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News and Notes

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New Year Messages.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

THE REV. CANON GOLDSMITH, OF MADRAS,

ON all sides we are now reminded that our work as Messengers of Christ must be guided by brotherly love rather than by military vigour. The very fact of the prevalence of this principle and the emphasis which is given to it, may reasonably shew that it is inspired from above. The principle may apply to all classes of people that we have to deal with, but it has special reference to the frequently warlike attitude of those Muhammadans who believe in "jihad."

When I first began work in Madras, some of our Indian Christian leaders were very bitter and contemptuous of *Hinduism*; one of them always expressed his disgust by talking of the "Belly-god" that his former co-religionists worshipped; and another saw nothing but grossest obscenity in the Hindu forehead-marks. I myself still cannot but notice the indecencies displayed on all the village and other shrines that abound everywhere. In the "Holi" feast the customs in Hyderabad and all our cities are understood to represent unspeakable filth, and the votaries never deny it. The British Police are ready to remove any outrageously indecent pictures on that "sacred occasion"!

But we are urged to be charitable, and doubtless should be so, even when conscious, along with better classes of Indians, of how much reform is needed.

With regard to *Muhammadanism*, the Apostolic rule must apply. "The servant of the Lord must not strive" (or "quarrel". Weymouth). He must "be gentle, shewing all meekness toward all men" (Titus iii: 2).

The late F. B. Meyer wrote on Ps. cxlix : 6-9: "We remember with a shudder that fifteen centuries after Christ professed Christians justified the horrors of religious war by this Psalm."

In 2 Mac. xv : 29, we read "so that fighting with their hands and praying unto God with their hearts, they slew no less than 35,000 men"!

But that age has passed, and we rather quote 2 Cor. x : 4, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal."

It may be just as well that the British Government has, at intervals, banned such books as *Rangila Rasul*.

Dr. Stanley Jones in his valued ministry leads the way in brotherly ingenuity to win others for the MASTER.

Let us therefore aim at "what makes for peace," and commend our Gospel by our prayerful following of Christ and patient continuance in well-doing.

M. G. G.

MISS F. ALLEN, WESLEYAN MISSION, HYDERABAD, DECCAN.

Tis with mingled feelings of joy and sadness that we look back on the year just gone. Praise and thanksgiving fill our hearts for all the way our God has led us, for His tenderness and love in His dealings with us, for the work He has permitted us to do for Him. But sadness, aye, and shame, too, overwhelm us when we think of lost opportunities through lack of faith, indifference and selfishness. How many times His heart must have been grieved and pained by the lukewarmness of our love. How many have gone hungry and sad because we have failed to give them the Bread of Life, while He has been saying all the time, "Give ye them to eat." How many still have never heard because we have failed to tell them, perhaps through fear, or perhaps because we have felt they would never respond, and therefore it would be useless to waste our time, forgetting all the while that we have behind us a power that can penetrate the dullest mind and break down the hardest heart.

We think of the wonderful changes that have taken place even recently in the attitude of our Moslem brothers and sisters towards the Gospel message, and of the tremendous opportunities that are ours to-day of friendship and fellowship with them. Are we taking advantage of these opportunities? Are we trying through our friendship and other means to bring them to a knowledge of the Saviour who loves them? Are we helping by our attitude to them to give them a clearer vision of Him, and a new conception of Him as a Father longing for them to know Him?

As we face the New Year and enter into the unknown, how we need to get into very close touch with our Master, to let Him search our hearts by the light of His Holy Word, to get a new vision from Him of the greatness and wonderfulness of His love for the

world, to know and understand more deeply the depth, the height, and the breadth of the meaning of the words, "God so loved that He gave."

