his career. His responsibility—if he ever was conscious of any—could not have appeared to him in the same light at such different periods of his life.

Another fact deserves consideration. Men have not always and in all countries had the same standard of loyalty. In Mecca, it is true, Mohammed deserved the title of *amin* (faithful). To us, in the twentieth century, an *amin* Koreishite might be a scoundrel. In our civilisation, two thousand years of Christianity and philosophy have determined and elevated the conception of human loyalty. *Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu*. In virtue of this axiom we exclude from sincerity any alloy. Loyalty exists or not, but it cannot be combined with a quantity, however infinitesimal, of duplicity, of interested views.

Studying Mohammed's methods of action and basing them on these principles, Father Lammens reaches the following conclusions :

If policy is the art of making use of men in order to obtain one's aim, Mohammed possessed this art in a remarkable degree. From the time of the Hejira, his whole career reveals in him the passionate diplomat. Nothing, I imagine, is more apt to subvert human conscience than political shrewdness, the habit of demanding from one's conscience, in preference to the right, the solution of problems referring to the highest interest of societies. To refuse to admit the political element in Mohammed's life is to forget his Koreishite up-bringing. In order to rule one must look ahead. The author of the Koran interpreted in his own way this governmental principle. It seems that he wished to spare himself the trouble of inventing. "His mind was receptive, not creative."* He copied, imitated, and proceeded spasmodically. He considered it the height of wisdom to make sure of the present ; the next day, he thought, would bring him a solution suited to the new difficulties.

* Ed. Sachau, Über den 2ten Chalifen 'Omar, p. 2.