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News and Notes

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The Life and Work of Dr. J. C. R. Ewing

The Rev. Sir J. C. R. Ewing, D.D., D.Lit. passed to higher service on the 20th August, 1925. His career in India embraced the years from 1879 to 1922, and during practically all this time he was an educationalist in High School, Theological Seminary and College. For thirty years he was Principal of the Forman Christian College, Lahore. His services were greatly appreciated as a member of the Senate and Syndicate of the Panjab University and as Vice-Chancellor for about seven years of the same University. He received various honours from Government, including the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal in recognition of his services as Chairman of the Kangra Earthquake Relief Committee, and honorary Knighthood. As Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University he is naturally associated with Dr. Miller of Madras and Dr. Mackichan of Bombay. On returning to America in 1922 he received his crowning honour in being appointed President of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Throughout the years Mrs. Ewing has been a worthy help-mate in every good work. Dr. Ewing was great as a Christian, great as an administrator, and great in the respect and love which he won from the Indian people as well as from his own fellow-missionaries and from the British Government officials.

H. D. GRISWOLD.

The Value of Establishing Friendship.

ONLY a few years ago we opened up a station in Baghdad. Within a year of the appearance of our missionaries on the scene, Syrians were coming to my office (in New York) and turning over sums of money to be forwarded to their refugee friends near Baghdad, whose only address was often "Care of the American Mission, Baghdad." It is an interesting reflection upon the confidence which is so soon won by our representatives out there.

But even more striking has been an experience of the past year. One of our missionaries at Kuwait on the Persian Gulf was entertaining at dinner no less a person than His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed al-Jabir, ruler of the principality. The Sheikh commented upon an automobile which we had recently shipped to Kuwait and expressed the desire to purchase one. Upon advice of the missionary he cabled to his agents in Bombay who forwarded me a draft to cover the cost, while the missionary sent me the order for a Ford roadster with right-hand drive. After considerable negotiations with Ford representatives, such a car was finally shipped down from Canada and forwarded. About a week later came another order from His Excellency for a Ford Sedan, also with right-hand drive; a few weeks later, this time through another missionary, came an order for a windmill. Finally, just a few weeks ago, I received a draft from his Bombay agents for nearly \$2,000, and promptly became quite curious as to his latest wish. A letter from the missionary soon followed, announcing that His Excellency desired a complete electric lighting plant for his palace, a duplicate of one installed in our hospital compound recently. One who knows anything of the character of the Arab will appreciate the significance of the story. He is naturally of a rather suspicious nature, not given to trusting his money rashly to friends, let alone strangers. His advancing of considerable sums to some unknown person in New York City is eloquent proof of the measure of his trust and confidence in the missionary "infidel" whom he had come to know on the field.

And this winning of the friendship of the man of alien race, tongue and creed, is the basis of missionary work. As a missionary friend once expressed it, "No one ever came to believe in Christ who did not first believe in a Christian." If this atmosphere of warm, human friendship can be maintained through all the relationships of the missionary to his fellow-missionaries, and to the people for whose salvation he labors, he will never be found to have wrought in vain.

(by a member of the Home Board staff of the Arabian Mission in "Neglected Arabia.")

Some Characteristics of Village Mahommedans in Bengal.

BOTH my inheritance and training have been such as not to have left much room for a sympathetic understanding of Islamic culture and religion. But in recent years, work and circumstances have brought me in close touch with Mahommedans and their faith, and I have had opportunities of making some acquaintance with both. My former attitude of indifference to Islam has given place to newly awakened interest, and I am glad and thankful for this.

