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News and Notes

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Christian Literature for Children (In Egypt)

BEFORE the inception of a regular Junior Department about six years ago, the Nile Mission Press had issued a series of story parables drawn from Oriental life, for use in direct evangelism. Many of these were intended for boys and nearly all appeal to young people. This was the first effort at using literature as a missionary agency in Egypt. But with the formation of our Junior Department came a more careful study of the needs of boys and girls and of the problems to face in creating a literature for them. We have not yet passed beyond the experimental stage,—the style, for instance is a standing difficulty, as I suppose must be the case wherever the language of books is divorced from that of daily life so that the reader has to acquire a new vocabulary. But we have succeeded in producing a small number of volumes that commend themselves to child readers.

For evangelistic purposes, we have supplemented the tracts already mentioned with a couple of booklets: "Two Heroes," which leads from the heroic episodes in the life of David to the spiritual triumphs of his Greater Son; and "Two Suns," a sort of allegory in which the benefits that come to us from the light and heat of the sun serve to illustrate the all-pervading love and activity of the Sun of Righteousness. Both these books, together with the parable tracts, came originally from Algiers, where a big work has been done on evangelistic literature for children.

The need of children for help in their prayer life led to the preparation of a card of "suggestions on prayer", designed to give help in making prayers definite and inclusive of all important elements,

while leaving the child unfettered as to expression. And as tiny children are best helped through their mothers, some Egyptian and Syrian ladies were asked to contribute papers on methods used in training their own little ones in habits of prayer. These were issued as a book "for Eastern mothers by Eastern mothers," with the title "The Little Child and Prayer."

Here in Egypt schoolboys stand in special need of a pure and healthy literature, as even if they can resist the lure of definitely bad books their power of reading simply runs to waste and serves no useful purpose. As the taste of the Egyptian schoolboy is an unknown quantity we were bound to experiment, and made a beginning with a translation of Ballantyne's "Coral Island," as a book of healthy and indirectly Christian ideas with much interesting information about nature—human and otherwise—in the wonderland of the South Seas. (The young Egyptian is apt to be wholly provincial in outlook). Two biographies are also intended specially for boys, one a short life of Livingstone, the other a translation of "Pennell of the Afghan Frontier." There is also a life of Chalmers of New Guinea which is popular among boys, though it was not expressly written for them.

Girls are not exposed to the temptation of bad books as boys are, but they stand equally in need of the enrichment of the spiritual and mental life that books can bring. For them we have a little book called "Galila's Struggle," unique as being the first (and hitherto the only) story of Egyptian child life. It tells how a little Moslem girl attends a mission school and is converted there, and of her subsequent struggles against temptations, especially to deceit in various forms. It is in the very simplest literary Arabic possible, and the conversations are in the colloquial speech of Egypt. The way this intensely simple tale has gripped not only boys and girls but women, and in some cases men also, reveals the power of the story of native life when simple enough to be read by those whose schooling has been slight.

Another book for those who can only just read is "The Picture Book of Joseph," the Bible story written up by a kindergarten teacher for little children, and illustrated with large coloured pictures. This and "Galila's struggle," are our two most popular efforts.

A beginning has been made in the way of handwork for children with a set of six outline texts for colouring. The texts are from the Beatitudes and the decorations are Arabic designs copied from old illuminated books. On the back of each is an explanation of the text, which virtually converts each card into a tract almost certain to be read attentively by parents when the proud artist brings it home from school as a sample of his or her very own work.

Many important types of books are as yet unrepresented among our publications, but we hope to rectify this as time goes by. We hope that a day will come when the boys and girls of the Arabic-reading world will have within their reach a literature that will minister to every need of the developing mind and spirit.

MARGARET T. MONRO.

It affords us genuine pleasure to introduce to our readers Miss Monro, Secretary of the Junior Department of the Nile Mission Press, 37, Sharia Al Manakh, Cairo. Members of the League in Bengal will be especially interested to know that she is the grand-daughter of James Monro, C. S. who founded the mission (now a C.M.S. station), at Ranaghat, where her father also worked for twenty years.

