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News and Notes

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Series XVIII

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Enduring the Cross, and the Joy set before.

*(An address given at a quiet hour, in the hills, by one
of the first students of The Henry Martyn School.)*

LIFE has its difficulties for us all. It is never easy for any one of us for too long at a stretch. It seems as if life goes in waves.

There are the rough places; and the green pastures and still waters come just when we need them, and are perhaps nearer to us all the time than we realise, if only we had eyes to see them and a heart to appreciate them. But there *are* the hills of difficulty, and the giants to be slain by the way, and situations which call for all our courage and endurance; and experiences come to us all when there seems nothing we can do except hold on. That is one side of it.

But there is the other side—the cross that we ourselves take up. The Cross lies at the heart of our message. It was at the heart of Christ's life, and Christ was emphatic that His disciples must deny themselves and take up the cross and follow Him. As one writer* puts it, "The symbol of Christianity is not a cushion, but a cross." Dr. Stanley Jones has told us how one day on the Mount of Olives during the Jerusalem Conference he put out his hand to pull a flower. But a Voice seemed to come to him saying, "Not the flower, but the thorn." Again his hand went out, but again the Voice seemed to say, "The thorn, not the flower." And so it is with us all. We want the flower, but we must pluck the thorn. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die," it bears no fruit. And it does seem as if the Christian must be willing to be bruised and broken before becoming effective.

* Leslie Weatherhead.

There was an occasion when the disciples tried to cast out an evil spirit, and could not. And they said to the Master, "Why could not we cast him out?" And Jesus replied, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer." They could not do it, because they did not know the agony of self-giving beforehand. They did not know as Jesus knew, what it meant to spend the whole night in prayer, to give up the night to talk to a seeking soul, and in the heat of the day when He was tired and hungry and thirsty to lead a woman to a knowledge of salvation. "*He* knew how hardly souls were wooed and won, His choicest wreaths" were not "wet with tears," but stained with His own life blood. And the Master turns to us and says, "Can ye drink the cup that I drink?"

We have been reminded of an incident in the life of Canon Gairdner. It was during a Student Camp at Keswick on the Saturday afternoon, when after a strenuous morning of meetings the campers were in boats on the lake, enjoying the quiet and beauty of the scene. Suddenly one of the speakers stood up in one of the boats and cried out, "*Agonia* is the measure of success. Christ suffered in agony. So must we. Christ died: so perhaps may we. Our life *must* be hard, cruel, wearisome, unknown. So was His." Those words were the key-note to Gairdner's whole life. As a single instance we might quote the anguish he suffered over a backslider. He was won back in the end, but "Oh, the cost of it!" It was Gairdner who on another occasion said, "I think if one let oneself go, one's heart would really be broken and we should then be free to love all men." And I ask myself, as we must all ask ourselves, "Am I, ready to let myself go, to go to *any* lengths that the Muslim might be won for Christ?"

Then where does the joy of it all come in? Is it not just there that we so often fail? When the work I do saps my strength to its limits, am I glad? Do I rejoice when the only way of facing some situations seems to be a willingness to let one's own personality sink into nothingness for the sake of some one else. When I engage in real intercessory prayer for someone I love, and exhaustion follows, am I glad? In looking back to times of stress and strain, it is so easy still to count the cost instead of forgetting it.

We do not simply need the capacity of seeing the bright side of life, and of believing that every cloud has its silver lining. We need have the faith that storms will pass, and that in every situation of life we have the Master's presence with us. As Henry Martyn said, we may still be "kept in darkness, but darkness is not the frown of God; it is Himself—thy shade on thy right hand." We know that every ounce of self-giving for Christ's sake is well worthwhile. But there is something deeper still for which one yearns.

