

PRO REGE.

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.

PART ONE - THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST IN HIS HIGHNESS I.

FIRST SECTION.

I. - The obscurity of Christ's Kingship.

Christ and Mohamed.

Surely I have anointed my King over Zion, the mountain of my holiness. PSALM 2:6.

Nothing strikes you more in the distant land of Islam than the fidelity and loyalty with which all the people uphold the name of "the Prophet", the honor of Muhammad. Not with the fading light of the Crescent Moon

Moon, which shines over our East Indian Archipelago, you should count on this. To admire this loyalty, this attachment in all its warmth and inner beauty, you have to listen in the Khalif's own country, in Istanbul and in Brussa, in Khonia and in Damascus, in Cairo or in Alexandria. The keynote of life is and remains everywhere the ancient: "Allons, marchons, chantons en l'honneur de Dieu et son Prophète". "To God and his prophet be our ascent and our song of praise".

Without fail, day after day, as soon as the prayer time returns each morning, the Mn'cizzin climb the gallery of the Minnaret, or if there is no Minnaret, they place themselves near the mosque, on the side that touches the public road, to sing their azan, i.e., their call to prayer, in a recitative. And then it echoes through all the towns and villages and places, at one and the same time from tens of thousands of mouths:

*God is great, God is great, God is great,*

*God is great, God is great!*

*I testify that there is no god but God.*

*I testify that there is no god but God.*

*That's for Allah. But then follows unchanging, in honor of the Prophet:*

*I testify that Mohamed is the messenger of God.*

*I testify that Mohamed is the messenger of God.*

*Come to prayer, come to prayer.*

*Come to salvation, come to salvation.*

*And at least early in the morning, they call out:*

*Prayer is better than sleep.*

Then, when the people are assembled in the mosque or the prayer hall, the prayers are introduced by repeating the same words again; and also at that Iquamah, as this introduction to the actual prayer is called, it is shouted out again:

*I bear witness that Muhammad is the Envoy of Allah.*

*I testify that Mohamed is the messenger of Allah.*

*Now the prayers begin.*

This honoring, highly honoring, of Muhammad takes place with a show of high, religious seriousness, because the prayer tone in the mosque never sinks, but always remains elevated. First it is shouted: "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate!" and then follows the so-called Fatihah, which reads as follows:

*Glory be to God, who is the Lord of all the worlds.*

*The Beneficent, the Merciful.*

*The King of the Day of Judgment.*

*Thee alone we worship, and unto Thee alone we cry for help. Lead us in the right path.*

*In the path of those who have experienced Thy mercy.*

*Against whom thou wert not wroth.*

*And who do not stray. Amen.*

And so it goes on in a sacred, ever elevated sound, until they come to the actual rak'ahs, or individual prayers, which are sometimes first completed in a series of nine supplications. For example, in the Nafl. And after every two rak'ahs comes the remembrance of Mohamed, and this in two instantiations.

First it is called:

*To God be the worship of all tongues.*

*For God be the worshipful attitude of our body.*

*And to God be the worship that lies in our alms.*

*Then follows in honor of the Prophet:*

*Peace be upon you, O Muhammad, with the peace of God and His blessing!*

*But it does not stop there. They always add, to honor the Prophet once again:*

*I testify that there is no god but God.*

*And I testify that Mohamed is the ambassador of Allah.*

And, to mention nothing more, in what they call the Darud, the praise for Muhammad returns once again, and much more extensively, as it is called:

*O God, bless Mohamed and his descendants, as Thou hast blessed Abraham and his descendants.*

*Thou, O God, art to be praised, for Thou art great!*

*O bless Mohamed and his descendants, as Thy blessing rested on Abraham and his descendants.*

*Thou art to be made great, for Thou art great!*

These prayers are obligatory five times a day, to which two or three free prayers are added for the particularly pious Mohamedan, the so-called Ishraq, Zuha and Tahajjud.

All together this amounts to over 1800 prayers in a year, and for some prayers even over 2500; and in each of these prayers Muhammad is commemorated from four to ten times. A commemoration of Muhammad that for one single prayer can rise to far over ten thousand times in one year.

Of course, there is something mechanical about it; how could there not be? But the prayers are arranged in such a way that the body takes part in all kinds of prescribed postures and movements, something that repels all dreaminess and breaks the mechanics. And anyone who has attentively observed this broad, elaborate act of prayer inside and outside the mosque, and has an eye for the calmness, the seriousness, and the warmth with which these prayers are performed, soon realizes how in the Easterners' minds lives a tendency to rapture that is capable of inspiring much of what is mechanical.

On top of the gallery of the Hagia Sophia mosque in Constantinople, the author saw a bell ringer, who could not suspect that anyone was watching him, perform his prayer for more than twenty minutes with an enthusiasm in his entire posture and with a glow of seriousness on his face that could be the envy of many a Christian worshipper.

