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## News and Notes

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Series XIII

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### The mind of a Moslem woman.

“WILL show you the Qur’an sharif”, said a Moslem woman to me one day, and she took the book down from a shelf, and taking it out of its wrapper, an envelope-shaped bag of coloured material, she turned over the pages with great reverence. Another woman brought the little folding wooden stand, and showed me how this acted as a book rest when the holy book was read.

“Can you read it?” I asked, “because it is written in Arabic”. For answer she opened the book anywhere, and read fluently in their strange sing-song manner.

“What were you reading? did you understand it”?

“Oh no,” she replied, “but I have another copy which contains the translation of each line in Persian-Urdu, and that explains it all. The Qur’an is a wonderful book and we give it great reverence, for you know it came down from heaven just as it is, and hundreds of copies were made, and Gabriel and numbers of other prophets came with it to interpret it to men;” and saying this she wrapped it up, and placed it back on the shelf. It was the end of the month of Ramzan, and the women began to tell me about the ‘Id, and the festival of this last day which ends the fast.

“On this day the men go to the ‘Idgah to pray and to hear portions of the Qur’an read, but we must stay at home, and we wear our best clothes and jewels and have a feast of good things”.

“But you may pray too,” I said.

“Oh yes, we may pray, but we may not go to the Mosque, or the ‘Idgah; and because we are women we are not allowed to say the same *namaz* (prayer) that the men repeat on Fridays, and on special days like the ‘Id.” Seeing the conversation turned on prayer, we compared the Moslem and Christian ideas of prayer.

“The praise of Allah, and the praise of His prophets, that is what we do when we pray,” said a woman in answer to my enquiry.

"Yes," remarked another, "that is what we must do, whether He hears us or not."

"But God *does* hear prayer, does He not?" I asked.

"Who knows?" she replied. "Who can know? Allah is great, and He hears perhaps, or He does not hear, just as He pleases." "Ah, but Muhammad Rasul Ullah, On him be peace, he will intercede for us."

I sat there and wondered what to say next. Here I was in the midst of a group of Shia' women, the most fanatical sect of the Moslem community, and there was so much that one wanted to tell them about God and Jesus Christ; Christ's perfect work for all; our acceptance with God through Christ; Christ's intercession for us etc, but the situation bristled with difficulties.

Perhaps a little of one's own experience may interest them—

"Shall I tell you what we think, and believe, and have experienced about God?" The women look at me, and their faces plainly say, "What presumption! what can *she* tell us about Allah."

I begin. "We know that God hears prayer, we are quite sure of that, and we pray not only for material blessings, but for spiritual blessings too." We are sinners ("True, true," murmurs a woman near me—) "and it is written in our Bible that only the pure in heart see God, so we pray that we may be made pure, and true, so that we may become like God and one day see Him."

"Nay nay," interrupts a woman with a loud voice, "Like Allah! that can never be! Allah is great and powerful, and we—we are nothing at all".

"No," I reply, "not like Him in power and greatness, that could never be; but God is not only great and powerful, but good and true, and we are not like Him in that way, are we?"

"*Tauba, tauba,*" ejaculates a woman, which is her way of expressing her regrets on that score; "but," she continues, "what a world this would be if everybody was like that, like heaven in fact."

A significant remark from the lips of a Moslem woman, for the Moslem idea of heaven is a somewhat different one. Surely for the moment that woman had entered a higher and nobler plane of thought.

One ventures to speak of the One who can help us to be good and true and like the Father, and we tell them something about His life on this earth and what He did, and how He gave His life for everybody, but here a woman interrupts us with—

"Nay, that is not so, don't you know that Allah predestined Hasan and Husain, to be martyred in order to save us?"

"Yes, listen," breaks in another woman, "Hasan and Husain, (May Allah reward them!) were predestined before they were born, to give their lives for the Moslem people. Jesus was only a prophet."