Miss Monro is as keen as possible in the matter of meeting the needs of the children of the Moslem world in respect of literature, and she has very kindly written the above note at our request, since a wish had been expressed by some members in China for guidance in work for the children.

Reading the above some may feel a desire to know more and do more. We are at liberty to say that nothing will please Miss Monro more than to get into touch with members of the League where use can be made of the literature she speaks of. If you want more information please write to her at the address given above.

The Islamic Studies Circulating Library

(under the auspices of the M. M. League)

IN our March issue we published particulars about this Library which has been established through the generous gift of an ardent well-wisher of missionaries to Moslems. For the benefit of new members who may not have seen the earlier notice we desire to state again that it is to be open to all members of the League residing within the Indian Postal Area, on payment of an annual subscription of one rupee only. The privilege of membership has been slightly modified since, as follows: League members, ordinarily resident outside the Indian Postal Area, shall be entitled to take advantage of the Library, whenever, by coming to reside for a time within the Indian area, they are in a position to do so. Will members in Arabia and Mesopotamia please bear this in mind. Of course we should like to include all the members of the League, but that would not be practicable.

Furthermore, members can become "Life Members" of the Library on payment of a single sum of fifteen rupees. In all cases, however, those borrowing books shall pay postage both ways. Books may be retained for one month (or in special cases, two months) and may be immediately renewed by letter, for a similar period, provided others are not waiting for the volumes. The annual subscriptions etc., will be devoted to the purchasing of new volumes. Gifts of books will be welcomed. All correspondence with regard to the Library should be addressed to the Secretary of the League, who is also acting as Librarian.

Your Committee have agreed to procure at once the under-mentioned volumes for the Library; these have already been ordered and should be available towards the end of the present month:—

The Vital Forces of Christianity and Islam.	
Crusaders of the 20th Century,	Rice
Hughes' Dictionary of Islam.	
Mohammed.	Margoliouth
Mohammedanism.	do.
The Early Development of Mohammedanism.	do.
Aspects of Islam.	Macdonald
Muslim Theology and Jurisprudence.	do.
The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam.	do.
Sweet First Fruits. Trans. by Sir Wm. Muir.	
Islam.	Zwemer
Raymond Lull.	do.
A Moslem seeker after God, (Al Ghazali)	do.
The Ahmadiya Movement.	H. A. Walter (donated)

A further list of books to be acquired, will be published later on.

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THE COURSE OF STUDY AND EXAMINATION IN ISLAMIC SUBJECTS.

In addition to the above-mentioned volumes the following have already been acquired or are on their way, more especially for the benefit of those who may desire to read the post-graduate course of study of which notice was given in March:—

The Qur'an.

Sale: The Koran. Portion set for the Examination:

‘THE PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.’

(Available in The Chandos Classics Series. About 2s.)

One copy has been ordered for the Library.

Sell. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE QURAN.

(This is the 3rd edition. Original price, Rs. 2. A few copies are available at C.L.S., Madras, at the reduced price of 12 annas only—a real bargain.) Two copies have been placed in the Library.

Also recommended for study: Rodwell's translation of the Koran.

Two copies of the Everyman's Library edition have been placed in the Library.

Biography.

Sell. LIFE OF MUHAMMAD.

(Available at C.L.S., Madras. Paper cover, Re. 1-6. Cloth Re. 1-14)

Two copies in cloth binding have been placed in the Library.

Theology.

Sell. THE FAITH OF ISLAM.

(Available at C.L.S., Madras. 3rd ed. Rs. 4 only.)

Two copies of this edition have been placed in the Library. A new 4th edition is to be had of the author at Rs. 6.

Also recommended for study in connection with the above:

Sell's "OUTLINES OF ISLAM" (The Islam Series)—C.L.S., Madras, 90 pp. paper cover, annas 4 only.

(Copies should be ordered direct from C.L.S., Madras.)

Controversy.

Pfander. MIZAN-UL-HAQQ (The Balance of Truth). New and revised edition by St.Clair Tisdall. Published by R. T. S. Available at C.L.S., Madras—who have a few slightly damaged copies on sale at half price, viz. Rs. 3-15-0. Another bargain.