But there is more.

Not only that Muhammad is remembered restlessly in the prayers, but also the honor paid to anyone who is considered to be a descendant of Muhammad in any way, shows in a moving way how deeply the name and the memory of Muhammad lives on among all the people of Islam.

And what speaks even stronger, and to which all of the above was only an introduction, even the half-Westernized Mohamedans still stand up for Mohamed; they do not tolerate in any way that his high calling is being diminished; and in this at least they still agree with all the pious people that whoever does not stand up for Mohamed, throws away his own honor.

What one encounters in our Christian countries, indifference to Jesus, or cowardly silence at the insult to the Divine Founder of our religion, is in the countries of Islam sufficiently unknown with regard to Muhammad.

It is true that the Chodchas in Persia and India put Ali above Mohamed, but these Chodchas are a sect, which included all kinds of Buddhist elements, e.g., the transmigration of souls. Precisely because of this, this does not detract from the common rule that where Islam retained purity, Muhammad receives all the homage.

It is true that also among Islam there is a tanning of the glow of religious life. Not in the countryside, not in the more remote areas, but in the centers of social life, in places like Constantinople, Cairo, Alexandria and Algiers.

Many from those cities repeatedly visited the West, or even made their studies in Paris and London. From there they took an interest in life in the West and, having returned, tried to introduce Western mores into their own homes and courts. This naturally led to a weakening of their religious awareness. Such people are no longer bothered by the ban on drinking wine. Just like many a Reform Jew, they feast on boar meat if necessary. Sometimes they are half moderns.

But and this speaks so strongly, even with these modernized Mohammedans you will never hear a word that would do short shrift to the honor of Mohammed.

Despite their indifference and religious instability, they deeply feel the difference and the contrast between the Christian and the Mohamedan world and almost without exception they cling to the high excellence of Islam. Even among the highest circles you will not find one in which you would dare to scorn Muhammad with impunity.

At least in such high circles, thoughts are expressed freely, and you can present your dissenting views without hindrance, but on one condition: you must not think of falling short of what is sacred to them. If you do this even for a moment, you will immediately meet with resistance, and everyone in that circle will stand up for Mohamed. Of course, this is much more sensitive in houses and circles of a real oriental type, as it is in orthodox circles in our country; but what speaks so strongly in the countries of Islam is that even in the most deviated circles the loyalty to the founder of their religion implacably persists.

And in defending Muhammad and Islam they are not at all shy. They know very well the weak points on which they can attack you and they are eminently aware of the bright side that falls on their Muzelman life. Even in the lower classes they know the very peculiar meaning of their religion, and, thus armed, they know how to talk themselves out of it. Especially the fact that Mohamed came after Jesus, remains to them the solid proof that therefore Mohamed too must stand higher.

Every statement that would be beneath the honor of Mohamed is immediately rejected by contradiction. Not vehemently, not rudely, the Oriental remains polite, but in that politeness he decides. You will not touch the honor, the good name of Mohamed. Everyone immediately stands up for Mohamed, in his own way, as soon as Mohamed is mentioned. For everyone, he is and remains, among all the great names of history, the one that arouses a feeling of quiet honor in them.

This state of mind in the Mohamedan country seizes a believer in the Christ, even after a short visit, so much, because in his own country he is used to such a different approach to the Christ. He feels ashamed of his own country of origin. He regrets the profound decline of the power of the Christian religion in the baptized countries. And the memory grieves and irritates him because of the lukewarmness, the indifference, if not the hidden hostility, with which in the Christian country the memory of his Savior and King is so often treated.

It goes without saying that this did not escape the notice of the Mohamedan, who was often in the West. In his own country, accustomed to the high reverence for Muhammad, he could not at first form an idea of the unsparing, the unsparing hubris, with which in the Christian country the high honor of the Christ is attacked in some circles. He too has heard, he knows, how in their Confessions the Christians place their Christ much higher than Mohamed. The Muslims honor Muhammad as an envoy, as a prophet, as an apostle, but they do not deify him. In Christianity, on the other hand, they expect to find a much deeper respect for the Godhead, one that progresses to worship. And how very different is the outcome! They find an entire literature which is intended to bring down the high honor of Christ. They find profoundly hostile statements, which bear witness to hatred rather than love for the Christ. They meet entire circles in which the name of Christ is either systematically withheld or only mocked. And in the circles of intelligence and artistry they find neither such enmity nor such derision, but a calm, and precisely in that calmness so shocking, dethroning of the Christ, so that nothing is left of him but a certain religious genius, good for that long ago period, but now gradually obsolete, and subject to the scrutiny of a sharp critique even from a moral point of view.

In Java, too, one knows how nothing frustrates or at least disturbs the work of the mission as much as the un-Christianity of so many among the European population who call themselves Christians, and who benefit from Christianity in their legal and civil position, but who in their confession and walk have done away with even the faintest hint of respect for Christ. Ask yourself, what impression it must make on the Mohamedaan, if you want to lure him to say goodbye to Mohamed and come over to your religion, when they have such people before them as examples of what your religion is capable of.

