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DAVID NUTT, LONG ACRE.

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1901.

## ORDINARY MEETING.\*

THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES, ESQ., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following elections took place :—

ASSOCIATES :—Rev. Charles Estcourt Boucher, M.A. ; Rev. Albert Henry Hodges.

The following paper was read by the Secretary in the absence of the Author :—

*THE WAHĀBĪS: THEIR ORIGIN, HISTORY, TENETS, AND INFLUENCE.* By Rev. S. M. ZWEMER, F.R.G.S.

THE rise of innumerable heresies as the result of philosophical speculation, the spread of mysticism among the learned classes, and the return to many heathen superstitions on the part of the masses made Islam ripe for reform at the middle of the last century.† Add to this that there was a general decadence of morals under the Ottoman caliphate and that there had been a lull in the period of Moslem conquest. Except for a temporary revival of missionary activity on the part of the Moslems in China and the spread of Islam among the Baraba Tartars, the eighteenth century saw little advance for the Crescent. Instead of conquest there was controversy. Over one hundred and fifty heretical Moslem sects are enumerated by writers of that period. Each of them agreed with the words of Mohammed, ascribed to him in the tradition : “ My people will be divided into seventy-three sects ; every one of which will go to hell except *one sect* ” (*Mishkat*, book i,

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\* Monday, February 18th, 1901.

† The 18th century.

chap. vi, part 2). All these sects differed either in their ideas of Allah and his prophet's revelation or split hairs on free-will and destiny. The Abadiyah held that Ali was divine. The Safatites taught the grossest anthropomorphism. While Sufism, which arose in Persia, was so thoroughly pantheistic that it seems incredible to find monotheists carried away by its teaching. The four orthodox imams were at agreement concerning most doctrines and differed chiefly in their genuflections and more or less lax interpretation of moral precepts. The germs of idolatry left by Mohammed in his system bore fruit. Saint-worship in some form or other was common all over Arabia, as well as in other Moslem lands. The Shiah had made Kerbela the rival of Mecca and Medinah as a place of pilgrimage. There were local shrines of "holy men" near every village. The whole world of thought was honeycombed with superstitions borrowed from every conceivable source; even Buddhism gave its rosary to Islam, and they had already passed it on to the West. The old-time simplicity of life and morals had given way to pride of life and sensuality. Burckhardt testifies regarding Mecca itself (which has always been to the pious Moslem the cynosure of his faith) that, just before the time of the Wahābī reformation, debauchery was fearfully common, harlotry and even unnatural vices were perpetrated openly in the sacred city. Almsgiving had grown obsolete: justice was neither swift nor impartial; effeminacy had displaced the martial spirit; and the conduct of the pilgrim caravans was scandalous in the extreme.

Such was the condition of Arabia when Mohammed bin Abd el Wahab bin Musssherif was born at Wasit\* in Nejd, 1691 A.D. Before his death this great reformer, earnest as Luther and zealous as Cromwell, saw his doctrines accepted and his laws obeyed from the Persian Gulf to the Yemen frontier. As the result of his teaching, there sprang up, in the course of half a century, not only a new, widely extended, and important Moslem sect, but an independent and powerful state. Abd el Wahab was an incarnate

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\* Palgrave says he was born at *Horemelah* (in his *Travels*) while in the article on Arabia (9th ed. *Encyclop. Britannica*) he mentions *Ayinah*. This place is also given by Burckhardt, but he adds that it is uncertain. From a direct descendant of Abd el Wahab, an Arab at Bahrein, I learn that there is not the least doubt that he was born at neither of these places, but at *Wasit*; some maps give *Waseit*.

whirlwind of Puritanism against the prevailing apostacy of the Moslem world. The sect which he founded and which took its popular name from him was a protest against Moslem idolatry and superstition. It stood for no new doctrine, but called back to the original Islam. Wahābīism was an attempt at an Arabian reformation. "Yet so far from giving any progressive impulse to the Mohammedan cult, it has proved the most reactionary element in the history of Islam."\* This purely Semitic and unique movement, with all its energy, has produced nothing new; it has been directed exclusively toward the repristination of pure monotheism. Our purpose is to sketch (*a*) the origin and history of the Wahābīs; (*b*) give an account of the Wahābī doctrine; and (*c*) of their present condition and influence. The sequel will show that a reformation of the Moslem world by a return to primitive Islam (in theory and practice) is an impossibility, even when aided by the sword. *Back to Christ*, not back to Mohammed—that is the only hope for the Moslem world.

I. ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE WAHĀBĪS.—Mohammed bin Abd ul Wahab was instructed from his youth by his father in the religion of Islam according to the strictest sect of the orthodox Sunnis, namely, that of the Imam Abu Abdullah Ahmed bin Hanbal. Arrived at manhood, the serious student of Islam determined to visit other schools than those of Nejd. He went to Mecca, and afterward also to Busrah and Bagdad. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca and visited El Medina, but in neither place did he find the ideal Islam for which his heart was longing. He felt that there was a distinction between the essential elements of Islam and the recent admixtures of dogma and practice. At Ayinah he first posed as a teacher of the truth. He affirmed the right of private judgment in interpreting the Koran and the traditions by boldly rejecting the old-time leading-strings of the four orthodox commentators. His teaching met with opposition from the outset, but there were also those who accepted his bold position. He fled from his native town and sought refuge at Deraiah under the protection of Mohammed bin Saood, a chief of considerable influence and great ambition. The reformer and the chief found that they could be mutually helpful in furthering each

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\* Rev. F. F. Ellinwood, D.D., in his article, "Has Islam been a Religion of Progress?" (*Missionary Review of the World*, Oct., 1897).

the interest of the other. A marriage alliance, by which the daughter of Abd ul Wahab became the wife of Mohammed bin Saood, sealed their covenant. The preacher with his book and the warrior with his sword now stood on the same platform and were ready to begin conquest. Without Mohammed bin Saood and his powerful dynasty there would have been no Wahābī conquest. It is in the very nature of Islam and all its sects to grasp the sword which the prophet himself received from the hand of Allah.