Two such copies have been placed in the Library.

Also recommended for study: St.Clair Tisdall's, 'MUHAMMADAN OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY.' S.P.C.K. LONDON. About 3s.

Two copies have been ordered for the Library.

The establishment of the Library makes these volumes available for League members at the absurdly low figure of one rupee per annum, and there is no charge in connection with the examination itself. Our supreme purpose is to persuade people to inform and so equip themselves, for this great enterprise. The information to be acquired through this course of reading will furnish a solid foundation for all future intercourse and study. To date four members have expressed a desire to read this course. Have you considered your obligation to Moslems in this respect?

All correspondence regarding this Course of Study should be addressed to the Secretary of the League who is acting as Convener.

The Conversion of Mussalmans to Hinduism.

WE, in India, have read and heard so much during the past year or two about Hindu-Muslim Unity, and at the same time entertained such grave doubts as to its practicability, that it has not been a matter of great surprise to find that quarrels have recently been breaking out amongst the people of these communities in different parts of the country. Both sides still have their irreconcilables. These are quick to make quarrel (and get to blows too) over matters such as, numerical representation in the Legislative Assemblies and Municipal Boards; Hindu music played in the vicinity of a mosque; the celebration of the Muharram, and the slaughter of the cow.

But the minds of the leaders of both parties have been thoroughly disillusioned in the matter of unity by an unexpected turn of events which has produced nothing short of consternation in the ranks of the Muslims. Accustomed as the latter are to make proselytes from amongst the Hindus, they have now been taken unawares by the Hindus themselves. News came through about three months ago that Swami Sradhanand, a leader of the reformed sect in North India called the Arya Samaj, had successfully persuaded some thousands of Rajput Moslems

to return to the faith of their forefathers. Arya "missionaries" have been at work amongst these Rajputs and in places appear to have won over whole communities. But their inroads have stirred up the Muslims to counter-effort, and maulvies of the locality, or imported from other areas, have been reclaiming their people and steadying the remainder.

Coming as this has while the country is still indulging the hope of Hindu-Muslim Unity, it is interesting to observe the attitude taken up by various sections of the Press. "The Servant" (a staunch supporter of Mr. Gandhi) for instance, makes the following observations :

"Honest and earnest seekers after God are so rare that proselytisation is of doubtful significance from the viewpoint of religion: it only augments the numerical strength of its followers. Yet man is, in all ages, animated by fraternal feeling to deliver to his fellow-beings what he considers most conducive to their progress. It is this altruistic spirit which underlies proselytisation. Swami Sradhananda has of late engaged himself in reclaiming into the fold of Hinduism those Mussalmans whose ancestors were Hindus.....(adding, with an eye on the Muslims!) the followers of other proselytising religions can have nothing to object to in his acts."

At such a time and from such a source, a statement of that kind is apt to cause heart-burning amongst Muslims, and indeed the editor of 'The Mussalman Weekly' (published in Calcutta) who has much to say about the general question manifests commendable self-restraint. He says :

'The followers of the Islamic faith consider that Islam is most conducive to the progress of man, spiritual and temporal, and that is the only justification for their invitation to the followers of other religions to accept Islam. So Mussalmans, the followers of a proselytising religion, can have no reasonable objection if the votaries of any other religion, believing their religion to be most conducive to progress, invite others to accept *their* faith. Nobody, whether a Hindu, or a Muslim or a Christian, likes that any of his co-religionists should abandon his faith and embrace another religion—we must frankly say that we ourselves do not like it—but that is no reason why we should object to it or quarrel over it. When *we*, Mussalmans, ask others to embrace our religion why should we be so intolerant to others when they invite us to accept their faith? If we think that we have the right to carry on a proselytising mission, why should we deny the same right to others? And we think no sensible Mussalman, whatever the inclination of his heart may be, would ever object to any Hindu movement for the conversion of Mussalmans to Hinduisim, if no undue pressure is brought to bear upon those whose conversion is solicited. Moreover, personally we are of opinion that if a person, being born a Mussalman or having remained a Mussalman for a considerable number of years, can think of abandoning Islam and accepting some other faith, the sooner he leaves the fold of Islam the better: such a man is a source of weakness to Islam and not a strength, and in the interests of the community itself he should be weeded out of he proves incorrigible.