We have already mentioned Canon Gairdner and how *agonia* was the key-note of his life. But there was another note running alongside, a note of triumphant joy, joy that "seemed to well up from some inexhaustible inner spring." A friend said of him, "He was the

greatest living testimony of the joyfulness of Christianity. One incident of his life came home to me as I read it. He had arrived in Cairo, and found—as we all find—that the singing in church was very poor; but he threw himself into what he found, and “so eagerly beat time that his lagging Bulls of Bashan at the back of the Arabic congregation lagged a little less, and people smiled and said, ‘How he was enjoying himself in that hymn.’” *Was* he enjoying himself? I should have thought he suffered. He must have suffered. The amateurish performance would be excruciating to his sensitive ear. But I am just as sure he enjoyed it too. And I asked myself as I read it, “Could I do that?” If I were conducting the singing, the lagging Bulls of Bashan at the back of the Indian congregation might lag a little less, but no one would be deceived into thinking I were enjoying it. They would be far more likely to say afterwards, “Oh, she *did* try to hurry us along in that hymn.” Yet here was Gairdner with a musical gift as rare as it was wonderful, stooping down to the level of his congregation, and giving them just as much of his talent as they could take, *and* enjoying himself in the doing of it.

That is an ordinary, everyday example of what Jesus did all the time. He stooped down and came to earth to live our life, and gave Himself that we might take of Him; and in so giving Himself, enjoyed life to the full. “His was a radiant, vivid, powerful, humble personality, so gloriously alive, so perfectly happy.”* Did this joy never leave Him? Did it remain with Him, even on the Cross? Who knows? Who can tell the depth of that agony? But we do know this, that when the shadow of the Cross was upon him, in those last hours with His disciples, He said to them, “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” It was His own inexhaustible joy that He was offering to them.

And Jesus once told a story of a shepherd searching for his lost sheep. When we retell that story, we are so apt to enlarge on the sufferings that the shepherd underwent. But Jesus didn’t. He never mentioned them—as if He took that for granted. The most natural thing for the shepherd to do was to search until he found. And the joy of finding quite put into the background all that it had cost him.

And when Jesus rose on the first Easter morning, the nail-scars were still there—They always will be in the heart of God, “until the last sinner is gathered in.”—But nothing could overshadow or take away the joy that His living presence brought.

For, after all, joy and suffering do go together. It was Gairdner who said, “The opposite of joy is not sorrow but sin. Pure joy and pure sorrow can live together.” “To share with God the heart-break of the world does not allow the true soldier of the cross to sit down and weep. It sends him out to find a new joy set before him; for

* Weatherhead.

unselfish sorrow does not inhibit the finest and deepest joy either in heaven or on earth. His song is the song of the first robin, who tugged with its tiny beak till it had withdrawn a spike from the crown of thorns which Jesus wore upon the cross, and then went out to sing a new song, though its own breast was stained with blood." †

Can we drink the cup that the Master is offering to us—His cup of joy and suffering mingled? May we draw closer to the heart of the Eternal, that in sharing with Him the sorrows of the world, we too may share His joy.

K. G.

He, being dead, yet speaketh.

HENRY MARTYN, on the day following his arrival in Calcutta in 1806, thus made, in his private Journal, at one and the same time, his confession and resolution:—

"I feel pressed in spirit to do something for God. Everybody is diligent, but I am idle; all employed in their proper work, but I tossed in uncertainty; I want nothing but grace; I want to be perfectly holy, and to save myself and those that hear me. I have hitherto lived to little purpose, more like a clod than a servant of God;" (this Senior Wrangler, then little more than 25 years of age! *Ed.*), "Now let me burn out for God."

The Power of the Printed Page.

It has been well and truly said that, **no agency can penetrate Islam so deeply, abide so persistently, witness so daringly, and influence so irresistibly as the printed page.** That being so, are you doing all you can to distribute Christian literature?

Three Interesting Friends in Persia.

THREE of the most interesting men whom I have had the privilege of meeting and teaching in Meshed this year are a lawyer, a lecturer to the army, and the principal of a neighbouring school. These three men are as different as can be and I have found their friendship instructive and helpful in many ways.