To give the history in detail of the rise of the Wahābī state and its bloody conflicts, first with the Arabs and afterward against the Turks and Egyptians, as well as the history of the two British campaigns from India against the Wahābī pirates of Oman, is impossible in the narrow limits of this paper. By comparing various authorities I have prepared a genealogical table of the Saood dynasty and a brief chronology of the most important dates. Burckhardt's notes for the history of the Wahābīs are most interesting and valuable, but his account does not go beyond the year 1817. After that date we are dependent on Palgrave, who is not renowned for accuracy and frequently contradicts himself. As far as I can learn there is no *Arabic* history extant. The two accounts of the Wahābīs in the French language are, according to Burckhardt, unreliable. But for the later history of the Wahābīs, and the final collapse of their power, Doughty in his *Arabia Deserta* gives important data.

The following is a brief account of the spread of the Wahābīs and their conquests in Arabia:—Their conquests outside of Arabia were not by the sword, but by the cheap lithographic literature of Indian disciples. The reform started on its march of conquest soon after the arrival of Abd ul Wahab at Deraiah. Partly by persuasion and partly by force Saood gained victories over the neighbouring tribes, and even the province of Hassa. Before his death, in 1765, the whole of Nejd was one Wahābī state. Abd-ul-Aziz, his son, and successor, a more able warrior than his father and of equal ambition, assumed the titles of Imam and Sultan. The provinces of Areesh and Nejran, to the south of Mecca, were added to the Wahābī dominions. Ghalib, the Shereef of Mecca, was filled with alarm, and, on his complaint, the Turkish Government sent an army of 5,000 to lay siege to Hofhoof, the capital of Hassa. They were repulsed, and the Wahābīs now took the initiative by advancing toward Bagdad and laying siege to Kerbela. The town was stormed,

the inhabitants massacred, and spoils of immense value were taken from the shrine and put into the Wahābī treasury.

Flushed with the success of this campaign against the idolatrous Moslems of the north, the Wahābīs now turned toward Mecca. Taif, the fertile garden-city near to Mecca, was subdued with great bloodshed, and in a few months Mecca itself came into Wahābī hands. Ghalib fled to Jiddah, which was the only place in all Hejaz that held out against their invasions. To Saood, the son of Abd-ul-Aziz, was given the governorship of Mecca, and in a noteworthy letter he dictated to the Porte the terms on which alone the annual pilgrimage would be permitted. In 1804 Saood conquered Medinah, treating the inhabitants with great severity and plundering all the riches which had accumulated for centuries around the prophet's tomb. The tomb itself barely escaped being utterly demolished by the desert iconoclasts, who preached a thorough reformation and butchered all Turks as idolaters. From that time until 1811 the Wahābī armies made incursions into Turkish territory as far as Damascus and Anah on the Euphrates. The Wahābīs on the Persian Gulf began to use their new religion as a cloak for piracy, and two expeditions sent from Bombay broke up the robber-nest of Ras-el-Kheyimah, and taught the zealots a lesson never since forgotten. The so-called pirate-coast is now under British protection, and the inhabitants, although still Wahābīs, are friendly to Great Britain.

Meanwhile (since the pilgrimage to the holy cities was limited to those who embraced the Wahābī reform), many complaints reached the Sultan of Turkey. After some futile efforts of his own, he entrusted the task of conquering the Wahābīs and re-taking Mecca to Mohammed Ali Pasha, his already over-powerful Egyptian vassal.

Tousson Beg, the son of Mohammed Ali, commanded the first expedition, landing at Yenbo, the port of Medina, in 1811. By the end of the following year Medina was taken. The troops made a fearful massacre of the Wahābī garrison and the inhabitants, and treacherously murdered even those 1,500 to whom they had promised safe conduct. The intrigues of Mohammed Ali had meanwhile detached the Shereef Ghalib from the Wahābī cause; and Jiddah was occupied by the Turks in 1813. Mohammed Ali now came over in person, collected a large army, and in 1815 advanced toward Yemen. Shortly after Gunfidah, a small town on the Red Sea, was taken by the army, discontent broke out

among the troops. In 1814 Saood, the second of that name and the greatest of the dynasty, died and was succeeded by his son Abdullah. The power of the Wahābī state had already suffered serious loss during Saood's life by the taking of the holy cities. After his death other losses followed. The Wahābī forces were utterly defeated by the Turks in the battle of Bessel. This battle, fought on the 26th of Moharram, 1230 A.H. (January 7th, 1815), was the deciding blow. The Wahābī force numbered 25,000 men—camel-riders, infantry, and a few horsemen. The Turks had artillery and with it drove the enemy out of their mountain position into the open plain. "As soon as Mohammed saw the enemy running, he proclaimed among his troops that six dollars should be given for every Wahābī's head. In a few hours five thousand were piled up before him; in one narrow valley fifteen hundred Wahābīs had been surrounded and cut to pieces" (Burckhardt). Of three hundred prisoners taken, fifty were impaled before the gates of Mecca; twelve suffered a like horrible death at every one of the ten coffee-houses from Mecca to Jiddah; and the rest were impaled at Jiddah! "The Turks delighted in this display of disgusting cruelty, but all their Bedouin allies expressed aloud their utmost indignation" (Burckhardt). Mohammed Ali Pasha returned to Egypt; Toussoun Pasha, left to complete the war, concluded a peace with the Wahābīs, but the treaty was disavowed both at Cairo and Constantinople. Ibrahim Pasha landed at Yenbo in 1816, and commenced the final campaign. He subdued the entire province of Kasim, entered Nejd, and in April, 1818, appeared before the walls of the Wahābī capital, Deraiah. The city was taken and razed to the ground; Abdullah was carried off to Constantinople and publicly executed in front of St. Sophia. The Egyptian occupation of the Wahābī provinces was rather for vengeance and destruction than for the purpose of government. Executions, massacres, and ruined villages marked the progress of Ibrahim Pasha through Nejd. It was no wonder that on the departure of the commander revolt broke out against his garrisons. Harik and Hassa were the first to rebel. Riadh became the centre of the movement, and Turki, a younger son of Abdullah, became the new sultan of the Wahābī state. Feysul bin Turki succeeded to power when his father fell by the hand of an assassin, and was as able as he was popular and powerful. For his character and method of