The atmosphere is getting somewhat hostile, and this will never do. We must win back the friendly attitude towards us before

we leave, so we do not attempt to argue the matter further, but talk of other things and finally leave, for it is a question whether, by argument alone, they will be brought into the kingdom.

A little distance away we enter another home, and here again *namaz* is mentioned. We try another method of presenting the Truth.

"We pray too, and we feel that we can talk to God in prayer, and we believe that He speaks to us, and what a privilege it is to know that He hears us."

"Talk to Allah—who can talk to Allah?" says a woman at once. "Allah is too great for us to talk to Him, or He to speak to us."

Well, that remark has gained her attention, and what shall we say now? How explain that it is only through Jesus Christ that we may approach God without fear, and only through Him we are heard. That Name again!! A thought comes to one's mind.

"God created man?"

We all agree. "Who did create man if God did not?" says one. "Did He not make all things? of course He did."

"Then in our Bible it is written that when God created man, man became a living soul, and we belong to Him. We have a relationship with God, and we are His." Dare I go further and say that He is our Father, and He loves all His children, and that we may speak to Him in prayer and hear Him speak to us because of this relationship, and because of what Jesus Christ has done for us we may 'draw near' to the Father?

"We get near to God through prayer," I begin.

"Yes," interrupts a woman, "fasting brings us near to Allah, and we receive great rewards for fasting, and we pray five times a day."

Always the same thought—good works, good deeds, fasting, almsgiving etc. These *works* bring them near. To *do* things. Allah will be pleased or appeased by works.

In an interval of silence—and these intervals are few and far between when once the women find their tongues, and begin to argue about religion matter—one ventures to remark:

"Yes, but we must remember that we are sinners, and our good works, what are they in the sight of One so holy and true as God is? Our good deeds are nothing in His sight, and we must not depend on them for our salvation, for our works are not perfect. But there is One whose work was perfect"—and then the Name of Christ is mentioned again. The Name that is above every name.

Accepted as a prophet in these homes, but no greater than a prophet, and at the mention of that Name the women lose interest, and turn the conversation, or begin to move away, and attend to other matters.

Have we got anywhere to-day? we ask ourselves as we turn towards home. Did a seed drop in good ground or stony? The ground is certainly choked with the weeds of superstition and very hard.

Is there room for the good seed? Will it take root in such ground, or must we try and uproot the weeds first?

This is zenana visiting. Often just simple conversations with the women. A parable told, a picture shown. Jesus Christ lifted up before them as a pattern for us, and His life so portrayed that it may draw forth their admiration, in the hope that in time there will come into their hearts a deeper feeling than admiration, that of reverence and love, when at the Name of Christ the women will respond with gladness, and hope eternal spring up in their hearts, and uproot the weeds of uncertainty and superstition.

MISS E. M. MITCHELL.

### **A Moslem Saint-Mawlid at Capetown**

*(sent in by Dr. Zwemer)*

WE find in "*The Moslem Outlook*," Capetown, Feb. 20, 1925 the following interesting account of an imposing annual ceremony.

It refers to the great Indian mystic whose life was sketched in a recent number of *The Moslem World* and whose influence has extended to South Africa from Ajmere. We retain the spelling used at the Cape:

"There took place, last Sunday, at the Cape Provincial headquarters, the solemn and inspiring ceremony of this particular House of Chistia of Agmer, India, an event which brought together over a thousand of our Moslem brothers. It happens that this particular sect of Sufie which supervises the Moslem College and Mission Station at Thornhill, is a branch of the Great House of Chistia, founded by the illustrious Ovlia and Philosopher Khwaja Moohijudien Chistia, of Agmer, whose religious title was Hind-ul-Vallie Atiaye-Rasul. Last Sunday was the anniversary of the death of this Great leader, and as such is observed with all due reverence to the honoured dead by the Sufie sect wherever it is found. It follows, then, that the College at Thornhill being under their supervision, the day should be observed at the College in an appropriately impressive manner. That was how from Sea Point to Simons Town, the people assembled in force at Thornhill to celebrate so notable an occasion. From 10 a. m. they began pouring in, until by one o'clock the scene was as that of an army's camp, the illusion being heightened by the fact that the large majority of the concourse was of grown-up men, to be seen by the hundreds whichever way one turned.