The first one, the lawyer, came to the Reading-Room on the 25th of last October, saying that as the adoption of the new national hat had made it possible for him to abandon the ecclesiastical turban, he felt free to come to see me openly as an inquirer. He has come since that, once a week,

†Leslie Weatherhead, in 'The Transforming Friendship.'

almost every week that I have been in the city during the year. For some time he had worked as a teacher in one of the theological colleges here, and was often called upon to preach in the mosque in his district of the city. But in recent years he has given most of his time to the work of a lawyer. After he had read the apologetic works that are available in Persian, and when he had had five months assistance in his study of the essential teachings and practices of Christianity, he was able to meet the session of the Meshed Church and give reasons for the faith that was in him. But this final confession of his Christian faith came in the beginning of the month of Ramzan, and he was embarrassed by a promise he had made some time before to lecture in the mosque for five nights during that month. His way of meeting this difficulty was to go ahead with the lectures, but he chose as his subject: *The Folly of Unfair Criticism*. A series of articles against Christianity had been published by one of the Tabriz newspapers, in which numerous Scripture texts were wrongly quoted or mistakenly applied. Accordingly, each evening he took up some of these instances, and tried to show that while misrepresentation might succeed in helping one gain a point, it was essentially immoral and could never make for progress. Partly as a result of these lectures a number of interested friends came to talk these things over with him, with the result that he now has a group of seven or eight inquirers, with whom he has been reading the Sources of the Koran, the Friendly Dialogues, and passages from the New Testament. He brought three of these men to see me recently, and they are all self-respecting, hard-working men, who are making steady progress towards understanding and belief.

However, when it was learned in the city that this man had become a Christian, an effort was made to prevent him from continuing to practice law, but in the end a renewal of his authorization came from Teheran and a reprimand was sent to the officials of the Department of Justice in Meshed for their having raised objection to this lawyer on the ground of his personal beliefs, which he was said to be "intelligent enough to be able to determine." Another difficulty that he faced, as he sought to adjust his life to Christian standards, came from the fact that he had two wives. One of them, however, the mother of his children, has proved to be receptive to Christian teaching, whereas the other one refuses to live with him, if the report is true that he has become a Christian. So it looks as though his family duties may soon be adjusted so that he may aspire to the Scriptural qualifications for "a bishop" (I Tim. 3: 2).

In the meantime, while still awaiting his baptism, he has gone with one of the other Persian Christians for a month's fellowship and testimony in the near-by towns of Nishapur and Sabzewar. This he is doing at his own expense and entirely without compensation of any kind, and we hope he will return from this journey with such joy and assurance in his new faith that he will be a source of strength and inspiration to the entire group of Christians in Khorasan.

The second man, who has come to lecture regularly to the army on subjects that make for patriotism and morality, seemed at first to be one of those irresponsible personalities whom one can scarcely teach anything. But after a while I found that by just coming back again and again to the death and resurrection of Jesus, finally an impression was made, and during two months that I was away from the city he read the Bible from the beginning to the Books of Acts, and now each time he comes, he has some really vital question, something that deeply concerns him, so that at times I feel almost sure that this candid friend is really being led by the Spirit of God.

The third man, the principal of the near-by school, is the son of a Persian *mujtahid*, or doctor of religion. When he was little more than a boy, this man left his home to become a Bahai, and for several years he was most zealous in propagating the beliefs of that sect. But some two years ago, he made a definite break with the Bahais, and he is now an avowed Rationalist, who acknowledges, however, that he is not finding any positive comfort or satisfaction in his personal relation to God. But the teachings of Jesus, he says, have an unusually powerful effect upon his emotions, while at the same time, his reason seems to be repelled by other things that he reads in the New Testament. Absorbed as he is in many activities, and living under the pressure of close economy and family cares, this man well exemplifies that mental confusion in the midst of enlightenment with which we are having more and more contact.

D. M. DONALDSON.

On eating meat from Animal Sacrifices.