Questions like the following have again and again arisen in my mind. Are Moslems so hard-hearted and fanatic (they are often so represented) as not to yield to the influence of the Cross? Is their religion so formal, rigid and exclusive as not to allow the light of the Gospel to shine within its orbit? Are Mahommedans so peculiar and different from Hindus that widely different methods of approach are necessary in their case? My experience of Mahommedans in some Bengal villages, limited though it be, leads me to think that many things that are supposed about the Mahommedans are not sometimes true. For example, it is held that Mahommedans are more orthodox and intolerant than Hindus. The truth is that intolerance and orthodoxy assume other forms in Hinduism, but are not less violent in Hinduism than in Islam. It is said that Mahommedan converts are less loyal and steady than Hindu converts. But is this really true? I have come across some of the finest Mahommedan converts that can adorn any church in the world. While on the other hand I have personally known in fifteen years not less than fifty cases of Hindu converts who have either gone back entirely or are leading secluded and uninteresting lives in the Christian community. It is again held by some that the Moslem needs an entirely different treatment, both in the matter of spiritual approach and in training and after care, because, as is imagined, his heritage and outlook are so different. Then it is maintained by many missionaries that for work among Moslems a different type of literature, called Musalmani-Bengali, is necessary. It is a significant fact that Mahommedan converts have, by their convictions and literary productions, modified this theory. To quote only one instance. The literary genius of the late lamented Brother Alauddin Khan, who has probably contributed more Christian hymns and devotional writings than another single individual to the future possession of the Church in Bengal, was of a type and quality which is undistinguishable from the spirit of Hindu culture. It should be noted that all over the province, in all ordinary schools, Musalman children use the same text-books as are used by Hindu children, and in conversation Mahommedans use the same colloquial Bengali as is the habit of Hindus to do. I have found that books written in simple, but chaste Bengali are more easily understood and therefore wanted by village Moslem purchasers. The so-called Musalmani-Bengali contains too many and

too hard Urdu, Persian or Arabic terms and phrases. The educational attainment of the average village Mahommedan is not enough to enable him to appreciate such books. This practice will produce a hybrid type of Bengali that is bound to fail in the future. Musalman poets and authors of repute write as Hindus do. A Maulvi or a Muhshi might appreciate a few solitary Islamic terms. But the type of Musalman we meet in *hats*, bazars, *melas* or villages, needs pure and simple Bengali. Missionary effort should neither create nor foster the desire for Musalmani-Bengali, which has a doubtful future.

I think the vast majority of village Moslems in Bengal are not Musalman in the full sense of the word. The spirit of Saracenic culture sits lightly on them. This remark does not apply to the large number of Mullas and Maulvies who have come down from the Punjab or the Frontier Province and are constantly trying to excite the otherwise peaceful Mahommedans of Bengal. Nor is it true of those Mahommedans who have been living in or near centres of Islamic influence like Dacca—the capital of the old Nawabs. The great masses of agricultural Moslems are of Vaishnab-Hindu and Buddhist extraction and possess, beneath a rough and outlandish exterior, a truly native heart and mind with not a little emotion and philosophy. Most of the Mahommedans who inhabit the country bordering on Assam and the Himalayas are recent converts from the numerous races of Rajbansis and Koches. Mongolian features are plainly written on their faces.

In two different stations in Bengal I have come across certain facts that have led me to hold the above views. At one station the first inquirer to be instructed and baptised was a fairly educated village Mohammedan; of other converts the majority hailed from the Mohammedan community. A special evangelistic service, the form and spirit of which came nearer Hinduism than Islam, with plenty of music and meditation, was attended and appreciated more by Mohammedans than by Hindus. Some of the most valued friends were Mohammedans. Scriptures were sold and preaching was done mostly among Mohammedans. One noted attention and the spirit of inquiry, and never met discourtesy or rowdism. Here in the Rangpur district almost all our one dozen schools are among Mohammedans. In nearly half of these schools there are grown-up girls studying together with boys. In January last these girls ran races and gave other exhibitions for prizes in the presence of men. At one school, when I was visiting it for the first time, I was taken aback as I found that the scholars, all Mohammedans, came one after another from their seats and reverently touched my feet. They showed respect to the teachers also in the same way. In every considerable village the worship of the goddess Kali is held at regular intervals and also when epidemics appear. Mohammedans liberally patronise these religious and other festive occasions both by their personal presence and money subscriptions. One frequently meets with Mohammedans who belong to a heterodox sect—some Fakir movement and association. They are liberal in idea

and practice, appreciate music and are somewhat mystical. They have the Guru-chela (master and disciple) relation well-established amongst them, blindly revere and obey the Guru, and believe in some form of faith healing. In the *hats*, bazars and *melas* most extensive and effective work is done among the Mohammedans. There is no indifference or hostility shown anywhere. Sometimes preaching is allowed and welcomed on the premises of mosques on Jumma Day. The larger number of those who use Christian literature or come to us for talks are Musalmans.