HIS HOLINESS SAYED-CADIRI-RAFAI.

This year the presence amongst us of His Holiness Sayed Aboo-Saleh Cadiri-il Rifai gave an added dignity and importance to the proceedings. The stately saint-like figure of His Holiness lent a charming, old-world picturesqueness to the whole. The movement of

the carriages containing the Sayed and his attendants towards the gate of the College, was the signal to receive the first visit of the descendant of the Prophet's daughter with due reverence. As the particular carriage in which the Sayed himself was seated approached nearer and nearer, the band party—no brass band, but the Rabarangs used when Khalifa is performed—were heard. Then came the flags proper to the occasion, pale yellow in colour, flying kite fashion, with the Crescent in the centre. In the carriage with His Holiness by special request, was Mr. S. M. Rahim, while the revered guest's present host, Mr. J. M. Parker, of Maitland, was also an occupant; the whole escorted by a special Guard of Honour. In every way the observances of the ceremony reflected high credit upon Usufmia Hadjee Ahmed, the Principal and Organiser, and upon Abdul Sawad his chief assistant."

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## **A Great Door and many Adversaries in Northern Nigeria.**

(Arthur Hughes in *The Christian*, June 25, 1925)

**K**ANO, a city of fifty or sixty thousand people, is the centre of Mohammedan power in Northern Nigeria. A few weeks ago, in this city, a great demonstration was witnessed in honour of the Prince of Wales, then touring West Africa. From this centre the foul stream of false religion is extending all through the Protectorate, and is doing so with the sanction and protection of British officials. When, however, it comes to Christianity to do its part, there is no such freedom to plant the Gospel in Mohammedan areas. The refusal to permit Christian missionaries to live and work in Moslem sections is defended on the plea that a promise against proselytizing was given to Mohammedan chiefs on the coming of British rule in the region.

In all of the Government schools in these "closed areas" (closed to Christians), Mohammedanism is taught to the pupils by Mohammedan Malams, and every pupil is graduated a Mohammedan. In the Arts and Crafts School, supported by Government money to teach trades to the native boys and young men, no Christian boy is allowed to enter. Just now, an independent missionary, who for some months has been living in a native house as the guest of a native, teaching and preaching as the opportunity came, is being driven out by the Government official, and this worker is being told there is no place in this province for such a worker to stay. Protest is being made against exclusion. If only money and friends could be secured, we believe that the Colonial Office could be made to change this policy, which is so contrary to the religious freedom of Britain.'

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'Yet in spite of opposition to Christian activity, there is a work of God quietly going on. . . . But none within the city itself—the Government will not permit it. The thousands upon thousands of Mohammedans in Kano itself are thus left without a witness. Let our hearts go up to God for these, that some of them may drift into these little groups

outside the city walls. What is true of Kano is true also of the scores of other Mohammedan cities and towns in the province. There is no one to give the light, and the Government refuses to permit any to go in, that the light may be given. *Yet in all of these cities there are many pagans who have not adopted Mohammedanism as their religion, and thousands of other so-called Mohammedans who are that in name only, being totally ignorant of the teaching of the Moslem faith. We cry out for the Government to permit us to go to these. Nay, we ask for the right for every man and woman under the Union Jack the freedom of conscience to worship God as he or she may will. All we ask is equality with the Moslem teachers to present our message, and then to leave it for the people themselves to choose.*

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In confirmation of the above, a lady, writing from Kano shortly after returning from furlough, says: "The fight here seems very stern, coming back from the fellowship and warmth of Christian friends in England. I came back, too, to meet a very stern refusal from the Government to allow me to settle as I did before, right amongst the Moslem population. I have had two interviews with the British Resident, who was as before, most courteous, even sympathetic to me personally, but *officially* he was inexorable, and warned me that if I went outside the European Cantonment they would not tolerate it."

