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News and Notes

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A Message to the Members of the League.

BEFORE leaving India, Mrs. Zwemer and I desire to send a brief message of gratitude to the members of the League. We are thankful to God that we have come to the end of our long journey and that everywhere the group meetings have proved profitable and inspiring. Since our arrival at Bombay we have travelled over 8,000 miles by rail and visited the following centres: Ahmedabad, Bombay, Karachi, Ludhiana, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Lahore, Delhi, Lucknow, Bareilly, Jubbulpore, Calcutta, Dacca, Allahabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Madras, Vellore, Calicut, Madura, Kandy, Colombo. In 16 places regular Conferences were held with an attendance for the study course from 26 to 90 people. The largest registered attendance was at Madras. The brief visits made at Peshawar, Ludhiana, Allahabad, Vellore and Calicut enabled us to see something more of Islam and to meet with special groups and missionaries, although no regular Conference was held. Everywhere we have noticed an increasing interest in work among Moslems, a larger faith and more earnest prayer. Truly we may expect a larger blessing on the sowing of the years that are passed and the joy of harvest in the near future. We wish to express our gratitude for the unbounded loving hospitality and the much kindness received in every place we were privileged to visit. As we return to Cairo, we will remember India in prayer and ask you to remember us.

Colombo, Feb. 26th, 1928.

AMY E. & S. M. ZWEMER.

From Islam to Christ.

WE venture to reproduce here, for the benefit of those of our readers who do not see *The Moslem World Quarterly*, some extracts from a remarkable narrative appearing in the current issue concerning the early spiritual experiences of a Persian convert, now a valiant witness for Christ in that land. The whole article is well worth reading as may be gathered from the following introductory note supplied by the translator of the original manuscript.

The writer of this narrative became a Christian about thirty years ago, and was one of the very first Moslems in Persia to accept the Gospel. His life has been a varied one, for at different times he has been artisan, steward, attendant in the Parliament during the stormy days of the first constitutional government, city detective, and a trusted employee of the American Mission in Teheran. He is largely self-educated, but is surprisingly well-informed, and spends much time in thought and meditation. Keenly observant, he has contributed to a popular Persian magazine a series of articles on conditions in Persia which have been full of wit and satire, and have created much comment.

During thirty years of Christian experience, this man has been remade by the power of Christ. He is now senior elder in a Persian church, and his power in prayer, his wisdom, independence and common sense are invaluable in the church's growth. In his study of the Bible he has had the help of scarcely any of the wealth of commentaries and spiritual books which we take for granted, but his conception of Christianity is remarkably broad and comprehensive. His life is above reproach, and his quiet efficiency and thoughtfulness are an example to the missionaries with whom he works.

As I write we are on an evangelistic trip together to one of the smaller cities which is solidly Moslem. He makes a capital travelling companion, and his unending supply of stories and wise observations fill up any empty hours in our days together. He is perhaps at his best when he presents the Gospel of Christ to Moslems who have never before heard it. Fanatics who come to annihilate us with their arguments find that he skillfully disarms their prejudices, and soon they are listening quietly to the old story of the Messiah who was witnessed to by the prophets, taught eternal spiritual truth, and died for our sins. In these discussions he is always entirely fearless in his personal confession of Christianity, though it is still the law of the land that an apostate from Islam shall be killed like a dog by anyone who hears his blasphemy. Surely God has a future for the Persian church with such men among its founders.

In early manhood he made the acquaintance of a learned and eloquent man whose like he has never seen to the present day—a recluse, yet withal possessing a striking personality. "He had studied twelve years in Kermanshah, fourteen years in the Shiah Shrine cities of Mesopotamia, ten years in the Moslem university of Teheran and ten years under a renowned teacher in Sabzevar.....He had never married. Of worldly goods he possessed nothing except a library..... The book that he honored most of them all was the New Testament."

This old man of seventy carried some wonderful secret which

the younger one demanded to know. He was told. 'As to those who have claimed they were prophets I believe in none except Jesus. For a long time I have struggled against accepting Him *but I cannot prevail.*'

Naturally the fanatically-inclined youth wanted to know what he made of Mohammed and the Koran. The reply came:

"There is nothing about Mohammed or the Koran," he replied, "that I hold to be from God. The structure of Islam has been built upon the sword, bigotry, selfishness, and sensuality. The Koran contains some sayings and commandments that have been borrowed from the Old and New Testaments, but what we see and hear in Islam to-day was added later under the name of tradition." "Sir," I asked, "do you mean to say that in a book as large as the Koran there is nothing you accept as the Word of God? Perhaps you have not looked carefully enough."