One regrettable feature in the lives of many Mohammedans in these parts is their open and bold immorality. Lust and luxury are eating the vitals of the community. I have not seen anywhere else such a naked indulgence in prostitution in broad daylight. There is a nomadic race of prostitutes who build tiny little temporary huts in *melas* and are visited by hundreds of exclusively Mohammedan villagers within sight of their grown-up children and relatives. This practice goes on in the most shameless and indecent manner at festivals, where thousands of men congregate. Then in this district there are frequent kidnapping and rape cases in most of which the offenders are Mohammedans and the victims Hindus. Apart from this the Musalmans on this side of the province are simple-minded, inoffensive and approachable. Under such conditions a missionary need not feel sad over the difficulty of Moslem work. On the contrary there is bright prospect of the Christian truth being accepted and promise of good harvest, if faithful labour is put in in the Lord's vineyard. The pure Gospel, the unvarnished religion of the New Testament and of the Early Church is a universal religion and makes its appeal to all men in all ages under all circumstances, essentially in the same way. There is neither male nor female, Greek nor Barbarian, Jew nor Gentile, Hindu nor Musalman; all are alike in the need of the gospel of salvation and abundant life in and through Jesus Christ. One is not very far from the truth in making this remark about the vast majority of the Mohammedans of Bengal. And in doing so I do not in the least mean to deny the individuality of the Musalman or to minimise the value of special training for Mohammedan work up to a certain limit.

Kurigram, North Bengal.

R. C. DAS.

Buy! Buy!! Buy!!!

The C. L. S. Madras are offering the following books on Mission Work Among Moslems, at bargain prices:

(1) *Islam and Missions.* (Illustrated) Being papers read at the Second Missionary Conference on behalf of the Mohammedan world at Lucknow, January, 1911. Edited by E. M. Wherry, D.D., S. M. Zwemer, D.D., C. G. Mylrea, M.A. Original price Rs. 4. Reduced to Rs. 0-8-0.

(2) *Methods of Mission work Among Moslems*: Being those papers read at the First Missionary Conference on behalf of the Mohammedan world held at Cairo, April, 1906, and the discussions thereon, which by order of the Conference were not to be issued to the public but were to be privately printed for the use of Missionaries and the friends of Missions. Original price Rs. 2-12-0. Reduced to Rs. 0-8-0.

(3) *Daylight in the Harem*. (Illustrated) A new Era for Moslem Women. Papers on present day reform movements, conditions and methods of work among Moslem women, read at the Lucknow Conference, 1911. Original price Rs. 3. Reduced to Rs. 0-8-0.

(4) *The Unoccupied Mission fields of Africa and Asia* (Illustrated) By Samuel M. Zwemer, F.R.G.S. Original price Rs. 3-8-0. Reduced to Rs. 0-8-0.

Book Review

The Sources of Islam, by the Rev. John C. Blair, Deesa Camp, India. Published by the Christian Literature Society, Madras; 250 pp. Cloth Cover, Rs. 2-10-0

In these days of new and growing interest in the Muslim people and the Muslim problem it is to be expected that there will be a considerable output of fresh literature on the subject. Whether, however, it can be claimed that the work under review is a direct result of this new interest is doubtful. The author informs us that he has been working among Muslims and other peoples in Western India for about 35 years and that he first took this project in hand about ten years ago. However, Dr. St. Clair Tisdall justly remarks in his 'foreword' that the book bears witness to wide reading and careful study. The author himself 'hopes that the book will be of use to missionaries in their work among Muhammadans and to all students of Islam; and that mission study-circles in the Home Church will also find it helpful in their study of the Muhammadan problem.'

The book has been got up in the best style of the Wesleyan Mission Press, Mysore, and enjoyed in the proof-reading stage the supervision of Canon Sell himself.

It demands careful reading, for it abounds in footnotes—the delight of some readers, the despair of others. It is in fact a manual, and will prove, we hope, a valuable reference book for missionaries and others, since it covers a field not traversed before, we believe, by any one single volume.

