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## News and Notes

A Monthly Paper printed for the private use of the  
Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

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Series XI

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1st October = 19th Safar (2nd mo.), 1342, A.H.

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### Dealing with Enquirers.

IV

Dear Mr. Bevan Jones,

I was glad to see the subject of 'Dealing with Enquirers' opened in the July number of 'News and Notes,' as the difficulties set forth are just what I have experienced, and I long to hear of a solution to them.

I have long felt that giving employment to enquirers is a mistake. We have inherited a bad tradition. The issue becomes confused. The enquirer not only looks for spiritual teaching but for temporal help. If he gets it as an enquirer, he feels it all the more his right to get it as a Christian. It so often happens that when difficulties arise or disciplinary measures are taken, the convert falls away altogether.

Yet the difficulties of the enquirer are enormous. If he is once thought to be inclining towards Christianity every non-Christian hand is against him. We often employ non-Christians on our staffs, in school and hospital and house. Why not enquirers?

For one thing one cannot gauge the motive of their coming to us or continuing with us. There seems a certain class of man who merely wants employment but thinks he can curry favour by saying he wishes to study our Faith. And those who may be real seekers generally seem to feel that as their employment is only a means to enable them to study the Gospel, they can slack over it.

Of course for one great class of enquirers, *i.e.* the Mullahs and Maulvis who live by teaching the Muhammadan religion, the difficulties are acute. They cannot continue in their profession, and are unfitted for taking up ordinary work. Yet many such truly converted have

become good Christian teachers and evangelists. I think however this ought not to be allowed *as their means of earning a living*, till they have been Christians some time. They should have some definite trade to fall back on as St. Paul had with his tent making.

I have known many sad cases, in the course of years, of converts perverting when the Mission could, for one reason or another, no longer employ them, partly perhaps out of spite and partly for what they could get. They had lost their first love.

For this reason whenever an enquirer comes to me now, I always tell him we shall be very glad to teach him, but he must stick to what he is doing for a livelihood, or find some work outside the mission as we cannot employ him.

One Mullah has been very persistent in coming, and was taught by our catechist. But he was naturally losing the support he gets from Moslems, and we tried employing him in the wards.

Our sister never found him satisfactory in his work, but he always maintained it was either because he did not understand her orders, or that the Muhammadan employees were deliberately putting him in the wrong. He afterwards got employment as a *jamindar* of a gang on one of the new Frontier roads which are being made, but thus he has scarcely any opportunity to come in for teaching.

A district *zamindar* has lately proposed to enlist in the police and so get employment near at hand, and come in his spare time for teaching. We must await the result of this experiment with prayer, but one can foresee he will be in for a very difficult time in his service.

We are taught that only through much tribulation can a man enter into the Kingdom of God. It generally seems a failure to try and soften this tribulation by giving employment to enquirers, but I long for light as to what should be done.

C. M. S. Bannu.  
N.W.F.P.

Yours in our Lord's service,  
M. E. WIGRAM.

#### V.

We feel the tremendous responsibility of the task of dealing with inquirers. They come to us with mixed motives. Among them are many whose motives are entirely wrong, but again there are some whose motives are entirely right! Is not the tendency on our part too much that of supposing that their motives are wrong?

We have been rebuked by these words of Dr. Jowett's—"I have assumed that in your intercourse with men you will act as 'the friend of the Bridegroom.' You are about His most sacred business, seeking to win the soul to the Lord, and to minister to the holy relationships of Bridegroom and bride. That is our business, and *we must, therefore, be regularly watchful lest any mood or disposition of ours should give a false impression of the Bridegroom* and scare away the prospective bride.....Spiritual moods are very sensitive, as sensitive and delicate as the awakenings of early love..... I know of only one

thing more exquisite still—the earliest mood of the soul when it is first “*falling in love*” with the Lord..... This love for the Bridegroom can be checked and bruised by the Bridegroom's friend; he can change its vision into fancies, and he can pervert its dawning passion into a transient dream. But, on the other hand, he may, by Christian grace and courtesy, and by the strength which God supplies, confirm the heart's desire of the would-be lover until the soul, wooed by his life, has become the consort of Him who is the chief among ten thousand.”