In replying he laughed and said, "I have spent the best part of my life studying Islam. I am a religious leader with testimonials from the great men of Nejed. There is nothing either in the Koran or Islam hidden from me. I am completely informed as to every branch of Islam, and I count this knowledge, compared with what else I know, as the very least. Every verse in the Koran which you may read I can repeat from memory and I know all the traditions of both Sunnis and Shi'ahs, and all the interpretations of the commentators as well. When I say this, you know that I make no untoward claims.

"I have made every effort to find the truth, and if it had been in Islam I would never have given it up. I am neither out of my mind nor an enemy to my own salvation. Know this, that any one with one-tenth the knowledge of the religion of Mohammed that I have would leave it. There are only three groups who hold fast to Islam. The first are those who get their living from religion. The second find in religion a means of furthering their own ambitions, and by upholding Islam either secure, or hope to obtain, power or some great place. The third group is the largest and made up of the common people who are illiterate and accept blindly and without argument anything outside their own limited knowledge. If it were not for these three groups there would be no Islam.

"The Koran is a book with no beginning or end and hopelessly incoherent. It contains the fables of Solomon and the demons, and of the ants and the wind, who are Solomon's emissaries. It contains the incident of the unfortunate Zaid and his cherished wife, who became unlawful for him but lawful for Mohammed. It contains the story of Mary the Copt, who was first lawful, and then unlawful, and then lawful again for the Prophet to add to his numerous wives. In it is the cursing of Abu Lahab; in it are commands inculcating murder and plunder. In it are hundreds of incidents contrary to truth, contrary to history, contrary to logic, science, reason, and justice."

The first feelings of rage and a desire to kill the old man gave place to great restlessness of soul. Two years' searching at length convinced him that the old Saint had but spoken the truth. Despair and cynicism fought for first place within him. Then,

"One day it occurred to me that I might talk a little with a Christian priest and learn what he had to say; although I was sure there was no one in this world who could convince me. Since I was not acquaint-

ed with a priest, I searched until I found one who was known as a learned Christian. Later I learned that he was an American missionary. His house was on the edge of the city, and I visited him three times; each time I talked several hours with him, but did not get the real meaning of a thing he said. On the fourth day, which was the last, since I had determined not to go there again, I heard him say this, "Just as malaria is very prevalent in the world and has only one remedy—quinine, which, though bitter to take, cures the disease, in the same way all mankind is sick with sin and the sole medicine for it is the Gospel. Every one has the choice of accepting it or rejecting it."

That was the end of our conversation. It struck noon and I got up and went out—aimlessly and in complete despair. When I went out of the gate there was nothing in front of me except vacant lots and a few walls, and not a person was in sight. I was absolutely alone in that wide and desolate place, and in utter distraction I raised my arms and said: "O God, if Thou dost exist, and Jesus is from Thee, and the Gospel is the remedy for the sin of the world, guide Thou me, for I am in sore straits. If Thou art not, I am but speaking to the empty air."

Suddenly I saw two spiritual forms over my head, whose clothes and faces were like the color of the sky. In a loud voice they said, "God is, and Jesus is true. Be of good cheer and come." Then they suddenly disappeared. This vision and the words terrified me; fear so took hold of me that sweat poured from my body. I trembled and in the heat of the day I was so cold that my teeth chattered. Bewildered I started to run until I reached a part of the city which was built up. When I saw human beings once more my terror and excitement disappeared, but I continued to be astonished at the vision I had seen and the voice I had heard, and I fully comprehended that I was no longer the same man. All darkness and despair fled from me at once, and a new joy and a deep thankfulness took their place. I felt myself to be a new man and there was new life within me.