ONE thing that struck me most after my conversion was the freedom given to a Christian in the matter of food in the New Testament. There are, it seems to me, only two criteria which every Christian must observe with regard to his edible articles. Firstly, anything that defiles the temple of God, *i.e.* the body, must be shunned, for the New Testament says, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy." There is no piety or sinfulness attached to any article of food, as it is. It is the use we make of it that matters. The above rule debars us from taking such food as will affect adversely our body, mind or character. Again, "Whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly and is cast out into the draught." The second criterion to be observed is to see that this liberty is not allowed to deteriorate into license and does not become a stumbling block to our weaker brothers. Now as to the particular question asked in *News and Notes* (Sept. issue), I hold that a Christian, when invited by a Muslim friend and offered 'food containing meat that comes from an animal sacrificed at the time of Id-uz-Zuha,' is free to partake of it, so long as he bears the above two points in mind. He is concerned with food, not with sacrifice.

D. A. CHOWDHURY.

The Henry Martyn School, Lahore.

WE feel sure that there must be individual missionaries scattered up and down the country who would very much like to get to Lahore in the cold season for a course of study such as has been advertised, but who find that in their case this is not possible either because of the exigencies of their work, or through shortage of staff. It has been suggested to us that in order to meet the case of such we should arrange for a shorter course in some hill station.

The proposition is attractive and seems practicable. It ought to be possible, without any serious dislocation in the work of a station for individuals to extend their annual holiday for such a purpose.

Large group meetings this year in Dalhousie, Punjab, have shown us that that is a good centre for an extended course and we are proposing to hold one there in 1931 during the months of May and June, or thereabouts, if a sufficient number register their names. Accommodation is readily available, but there should be early bookings, more especially to enable us to secure a suitable building as the School Centre.

On the other hand, it may well be that Indian workers could be spared to come to Lahore for a course in the cold season. We would cordially welcome these so long as it is understood that they would need to be sufficiently equipped to benefit from such study, and that our scope as a teaching staff is limited to lecturing in English, Urdu and Bengali!

We shall be glad to arrange for their board and accommodation at rates varying from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 per mensem.

There will be no charge for any of the courses of study.

Enquiries should be addressed, at an early date, to the undersigned, who will gladly furnish further particulars.

*The Principal,
5, Egerton Road, Lahore.*

A Word Between Ourselves.

AS announced last month in a note at the foot of the list of new members, we have been compelled, not without reluctance and regret, to delete from our foreign list no less than 65 names, since these people were owing the League arrears of subscriptions for 3, 4, 5, or even 6 years. Our membership has therefore been reduced to a total of, approximately, 417 members—272 on the Indian list, and 145 on the Foreign. We have the satisfaction, however, of knowing that all these are in 'good standing,' and also that things are looking up, for over 25 have joined during the last four months.

But never has the need for care both in the despatch and in the preservation of our little paper, *News and Notes* (which, after all, is strictly for ourselves only), been more emphatically demonstrated. For with the application of the 'axe' some one has apparently suddenly ceased to receive the paper to which he has no vestige of a right. This is the only construction that we can, at present, put upon a wheedling letter we have received from a *maulavi* (a renegade Christian, unless we are greatly mistaken), who confesses to having received the copy of one of these same members, and whose name we have had to strike off, because his arrears ran back to 5 years! We very much question whether that member in view of his indebtedness to the League has, as the *maulavi* alleges, been thus sending his copy back to one who is, at least, no *friend* of our cause.

In view of this incident we venture once again to advise members to (1) keep the Orissa Mission Press informed of their present whereabouts; (2) safeguard their own copies; and (3) intimate to the Press if they no longer wish to receive the paper.

For Prayer.

PRAY for the *imam* of a mosque in an Indian city—'he is coming to me from time to time. I think he is not far from the Kingdom.'

WANTED : One Platt's Urdu Dictionary.

Miss Chapman,

Z.B.M.M., Sholapur.

NEW MEMBERS

Miss G. E. Clarke,	St. Catherine's Hospital,	Amritsar.
Miss M. Lamb,	do	do
Miss M. L. Hudson,	Z.B.M. Mission,	Sholapur.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscription, etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.).

Matters of interest to members of the League, items of news and requests for prayer should be sent (if possible, early in the month) to the Hon'y. Secretary:—

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,

*5, Egerton Road,
Lahore,
Punjab, India.*

NOTE NEW ADDRESS 