government we can go to the pages of Palgrave and Sir Lewis Pelly; the Wahābīs still remember their distinguished visitors.

In their day the boundaries of the Wahābī state embraced Hassa Harik, the whole of Nejd, Asir, and Kasim—one broad belt of zealots from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. But in 1870 the aged and blind Feysul was assassinated. Dissension broke out regarding his successor. And the result was Turkish interference and loss to the Wahābī state. Hassa became a Turkish province, at least nominally, and Hofhoof, the capital, has since been occupied by a Turkish garrison. From the Yemen side also Asir was annexed to Turkey and the rebellious Arabs crushed under the yoke of taxation.

Meanwhile, a new Arabian kingdom of a different and more liberal character sprang up in northern Nejd under Telal. Gradually but surely it became independent and at last superior in power to the Wahābī state. Saood, the last of the Wahābī dynasty, finally paid tribute to the ruler at Ha'il, and Mohammed bin Rashid so strongly established himself and so far extended his influence that as a political power the Wahābī state has ceased to exist. Abd-ul-Aziz, the nephew of Ibn Rashid, and his old-time favourite, now rules Nejd and its dependent provinces. Even Riadh is under his green and purple banner. There is little probability that a new Wahābī revolt will take place, or be successful if it should.

II. THE WAHĀBĪ DOCTRINES.—The name of Wahābīs was given to the followers of Mohammed bin Abd ul Wahab by their opponents; since they would not call them Mohammedis, they used the patronymic. But that name always was and still is displeasing to them. In India they generally call themselves *Ahl-i-Hadith* or the People of Tradition. In Nejd their earliest name was *Firket-el-Najiet*, i.e., the sect of those who are saved. They also sometimes took the name of *Muwahidin*, i.e., Unitarians. In the eastern Punjaub districts they call themselves *Mujahidin*, i.e., those who believe in the jihad or war-for-Islam.

In considering the distinctive religious tenets and practices of the Wahābīs we must never lose sight of the fact that they themselves claim (and claim rightly) to possess all the doctrines of primitive Islam in their original purity; and that Abd ul Wahab contended not for new views but for first principles. It was his aim to demolish utterly everything

that had been superadded to the original revelation of Allah. This revelation the Wahābīs, together with all other Moslems, consider a twofold revelation—first, the Koran or revelation of God's will *in writing*; and second, the Tradition, or the written record of God's will as revealed *in every act of the life of Mohammed*, and faithfully handed down by his companions. "Wahābīism has sometimes been designated the Protestantism of Islam, and so it really is, although with this remarkable difference, that while Christian Protestantism is the assertion of the paramount authority of sacred Scripture and the rejection of traditional teachings, Wahābīism is the assertion of the paramount authority of the Koran with the Traditions. . . Tradition in Islam occupies a totally different place from that which it does in the Christian system, being nothing less than the supposed inspired sayings [and also *doings*] of the Prophet and being absolutely necessary to complete the structure of the faith" (Hughes, *Dict. of Islam*, p. 661).

This firm stand taken by the Wahābī leaders on the original foundation of Islam has ever been their strongest argument against their opponents. Burckhardt writes:—"If further proof were required that the Wahābys are very orthodox Musselmans, their catechism would furnish it. When Saood took possession of Mecca he distributed copies of this catechism among the inhabitants, and ordered that the pupils in public schools learn it by heart. Its contents are nothing more than what the most orthodox Turk must admit to be true, . . . and nothing was contained in this catechism which the Meccans had not already learned" (*Notes on the Bedouins and Wahābys*, Vol. II, p. 104). This catechism or creed of the Wahābīs, given by Burckhardt, in his appendix to the second volume, opens with the usual Unitarian formula coupled with a motto from Bochari, the great traditionist: "First learn, then speak, then act." The questions and answers are in no way remarkable, except that each answer is accompanied by a proof-text from the Koran. The division of the little tract is threefold—on the knowledge of God, the knowledge of Islam, and the knowledge of our prophet Mohammed. Concerning Mohammed, the catechism answer reads: "Mohammed, may God's mercy be with him! is a delegate whom we dare not adore and a prophet whom we dare not belie; but we must obey and follow him, for it has been ordained to spirits and to mortals to be his followers. He was born and appointed a prophet at Mecca; his flight and death were at Medina. If it be asked, is he

mortal? answer, yes, he is mortal. In proof of which we read, 'Say I am but a mortal like yourselves, to whom it is revealed that your God is but one God.'" Burekhardt also states that in 1815 a book had been received at Cairo containing various treatises on religious subjects written by Abd ul Wahab himself; it was read by the theologians of orthodox Islam, and they declared unanimously that if such were the opinions of the Wahābīs, they themselves belonged altogether to that creed! Nevertheless, Moslems to-day do not look upon the Wahābīs otherwise than as a pestilent sect, for however much they may agree *technically* with the average Moslem and with the Koran as taught in the schools, *practically* they are widely at variance with orthodox beliefs, and bitterly at war against many orthodox practices. Here are some of these points of difference:—

1. They do not receive the dogmatic decisions of the four imams (founders of the chief systems of interpretation), but say that any man who can read and understand the Koran has the right of private judgment, and can interpret the Koran and the Tradition for himself. They therefore reject *Ijmaa*, i.e., "the unanimous consent of the fathers," after the death of the companions of the prophet.