I had a desire to read the Gospel once more and when I turned to it I saw that this was not the Gospel I had read before, though it was the same book. I took extraordinary pleasure in it; I found joy upon joy in reading it. I felt as if every verse of it was written just to fulfil my desires and to give counsel to me. Again and again I asked myself why, since this was the same Gospel I had read before, was it one book then and another book now. In four nights and days I read the whole New Testament; the only part that I found beyond my comprehension was the Revelation of John. Then I turned to the Old Testament and found that it made clear a hundred of my problems which no one had been able to solve for me. I was delighted. From that time the Bible was my treasure, my library and my recreation, the medicine for my spiritual pain and the solution of all my difficulties, and after more than twenty years it still is all this to me. My hope, my pride, my life, my salvation, my king, and my Lord, is Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, risen on the third day and seated at the right hand of God, for His glory and authority and power were and are and shall be forever. And this grace and love, which are beyond the imagination and explanation of the whole human race, have come from God the Father, who is Creator of all things and over all things, to poor, unworthy, rebellious mankind. "May all praise and honor and reverence be given to His holy name."

The story would be robbed of half its charm were we to omit to add that in after years he heard from the old man who reported that he too had accepted Christ!

The Christian Kalima.

Outline of a Tract for Moslems.

[We are grateful to Dr. Zwemer for taking up the idea that we have a very obvious *Kalima* in the N. T. to place over against the much-vaunted creed of the Moslems.—Ed. N. & N.]

THE religion of Islam makes much of its word of witness (*Kalima*), and not without reason. It is the shortest creed in the world and has never been revised. It is used as a battle-cry and as an amulet, as a copy-book maxim and as the pillow for the dying. "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His apostle." Has Christianity no such short summary of its essential character? Surely it has. It should include all of its vital teaching and be short and universal. We think such is found in the solemn words of our Saviour in the night of His betrayal in His great high-priestly prayer when with royal and prophetic vision He spoke to His Father of the future: 'This is Life Eternal, that they should know Thee the only True God, and Thine Apostle Jesus Christ.' (John 17: 3).

1. It is a Christ-given *Kalima*.
2. It is positive and not negative; and in this respect is far above the Moslem *Kalima*.
3. It contains a strong affirmation of the *Tauhid*, i.e., the unity of God.
4. It also affirms that life eternal is not in the *Tauhid* but by faith in the supreme messenger of God and knowledge of His mission. Compare Ep. of James, Ch. 2: 19.
5. This *Kalima* tells us that to know Jesus is to know God. He is the revealer of God's holiness and mercy and love. He revealed the one hundredth name of God; *Father*.
6. Jesus is indeed *Rasul Allah* but He is the Word of God also, and His eternal Son.

This *Kalima* we should learn and study and use. It is the *sikr* that gives heart's-ease and joy and peace—Life eternal.

S. M. ZWEMER.

Moslems Watch Christian Lives.

I

LADY living in Egypt writes: 'When I came here I was cautioned not to talk to the servants about religion; my predecessor had done so, and the servants had immediately asked for their wages and gone away saying, 'We did not come here to learn religion.' So I was surprised when one day our table waiter came to me and said, 'O lady, I want you to teach me about your religion.' I asked him to repeat what he had said, for I feared I had misunderstood his Arabic. But there was no mistake. That was what he wanted. 'Why do you ask me to teach you about my religion?' He said, 'There is something in your religion which is not in ours.' 'That is true, there is. We have the love of Jesus. But tell me why you say that?'

'Because you and your sister never quarrel,' he answered. Even an uneducated servant could see the practical difference between the two religions. Many Moslems are longing for the truth, and watch us closely o discover it.

Another Egyptian Moslem once said to me, about a certain Christian, 'He is never angry with us, except when we have done something really wrong; he could not be so patient with us unless he had the spirit of Jesus in him.' The man who said that is thinking about becoming a Christian himself.

(Slightly adapted from *Eastward Ho*, December 1927).

II

LOCAL APPRECIATION OF SIR WILLIAM WILLCOCKS.

As illustrative of our contention that the people of the East know a man when they see one, there has recently appeared a cartoon of Sir William Willcocks, with an article of nearly a whole page, in one of the leading Cairo newspapers.

The writer had for sixty-six weeks caricatured one Minister of State, or high official, every week, and remarks:—"After all the libel actions from indignant Egyptians, now I am going to have the British warships sent to Port Said or Alexandria and a cannon blowing off my head for caricaturing one of these precious Englishmen. Still, William is only half an Englishman, for he was born in India."