W. H. M.

## VI.

Dr. Wherry, now living in retirement in America, has understood our question regarding enquirers in a different sense, but contributes nevertheless a very valuable statement which we have much pleasure in inserting below. He writes: ‘I rejoice in the News and Notes, and the fact that so many are arraying themselves under the banner of the M. M. League. God bless you and all who are co-workers in the effort to reach the Moslem with the Gospel. *Islam is the only rival to Christianity for world supremacy.*’

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First find out what knowledge the inquirer has of God and of Jesus Christ; what he has read or heard of the Injil and what of sin; has he any conviction of sin? You will thus secure a diagnosis of his spiritual condition. If he has any difficulties they will probably be intellectual, relating to the person of Jesus Christ, the inspiration of the Christian scriptures &c.

The best books to be studied at first are the *Gospel of Matthew* for the Divine attestation to the claims of Jesus to be the promised Messiah—then the *Gospel of John* for other teaching of Christ and vindication of His claims to be the Saviour of men. *Study these with the inquirer and with prayer* with him. Try to bring Jesus to the Moslem as the revealer of God to man. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Show Him as having authority to forgive sin. Do not enter into controversy with an inquirer. Tell him about the Holy Spirit and lead him to pray for His presence in the heart, and His power in the mind and heart (Luke XI, 1-13).

A most valuable book is Dr. Koelle's ‘Food for Reflection’ (in Urdu: Khwán-i-Aql, C. L. S. Madras and Ludhiana); also Takle's *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* (in Urdu, at C. L. S. Ludhiana).

The *fundamental weakness* of Islam is the absence of an atonement for sin and a salvation from sin as well as from death. To the Moslem mind salvation is by works and not by Grace. No Moslem can say, “I am saved.”

Do not hurry your disciple to an open confession. Wait for the mouth to confess under the impulse of the Spirit. When the inquirer sees in Jesus Christ his Saviour he will volunteer confession.

Many Moslems are deeply impressed by the Gospel teaching. To these we should give the Gospel teaching of Christ and His apostles.

E. M. WHERRY.

759, *Ridgeway Ave.*  
*Cincinnati, Ohio, U. S. A.*

### 'Again I say, Rejoice'!

IF members will refer to p. 55 of the July 'News and Notes' they will understand the intended reiteration in the above injunction.

There I promised to tell the story of the convert aged 25; I now have the added joy of announcing the baptism of the old man, aged 75, for whom prayer was asked in the August issue, (v. p. 59). I wish to share with you the story of God's wonderful work in the hearts of these two new disciples of the Master.

The youth had leanings towards Christianity years ago. Being the bright boy of the family, his father put him to school and encouraged him to read on into the higher classes. It was thus that he went to the Mymensingh (East Bengal) High School, and there met with and learned to admire and emulate some Garo Christian lads in the School, who resided in the local Mission Hostel. The new friendship led him into closer contact with Christians, but his eldest brother, a bigoted maulavi, on discovering this, removed him to another school in the interior.

He lost his father about the time that he passed the Matriculation and so ventured up to Calcutta in search of work.

A veteran missionary there secured some employment for him and he frequently went to the house of his patron to study the Bible. Ill-health compelled him to leave Calcutta and from there he came to this city with a letter of introduction. The old missionary passed him on with the significant remark, 'I believe he is not far from the kingdom.' That proved to be true. It soon became evident that he is singularly devout and pure minded. But from the outset his problem was to find employment, and the thought was constantly present with one—how much of this is an effort to get work; how much a desire to follow the Christ? We could give him no work and frankly told him so, but he was not deterred; he went and hired himself out as tutor in a Moslem family, thus finding, as so many do, his bed and bread. How easy it might have been in those early days to have wounded his feelings and driven him away by telling him we were not an employment bureau! He persisted through it all until at length we got him to face the question of confession of faith by baptism. He had previously said he was ready, but now for the first time he began to count the cost. He mentioned one obstacle after another, and we

assured him that there could be no further talk of baptism until he himself came and of his own free will asked for it. It was at that stage that we asked the members of the League to pray for him. And your prayers were answered. One day he suddenly came in with his mind made up. The face that had lately been clouded over was bright again with his winsome smile. He had fought his battle and by God's grace had won, and was now prepared to commit himself and his future entirely to God. It did us good to see his new-found faith in God.