2. Their monotheism is *absolute*. Prayers should not be offered to any prophet, wali, or saint. Palgrave's matchless description of Allah, as "the pantheism of force," in all its remarkable analytical detail applies rather to the Wahābīs than to Moslems in general (see *Travels in Central and Eastern Arabia*, p. 365, Vol. I).

3. Together with this absolute monotheism they are accused, not without cause, of having crude and anthropomorphic ideas of deity. They understand the terms "sitting of God" (Arabic استوى) and hand of God (يد الله), etc., in their literal sense. This most of all is the rock of offence to other Moslems, many of whom designate the doctrine as *kuf'* (infidelity).

4. Regarding Mohammed's intercession, they differ from other Moslems in holding that it is impossible *now*, although it will be possible on the day of judgment.

5. They think it wrong to build cupolas over graves or to honour the dead in any way, such as by illuminations or by perambulating their tombs. Even the tomb of Mohammed is no exception.

6. They are accused, rightly or wrongly, of holding that

certain portions of the original Koran were abstracted by Othman out of envy when he made his recension superseding all other copies extant (*Hist. of Imams and Seyyids of Oman*, by Saif bin Razik, pp. 252, 253).

7. They observe four festivals only, namely, 'Id el Fitr, after the fast month; 'Id el Azha or feast of sacrifice at the Haj; 'Ashura, the tenth day of Moharram, on which God created Adam and Eve; and Lailat el Mubarakat, the night on which the Koran descended. The anniversary of the Prophet's birth they do not observe, nor any of the other feasts and holy days of Islam.

8. They forbid the use of prayer-beads or rosaries, and instead count prayers and the names of God on the knuckles of their hand with the thumb.

9. In the matter of dress they advocate a return to early Arabian simplicity. All silk, jewels, silver or gold ornaments, and other than *Arabian* dress are an abomination to God and to His prophet.

10. Even in food and drink they are distinguished from other Moslems. The lawfulness of tobacco has always been a disputed point among Moslem theologians, but the Wahābī reformer puts tobacco-smoking under the category of greater sins, and the weed is known by the name of "the shameful," or by a still worse and untranslatable epithet which implies a purely Satanic origin for the plant. All intoxicants not only, but all drugs that stupefy or benumb, are under the ban. Even the Kaat-plant of Yemen (*catha edulis*) is forbidden food.

11. Wahābī mosques are built with the greatest simplicity. No minarets are allowed, and nothing but bare walls ornament the place of prayer.

12. The Spanish renegade, Ali Bey, details another interesting point of difference. Moslems are accustomed to leave a lock of hair on the crown of their head when shaving it. As this is based on a superstitious belief that they will be caught up by this lock of hair to heaven on the last day, Abd ul Wahab forbade the practice sternly.

13. The Wahābīs lay great stress on the doctrine of *jihad*. To fight for the faith once delivered with sword and spear and matchlock was to them a divinely imposed duty and a command of God never to be abrogated. In all their bloody warfare they never were known to grant quarter to a Turk (Burckhardt). They keep this precept of their

prophet diligently, "Kill the unbelievers wherever ye find them."

Other points of difference there are of less importance, and some of such trivial character as to be ridiculous. But enough have been enumerated to show that the Wahābīs are not altogether like "orthodox" Moslems. It is scarcely evident from these teachings why some European writers have called the Wahābī movement the Eastern Reformation. It did indeed resemble the Reformation under Luther in three respects. It was iconoclastic and waged war against every form of saint-worship. It acknowledged the right of private judgment and demanded a return to primitive beliefs. It was fruitful in results beyond its own horizon. "Just as the Lutheran Reformation in Europe, although it failed to convert the Christian Church, caused its real reform, so Wahābīism has produced a real desire for reform, if not reform itself, in Mussulmans. Islam is no longer asleep, and were another and a wiser Abd ul Wahab to appear, not as a heretic, but in the body of the orthodox sect, he might play the part of Loyola or Borromeo with success" (Blunt's *Future of Islam*).

But in spite of these points of resemblance the Wahābī movement differed utterly from the Reformation in that it was from the outset antagonistic to modern thought and the progress of civilization. It was an advance backward and progress toward an *impasse*. Luther emancipated the intellect; Abd ul Wahab enchained it, even though he gave it the right to think. The European Reformation was accompanied by a revival of learning. The Arabian reformation was a retrogression to "the time of ignorance." The one used the "Sword of the Spirit," the other the sword of steel. The one was eminently practical, the other fanatical. And above and beyond all this, the results of the Lutheran Reformation were incalculably greater and more blessed than the efforts at reform made by the Arabian Moslems.