He calls us to a deeper consecration, and a deeper knowledge of Himself. Are we willing for all that this means? He needs men and women who will gladly lay their all on the altar, who will dare to test His resources and His promises, who will be willing to go all lengths with Him to save those for whom He died. The difficulties before us will be great, and sometimes will appear almost insurmountable, and discouragements will be many; faith will be tried to the uttermost, but His resources have no end, and there is no limit to His power. Campbell Morgan years ago at Keswick gave this reading of *John xv: 7*. "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall demand that for which ye are inclined, and it shall be generated for you." Generated for you! Oh, the depths of the possible with God that are hidden in these words.

Shall we ask that this year He will do a new thing in us and in the Moslem world—generate a glow of Holy Ghost fire that will penetrate to the innermost recesses of our hearts, revolutionising our lives, and through us reaching out to our Moslem brothers and sisters?

F. B. Meyer once wrote, "You do not test the resources of God till you try the impossible;" and Andrew Murray said, "We have a God who delights in impossibilities;" surely enough for us who believe that all our needs will be met by Him whose yea is yea and His nay, nay.

"Behold I am the Lord, the God of all flesh.

Is there anything too hard for me?"

"All things are possible with God."

"All things are possible to him that believeth."

"All things are possible to God,

To Christ the power of God in man,

To me when I am all renewed,

When I in Christ am formed again;

And witness from all sin set free,

All things are possible to me."

MISS H. MCLEAN, AUSTRALIAN BAPTIST MISSION, PUBNA, BENGAL.

My Primal Light.

HERE are those who laugh at the old-fashioned habit of pausing for a while on the night of December 31st, to think over the failures of the Old Year, and make all sorts of good resolutions for the New. They say that good resolutions are like piecrust, made to be broken. Yet no one is likely to suggest that we should give up the habit of making piecrust just because we break it, then why suggest that we should give up the habit of making good resolutions? The obvious solution of the problem is that we should remember that they are not piecrust, and not made to be broken.

Perhaps we should keep our good resolutions better if we sometimes stopped to remember them. Too often we are like Paracelsus, whose portrait Browning has painted so vividly for us.

He fares forth on his adventure with the brave words:—

“I go to prove my soul.

I see my way as birds their trackless way.

I shall arrive! what time, what circuit first

I ask not; but unless God send His hail

Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,

In some time, His good time, I shall arrive.

He guides me and the bird. In His good time.”

Brave words indeed! Who would ever guess that, as we turned the pages and followed his story, we should come upon the sorrowful confession:—

“I never glanced behind to know

If I had kept *my primal light* from wane,

And thus insensibly am,—what I am!

Oh, bitter; very bitter!”

Has the same confession never been wrung from our lips? Has our “primal light” never waned because we did not pause to “glance behind” and take account of it? Bitter indeed it is to fail to realise our ideal in spite of agonised striving after it; but how much more bitter to fail to reach that ideal simply because we forgot to look at it.

“I never glanced behind . . . and thus insensibly am,—what I am!” And what am I? A missionary, possibly a specialist for Moslems, in any case a leader, a teacher, and, willingly or unwillingly, an example, willingly or unwillingly a living representation of Christ to the people, as He was a living representation of the Father.

Then, after all, the thing that really matters is, am I Christlike? Am I daily becoming more Christlike or less Christlike?

“Primal lights” seem to have some affinity with the moon: they either wax or wane. So with our spiritual lives.

How high were our ideals when first we set out upon our adventure! Did we not see before our eyes that masterpiece of the great portrait painter, Isaiah, that portrait of the Nameless Messenger, which Christ chose from all the others to present to His own town-folk:—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel. . . .”

A Messenger from God, anointed with His Spirit to preach the Gospel. From that ideal, and all that it involved, Christ never flinched. His primal light never waned. That one fact makes Him for ever worthy of the homage of all Moslem hearts, for, in the very place where their prophet fell, He stood erect and victorious.

“Anointed by the Spirit to preach the Gospel.” Would that the words might ring in our ears every time we preach! For we are all preaching, whether it be by lip, or pen, or medicine bottle or

surgeon's knife, or school and office routine. All are preaching. Then dare we let our primal light wane? Dare we run the risk of preaching without the anointing? The Lord Himself did not, and He told His apostles not to.