The subject is treated under the two natural divisions of 'The Faith of Islam,' and 'The Practice of Islam,' and the mass of detail involved is sifted with a view to exposing the sources from which it is drawn. It is, of course, a commonplace that Islam is indebted to other systems; educated Muslims admit as much.

The author has marshalled a host of parallel details from the Jewish Talmud, from Zoroastrianism, from Sabianism and Christianity, and cites them all, or nearly all, as probable if not actual sources. The thing has been cleverly, if not always convincingly done. Certain criticisms inevitably suggest themselves. For instance, the author would seem to have started out with the conviction that there is nothing new in Islam, and on every page he seeks to prove it. In fact, in his concluding review, he allows himself to say, 'there is nothing new *except Muhammad*.'

The refrain throughout is that Muhammad has borrowed, and to have borrowed—to be indebted to other systems, is the last sin. But is it? Is that in itself adequate reason for discounting Islam? Does the author mean to imply that the criterion by which we should judge one claiming to be a prophet, is that he should be original? In that sense is anyone original? Nelson Fraser, in his appreciative review of the work of India's poet Tukaram (Pubd. by the C.L.S.) says that 'his creed is in some ways a far-off reflection of Buddhism.' (But adds) 'No one, however, knew this less than he.'

Other writers have found in this fact, that Muhammad took up and welded into a wonderful whole, elements from other faiths, the mark of genius. Not because he has borrowed do we reject Muhammad's claim.

We could have wished that the author had been a little more careful to indicate that in many details the indebtedness, as in the case of Tukaram, must have been unconscious. As the result of most painstaking work the author himself has traced parallels in remote systems. He cannot expect that we should understand that Muhammad had intimate knowledge of those systems!

There is a tendency with our author to let a 'supposition' at one point pass into certainty at another. On p. 38, of 'Malik, one of the angels of Islam,' he says, 'This name seems to have been borrowed from the Ammonite idol Molech.' On p. 101, we read: 'We have already seen that Muhammad borrowed this angel's name from Molech.' This is an unfortunate blemish in a serious work of this kind.

The impression* is left on the mind that this study has been undertaken in an unsympathetic spirit. True, several good things are said for both Muhammad and Islam, especially in the closing section. But on the whole new missionaries using the book will be well-advised to guard themselves against the subtle danger of adopting a mental attitude towards this faith and the people of this faith, such as ultimately proves a stumbling block.

There are places, like pages 184-5, where the author, unnecessarily in a work of this nature, turns aside to pass judgments on Muhammad in such a way that, if the book as a whole has not already done so, his remarks will be certain to offend the average Muslim reader.

L. B. J.

Books Received

We have received the following books and hope to notice them later:—

1. An ancient Syriac Translation of the Kuran exhibiting new verses and variants. Dr. Mingana.
2. The Moslem World in Revolution. W. Wilson Cash.
3. An Outline of the Religion of Islam. Dr. Stanton.

Recently Issued from the Press

Urdu Khutbas. No. 1. Prophecy and the Beni Israel
No. 2. The Mother of Jesus
No. 3. Death and Resurrection.

Bengali Tracts. Published by C. T. and B. S., Calcutta @ 2 as. per 100.
(1) Najat—in 4 pp. Musalmani—Bengal. (2) The Teaching of Jesus, Nos. 1. 2. 3—specially written for Muslims of East Bengal.

Advance Notice

Mr. Passmore of the C.L.S. Madras, hopes to be able to complete the printing of Mr. Bevan Jones' Life of Christ for Muslim readers (in English) early in October. It is a book of some 66 pages. We hope to publish a review in our next issue. The selling price is to be 2 as. (plain); 4 as. (illustrated).

FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER.

PRAISE for the very definite Conversion of our Educated Muslim in East Bengal (aged 35), whose baptism is to take place shortly; pray that he may become an ambassador of Christ to his own people.

PRAYER is requested "for a young Muslim of high ability and training who is thinking of accepting Christ; but there is abundant chance of his courage failing. It is important that we win this man, not only for his own sake, but also for the large work which the Lord has waiting for him". (North India)

NEW MEMBER.

190. Rev. J. J. Kingham M.E.M. Nungambaukam, Madras.

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The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0 (English 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,
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