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News and Notes

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1st April = 17th Ramzan (9th mo.), 1344, A.H.

Called to be Saints

(from Six Lectures on Dervishism, by Mr. George Swan).

‘**H**OW does a Moslem become a Saint? Shakespeare gives us the answer concisely: “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, some have greatness thrust upon them.” Some literally are born saints; e.g. the Sayyids of the Mirghaniya order. It would seem that every member of the leading family in direct line of descent is considered a saint. By far the greater part have this reputation as their goal and arrive there by many devious courses, generally by simulating ecstatic experiences or by the practice of magic. Very occasionally the greatness is thrust upon them.....

‘It behoves us, as missionaries, to combat this idea of saintship which holds the people in such grips. We must find out if we ourselves are quite clear as to what constitutes saintship. Not only so, but we must remember that we too are called to be saints. This the missionary is apt to forget in the great pressure of work that short-handedness and a vast field involve. We are to demonstrate practically that what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, by sending His own Son, can do in us, so that our righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. Our standards of righteousness can only be the righteousness of God. When we say He is righteous we mean that all His acts are in conformity with His nature. Our standard of holiness will therefore increase with the increase of our knowledge of God’s nature, at which we can arrive, not by an uncertain inner light, but by God’s great revelation of Himself in our Lord Jesus Christ.

‘We must ever be on the watch against the foolishness of the Galatians, whilst at the same time we must remember that holiness by faith comes not to him who does not hunger and thirst after righteousness.

‘Again I would urge that it is in the subject of saintship we have the crux of the problem of Islam’s hold upon the masses, and mere theorists as to right views of saintship will not successfully combat their errors. We are called to be saints.’

Reforms at the Azhar University

THE commented on this subject in a recent issue. A fuller account is expected to be published in the April number of the *Moslem World Magazine*. We have thought that members will be glad to have the following notes:

The Azhar University at Cairo has for generations been considered the very brain of the Moslem world. Here orthodox theology is authoritatively taught. Twenty years ago it would have seemed impossible that modern methods of logic, scientific research, pedagogy, organization, or external arrangement should disturb its traditions. The new proposals are startling; and some of them are already being carried into effect.

Reforms of External Organization. Electric light is being installed. Benches and desks are provided. No children’s classes are permitted inside the mosque. No students are allowed to sleep inside: hostels are to be provided in the neighbourhood. No tickets are necessary for those who wish to visit. A well-known missionary has been photographed inside the mosque with the permission of the authorities.

Reforms of Curriculum and Method. Scientific subjects (elementary natural science, arithmetic, history and geography) were added to the curriculum as long ago as 1890, but were optional. They are now compulsory for the literary course, in which all students must graduate before beginning the theological studies.

Educated men in Egypt are generally classified as either Sheiks (educated in the orthodox theology deduced from the text of the Koran) or as Effendis (educated according to modern Western methods and generally speaking English or French, or both). It is said that now Sheiks instead of sitting on the ground in the centre of a ring of students are themselves learning at benches from especially appointed Effendis.

The Reformer. Muhammad Khalid Hasanein Bey is an enlightened educationalist, who took a degree in England, specialising in mathematics. He is now general director of the University.

Reason for the Reforms. This movement has risen from within. The competition of the government schools and foreign institutions has become too strong; e.g., a young man with a title to the position of grand Mufti in an important Near East city came to Cairo with a Cambridge degree, and exclaimed indignantly, “Do you think I’m going to sit on the floor and listen to that rubbish?” (He meant the orthodox Koranic theology).

Results to be expected. Already the old commentators are losing popularity. Beidhawi, formerly sold for 8/- complete in Cairo, costs 15/- or 16/- and the London publishers say they are exporting very few. Muhammad Bey says he is only introducing scientific subjects, and is not intending to touch religious instruction. But what will happen when men qualified in natural science, logic, psychology, and above all historical criticism, begin on the courses of old-fashioned theology?

The Stories of Some Mohammedan Converts

BY THE REV. B. A. NAG, OF CALCUTTA.