Temple Gairdner, the seer, who being dead yet speaketh, has left, in his last message to the missionary world through the Jerusalem Conference, a warning which we do well to heed.

"Our religion as preached to the Muhammadan must be a religion of the Spirit—of the "Spirit of Jesus." The phrase is pregnant to the last degree: not the manner of Jesus, not a "Spirit of service similar to His"—but "The Spirit" of God which was in Him, and which through Him is the divine means of grace to-day. We have nothing else to give the Moslem unless we give this... ..Let the Church that does not believe in the Holy Ghost save herself the trouble of attempting the conversion of Islam..."

Yes, and let the missionary do the same.

Our Heavenly Father, as we look backward over the Old Year, we crave Thy forgiveness for the times when we have allowed our 'primal light' to wane: as we look forward we crave Thy fresh anointing, that we may indeed be messengers "Anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel."

THE REV. FATHER W. H. G. HOLMES.

Editor of the *Epiphany*, Calcutta.

THEORETICALLY one would suppose that it would be less difficult to build on a foundation which had some strong, sound elements than to construct an entirely new building on marshy or sandy ground. The image may be faulty, but it expresses something of the truth of a missionary's anticipation when he is faced with the task of presenting the Gospel to Muslims and Hindus. On paper, at any rate, Islam seems so much the finer religion; the mosque so much more attractive than a temple of Kali; there are sound elements in such a religion upon which to construct a fair spiritual temple in which the one God may be known and adored. In Hinduism, on the other hand, he has to hunt to find something on which to build, and again and again when he seems to have secured it, it dissolves into gas.

In practical experience, however, the reverse is found to hold good. It is easier to approach the Hindu than the Muslim, and not only is it easier, but hope stirs more vigorously in his heart as the missionary does so.

Possibly a more accurate way of stating the position would be that it is less difficult to convert a pagan than a heretic, because a pagan may be drawn from the dim twilight of nature-worship when the sunshine of the supernatural dawns on him, whilst the heretic, being convinced that he knows, closes his mind and will maintain at all costs his own particular perversion of the truth.

However this may be, as we look out in India on the seventy millions adhering to Islam we are confronted with a task which seems impossible. And because by every human calculation it is impossible the conviction grows that the impossible must be compassed, in the name of Him who goes forth conquering and to conquer.

Such is our faith as we enter another year. But in our faith we must supply virtue; *i.e.*, we must in CHRIST manifest a moral excellence which shall draw Muslims to enquire into its secret. In our virtue we must supply knowledge; and in *this connexion* we must include the knowledge of what are the firm and sound elements in a faith which has secured the enthusiastic allegiance of such vast multitudes of our fellow-beings, and in the light of that knowledge discover wise and loving methods of approach.

It is for this supply of knowledge, the knowledge of students who love and take pains, that we look confidently to the Lahore School for the study of Islamics. There is evidence of a new spirit of enquiry among young Muslims in India. Muslim subscribers to the *Epiphany*, for instance, increase by leaps and bounds. None in India will be more qualified to meet this spirit than the men who pray and study in this school, and to the prayers of all who love our Lord they are commended.

THE REV. CANON B. H. P. FISHER, S.P.G., CAWNPORE.

AT the end of the year we may look back, and we see enough of lost opportunities, errors of judgment, failures of courage, lack of persistence, to make us humble about what is past; and then we look forward to a new year with what sort of hope? If it depended on us, with very little hope. But we know it does not depend on us. We are 'workers together with God.' Paul plants, Apollos waters; but it is God that gives the increase. We can dare to look forward with good hope; not because we have confidence in the success of *our* plans, or *our* wisdom, or *our* persistence; but because we have faith in God's faithfulness, God's wisdom and God's plan. Our best work is our prayer, and our best prayer is 'Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Will be done.' In the spirit of such prayer alone can we become more faithful workers together with God.

The Christian Message and Islam.

II.