But the whole question, specially the reclamation propaganda started by our Hindu countrymen at the present moment, is to be looked at from a different point of view also. Our contemporary of the *Amrita Basar Patrika*, in commenting on the reclamation movement and the attitude which a section of the Muslim community has taken in regard to it, says, 'Our Mohamedan friends look upon the movement with disfavour and persistent endeavours are being made in interested quarters to misrepresent Swami Sradhananda's activities in this direction. The Secretary to the Jamait-ul-Ulama is reported to have said that Swami Sradhanand is at present very active in his campaign against Mohamedans.' *We do no*

know what the Secretary to the Jamiat has said but it is true that Mussalmans have also started a propaganda—a peaceful propaganda no doubt—to explain to the Rajput Mussalmans the beauties of Islam and thus to make them true Mussalmans so that they may not abandon the faith which they have long adopted. Can this propaganda, like the reclamation propaganda of the Arya Samajists, be objected to by anybody with any show of reason? Certainly not. But it seems that this is being actually objected to in some quarters. The *Patrika* further observes, “We do not wish to rake up religious controversies, but it is time our Mahomedan friends should be made to understand the Hindu side of the question. No Hindu can take any reasonable objection to any of his co-religionists embracing any other faith on grounds of religious conviction; but he claims an equal right to convert men of other faith to his own religious beliefs. *He is not prepared to surrender this right even for the sake of Hindu-Mahomedan unity, which surely should not be a one-sided affair.*” Subservience would be too great a price to pay even for unity.” The first few sentences of the above extract give expression to views which exactly coincide with ours, but what our contemporary says in the sentence italicised by us goes to show that it has taken a bellicose attitude. Our contemporary would stand on its right and would not care for Hindu-Muslim unity. The Mussalmans may as well say that in the matter of cow-killing they would stand on their right and they would not give up the use of beef—a cheap food to them and a nourishing food to boot—for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity, that they would not substitute other costly animals for the cow, for the purpose of *korbani*, on the occasion of the Id and that they would exercise the civic right of killing their own cow on their own land, no matter whether it is exposed to the public view and calculated to wound the feelings and susceptibilities of their Hindu neighbours. . . . This is not the time for any aggressive exercise of anybody’s right. This is not the time when anything should be done that may cause any estrangement of feeling between one community and another. There is a way even to exercise one’s right. Indian Mussalmans have one or two permanent organisations one of the chief missions of which is proselytisation, but these organisations have been doing nothing at the present moment towards the fulfilment of that mission, for the sake of Hindu-Muslim Unity.’

We venture to make two further quotations on the present situation, both taken from a new monthly magazine, published locally in English, called “Peace,” devoted to Islam and Islamic culture.

“We cannot but deplore the abject apathy of our co-religionists in hitherto not educating these people (the Rajput Moslems) in religious matters.....Should we not give our attention to those Mussalmans in other parts of India, who are living in ignorance of their religion and culture? Mere preaching will not do; but thousands of schools on the lines of Christian missionary schools are to be started for them. These will serve to remove the stigma of illiteracy and the curse of irreligion to which the majority of the Mussalmans are subject. We fervently hope that funds will not be wanting from the large hearted Mussalmans for such an immensely noble cause of religion and education.”

The second quotation is from a telegram issued jointly by several leading Muslim Societies :

‘One hundred preachers and teachers are urgently needed, honorary or paid, applications are urgently invited. About 300 Aroya teachers are working in that area. Men and money are very urgently needed.’

Notes for Prayer.

PRAY for a young Moslem widow in East Bengal who fears the opposition of her relatives, that she may be helped to confess Christ.

PRAYER is once more sought for the 'promising young Moslem in East Bengal', who is now counting the cost of open confession, that he may know the sufficiency of the grace of Christ. (See February issue.)

NEW MEMBER.

326. Rev. F. G. Coan, D.D. A.P.M. Hamadan, Persia. (27th Day)

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.