Before we dismiss this division of our subject, a few words regarding the character of the Wahābī government are necessary. Their ideal state was founded on the old method of the Koran and the sword. In not passing over this element of Islam they were truly consistent with the teaching and example of their prophet. This we have already referred to in enumerating their teachings, but it is worthy of emphasis, and therefore we repeat it. The Wahābīs believed in *jihad*. Modern apologists for Islam try

to eliminate all idea of warfare or killing from this word,\* but the Wahābīs knew Arabic better and understood the spirit of their prophet and his book perfectly.

We have already seen in our sketch of the Saood dynasty how vigorously they used the sword in Arabia to found their new state. Once firmly established, the Wahābī rule was after all an improvement on the lawless state of nomad Arabia previous to this. Palgrave never writes in a friendly way concerning these Arabian Puritans, but even his remarks sum up the fact "that the Wahābī empire is a compact and well-organized government where centralization is fully understood and effectually carried out," although "the mainsprings and connecting links are force and fanaticism." And he who has read the pages of Burckhardt will hardly agree that Palgrave is just in saying that "the order and calm which the Wahābīs sometimes spread over the lands of their conquest are described in the oft-cited *Ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant* of the Roman annalist." Saood, the founder of the Wahābī state, was a great man. Though at the head of a powerful military government, he appears never (outside the laws of religion) to have encroached upon the legitimate freedom of his subjects. The great principle of separating the judicial from the executive branch of government he understood not only, but faithfully carried out. The Wahābī judges were noteworthy for their impartiality; they were so well paid from the public treasury that they did not need bribes for bread. Robbery and theft were everywhere suppressed, and vengeance was swift on every transgressor. "The people lay down to sleep at night with no fear that their cattle would be stolen in the morning; and a single merchant with his camel load of merchandise could travel in safety from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea" (Clark's *The Arabs and the Turks*, p. 294). To-day even a well armed caravan dares to travel only by daylight through Turkish

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\* T. W. Arnold, in his *Preaching of Islam*, is the latest to attempt this impossibility. Following the lead of Manlavi Cheragh Ali (Calcutta, 1885), he tries to show that all the wars of Mohammed were defensive, and that aggressive war or compulsory conversion is not allowed in the Koran. He gives all the passages in which the word *jihad* occurs and carefully omits the passages where *katala* (to kill) is used to enjoin the same duty. It is a sorry attempt to prove that which is contradicted not only by all Arabic lexicographers, but by the history of Islam from the days of Bedr to the late Armenian massacres. Not to speak of the interpretation given of *jihad* by Abd ul Wahab and his fiery warriors, who professed primitive Islam.

Hassa and Yemen. The Wahābî state strictly enforced the Koran precept concerning the duty of military service. The strictest police regulations were observed in camp; after the surrender of Mecca soldiers were seen running about with lost articles seeking for their owners! Public education had no mean place in the Wahābî state. Schools were everywhere established and teachers sent even to the Bedouin tribes; although, as a matter of course, the instruction was elementary, its widespread results are yet apparent in many districts of Central Arabia. The Wahābî government also endeavoured to improve the status of Bedouin society by abolishing the system of blood-revenge and tried to make the Arabs content with a money payment for the blood of a relation. The right of *dukheil* or refuge was abolished in every case where it might be used to screen a criminal from the hand of justice. Wealthy individuals and those in moderate circumstances paid proportionately in the taxes, and the Wahābî state is perhaps the only Oriental despotism that ever granted security to the rich from the rapacity of government (Burckhardt, p. 142). Many of the Wahābî laws are given by Burckhardt in detail, but they are all founded upon the early practice of the prophet and the caliphs, and consist of a list of graded penalties for various crimes against God and the state. The revenue for the public exchequer was derived from four sources. First, according to the old law of Mohammed, one-fifth of all the booty taken from heretics belonged to the state. Second, the tribute or legal alms (سك), amounting to one-tenth, or in some cases one-twentieth, of land income and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on merchant profit. Third, proceeds of government lands, and lands, flocks, etc., wrested from rebellious Arabs. And, lastly, fines levied for trespass against the law. The revenue during the reign of Saood II must have been enormous. Some Mecca merchants estimated the total at two million Arabian dollars annually, which is a sum beyond the ken of the half-starved Bedouin in the Arab waste.

All of the above particulars refer to the Wahābî state when in its glory. We have seen how it fell into decay. Yet, although the great hall of justice at Riadh has fallen into ruins, and the Saood dynasty is for ever at an end, the idea of a purely Moslem state founded on the sword lived on; and it will always continue the inspiration of every restless fanatic who desires power for himself by reforming Islam and butchering unbelievers.

III. PRESENT CONDITION AND INFLUENCE.—Our knowledge of the exact numbers and condition of the Wahābī sect is necessarily imperfect, and that for two reasons. Their old centres of power in Arabia have not been visited by European travellers for the last twenty years, and statistics of population are mere guesswork for all of the countries where there is no European government. Secondly, in India, where otherwise statistics would be valuable, the name of Wahābī received such a bad odour at the time of their *jihad* on the Sikhs, and in other frontier rebellions, that adherents of the sect have adopted other names to conceal their creed. According to the report of the census of India (1881, Vol. I, p. 27), Wahābīs are found to some extent in every part of India; they are most numerous in the Patna district, and in the city of Umballa alone, according to Hubert Jansen, there are over 6,000 Wahābīs. Yet the census of 1881 gives the total Wahābī population of all India as only 9,296! It seems to be the fact that not only are the Wahābīs of India to some extent followers of Ibn Hanbal,\* but that even in Arabia they no longer call themselves by their old name. I have just spoken with a Wahābī from Deraiah whom I met in the bazaar at Moharrek. He emphatically denied that the Wahābīs were a sect at all, and said that he was a Sunnite of the Hanbali school, *but followed the teaching of the great reformer Abd ul Wahab!* Even the author of our MSS. on the Wahābī faith calls himself a Hanbali (see List of Authorities, p. 329). If this view has become general, it is evident that statistics of the Wahābīs are out of question.