WE reproduce below a summary of the views of the Cairo group who met to discuss the subject of "How to Present Christianity to Sheikhs." Readers in India and elsewhere will know what type of Muslim is represented by the term *Sheikh*.

1. Our first need is to *understand the mentality* of the Sheikh. Some went so far as to maintain that this requires a knowledge not only of the Quran, but of Moslem law and tradition also. Others did not consider such detailed knowledge necessary. (see Note.)

2. Then we should aim at inducing the Sheikh to *read the Gospel* in a spirit of enquiry, rather than of criticism. Some held that we should put the whole New Testament in his hands at the outset, with certain words of explanation, so that there may be no misunderstanding later, as to what the Gospel is. Others maintained that it is better to give the Sheikh at first one Gospel only, (e.g., the Gospel of St. Luke, as it deals with subjects in which the Sheikh is already interested, for example, the story of John the Baptist) and then give him the other Gospels in turn.

3. The four *subjects* which every *Sheikh wishes to discuss* when he first comes into contact with missionaries and evangelists are:—

1. The Reliability of our Scripture record.
2. The Divinity of Christ.
3. The Meaning of the Trinity.
4. The Death of Christ.

All agreed that it was important early on to shew the Sheikh that our Bible narrative is trustworthy, but it is preferable, if possible, to avoid the discussion of the other three subjects, until such time as the Sheikh has a better understanding of what Christianity is, and until he knows more about Jesus and His life on earth.

4. Our main purpose should be to bring home to the Sheikh the meaning of *sin*, and of his own need of a *Saviour*. This may take a long time, but it is fundamental. Also we should shew him what love and purity and self-sacrifice mean. It is supremely important that he should study the *personality* of Jesus, until he begins to realize something of the power of that personality in human life.

5. While it was felt that there was relatively no value to-day in the method of criticizing the reliability of the Quran, or of imputing the character of Muhammad, some were of the opinion that it is useful to get the Sheikh, at an early stage, to *make comparisons* between the Bible and the Quran, and between Christ and Muhammad. Others felt that positive teaching of Christianity was our main concern, and that this process of comparing the two religions and the persons of our Lord and Muhammad, would come naturally later on.

6. There was some difference of opinion as to the advisability of substantiating any statements we might make by *quoting from the Quran*. While some held that this helped to draw the attention of the Sheikh, others believed that it was a mistake to support our position by aims derived from a source in which we do not believe.

7. All agreed that, in preaching to Sheikhs, it is most essential that we should *use words*, phrases, and metaphors which are *intelligible* to him and which convey our exact meaning, and which do not cause him to stumble,

8. Whereas, general evangelistic meetings may be, and are, of great value in acquainting us with Moslems, the best work is done, not in the meetings at all, but in the *personal work*, with which they should be followed up, and especially in the periods of consecutive *Bible Study*, when an individual Moslem takes a regular course of lessons, say once a week, from an individual Christian, be he missionary, evangelist, or church member. Such Bible study is best done with individuals, rather than with groups, and its purpose is to lead those who at the meeting or elsewhere, have shown some real interest in the message, to a personal knowledge of Christ as Saviour, and so to membership of His Church. It is in these hours of individual Bible study that such questions as the Divinity of Christ, and the meaning of the Atonement can best be explained, rather than at the big general meetings.

NOTE. Attention was drawn to the fact that compared with twenty years ago, there are very few younger missionaries who are acquainted with the teachings of Islam to any profound extent. The need for a limited number of *first-class Islamic scholars* from among the missionary community will be felt in the near future. It was suggested that all missionaries should read the books which the Government uses for the teaching of Islam in the Government schools, and, also, that we should encourage some Egyptian Christians, so to study Islam as to be able, in the future, to produce the literature which may be required for certain types of Moslem readers.

NEW MEMBERS.

Miss H. Moore,	Union Mission	Cawnpore, U.P.
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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 Hony. Secretary :—

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,

NOTE NEW ADDRESS 

5 Egerton Road,
Lahore,
Punjab, India.