THE very first Mohammedan convert with whom I had anything to do was Brother Serajuddin. He was a Sub-Inspector of Schools and an enquirer for many years. I knew him when he was transferred to Dacca and was engaged as a teacher in the Madrasa there. Regularly every day he used to come to me during his recess in the school for his Bible lesson. We used to read and pray together, the theme being the life that is possible in Christ.

He was soon very much attracted towards Christ, but naturally shirked the question of baptism. I could see and sympathise with his difficulty. He was sure to lose his post in the Madrasa as soon as he was baptized, and then how could he support his wife and children and himself. He knew he was not being loyal to his conviction, and was feeling miserable. *We did not for a single day discuss the question of the superiority of Christianity to Mohammedanism.* The question, so far as he was concerned, did not arise. He was troubled in his conscience. He was anxious, not about his religion, but about his soul.

Every day we prayed together for light and guidance, until one day he could only sob out the prayer, "Lord, Thy will be done."

"About what?" I whispered.

"About my baptism and my family," he said,

"Have you then decided to be baptized?" I asked. "Yes, I have said so to the Lord," was his reply. On that very day was this brother baptized.

Another Mohammedan convert with whom I had anything to do was a young student in the town of Mymensingh, where I was conducting a special mission, lecturing to students in the Town Hall. The very first night after the meeting, this young man introduced himself to me, and followed me to the Mission House where I was staying, talking all the time of our Lord.

I was deeply impressed by his earnestness, and realised that

my message had gone home to his heart and that he was already a secret believer in Christ. I therefore pressed upon him the question of his obedience to the Lord in the matter of baptism. He was baptized during these special meetings. He was no other than the late Rev. John A. D. Khan, who became an earnest and powerful preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I would like to present his own story of his baptism as he wrote it in his book "India's Millions," published in America. He wrote:—

"It was during these meetings that I had an interview with Mr. B. A. Nag, who presented to me the need of baptism. I saw it clearly as a commandment of the New Testament, and yet was not quite ready for it. Baptism for an Indian convert means a complete separation from his own father and mother, brothers and sisters—yea, all that are near and dear to him after the flesh; he has to die to reputation and good name, popularity and public opinion; he must be utterly forsaken by his own friends, who almost invariably become his bitterest enemies. I looked confused at my friend's question regarding the subject, and I told him of the difficulty of my position. He assured me that God was well able to counteract all possible evil, and when my father and my mother forsook me, the Lord would take me up. 'Believest thou this?' he asked. I saw it clearly in my head, but did not feel like saying 'Yes' from my heart. After prayer I left him with a promise to answer his question the next day after having had prayer at home.

"I shall never forget the state of my mind that day and the night following. I was altogether restless with the thought that I was not wholly for God, and the thought of the tremendous loss from a worldly standpoint was also a great perplexity to me. I spent the night in much prayer, but I was no better. In the morning I became more earnest, and prayed fervently for grace. I begged God to reveal His will concerning the matter. At last in my extreme embarrassment I asked a sign of the Lord. I said, 'Lord, after prayer I shall open the Bible, and wherever it opens I desire that Thou shalt speak to me Thy mind from there.'

"I got up from my knees and opened the Bible, and the message the Lord gave me was 2 Chr. 16:9. Though I had never read the passage before, the whole thing was clear as daylight to me. I saw how my heart was not perfect towards Him. I saw how anxious the Lord was to find such as are wholly for Himself, and how He is anxious to show forth His almighty power in their behalf. The whole problem was clear to me. I exclaimed, 'Yea, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.'

"The struggle was all over, and the unrest and confusion all gave way to the heavenly joy and Divine peace that filled my entire being. I ran to the Mission House, and told my friend that I was able to reply to his question in the affirmative, and that I was also willing to be baptized."

This brother was baptized on the next day. I thank God that He used me towards his surrender to Christ.....

It will be noticed that in each case the enquirer was troubled about his sinfulness and his need of salvation, and hardly had any time or inclination to think of the comparative merits of Islam and Christianity.