According to Arnold (*Preaching of Salem*, p. 230), the remarkable revival of the Moslem faith in Bengal was due to Wahābī influence. "Nineteen years ago in Bengal proper Hindus numbered nearly half a million more than Moslems did, and in the space of less than two decades, the Moslems have not only overtaken the Hindus, but have surpassed them by a million and a half."

In Arabia the chief strongholds of the Wahābīs are along the Oman coast of the Persian Gulf, especially Sharka, Abu

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\* The Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal, founder of the fourth orthodox sect of Sunnis, was born at Bagdad A.D. 780. He died A.D. 855, and such was his reputed sanctity that 860,000 people are said to have attended his funeral, and on the same day 20,000 Jews and Christians embraced Islam. His teaching was not different in any important matter from the other sects, only more austere in its morals. (*Cf. Hughes's Dict. of Islam.*)



Thabi and Rus el Kheyma. Also in 'Ajman and the Wady Dowasir district. In the latter place, according to Doughty, they still preserve all their old-time beliefs and fanaticism, so as to be a proverb among the Arabs. In the rest of Arabia their numbers have greatly diminished, their zeal has waxed cold, and many of the precepts of their leader are disregarded. Western life (through trade and passing caravans of pilgrims) has reached even here with its urbane influence. Many of the Wahābis have again begun to smoke "the shameful" and wear silk head-dress; for Epicureanism was ever more congenial to the Arab mind than Puritanism. The Nejd, which was once a stronghold of Wahābī doctrine, now harbours even Shiāhs, and the government is, in a Moslem sense, liberal. Hassa and Bahrein once had hundreds of Wahābī mosques, but most of them have passed into the hands of other sects for want of worshippers.

Most remarkable is the story of Wahābī missionary zeal in the Sudan under Sheikh Othman Donfodio, as told by Arnold. Making a pilgrimage to Mecca at the time of the Wahābī occupation, this man was converted to their views and returned to the Sudan to inaugurate reform. He united the scattered clans of the Fulahs into one Moslem army and marched against the heathen tribes of Hausa. He also sent letters (*à la* Mohammed) to the kings of Timbuctu and Bornu commanding them to reform their lives or receive the punishment of Allah at his hands. The army enforced his demands, and Sokoto became the capital of a Moslem state. In 1837 Adaman was founded on the ruins of several pagan settlements. To-day the most zealous propagandists of Islam are the Fulah missionaries.\*

In Egypt and Turkey the number of Wahābis is not large. In Persia, as far as I can learn, there is only one place where they are found—a small colony of Arabs from Nejd live north of Lingah, on the Persian Gulf. Central Asia (with the exception of parts of Afghanistan) and China were never much influenced by the Wahābī reform.

As an indirect result of the Wahābī movement we may count many of the Moslem brotherhoods, or the so-called religious orders of Islam. The Sanusiyah Dervishes especially seem to have borrowed many of their distinctive

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\* See also S. W. Koelle's *Polyglotta Africana*, p. 18. (London, 1854.)

marks from the Wahābīs. With them, too, tobacco is strictly forbidden; they prohibit pilgrimage to the tombs of saints; luxuries of dress are forbidden, and the war against infidels is a duty; intercourse with Jews or Christians is not permitted, and the ideal state is one of Moslems only. This Sanusiyah order is very numerous and powerful from Morocco to the Malay Archipelago. Its secret agents are everywhere. At Mecca they have a strong branch and twelve other centres of power in other parts of Asia.\*

In conclusion, what is the relation of the Wahābī reformation and its results to Christian missions among Moslems? The most unfavourable result has been in Arabia itself, by practically building a wall of fanaticism around the old Wahābī state, and postponing the opening of doors to commerce and Christianity in that part of the peninsula. On the other hand, the positive and negative results of the Wahābī movement on Moslem thought have, I think, had favourable effect on Christian missions. Islam in its primitive state is nearer the truth than Islam with all its added superstitions and additions of later date. The Koran can more easily be made our ally in the battle for the Gospel than the interpretations of the four Imams. According to Hughes, "the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Sonship of Christ do not present the same difficulties to the mind of a Wahābī which they do to that of a Sunni."

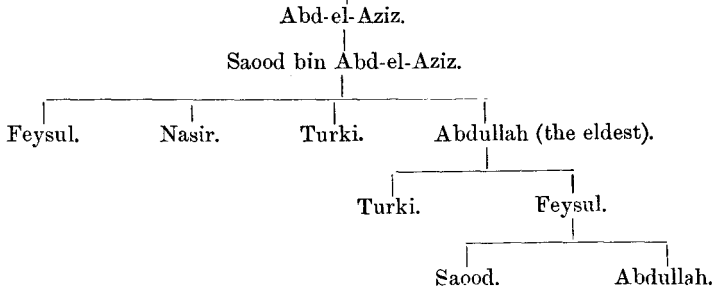
Negatively, Wahābiism is a strong argument that Islam, *even when reformed to its original purity*, has no power to save a people. There is no better polemic against Islam than a presentation of the present intellectual, social, and moral condition of Arabia. Cradled at Mecca, fostered at Medina, and reformed at Deraiah, the creed of Islam has had undisputed possession of the entire peninsula almost since its birth. In other lands, such as Syria and Egypt, it remained in contact with a corrupt form of Christianity, or, as in India and China, in conflict with cultured paganism, and there is no doubt that in both cases there were (and are to-day) mutual concessions and influences. But in its native Arabian soil the tree planted by the prophet has grown with wild freedom, and brought forth fruit after its kind. "By their fruits ye shall know them" is Christ's criterion in the study of comparative religions. As regards morality, Arabia is on