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## Addressing the Home Churches.

(NOTES OF A FAREWELL ADDRESS)

The task of the missionary to Muslims has been described as "the attempt to persuade the proudest man in the world to accept the thing he hates at the hands of the man he despises."

But we find that pride is not the peculiar property of Muslims. It is co-extensive with the human race. We read indeed of William Carey, the father of modern missions, that in his unregenerate days he "looked down upon dissenters with contempt." What the grace of God did for Carey it can do for the proudest Muslim. We are not deterred from this task, therefore, by the thought of the Muslim's pride, deep-seated though we know it to be.

The Muslim hates that which he does not understand. He is the victim of grave misrepresentations. What he hates is not the character, but a caricature of Christ. We return to help in removing some of the sad misunderstanding.

No pious Muslim really despises a Christ-like missionary. This rather is our task—to show forth the Spirit of Christ in all our walk and conversation with these people. And to this task we only dare return because we are persuaded that you will constantly bear us up before God in your prayers. Fail, and you'll find that we'll falter. Lay hold on God for us and by His grace we'll conquer.

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## Notes

We would call attention to the very searching review of the present conditions in the Moslem world made by Mr. Edward Shillito in introducing the Findings of the Jerusalem Conference, now issued in booklet form by Edinburgh House, London. In graphic style, with apt illustration, he has sketched out the main features in such a manner as can hardly fail to awaken the churches at the Home Base to the great urgency of the situation. The first task before the Church is to abandon its spirit of despair. 'Islam is not outside the power of the Christian Gospel.' Some of his sentences are vivid and arresting. Speaking of the very probable results of political disruption and the fierce impact of western knowledge, he says, 'A great multitude who have found shelter in Islam will be left homeless. *But not for long.* The human spirit cannot remain homeless for long'..... 'Through the downfall of the political Islam the path to the spiritual Islam is now open,' 'Islam is accessible. That is true now. It may not remain true, but at the moment this fact should help us to have done with the fatalism with which Islam has infected the Christian host. We are of those who do not cry *kismet!*'.....'Controversy under present conditions between a revived Islam or an awakened Christianity will be a real controversy'...' Moslems over a large part of the field have no temptation to appeal to the sword; they must rest their cause to-day upon the spiritual appeal that it (Islam) makes to the mind of man.'... 'What is needed is "controversy steeped in love"...' 'Once Raymond Lull dreamed of an Islam yielding to the apostolic weapons of blood and tears. The dream still waits. The weapons, too, still wait'

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*There is reason to believe* that the Spirit of the Living God is at work in the hearts of men *somewhere* along the North West frontier of India. 'Good soil' has appeared in the midst of so much 'stony ground,' and the workers are praying for the outpouring of God's blessing. They are rejoicing in the fact that an Afghan mullah has transferred his allegiance to Christ. Let us join them in praise and supplication.

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*Opening of the Department of Islamic Studies, Bareilly, U. P.* We are glad to report that in spite of unforeseen great difficulties which were eventually overcome, the Bareilly Department of Islamic Studies successfully opened on August 1st. The Principal, Rev. J. Devadasan, M. E. Theological Seminary, Bareilly, will be glad to receive now applications from missionaries with regard to a course of study for special students. Applications for this the first term may be made up to October 1st, and for the second term from 1st January. The medium of instruction, be it remembered, will be Urdu.

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*A most valuable book*, Herklot's "Qanun-i-Islam," being a revised edition by W. Crooke, C.I.E., of the original work published in 1832, has been placed in the Islamic Studies Library, attached to the M. M. League. It is a Compendium of the Customs of the Musalmans of India, and valuable alike for workers among Moslem women and men.