Literature for Muslims in the Vernaculars of India

Although there will be no funds available this year from the I.L.F. we hereby once again notify people working amongst Muslims in areas where, e.g., Sindhi, Gujerati, Tamil, and other languages are used, that limited grants are to be hoped for from the American C.L.S. for Muslims. All such applications for grants should be carefully drawn up on the forms supplied for the purpose which can be had from the N.C.C. office, 111/A Russa Road, Calcutta, and should come through the Provincial Councils' Sub-Committees on Work among Muslims, and be forwarded to the Secretary of this League *before the end of August*. He as Convener will then present these applications to the N.C.C. Committee on Literature for Muslims, which expects to meet in Lahore during the latter part of September.

Review

An Outline for the Study of Dervishism.—Being notes of six elementary lectures on the Popular Development of Sufism or Mohammedan mysticism. Prepared and delivered by Mr. George Swan at the School of Oriental Studies, Cairo, 1925. pp. 38. Price 50 cents or 2 shillings. To be obtained at the office of the President, The American University, Midan el Ismailia, Cairo.

In sending us a copy of this pamphlet for review the President desires that it should be noted that finality is in no sense claimed for these notes. Hitherto very little material of the kind contained herein has been brought together, nevertheless, and for that very reason, the grouping of these facts in so small compass is in itself a valuable contribution to a study of certain types of the Muslim mind, and it is the earnest hope of the publishers that this setting forth of the facts will "stimulate interest in the subject and challenge further study on the part of others."

Mr. George Swan's interest in this subject is well-known to his friends, for his study has been sustained for the best part of twenty years at least. The outline lectures show that he has read up this subject in almost every conceivable direction and to this knowledge he has brought valuable first-hand experience from a study of the lives of the people around him. It has been repeatedly shewn that along this line of Sufism and the Dervish orders we, followers of the Christ, have an exceptional way of approach, that, used wisely and sympathetically, gives promise of rich reward. We therefore welcome the valuable treatise thus made available by one who himself has great sympathy with and a strong love for the people of the mystic way. In

six lectures the author discusses, 'The sources of Mohammedan mysticism,' 'The Beginnings,' 'Dervish orders and organisation,' 'Dervish worship,' 'Sainthood and Magic.' Not the least valuable part of this pamphlet are the lists of books of reference provided at the close of each lecture.

We strongly recommend this pamphlet to all workers among Muslims in every land.

Mr. Swan makes a further contribution to the subject in the January number of *The Moslem World Quarterly*.

L. B. J.

Our Output and our Outreach

A Summary of N. M. P. Annual Report for 1925.

No. of our Gospel publs. when War began	...	140
No. of our Gospel publs, when War stopped	...	280
No. of our Gospel publs. at last Annual Report	...	530
No. of our Gospel publs. now (New Cat. Summer 1926)		560

Average output, 25 new publications every year, for 21 years. Though we have not discovered the secret of "perpetual motion" yet we come as near to it as possible, for it is a good record to have issued "two a month for 21 years without a single break.

Colportage. Nile Valley only:—

- Seven N. V. Colporteurs in 1923 sold 17,805 volumes
- Ten N. V. Colporteurs in 1924 sold 30,009 volumes.
- Ten N. V. Colporteurs in 1925 sold 33,547 volumes.
- One man, Bulus Malaty, sold 5327 copies by himself in 1924.
- But the same man rose to 7564 in 1925.

Total Distribution, (large and small, from 540 page volume down to 4 pp. tract.)

In 1922—140,000 copies distributed.	
In 1923—160,000	" "
In 1924—340,233	" "
In 1925—357,056*	" "

(* Besides thousands of portionettes.)

Our Field is an enormous one. To take South Africa alone, our books promptly followed Dr. Zweimer through Cape Province, Natal, Nyasaland, Rhodesia, etc. In January 1926 large orders were being shipped, e.g. 40 parcels to Mosul (Iraq); others to Ecuador (S.A.) and a much larger consignment by freight steamer to the Barbary States; while small consignments were being sent the same month for work among Arab sailors in a port of British Columbia; also to Brazil, Argentine, and Kansu province of China.

Then in order to reach non-Arabic reading Moslems we have published, during 1925, Miss Blaikie's "Spiritual Seed for Spiritual Need," which is a collection of 15 more tracts for translation to Oriental languages similar to our first volume published the year before. (This one can be supplied to any part of the world for two shillings and six pence, post free).