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\* See an article on the Religious Orders of Islam in the *Indian Witness*, March 11th, 1898, by Rev. E. Sell, B.D., M.R.A.S.

a low plane. Slavery and concubinage exists everywhere; polygamy and divorce are common. The conscience is petrified; legality is the highest form of worship; virtue is to be like the prophet. The Arabic language has no everyday word for conscience, and the present book-term does not even occur in the Koran. Intellectually, there has been little progress since "the time of ignorance," when all the tribes gathered at Okatz to compete in poetry and eloquence. The Bedouins are all illiterate; their only writing is the brand-mark on camels. Book-learning in the towns is compressed into the narrow mould of Koran philosophy. Kufa, which was once the Oxford of Arabia, now has one day-school with twelve pupils! Fatalism, the philosophy of the masses, has paralysed progress. Hope perishes under the weight of this iron bondage. Injustice is stoically accepted. The bulk of the people are passive. No man bears another's burden, and there is no public spirit. Treachery and murder are the steps to petty thrones in free Arabia, and in the Turkish provinces justice is sold to the highest bidder. Cruelty is common. Lying is a fine art, and robbery a science. Islam and the Wahābīs have made the hospitable Arabs hostile to Christians and wary of strangers. Over all this hangs a cloak of self-righteousness and formal observances. There is no soporific like the Koran; nothing so well designed to hush all the heart's questionings as a religion that denies the need of an atonement, and promises Paradise to those who accept the *creed* of eight words, no matter what their life may be. There is no hope for Arabia in Islam. It has been tried for thirteen hundred years, and piteously failed. The Wahābīs and their history only emphasize this fact.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE SAOOD FAMILY.  
 MOHAMMED BIN SAOOD + *Daughter of Mohammed  
 bin Abd ul Wahab.*



## LENGTH OF REIGN.

MOHAMMED BIN SAOOD	....	1740-1765	A.D.
Abd-el-Aziz....	....	1765-1803	A.D.
Saood II	....	1803-1814	A.D.
Abdullah	....	1814-1818	A.D.
Turki	....	1820-1832	A.D.
Feysul	....	1832-1866	A.D.
{ Abdullah	....	1866-1867	A.D.
{ Saood	....	1867-1874	A.D.

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAHĀBĪ DYNASTY.

1691. Mohammed bin Abd ul Wahab, born at Wasit, Nejd.
1731. Mohammed bin Abd ul Wahab begins to preach reform.
1740. Mohammed bin Abd ul Wahab takes refuge at Deriah with the powerful Arab chief Mohammed bin Saood.
- 1740-1764. Wahābī reform spreads over all Southern Arabia with the exception of Oman.
1765. Mohammed bin Saood dies; succeeded by Abd-ul-Aziz.
1787. Mohammed bin Abd ul Wahab dies at age of 96 years.
1766. Abd-ul-Aziz assumes the titles of Imam and Sultan and pushes his conquest toward Mecca.
1797. A Turkish army enters Hassa and lays siege to Hofhoof, but is compelled to retire.
1801. The Wahābīs invade the vilayet of Bagdad and lay siege to Kerbela, taking and sacking the town.
1802. Taif, near Mecca, subdued with great bloodshed.
1803. April 27. Mecca taken by the Wahābīs; the Shereef Ghalib flees to Jiddah.
1803. Abd-el-Aziz assassinated by a Persian in the mosque at Deriah.
1804. Saood II succeeds his father Abd-el-Aziz and conquers Medinah.
1810. British expedition against Wahābī pirates of Oman.
1811. Mohammed Ali Pasha, governor of Egypt, begins his campaign against the Wahābīs, landing troops at Jiddah.
1812. The Egyptian army under Tousson Beg takes Yenbo.
1813. Jiddah treacherously surrendered to the Turks.
1814. Saood II died at Deriah; succeeded by his son Abdullah.

1815. Battle of Bessel; Wahābis defeated.
1816. Ibrahim Pasha lands at Yenbo to continue war.
1818. Ibrahim Pasha after a siege of five months takes Deriah, the Wahābi capital, and demolishes it; Abdullah executed at Constantinople, December 19th.
1819. Second English expedition against pirate Wahābis.
1820. Turki, the younger son of Abdullah, raises the Wahābi standard in revolt against the Turks.
1821. Riadh becomes the new capital.
1826. Wahābi Jihad under Seyyid Ahmed in Northern India against the Sikhs.
1832. Feysul, brother of Turki, succeeds to the sultanate.
1842. Khursid Pasha, the last representative of Egyptian rule, compelled to quit his frontier residence at Kaseem; Asir returns to independence and Wahābīsm.
1863. Palgrave visits Feysul at his capital.
1865. Sir Lewis Pelly visits Feysul.
- 1866 [?]. Feysul assassinated. His two sons, Saood and Abdullah, rival claimants for the rulership.
1868. Saood battles with the Ateyba tribe and loses heavily. He returns to Riadh. But the Wahābi power is broken. The Shammar dynasty of Ibn Rashid becomes paramount in all Central Arabia.

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## DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN.—Is there any lady or gentleman who would like to make any remarks on the paper that has just been read?

The SECRETARY.—I may mention that the author of this paper is a Christian missionary in the Persian Gulf. He has written this paper and sent it to us, having a great knowledge of the subject and having actual contact with these various Mohammedan sects, and I think we are much indebted to him for this voluminous statement of the history of the Wahābis.