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*Another Worker Set Apart.* A short while ago we had to report the death of one of our members who had been working especially among Mos-

lems—Miss Wood, of Hyderabad, Deccan. We are glad to announce that the M. E. Mission has lost no time in appointing in her place, Miss Margaret D. Lewis, M.D., definitely to work among the Moslems of that city and district. Dr. Lewis has just joined the League and pleads for a place in our prayers.

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*The Political Situation in Kano, Northern Nigeria*, is most irksome at the present time for those who seek as ambassadors of Christ to reach the Moslems of that place. What good can come to Britain, who owes her greatness to the Bible (as Queen Victoria herself once declared to an African chief) by placing restrictions upon the movements of those who would teach that same Bible to Africa's sons to-day? As the Church of Christ braces herself to this task with a new hope and courage we need to pray that *Parliaments may be freed from the paralysis of fear which results in legislation of so compromising a nature.*

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*Indian Press Support for Ibn Saud.* As once the cry in India was, 'The Turks can do no wrong,' so now the tune has changed to 'Ibn Saud, conqueror of Mecca, is above reproach.' 'The Mussalman,' Calcutta, in its issue of 14th August, deals with certain allegations against this same Ibn Saud. "An associated Press message has stated that some Hajis who have just come back from pilgrimage say that the followers of Ibn Saud have killed some Maulvies and Moulanas in charge of shrines and have demolished many of the holy shrines. *We do not believe these allegations to be founded on fact.* (The italics are ours). If, however, something of the kind has been done by them, we think they had good reasons to do so." Here follows a pronouncement on the matter of the upkeep of shrines which we cannot refrain from quoting, since it reveals a feature in the present 'Revolution' in the world of Islam. "Shrines of Muslim divines have at many places—at many places in India, also—become more or less houses of idol-worship. What is done there is nothing short of idol-worship; and if this sort of idolatry at these shrines cannot be prevented, we are of opinion—and our opinion is based on injunctions of Islam—that these "Muslim houses of idol-worship" should be ruthlessly razed to the ground and completely demolished so that there may be no trace of them, and the Maulvies and Maulanas who encourage these idolatrous practices for personal gain should be dealt with with an iron hand. (Apparently Ibn Saud found 'steel' more to the point!) In order to keep the name of Islam unsullied and for the preservation of the purity of the religion and restoration of its pristine glory, everything that smacks of idolatry on the part of Muslims should be done away with.....If Ibn Saud's followers have done what is required of them as true Muslims they have our entire sympathy and moral support."

### FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER.

PRAISE for signs of new interest in Christ in north-west India and for the conversion of a mullah there.

PRAISE for the setting apart of yet another worker for this task (in Hyderabad, Deccan) and prayer that she may experience the Presence and guidance of God's Spirit in all her service.



PRAYER is asked by workers in (1) Bogra (Bengal), (2) Peshawar, (3) Dhulia, West Khandesh, Bombay—that they may be enabled to take advantage of present opportunities.

PRAY for Christ's ambassadors in the Moslem stronghold, Kano, Northern Nigeria—that a way to the hearts of the people may be found, and that restrictions to the preaching of the gospel may be removed.

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### NEW MEMBERS.

|     |                    |                    |                             |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 52  | Dr. Margaret Lewis | M E.M.             | Hyderabad, Deccan.          |
| 238 | Rev. M. S. Pitt    | M.E.M.             | Jabalpur, India.            |
| 536 | Rev. M.P. Albrecht | Ev. Synod N. Amer. | Bisrampur,<br>Raipur, C. P. |
| 537 | Dr. E. H. Hudson   | A.P.M.             | Beirut, Syria.              |

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### DEATH OF A MEMBER.

As we go to press news has come to India by cable of the death of Dr. J. C. R. Ewing in America. Our sympathy goes out to those who have suffered this great bereavement.

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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,  
Dacca, Bengal, India.*




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