The N. M. P. supports no less than five colporteurs in Palestine, on Mts. Carmel, Zion, Gerizim, etc. And our co-operation with the Algiers Mission Band in our new branch at El-Biar (for colportage work in Algeria, etc.) is proving a source of joy to them and to us.

Truly we can thank God for the output, while the outreach is even more gratifying. But it is a long thin line that we hold (almost single-handed); will you not uphold us in prayer as never before?

A. T. U.

*Nile Mission Press,
Cairo 25-1-1926.*

Notes

Members proceeding on furlough are again requested to send in their home addresses to the Secretary in good time. We are anxious that all those who desire to do so shall receive the paper promptly and regularly while away from their stations. Will all such please note that we make *no extra charge* for posting to places outside India.

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The Calcutta Christian Tract and Book Society.—This society which has so faithfully served the interests of missionaries in Bengal and elsewhere for many years past is now entering upon a new phase in its career. To the immense gain of the Society economically, new quarters for the Society's stock of literature have been found on the premises of the Baptist Mission Press. The Society has wisely, we think, determined to concentrate its attention on vernacular literature and has recently overhauled its stock and issued a new catalogue. The capital realized by the disposal of their old premises is to be invested and the interest will be used for the production of much-needed vernacular literature. This definite step forward will rejoice the hearts of many in Bengal, and to these we would say, "Support the Society in every practical way possible to you." Rev. Percy Knight's interest in the Society will remain unabated and he is *on the spot*, but the new Honorary Secretary is Rev. F. F. Longman, 16 Elgin Road, Bhowanipore, Calcutta, to whom all communications and contributions should be sent. Actual orders for books should, however, be sent to the Baptist Mission Press, 41 Lower Circular Road, Calcutta.

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The Barrier to Mission Work in Nigeria.—A new member who is himself in Government Service in West Africa, writes from Lagos to say, 'We have here the serious problem of the barrier to missionaries in the Northern Provinces. I have a specially keen interest in seeing this barrier go, and have discussed it many times with Dr. Walter Miller.'

* * * * *

A lady member in retirement at home, writes, '*News and Notes* keeps up its interest. How much one can read between the lines of the faith and perseverance and courage with which the wonderful new opportunities are being met. Such a large part of the world now open, and such a small number of people rising to the opportunities, but one gives thanks for the progress, often in unexpected quarters.

'I rather wish the habit of talking and writing about our work among Moslems in terms of war or crusading, could be given up: for all the efforts you all are making that it should be so, one is glad, and for the response to it in modern literature. For the suggestions of such words are apt to arouse in one's mind thoughts of force and power as conquering (not to speak of the antagonism raised in Moslem minds when they hear, as they

often must, such terms used about winning them) rather than the real power—the drawing of Christ's and Christians' love.'

* * * * *

'*The Best Friend*.'—Are you doing your best to introduce this Life of Jesus, in its simple English form, to your Muslim friends who understand English? The sales so far have been encouraging—about 1500 copies in three months. (C.L.S. Madras,—Prices 2 as. or 4 as. illustrated). There must be many in India and elsewhere who should find this a most suitable 'Primer' with which to start a Bible Class among High School students. We are finding that students read it with delight.

As to translation into vernaculars. Friends in India will be interested to know that the Urdu translation is well on the way to completion and that the Bengali version is expected by the end of June. But there will be delay in publishing though we hope to have both ready this year. Enquiries have been made about translating it into Gujerati and Oriya (in India) and into Persian and Turkish. We assume that it will be done into Arabic also.

NEW MEMBERS.

49	Dr. W. J. Moerdyk	Arabian Miss.	Amara, Iraq
468	Rev. W. Wilson Cash,	Secretary	C.M.S. London
480	Dr. T. B. Adam	Govt. Med. Service	Nigeria, W. Africa.

The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.). 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.*



Edited and published by Rev. L. Bevan Jones, Dacca, Bengal, and printed at the Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, by Rev. R. J. Grundy, Superintendent.