He was baptized, still with no prospect of settled employment, and every day afterwards he would pray that God would open a door somehow, somewhere. During this period we helped him financially and consider that it was both a privilege and a duty to do so. Shortly afterwards a Christian employer of labour, hearing his story, made a place for him and he is now able to send money monthly to his mother whom he longs to win for Christ.

He sleeps in the house of a pious Moslem, a Pir, who supplies him with food for his services as tutor to his little boy. The Pir does this though he knows full well that he is a baptized Christian!

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And now the old man of 75 has come out too. A short account was given of him in the August issue. It is only necessary to add that his is manifestly a case in which God's Holy Spirit has been at work for many years. Interest in Christ and Christianity, he tells us, was first aroused 50 years ago through reading Moslem books which referred to Christ and the Bible. About 40 years ago he purchased locally a pice copy of one of the gospels; 20 years ago he stopped to hear the gospel preached by the road side and the words spoken on that occasion 'went home'—(should we neglect street preaching?). We believe the preacher was one of the members of the League now retired from active service, Rev. J. D. Morris of Shahjahanpur, North India. About 10 years ago the old man procured a copy of Mr. Goldsack's "Christ in Islam," which set out for him in concise form the very conclusions to which he had been coming, and the very verses of the Quran that seemed to him to prove that Christ alone can be his saviour from sin.

Many like him have been arrested by the way in which the Quran itself attests the excellence of Jesus. He however, has resolved for himself the discrepancies found elsewhere in that book. They are either mistakes or fabrications. Christ is the gift of God to sinful men.

'God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform'—and who will be so bold as to deny that God Himself is working so that many of the people of Islam, after much wandering and suffering in the wilderness of error, will at length be guided to the feet of Christ through the witness of these same verses so conspicuously preserved in the book which would otherwise reject Him?

L. B. J.

## Notes

*Back numbers required.*—The Missionary Research Library, 25, Madison Avenue, New York City, desire to complete their file of 'News and Notes' from the issue of the first number in May 1912. We have been able to supply them with all except the following numbers:—

Vol. I. 1-12; Vol. II, 1,9,11, and 12; Vol. III, 1 and 11; Vol. IV, 1,2,3, and 9; Vol. V. 10 and 11; Vol. VI. 2,3,4,8, and 11; Vol. X. 1 and 4; the current Vol; nos. 1 and 6. If any member can spare any of these numbers and despatch same to the Library at the address given above, we shall be grateful.

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*Wanted—Urdu tracts for Moslem Women.*—A lady member in North India, seeing the list compiled by us (for the August issue) of tracts and booklets available in Mussalmani-Bengali, writes to ask whether we can recommend any 'special tracts or booklets suitable for Urdu-speaking Moslem women in zanasas.' 'I want,' she says, 'some little booklet or tract that would interest some of my women in zanasas who can read quite well. If you can supply me with a list, I shall be most grateful.'

We publish this request because we feel sure others must be faced with a similar need, and also in the hope that some of our lady members in Urdu-speaking areas, on reading it, will kindly send to us all available information. It would be doing a service to many if we could publish in these pages a list of the Urdu tracts and booklets that have been found of help for women. Please note that our correspondent has women especially in view. In the meantime we are approaching some members in the hope that they can supply us with the necessary information.

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*Set apart for work among Moslems.*—It affords us genuine pleasure to be able to report that two members who have recently joined our ranks are commissioned to devote themselves especially to the work of the evangelisation of Moslems: Rev. G. N. Gibson, B.D., of the Baptist Missionary Society, Patna; and Rev. Gustaf Westmo, of the Swedish Alliance Mission, at Dhanora, Nandurbar, West Khandesh, Bombay Presidency. May other Missionary Boards be led to do likewise!

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*Can you help this man?*—A member in Bihar writes to us of a Moslem youth who is only waiting for the independence that will come with employment, to enable him to declare himself a Christian. The case is very interesting in view of the symposium now being conducted in our pages. Our friend writes, 'He is of a very distinctly high-class family, and has been for some time a Christian at heart. He used to attend my Bible Class when a student at College. He got his B.A. degree recently. Not long ago his father discovered him on his knees praying, and of course there was trouble. He is anxious to get a situation and then he will be baptised... He would like to be a teacher, but we have no opening here.'