This is something that the knowledgeable Mohamedan finds all the more disturbing because, in his own way, he does not only bring honor to Mohamed, but also to Moses and Jesus. Better than many Christians, he too honors Jesus Christ as the prophet sent from God; recognizes much divinity and wonder in his appearance; and does not think of equating Jesus with an ordinary teacher. In the Khoran itself, Jesus is not so briefly mentioned. And to notice how in our own Christian country the Christ is even less important to the intelligent circle than he is as a Mohammedan, - it surprises, it amazes and leaves an indelible impression on him of the minority of our holy religion, and makes the mission among them almost impossible.

The title of this series of articles is Pro Rege, which means that we want to issue a call for the honor of our King.

Does the Mohamedan testify for his Prophet, we confess of our Savior, that He is not only our highest Teacher, and our only High Priest, but also that He is: our eternal King.

Lord of Lords and King of Kings" is His highest title of honor, and our longing for eternity is to reign with Him one day, anointed as kings.

You call Him your Saviour, your Redeemer, your Borgion, and you delight in the Atonement and Redemption that He brought you; but all this still only means what He was for your good, to save you from destruction. But the Christ is more. He is also your King, and in that very Kingship His honor is expressed, and thus also what you will be to Christ. After all, the Kingship of Jesus comes to you with a demand. It demands loyalty, it demands adherence, it demands submission. It demands that you, most of all in the Christian country, confess Him, stand up for Him, plead for the honor of His Name.

And it is precisely in view of this demand that the contrast is so frightening and so terrible between what almost everyone in the land of Islam still feels for the Prophet and what those in the Christian world who set the tone feel, call and do for the King given to us by God.

And this not only among those who have fallen away from the faith of their fathers, no, also in the professing circles the confession of the Kingship of Christ has been so much weakened and fainted, sometimes it even seems to be forgotten in the preaching. The praise for the Prophet and the High Priest is great, but the complete dedication and manly loyalty to the anointed King no longer overwhelms the hearts of his people. It is precisely the Kingship of Christ that is so often lost in a haze, even among the devout.

For our King we therefore want to testify, for our King we want to send out a call. Not as if by a single series of articles, the disruption caused in such a number of years could be undone, but that at least the will, the attempt may come to pass, where God's Word tells us that Jesus Christ "must reign as King until all enemies are subdued at His feet", then through that Word and for that Word we may again awaken for our King the homage, the loyalty, and the devotion, which more and more elude him from many enemies and all lukewarmness.

Our Queen rules over fewer Christians and more Mohamed Than the Sultan of Turkey in Europe and Asia together. England, with its 63 million Mohamedans in the East Indies alone, is ahead of the curve; but after England, the Crown of Holland covers by far the largest number of Mohamedans of any power. The Sultan rules in European Turkey over 4 million Mohamedans and in Asia over 16, altogether 20 million, while Java alone far exceeds this figure. The comparison with what in the countries of Islam is felt for the Prophet, and among us as a Christian nation for our God-anointed King, is therefore not unpleasant, especially for us, the Dutch. And should it then, unfortunately, be confessed that, in spite of all sectarian mixing, and in spite of all religious fading, the splendor of the Crescent Moon still stands high in all countries of Islam, while, looking at the masses, the splendor of the Cross has faded so distressingly, is there not more reason than ever to again, more deliberately than before, issue an appeal for the honor of our King in our Herald?

Among Islam, religious adherence, loyalty and attachment to the Prophet are still so powerful that even serious statesmen recognize the possibility that, sooner or later, the holy war will once again be declared by the Khalif, with the almost certain certainty that this call will be echoed far and wide. And even though this is related to the article of faith of the Khoran that the Muslim people, if necessary, must also use the sword for their religion, this unreasonable mixture nevertheless expresses the enthusiasm and enthusiasm, the spark of which still smoulders in the hearts of all people under Islam.

The waters of fading may temporarily pass over this glow and dampen it, but they cannot extinguish it. As when a burning pit of fire is doused with a wide jet of water, yet every time the flame flares up from the smouldering ground, so it is with Islam.

And even if God forbid that fanaticism in a bad sense should ever break out among us, we would still be higher in our Christian countries if the faithfulness and loyalty to our God-anointed King were still so deep in everyone's heart that, whenever his honor and glory were at stake, the same fervor filled the hearts and the same enthusiasm united all confessors in one holy, unbreakable order.

Even in quiet times, when Christianity was not under direct attack, our honor as professors of Christ would demand this witness for our King. How much more so in our twentieth century, which already in its first decade has been characterized by nothing so sharply as by the almost universal endeavor to push back the Christian



religion from the place of honor, which it had tenaciously conquered in a history of just fifteen centuries.