After mentioning about a dozen incidents in Sir William's career, stating that he always stood up for the poorer class of natives—so much so that, at one time it was a by-word, "They are the William-men"—the article continues: "I will tell you the kind of fellow he is. Listen! When he was Director-General of a big Government Department they omitted to say whether his salary was in sterling or Egyptian; we Egyptians would have taken it in Egyptian and saved 2,500 sixpences. This man, being possessor of a thing they call a conscience, drew his in sterling! That is the kind of chap he is!"

Here is a story about him when he was up country, and all the people round Assuan loved him and protected him:—"The story runs that a brigand who was caught, and might have been shot in the night, called out, 'Ana ismi Willy-Cockis' (My name is Willcocks), and thus got off, because no one ever touched 'Willy-Cockis'!"

In general, it is said of this man that none of us have ever once seen him fighting for his own advantage; "in fact in his old age, and since his case, he goes about preaching what he believes to be the truth."

Note.—The caricature shows Sir William in a black suit, with clerical collar, holding a Bible, and underneath is written: "He who provided water to make gardens for men on this earth, now finds another kind of water for the garden up above."

Sir William Willcocks has translated into the colloquial the four Gospels, which the Nile Mission Press printed for him, and has distributed thousands with his own hand. (From 'Blessed be Egypt').

Lord Headley.

QOSLEMS everywhere hail Lord Headley as a great capture for Islam. He has recently been taking a prominent part in Moslem Conferences in India and has been duly reported in the Press. Our friend Dr. Weibrecht Stanton of London recently addressed the following letter to the Editor of *The Pioneer*, North India.

'Sir,

The remarks of Lord Headley reported in your issue of the 23rd Dec. will doubtless have been sufficiently answered by those against whom they are directed long before this reaches you, nor do I wish to continue controversy about a meaningless utterance. But, in case there should be occasion to refer to the matter again, may I note that Lord Headley is not a British, but an Irish peer? *The Times* of Dec. 11, 1916, contains a report of a fine inflicted on him for drunk and disorderly conduct in the Waterloo Road Police Court, which was upheld on appeal. *The London Gazette* of May 16 or 19, 1922, mentions that he was adjudicated as a bankrupt. In the *Epiphany* (Calcutta) of 10th Nov. 1917, further particulars are given.

* * * * *

Moreover, this champion of Islam in the West favours a strange variety of the old faith. In a recent issue of *The Islamic Review* he is almost cynical regarding that type still dear to the vast mass of the followers of Muhammad. Let us quote from that article:

"If you insist on the Yorkshire, or indeed any British farmer, giving up his dish of bacon and eggs or his glass of beer (Lord Headley knows something about beer!)—a diet which has been found very wholesome for many generations—and tell him that its continuance is going to *jeopardise his chances of salvation*, you will fail to convince him of the breadth and sincerity of Islam."

And more to the same effect. Shade of Abdul Wahhab!

Notes.

Back numbers of The Moslem World. Can anyone supply the following copies of *The Moslem World Quarterly*, desired by F. S. Coan, Esq., Y.M.C.A., 86, Oxford St., Secunderabad, (Deccan), India.

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- 1911—January, April, October.
 - 1912—July.
 - 1913—January, April, October.
 - 1916—April, July, October.
 - 1917—January, April, October.
 - 1918—October.
 - 1919—January, April, July, October.
 - 1920—April.
 - 1922—July, October.

Mr. Coan has the following odd copies of *The Moslem World* which he is willing to exchange or sell.

1921—January.
 1922—January.
 1923—April, July.
 1924—October.
 1925—July, October.
 1926—April.

* * * * *

A place in your prayers is desired by Rev. H. French Ridley who with Mr. Hunter is working in that lonely outpost in N. W. China beyond the Great Desert—the city of Urumtsi. Mr. Ridley has a Guest Room in the city where he spends several hours a day. He has been given a very attentive hearing. Mr. Hunter has made extended tours into unvisited tracks still further West.

PRaise for the good reception Mr. Hunter had at Khuldja and for the large number of books sold.

PRAY that the Lord may lead many into the light through the work in the Guest Room.

NEW MEMBERS.

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Mrs. Hoff,	"	Tiruvanamalai, N. Arcot.
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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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