Who will offer this young man the opportunity he seeks?

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*Proposed Conferences in North Africa and the Near East.*—Members will recall that it was hoped a year or two ago to arrange for Regional Conferences in the Near East, but eventually these had to be postponed.

At a recent meeting of the International Missionary Council held at Oxford, arrangements were completed for holding a series of such Conferences in Northern Africa and the Near East during February and March 1924, the series to be concluded by a General Conference of selected delegates to be held in Jerusalem in the early days of April. Dr. John R. Mott, as Chairman of the Council, is to conduct these Conferences. The important work of selecting representatives to attend the Regional Conferences (Egypt, Constantinople, Syria, etc.,) as well as the General Conference at Jerusalem, is now being taken in hand. Let us remember Dr. Mott and his advisers very specially at this time in our prayers.

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### BOOK REVIEW.

ITHNA ASHARIYYA, or The Twelve Shiah Imams, by the Rev. Canon Sell, D.D. pubd. by the C. L. S. Madras : 66 pp. paper covers, 10 ans.

Canon Sell has with this little book made yet another contribution to *The Islam Series*, the earlier volumes of which have already earned for him the lasting gratitude of mission workers.

This study shows how the devoted followers of the Martyred, Ali, as a distinct party known as the Shiahs, made a desperate bid for temporal power, but with the further tragic deaths of Husain and Hasan, his sons, they lost hope and sought to comfort themselves by cherishing a doctrine which distinguishes them from the orthodox—Viz: that the "Divine right" passed from Muhammad to 'Ali, 'the chosen,' and through him to his descendants. Thus they established the theory of the Imamát, a succession of Imáms or spiritual guides. In their view it is not enough to possess an infallible book; an infallible guide (the Imám) is necessary also, and devotion to the Imám is a fundamental duty with Shiahs.

Nine Imáms succeeded 'Ali and his two sons, and each had a considerable following. One Khalífa after another however, looked upon the party and their Imám with suspicion, sometimes well-founded, with the result that the sect was persecuted, in particular the Imám himself.

The author repeatedly warns the reader that too much credence must not be given to the accounts here supplied concerning these Imáms, for the reason that we have to depend in the main on Shiah sources, and the extraordinary veneration in which the Imáms were held led to obviously exaggerated statements in regard to them. The Imáms were believed to be free from sin, and possessed of an authority derived directly from God.

As they stand the stories of these spiritual guides are strangely similiar—they exhibit great piety, they suffer much persecution, and are finally put out of the way by poisoning. We are told that when the eleventh Imám suffered in this summary fashion, the people of his native place rose up in protest, and the town observed *hartal*! Great care was taken of the twelfth Imám from his very birth; few ever saw him, and at last after a life of strict seclusion, at the advanced age of 70 or more *he disappeared altogether*. Shiahs believe that he will come again at the end of the age. This is the Imám Al Mahdi. It is believed that he shows himself now and again for a brief period to his favoured ones.

L. B. J.

## For Praise and Prayer.

**PRAISE** for the confession of faith in Christ by baptism of the aged convert for whom much prayer was offered.

**PRAY** for the blessing of Almighty God to rest upon those who have to do with arrangements for Conferences next spring, of workers among Moslems.

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### NEW MEMBERS.

339	Rev. Gustaf Westmo	S. A. M.	Nandurbar (13th Day)
340	Rev. F. C. Long	C. M. S.	Karachi (12th Day)
341	Pastor E. Prip	Dan. Miss.	Deir Atiyeh, Syria (28th Day)

The last figure indicates the number now in membership.

For the enlightenment of those whose numbers are over 300 we would explain that "13th Day" etc. has reference to a list of members issued last year which is divided up into 30 groups for use as a prayer cycle. Unfortunately we did not anticipate such a rapid increase in membership, and when our figure stood at 275 printed 300 only. If funds permit we propose to reissue the list.

*The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0 (English about 3s.) The Secretary will be glad to send spare copies of this issue to addresses mentioned by members with a view to securing new subscribers. News and requests for prayer will always be welcome and should be sent early in the month to the Hon. Secretary:—*

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,  
Baptist Mission,  
Dacca, Bengal, India.