The CHAIRMAN.—I think this is a very interesting account of this Mohammedan sect. They may, it seems to me, be regarded as Puritans in their having effected a certain amount of reform by their austerity and so forth in regard to the habits of Oriental nations. On this point their fanaticism is probably even more pronounced than that of the true Mohammedans.

I went last Wednesday and heard Professor Margoliouth comparing the Bible with other religious books; and in the course of his remarks he spoke of the Mohammedans and their book, the Koran, and one of the things he pointed out, which seemed to me to be a very sensible and just remark to make, was that in Mohammedanism there is this one thing, which was also the case in certain other sects, that the religion seems to have been instituted for the glorification of one man, viz., Mohammed. Christianity, on the other hand, and in fact the writers of the books of the Bible in general, cannot be said by any means to have gained

in a worldly way, or in any unworthy way, by the religion which they put forward, and which we believe to be the true one.

Rev. G. F. WHIDBORNE, M.A., etc.—I suppose this paper was written last year, Mr. Chairman?

The SECRETARY.—Yes.

Rev. G. F. WHIDBORNE.—Because in the fifth line on the first page the author refers to “the middle of the last century,” which looks like an anachronism. I suppose he means the middle of the eighteenth century.

The SECRETARY.—Yes.

Dr. H. W. HUBBARD.—Some years ago I was travelling in the wild districts of North Africa, and I came in contact with a large caravan of pilgrims to Mecca, and amongst them I remember hearing there were Wahābīs, and I chatted with them, but I must tell you that they were in a very low social state. They were not allowed to change their clothes for the term of pilgrimage. I was afraid at first to go amongst them. I went over with Colonel Pakenham from Gibraltar to North Africa. They were very lightly clothed. It was very hot weather, and they only had vessels containing water made out of bullocks’ skins; each I do not suppose contained more than two or three gallons of water. Every man had a skin of water, his only possession, and they were not allowed to wash until they arrived at Mecca. We bought two or three daggers and some steel beads of them; so they were inclined to be sociable and were very peaceable.

The SECRETARY.—I should like to mention, Mr. Chairman, that although I have not been in Mecca myself, I have been not very far from it. I was associated with an expedition to the Arabian Peninsula, and when we were encamped at Akabah we were startled, one day, by an extraordinary noise of drums and loud shouting, and on looking out from our tents we saw a large party of pilgrims just returning from Mecca. We did not feel very comfortable, for they were known not to be celebrated for their extreme honesty, or even for leaving the property of the native Arabs of the district untouched when they were found in a sufficiently helpless condition not to resist. The condition of Mecca, the shrine of these pilgrims, appears by all accounts to be deplorable.

I think we may consider that Mohammedanism is the greatest impediment on the face of the globe to progress of any kind,

either religious, moral, social, or intellectual. The only advantage it has been to the world is that it is a monotheistic religion. "There is one God and Mohammed is His prophet." That is something that we owe to Mohammedanism, and it is that which gives to it a great force against idolatry of all kinds—in fact, it has been believed to have been a scourge sent by God to purge idolatrous Christendom as well as other idolatrous peoples; but the state of it, morally, socially, and intellectually, is most deplorable; and it is generally supposed that cholera, which is the annual scourge of Egypt and other Eastern countries, has its source in Mecca, where thousands of pilgrims from Northern Africa assemble every year, and where the sanitary arrangements are absolutely *nil*. The wells are choked with filth; and is it any wonder that it is the centre and seat of perpetual cholera and plagues, such as arise from filth and insanitary conditions? This is the state in which uncontrolled Mohammedanism has left these countries; and it would be the greatest blessing to society in that part of the world if the Christian countries (including Egypt under its present *régime*) were to combine and say that these pilgrimages have been going on too long; they are a danger to society and ought to be put down with a strong hand.

Mr. MARTIN L. ROUSE.—I quite agree with Professor Hull that these pilgrimages ought to be put down. Three or four years ago there was such a terrible outbreak of cholera at Mecca, and such a vast number of pilgrims died there, that the corpses tainted the air too terribly for anyone to dare go near to bury them. The people went on dying and poisoning one another until a large body of Turkish soldiery was sent and compelled to bury the dead.

I think it is a very remarkable fact that whereas Christianity is taunted by sceptics with having split itself up into so many sects, we find just the same process of the human mind going on in the false religion of Mohammed; for here we are told that in the eighteenth century "over one hundred and fifty heretical Moslem sects are enumerated by writers of that period." Again, whereas it is charged against the denominations of Christianity, falsely, save in the case of the Roman Catholics, that they all think that their own sect alone can be saved, it is here stated that one of the traditional sayings of Mohammed authenticated by the Wahābis was, "My people will be divided into seventy-three sects, every one of which will go to hell except one sect." And



this sect the Wahābīs thought was their own, by the name they actually used in India—"The Sect of the Converted."

The SECRETARY.—I thought that was a quotation from Mohammed himself.

Mr. ROUSE.—Yes ; a traditional quotation.

Another remarkable thing is that just as Christianity became corrupted by getting into high places, and men of rank and wealth were admitted into it, whether they were truly converted persons or not, and many lesser divinities were worshipped in the shape of saints, so was it with Mohammedanism ; for we find that the Wahābīs protested against the worship of holy men who had long previously had shrines erected to them. And lastly we find that that particular mechanical instrument of prayer, the rosary, which Roman Catholics took to many years ago, is declared by this writer to have been adopted from Mohammedans, who in turn got it from the Buddhists. I can testify to the fact that the Buddhists use it, and "holy water" also, from personal observation among a caravan of Buddhist Kuhnucks.

[A vote of thanks has been proposed to the author and duly carried. The meeting adjourned.]